

Austin Peay State University
Faculty Senate
Meeting of Thursday, February 27, 2025
Morgan University Center, Room 307 | 3:00 pm
Minutes

Call to Order: Osvaldo Di Paolo Harrison

Recognition of Guests: Mike Licari, Tucker Brown, Sherry Lawdermilt, and Mickey Wadia.

Roll Call of Senators: Senate Secretary Nancy Gibson

Absent Senators: McLean Fahnstock, Charles Gonzalez, Matt Hampton, Kathy Heuston, Alice Lin, John Nicholson, David Rands, Donna Short, Kristen Sienkiewicz, Lori Smith, and Jennifer Snyder.

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

Approval of Minutes from January 23rd, 2025, Meeting: Motion made, seconded, and passed by majority vote

Remarks

1. President, Dr. Michael Licari (10 minutes)

Governor's Budget Proposal: Reported that the governor's budget proposal was less favorable than anticipated. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) had requested \$40 million to fully fund the performance funding formula, but the governor recommended only \$17 million. He noted there was no increase for capital maintenance despite the university's deferred maintenance backlog exceeding \$100 million. The proposal included a 2.7% salary pool for raises. Dr. Licari explained that his appearance before the House Finance/Ways and Means Committee was postponed to mid-March due to weather, while he will appear before the Senate Education Finance Committee next Wednesday.

Tuition and Legislative Updates: Regarding tuition, explained that the THEC meeting was delayed and the tuition range will now be set in mid-March. Indicated that universities may need to consider tuition adjustments beyond 4% if legislative appropriations remain insufficient. Also discussed a bill progressing through the legislature that would modify THEC authority in areas of tuition setting, capital outlay methodologies, and program initiation, providing universities with more flexibility and autonomy.

Federal Updates: Addressed recent federal developments, including a Department of Education "Dear Colleague" letter requiring review of potentially "exclusionary" programs. Described the letter as broadly written with a February 28 deadline for compliance, and noted that a lawsuit had been filed by the American Federation of Teachers and American Sociological Association seeking an injunction. While editorial changes to university non-discrimination statements are underway to comply with requirements, emphasized that the university's commitment to inclusivity remains unchanged.

Q: Any information on H1B visas for faculty?

A: No specific updates on visa status issues; these should be unaffected as they are legal documentation.

2. Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Tucker Brown (10 minutes)

Enrollment and Academic Updates: Announced that Dr. Mitchell Cordova has been appointed as the new provost, starting July 1. He shared positive enrollment data, reporting applications up 17% from this time last year with approximately 1,789 admitted students. The Admissions Roadshow is scheduled for March 24-28, with visits to high schools throughout the region, including Memphis and Alabama. He reminded faculty of upcoming academic calendar dates: B/II term classes begin March 13, midterm grades for 1000 and 2000 level courses are due March 13, and spring break runs March 10-14 with no classes for full-term courses.

Watermark Implementation: Discussed the transition from Survey Dig to Watermark for course evaluations. He assured faculty that there would be no changes to the evaluation instrument itself, and noted that the new system will interface with RTP faculty profiles for easier access. When asked about accessing previous evaluations, he confirmed that all historical data would be preserved and accessible.

Syllabus Management System: Reported that the university is exploring the implementation of a syllabus management system in response to a Student Government Association resolution. The system would replace the current Aspire repository and provide students with advance access to course syllabi.

Q1: What about courses where syllabi change frequently?

A1: Appropriate disclaimers will be included noting potential changes between semesters or within a semester.

Q2: Will faculty be able to access previous course evaluations?

A2: Yes, all historical data will be preserved and accessible.

Q3: Could the system also archive RSI forms?

A3: This is a good suggestion that will be considered.

3. Faculty Senate President, (10 minutes)

Senate Membership and Committee Updates: Announced new senators starting May 1, 2025. He reported that the Qualtrics survey for standing committee preferences had been distributed with a March 7 deadline, and thanked Kathy Houston and her committee for their work. Staff Service Award nominations are also due March 7, with three finalists to be presented to Senate on March 20 and the award presentation scheduled for April.

New Senators: Robert Atkinson, Philip Elike, Brandi Fuglsby, Uma Iyer, Sergei Markov, Keely Mohon-Doyle, Samantha Robinson, Perry Scanlan, Jane Semler, Daniel Shea and Scott Shumate.

Initiatives and Surveys: SASI proposals for the 2025-26 academic year are being accepted through March 28 at 4:30pm. The Faculty White Committee's survey on Regular and Substantive Interaction is open until March 4 at 4:30pm, with thanks extended to Andrew Kostakis and his committee. Committee report deadlines have been established, with extensions granted to the Faculty White Committee due to the RSI Qualtrics evaluation. The Rules Committee is currently reviewing bylaws and constitution changes, with a presentation scheduled for the March 20 meeting.

