

**Austin Peay State University
Faculty Senate
Called Meeting of Thursday, March 20, 2025
Morgan University Center, Room 307 | 3 pm
Minutes**

Call to Order: Senate President Osvaldo Di Paolo Harrison

Recognition of Guests: Mickey Wadia

Roll Call of Senators: Senate Secretary Nancy Gibson

Absent Senators: Soma Banerjee, Ronnel Berry, Leslie Binford, Florian Gargaillo, Kathy Heuston, Sam Ligo, Darren Michael, Jessica Morris, David Rands, Michelle Robertson, Bettina Shank, Kristen Sienkiewicz, and David Snyder.

Approval of Today's Agenda: Motion made, seconded, and passed by majority vote

Approval of Minutes from February 27, 2025: Meeting: Motion made, seconded, and passed by majority vote

Remarks:

1. Senate President Dr. Osvaldo Di Paolo Harrison (5 minutes)

Award Nominations:

- Announced that nominations for the Dr. Solie Fott Faculty Senate Leadership Award are open until March 31 and encouraged senators to nominate colleagues.
- Staff Senate Award nominations have closed, with three candidates to be presented at the March 27 meeting for Senate vote.

SASI Proposals: Reminded senators that SASI proposals are due March 28, with the SASI committee report to be presented to the Senate in April.

Faculty Pulse Survey: The second annual Senate Faculty Pulse Survey is open until April 17. All senators and faculty colleagues were encouraged to participate, noting the importance of comparing results year-to-year to track evolving trends.

Nominations for Faculty Senate Executive Committee: Announced upcoming nominations for executive committee positions. Past President Banerjee and two other senators will conduct the nomination process.

Budget Task Force: Emphasized the importance of maintaining the Budget Task Force for transparency and to provide faculty and students with opportunities to ask questions and offer recommendations. Noted that some non-mandatory fee proposals had been submitted without adequate information for review, and the Senate Executive Committee recommended these be reviewed by the Budget Task Force rather than bypassing established processes.

Syllabus Software Implementation: Reported on a meeting with chairs and the Executive Committee regarding syllabus software implementation. While the Executive Committee supported the software as beneficial for students, administration, and faculty, concerns were raised about potential policies stemming from the software's audit components. Recommended waiting for the incoming provost before proceeding with implementation.

Sabbatical Policy: Announced that the amended sabbatical policy approved at the previous meeting had been accepted by the provost. All faculty who apply for sabbatical will now receive feedback, particularly those whose applications are denied.

Parental Leave Policy: Provided an update on the parental leave policy, which was temporarily removed from the Policy Committee agenda at HR's request for additional review time. Following a productive meeting with Legal Affairs and Human Resources, an agreement was reached on most issues. An updated policy has been sent to HR and is expected to be presented to the Policy Committee for first reading in April with potential approval in May. Key changes will ensure faculty and staff no longer need to share parental leave and can take the full six weeks of parental leave before using sick leave.

Faculty Protections Petition: Addressed a petition circulating regarding strengthening faculty protections and campus safety. While expressing 100% support for the concerns raised, Senate President Di Paolo Harrison suggested that the petition should be a last resort rather than a first approach. After meeting with the petition organizer from the College of Business, it was agreed to work directly with Leonard and his team to develop clearer procedures. Proposed potential pre-semester conference session on the topic and establishing clear processes before the fall semester.

Policy 6:001 Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Non-discrimination: President Di Paolo Harrison acknowledged receiving numerous faculty concerns about this policy from all colleges. After contacting Dannelle Whiteside and LaNeeça Williams, learned that changes were required by the Government Operations Committee of the Tennessee General Assembly for all TN institutions. The changes were being tracked by LaNeeça Williams. Both Williams and the SGA President have been invited to attend the next Senate meeting to address concerns. Senators are encouraged to submit comments on the policy by March 28, noting that the Policy Committee reviews all comments and has made changes based on faculty input in the past, though this particular policy may have limited flexibility due to state requirements.

New Business:

1. Policies (15 minutes):

a. 2:015 Prior Learning Credit

Key changes included updated terminology, adding PLA, ELC, and CPL as equivalent terms for prior learning assessment, clarification of factors to consider when awarding credit, including knowledge age, and simplification of the approval process to empower chairs or designees to approve prior learning credit without involving student affairs or deans. The policy also clarified portfolio requirements and maintained the same limitations (1/3 of graduate requirements and 25% of undergraduate requirements). Motion to approve made, seconded, and passed with one opposing vote.

b. 2:040 Student Course Grade Appeal

Changes included adding library faculty representation to the five-member faculty panel and updating administrative titles from "Associate Vice President for Student Affairs" to "Assistant Provost and University Registrar." Motion to approve made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

c. 2:065 Academic Approval and Signatory Authority for Academic Agreements

Policy was updated to remove specific references to the eShop routing process in anticipation of the new Oracle system implementation. The revised language provides a more general

reference to "academic agreement routing" and clarifies delegation of authority. Motion to approve made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

2. Faculty Handbook Updates, Dr. Bobette Bouton. (10 minutes)

Dr. Bouton reported that while minimal changes were made to the Faculty Handbook last year during the SACS reaccreditation process, this year's updates include several significant modifications:

