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Official Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
04/06/2026

For Approval

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

Call to Order: Senate President Erika McPhee-Shaw called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The following minutes were approved by consent:

- March 5, 2026 ATC Minutes
- March 9, 2026 Faculty Senate Minutes

Reports and Announcements

Erika McPhee-Shaw, Senate President

- Since the Senate Executive Council has not met since the last Senate meeting, further discussion on the AI Work Group charge has not happened yet.
- A faculty-wide email went out last week announcing that the application period for next year's Senate Deputy Budget Representative is open through May 1.

Sabah Randhawa, University President

- During the breakfast and lunch sessions with senators last week, there was conversation regarding a potential property purchase. The Senate will be kept informed about this.

- There are no major action items scheduled for the April Board of Trustees meeting. Discussion items on Friday include presentations about the CBE's and WGSS's 50th anniversaries. The Thursday work session will focus on enrollment, budget, and the funding formula being developed by the Washington Roundtable.

The funding formula information will be shared with senators at the Senate's request.

Brad Johnson, Provost and Executive Vice President

- He will discuss the Senate AI Work Group with the Senate Executive Council at its April 13 meeting.
- There were no new public records requests last week.

Theresa Warburton, UFWW President

- The UFWW annual party is scheduled for May 29, and this year is the 20th anniversary of UFWW.
- There is an all-faculty UFWW meeting on May 15 that will include nominations for open positions.
- A Town Hall with elected officials and candidates is scheduled for May 18.

Tesla Monson, Faculty Senate Budget Representative

- There were no reports or announcement.

John Hardgrove, ASWWU Senate

- The ASWWU candidacy filing period is open through April 20.

Action Item

- **Certification of Melissa Osborne as Spring 2026 Senator for CHSS-SBS-Sociology:** A motion by Senate Appointments and Elections Officer Gabe Gossett (and seconded) to certify the appointment of Melissa Osborne as the Spring 2026 senator for CHSS-SBS-Sociology was approved unanimously.

Discussion Item

- **President's Strategic Enrollment Growth Initiative**

  - Becca Kenna-Schenk, Chief of Staff, Office of the President, with President Randhawa and Provost Johnson, provided an update on the President's Strategic Enrollment Growth Initiative. Information about the rationale for the Initiative, including enrollment pressures and the overall state landscape for higher education, was provided. The Initiative was built on the existing WAGAP structure and also was designed to streamline some admissions processes. Changes to the CTC transfer pipeline is the other major piece of the Initiative. The other piece is the transfer pipeline through CTCs. The Provost provided an update on current admissions and enrollment data. It was reported that one reason that the

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confirmation number is higher this year is that the previous confirmation fee will be collected later as an enrollment fee.

- Sislena Ledbetter, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, gave a presentation on student support and engagement. She described the responsibilities of the Student Affairs office, stating that all of the work in Student Affairs is related to retention, including accessibility, housing, basic needs, and engagement. She described increased student needs for food support, mental health services, accessibility services and housing and reported on current efforts to address them. For example, there is an effort to coordinate mental health services using EMRs. Other belonging/identity/retention efforts reported include the enrolling students in SMNR courses based on GPA, a shared advising model between The Centers and Academic Advising, and using a retention lens as the campus housing strategic plan is developed. This year has been about stabilizing Student Affairs, with a focus on strategic planning beginning this summer.

- Faculty Best Practices for Supporting Retention

  - Darius Martin (CBE-Economics), with John Krieg (CBE-Economics and Director, Office of Institutional Effectiveness), and Adam Wright (CBE-Economics) gave a presentation on social connection, friendship, and freshman retention, focusing on their research that used WWU dining hall data from 2008-2024.

  - Jill Davishahl (CSE-Engineering and Design, Director of First-Year Programs) gave a presentation on First-Year Programs in Engineering and Design, which are focused on belonging, persistence, and retention, with emphasis on women, gender minorities, and POC. It is a coordinated effort that includes an introductory course as a hub for cohorts, friendships, and connecting with student services and with faculty. This course could be replicated in other departments/divisions. Peer mentoring uses a group model. The Makerspace is a third space intended to create a sense of belonging. Viking Launch programming has a direct correlation to retention, but there is a $1,200 cost barrier to participation. Engineering and Design has a dedicated pre-major advisor, which is essential to retention, as is faculty advising for first-year students. She stated that it is necessary to meet students where they are rather than assuming that they have specific sense of knowledge, to work with them to get needed accommodations and access to other services (such as counseling & wellness). Due to budget issues, there is a need to be thoughtful about taking what we have and leveraging them to create clearer pathways for students.