Parental Leave Policy: Progress on policy ensuring faculty and staff don't have to split parental leave. New version with requested changes approved and will go to Policy Committee on March 3

Provost Search Faculty Input: Summarized key concerns identified during the Provost search process. These included Academic Affairs budget mobility, importance of transparency, accessibility

to campus and community members, visible presence on campus, willingness to collaborate with internal stakeholders, need to revise Teaching and Learning Center Support (TLCS), strengthening study abroad programs, reinventing Disability Services, Career Services, and student success initiatives, and improving faculty morale and retention.

Dr. Solie Fott Faculty Senate Leadership Award: Creating a new award with a kaleidoscope trophy. Criteria will include subcommittee excellence, leadership participation, and public representation. Information will be forthcoming for senator nominations.

50th Anniversary: Planning celebration for 50th anniversary of Faculty Senate next year with plans to coordinate with Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) fall meeting at APSU.

4. Associate Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Dr. Sherry Lawdermilt (15 minutes)

Provided a comprehensive update on IT initiatives. She highlighted completed 2024 projects including network infrastructure upgrades, classroom technology improvements, and cost-saving measures with the Avaya phone system. She outlined the Oracle implementation timeline with Finance going live July 1, Budget on September 1, and HR/Payroll on October 1, 2025, with role-specific training to be provided before each phase. A significant Microsoft 365 tenant merge will take place during summer 2025, moving student accounts to the employee tenant while maintaining email forwarding capabilities. Additional projects include Banner Self-Service upgrade, technology for the new Health Professions building, a student printing solution replacement, and the continuation of faculty/staff computer refresh programs.

Q1: Will the new Health Professions building be equipped with new technology?

A1: Classrooms and labs will have new equipment; faculty will bring their existing laptops and monitors.

Q2: Will student email forwarding be maintained?

A2: Yes, forwarding will be set up in both directions (during enrollment and after graduation).

Q3: Is Google Forms access still blocked for student accounts?

A3: Yes, but IT is exploring implementing email sending limits that might allow removing this restriction.

Unfinished Business

1. Policy 2:034 Faculty and Academic Staff Abroad Policy (5 minutes)

Tabled from the previous meeting due to questions about its relationship with Policy 2:068 (Research Security). After consultation, it was confirmed that there was no conflict between the two policies, with the current policy adequately addressing concerns through its statement that "Policies are governed by the symbolism that is some faculty and academic staff rights and responsibilities on the home council." After a brief discussion, the Senate voted to approve the policy as written, with the motion passing with one abstention.

New Business

1. Policies (15 minutes)

a- 2:006 Faculty Professional Development Sabbaticals

Policy revision resulted from collaboration with Dr. Brown and Dr. Cronley to improve the sabbatical experience for faculty. Changes include modified language for clarity regarding eligibility requirements, the establishment of a standing committee structure for sabbatical review

(replacing the previous rotating committee), added a requirement for written feedback from the committee to all applicants, and clarified post-sabbatical presentation requirements. The motion to approve with an amendment to the committee name passed unanimously.

b- 2:017 Development and Operation of Study Abroad Programs

This policy was updated to include study away programs within its scope, along with numerous procedural refinements. Key changes included updated definitions, an increase in the minimum GPA requirement from 2.25 to 2.5, added academic rigor requirements, enhanced evaluation procedures (both standard course and global education evaluations), strengthened pre-departure orientation requirements, and updated travel advisory guidance. The Senate approved two friendly amendments: to spell out the GPA requirement fully and to clarify "home country" as "United States." The motion to approve with these amendments passed unanimously.

c- 2:026 Awarding Honorary Degrees

d- 2:41 University Excused Absences for Students

e- 2:067 Course Continuity Policy

The remaining three policies had minimal changes. Policy 2:026 had no changes. Policy 2:041 updated the title for Dean of Students to Director for Community Care and Standards. Policy 2:067 updated language regarding grade book requirements. A motion to approve all three policies together passed unanimously.

2. APSU Curriculum Committee Report, Dr. Tyler Nolting (10 minutes)

Extensive report covered both the January 27 and February 10 committee meetings. The consent agenda included 139 items such as course number changes, rubric updates, title changes, credit hour adjustments, prerequisite updates, and course deletions. Action items included significant program changes across all colleges.

- College of Arts and Letters had several major modifications, including the restructuring of the English BA program's concentration areas, adding a World History concentration to the History MA, and creating new graduate certificates in Creative Writing, Linguistics, Literature and Literary Criticism, and Technical and Professional Writing.
- College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics made adjustments to Engineering Physics and Physics programs and added a new Graduate Certificate in Actuarial Science.
- College of Education restructured its BS in Education concentrations to align with Tennessee Department of Education requirements and elevated the TESOL concentration to a standalone degree.
- College of Behavioral Health Sciences modified its Strategic Leadership MSL program.
- University College revised its foundational course requirements and added an academic proficiency policy.
- The College of Business introduced a new AI in Business concentration for the MBA program with supporting coursework.

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