- *Professional Development and Sabbaticals*: Added clarification that faculty members with administrative appointments are not eligible for sabbaticals, and updated faculty development funds to \$1,100 per individual per year.
- *Research Integrity and Security*: Added the Research Integrity and Security (RIS) information to the handbook.
- *Committee Appointments*: Added provision allowing faculty members to request specific committee appointments rather than relying solely on the random selection process.
- *Faculty Meetings*: Clarified that attendance at regularly scheduled department, college, and university meetings is expected as part of faculty members' professional responsibilities.
- *Faculty Evaluation*: Enhanced documentation of committee service in area three of annual faculty evaluations and RTP, explicitly listing participation in governing and policy-making processes and committee service at department, college, and university levels.
- *Withdrawal Policy*: Restored faculty authority in determining whether to award a W or F when a student withdraws, placing this decision back with the Instructor of Record rather than administrators.
- *AI Information*: Added comprehensive information about AI use from the existing policy.
- *RSI Information*: Added Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) statement under syllabus requirements.
- *Attendance Reporting*: Added detailed guidance on attendance reporting for census day compliance.
- *Library Updates*: Incorporated extensive updates to reflect library restructuring and updated resources and services.
- *Title Updates*: Removed "Senior" from Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs title throughout the document and updated other titles for clarity.
- *Learning Management System*: Changed all references from D2L to "Learning Management System Platform" for future flexibility.

Dr. Bouton noted that the complete Faculty Handbook with tracked changes is available on the Senate website (along with a summary of changes), and a vote on the updates will occur at the next meeting.

3. Rules Committee Updates, Dr. Brandon Di Paolo Harrison. (10 minutes)

Vice-President Di Paolo Harrison presented proposed changes to the Faculty Senate bylaws and constitution:

- *Bylaws Updates*: Primarily involved cleanup with no substantive changes except for release time allocation. The current structure provides six hours of release time to the Senate President in fall and three hours in spring, with three hours to the Vice President/President-Elect in spring. The proposed change allows for more flexibility, permitting the Vice President/President-Elect to transfer their three spring hours to the President based on mutual agreement and need.

- *Constitution Updates:* Changes included aligning faculty definition with university policy, clarifying that senators elected to Vice President/President-Elect in their third year should serve a fourth year as President, updating the President-Elect title, addressing ex-officio status, and ensuring alignment with Robert's Rules of Order. Additional Senate officer positions (Treasurer, Board of Trustees Faculty Representative, and Parliamentarian) were added to the constitution, with clarification that the parliamentarian would not be a senator and would be non-voting in both the Senate and executive committee.

Vice-President Di Paolo Harrison indicated that today's presentation constituted the first reading, with a second reading and vote to follow at a subsequent meeting.

4. Faculty Red Committee Report, Dr. Heather Tillewein (10 minutes)

Dr. Tillewein presented research on faculty development funding at Locally Governed Institutions (LGIs) and other state universities, proposing an increase in professional development funds:

- *Funding Proposal:* Recommended increasing domestic travel funds to \$1,700 and international travel funds to \$2,500, with incremental increases of \$500 annually over six years.
- *Policy Changes:* Proposed greater flexibility in fund usage, allowing faculty to access all allocated funds and roll over unused funds to the next academic year (currently requires special permission).
- *Discussion:* Senators raised questions about implementation, particularly regarding the distinction between domestic and international funding allocations and how these would be managed at the departmental level. Concerns were also raised about including equipment purchases under professional development funding, with several senators suggesting that equipment should remain under departmental operational budgets. Dr. Tillewein acknowledged these concerns and indicated the committee would refine the proposal to focus on consumable items and professional activities rather than equipment that would become university property.

5. University Curriculum Committee Report, Dr. Tyler Nolting (5 minutes)

Consent Agenda Items: Seven updates including changing the course title of "Investigative War Reporting" to "Investigative Reporting" with updated description, four course deletions, and moving Film Studies to a different department.

Action Items by College:

- **College of Arts and Letters:**
 - *Languages and Literature:* Added two new readings courses - GREK 4999: Advanced Reading in Ancient Greek Authors and LATN 4999: Advanced Readings in Latin Literature
 - *History and Philosophy:* Modified the History BS degree by removing a minor requirement and adding three upper-level credits to major requirements; updated the History Education concentration's capstone course from HIST 4950 (Teaching Social Studies in Secondary Schools) to EDUC 4955 (Teaching Social Studies in the 6-12 Classroom) and added an additional credit hour of EDUC 2100 Foundations of Education

- **College of Behavioral Health Sciences:**
 - *Health and Human Performance:* Changed the concentration name from "Sport and Wellness Specialist" to "Sport, Wellness, and Coaching Concentration"; added two new certificates - an undergraduate Physical Education certificate for PE endorsement to existing licenses and a nine-hour online graduate certificate in Healthcare Administration
 - *Department of Leadership:* Updated two graduate concentrations (Community Leadership and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) by removing two courses (LDSP 5105 and LDSP 5420) as electives and adding LDSP 5999; reduced hours for the Community and Organizational Leadership certificate from 12 to 9
 - *Political Science and Public Management:* Added a new course (PM 3009: Bioterrorism, Preparedness, Surveillance, and Mitigation); added PM 2000 (Introduction to Emergency Management) as an elective to the Public Management BS and Minor; structured the Public Policy Minor around POLS 2010, POLS 2040, PM 3235, and 9 credits of electives
 - *Social Work:* Added SW 6430 Children's Mental Health as an elective for the trauma-focused concentration in MSW Social Work
- **College of Business:**
 - *Management and Marketing:* Added BUS 0900 Business Student Success, a non-credit course to support business majors experiencing academic struggles by providing a structured, quiet space for academic preparation
- **College of Education:**
 - *Teaching and Learning:* Updated the 12 hours of "Grow Your Own" electives which replace student teaching requirements for the 6-8 Middle School (Math) Concentration; updated multiple courses, course numbers, and confirmed the title for the 6-8 Middle Grades (Social Studies) in BS Education

Adjourn: Motion made, seconded, and passed by majority vote