Pending Approval

- Discussion points included the following:

    - First-year students are struggling with basic skills, such as notetaking and study skills. WWU should provide bridge skills courses. Budget constraints do not allow departments to offer first-year student classes for skill-building when they are having to cancel content classes.
    - Is the decline in friendship a national trend or unique to WWU? Is there information about how many hours students are having to work to pay for tuition? It is probably technology changes that have caused more isolation, and student work hours do not explain the trend.
    - What promotes friendship? People tend to make friends with people who are similar, so ideas include examining how roommates are matched, how dorm halls are structured, and core/cohort sequences for majors.
    - There is a striking similarity in terms of supporting and retaining faculty, such as cost of living (housing) and sense of belonging. Is there a way to collaborate on faculty and student retention? UFWW has been encouraging faculty to share their career trajectories; maybe sharing these stories with students would be helpful.
    - Are students making friends in classes, and is there evidence on what works to encourage class friendships. One idea is doing intentional pairing in courses to foster connection.
    - Students could be encouraged to participate in tech-free activities.
    - College success classes and bridge programs are both important. The WWU student population has shifted closer to a traditional community college student population, and there is a need to figure out at what level of the organizational structure (University/College/Department) to invest in student support programs.
    - Research lab groups are an important way to make friends and serve as a third space. Graduate students who interact with undergrads and postdocs can be an important bridge. Space considerations, such as communal tables, and class breaks are important.
    - Will universities start revisiting the idea of hall-style dorms? It was reported that they are being looked at. A comment was made that first-year students could be assigned to hall-style residences.
    - There is a connection between friendships and college navigation college which could be supported through student engagement that involves skills-building cohorts. Cal Poly Obispo's first-year program was cited as an example.

Items from the Floor

There were no items from the floor.

Adjournment

The Senate adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Faculty Senate Attendance
04/06/2026

Voting Members			Non-Voting Members		
Brianna Delker	CHSS-SBS-Psychology	x	John Hardgrove	ASWWU Senate	x
Camilo Ponton	CSE-Geology	x	Sabah Randhawa	President	x
Catherine Clark	CSE-Chemistry	--	Brad Johnson	Provost	x
Dawna Drum	CBE-Accounting	x	Christopher Bianco	Council of Deans	x
Dennis Whitcomb	CHSS-HUM-Philosophy	x	Theresa Warburton	UFWW President	x
Erika McPhee-Shaw	President (At-Large)	x			
Ernest Hartwell	CHSS-HUM-LLC/Linguistics	x			
Gabe Gossett	Libraries	x	**Committee Chairs and Senate Representatives**		
Greg Youmans	CHSS-HUM-English	x	Bidisha Biswas	Legislative Rep	--
Heather Moore	CHSS-SBS-SLHS/HHD	x	Tesla Monson	Budget Rep	NA
James Ray	CFPA-Music	x	Michael Slouber	Past President	x
Jane Wong	CHSS-HUM-Ethnic Studies	--	Melissa D'Eloia	ACC	--
Jason Query	CBE-Economics	x	George Zhao	ATC	--
Jim Cooper	CSE-Biology	--	Kendra Dupuy	SLC	--
Johann Neem	CHSS-HUM-History	x	Shawn Knabb	SOCEC	--
John Gialanella	CFPA-Design	x			
Junaid Khan	EECE, Physics & Astronomy	--			
Kameron Harris	CSE-Computer Science	x	**Recorder**		
Lindsay Foreman-Murray	WCE-ELIT	x	Becky Johnston	Faculty Senate	x
Margarita Ruiz Guerrero	WCE-ECE	x			
Maura O'Leary	CHSS-SBS-Linguistics	x			
Melissa Osborne	CHSS-SBS-Sociology	x	**Guests**		
Patrick Buckley	CENV	x	Becca Kenna-Schenk	President's Office	x
Ramadha Piyadi Gamage	CSE-Math	--	Sislena Ledbetter	VP, Student Affairs	x
Sondra Cuban	WCE-HCS	x	John Krieg	Dir, OIE	x
Stephanie Gomez	CHSS-HUM-Jou/Com	x	Darius Martin	Economics	x
Tarek Algeddawy	CSE-Engineering & Design	x	Adam Wright	Economics	x
Tesla Monson	CHSS-SBS-Anthro	x	Jill Davishahl	Engineering & Design	x
Tim Bruce	Graduate School	--			
Yanara Friedland	Fairhaven	x			

Voting Attendees	24	**Non-Voting Attendees**	13	**Total Attendees**	**37**

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