

**Austin Peay State University**  
**Faculty Senate**  
**Meeting of Thursday, April 24, 2025**  
**Morgan University Center, Room 307 | 3:00 pm**  
**Minutes**

**Call to Order:** Senate President Dr. Osvaldo Di Paolo Harrison

**Recognition of Guests:** Mike Licari, Maria Cronley, Tucker Brown, Leonard Clemons, Claudia Alonzo, Shahrooz Roohparvar, Sondra Hamilton, Marc Brunner, Kelly Pitts, Mickey Wadia, Scott Shumate, Martina Malvasi, and Deanna Sherry.

**Roll Call of Senators:** Senate Secretary Nancy Gibson

**Absent Senators:** John Blake, McLean Fahnestock, Kristen Hershey, Kathy Heuston, Christina Hicks-Goldston, David Rands, Lori Smith, and David Snyder

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

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

**Remarks**

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

Dr. Licari reported on his participation in the "Plant the Campus Red" event, with volunteers planting approximately 4,000 plants. He provided a state budget update, noting that higher education received only \$17 million of the requested \$40 million for the performance funding formula. In response, THEC approved a tuition range of 0-6.5%, and the Board of Trustees authorized APSU to implement a 5% tuition increase. Dr. Licari mentioned that enrollment continues to hold strong, with orientation sessions now underway. He also noted that THEC recently met with consultants regarding the compensation study, with campus communications to begin next week. Dr. Licari recognized and thanked Dr. Cronley and Dr. Brown for their service, as this would be their last Faculty Senate meeting. He concluded by reaffirming the university's commitment to remaining a welcoming and inclusive institution despite recent policy language changes and an unfriendly political climate for higher education.

2. Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Maria Cronley (10 minutes)

Dr. Cronley acknowledged that this would be her last Faculty Senate meeting as Provost. She reflected on her tenure, highlighting numerous achievements despite beginning her role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key accomplishments include: hiring approximately 150 new faculty; launching 7 new graduate programs and 3 new bachelor's programs; establishing a new university college and three academic centers; re-establishing the Office of Student Research; launching the Center for the Advancement of

Faculty Excellence; creating the first Academic Master Plan; achieving four consecutive years of freshman and graduate admissions growth; reaching record levels of grants and sponsored research (\$52 million portfolio); increasing GA stipends and adjunct pay; updating department RTP criteria; and implementing two-year course scheduling. Dr. Cronley described higher education as a "noble calling" and expressed her commitment to continuing to support an educated citizenry as she prepares to return to a faculty role.

3. Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Leonard Clemons (10 minutes)

Dr. Clemons outlined Student Affairs' organizational structure, which consists of four pillars: Campus Engagement, Belonging and Community, Health and Well-being, and Administration and Finance. He announced that the Morgan University Center and Event Services would transition to Student Affairs on July 1. Recent accomplishments include: opening the new dining hall, achieving 90% residence hall occupancy, launching the Gov's Success Institute (with 95% persistence rate), implementing Handshake for career engagement, and expanding the Little Goves childcare center.

Upcoming initiatives include opening a new food court featuring the largest full-service Chick-fil-A on any Tennessee campus, exploring new housing options to address waitlisted students, and conducting a search for a new Counseling and Health Services Director. Dr. Clemons shared that Student Affairs has hosted over 900 events with 20,000+ attendees, distributed \$610,000 in emergency funds this year, and managed 241 behavioral intervention cases, 184 student conduct cases, and 95 academic misconduct cases.

During Q&A, he addressed concerns about the handling of student misconduct, particularly threatening behaviors, and committed to improve communication with faculty about the resolution of cases. When asked about support for international students with limited summer employment options, Dr. Clemons affirmed that support services including the food pantry, counseling, and health services are available to all students regardless of nationality.

4. Vice President for Finance and Administration/Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Shahrooz Roohparvar (10 minutes)

Dr. Roohparvar and Sondra Hamilton provided information about the approved 5% tuition increase for both undergraduate and graduate students, noting that the five-year average increase had been 2.7%. Mandatory fee increases will total approximately \$25 per student. APSU received approximately \$2.3 million in state appropriations, partially designated for health insurance premiums, with some funds allocated for a 2-6% salary increase. Mark Brunner updated the Senate on capital projects, reporting that APSU requested \$61.5 million over five years, including a proposed \$32 million Military Academic Building. He also noted that the Health Professions Building will be turned over to the university on May 1. During Q&A, Dr. Roohparvar indicated that the compensation study would take a phased approach, with the first phase focusing on bringing salaries up to market minimums, and the second phase addressing inversion and compression issues in the following year.

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

President Di Paolo Harrison announced that the faculty vote on the revised Senate bylaws and constitution was still in progress, with only 75 votes received so far and 270 needed for approval. He encouraged senators to share information about the vote with their colleagues. He also reported that the Employee Appreciation Day had been highly successful, with 500 people attending, and funding for the event would be increased next year.

## **New Business**

1. Faculty Senate Staff Service Award (5 minutes)

The Faculty Senate Staff Service Award was presented to Deanna Sherry, who has dedicated 22 years of service to APSU, working in various positions with the Felix G. Woodward Library since 2003. In her current role as Maker Space Team Lead, she has transformed the library's maker space into a creative hub for students, faculty, staff, and community members. Ms. Sherry manages multiple types of equipment while providing comprehensive instruction on safety measures and techniques. She has established collaborative relationships with numerous campus departments and community organizations, with her nomination highlighting her commitment to "helping people become more confident and able."

2. Dr. Solie Fott Faculty Senate Leadership Award (5 minutes)

The Dr. Solie Fott Faculty Senate Leadership Award was presented to Christina Chester-Fangman. Her contributions include leading a comprehensive study on course caps in 2024, serving as Faculty Senate Secretary for two consecutive years (2015-2017), and leveraging her roles as Archives and Special Collections Librarian and University Records Management and Retention Officer to support faculty governance. The award includes a plaque and a traveling kaleidoscope award, selected in honor of Dr. Fott's collection hobby. Dr. Fott, the founding president of the Faculty Senate in 1975 and a 42-year faculty member, was present at the ceremony and offered brief remarks.

3. RTP P&G Edits, Faculty RTP Policy Committee Chair, Dr. Uma Iyer (5 minutes)

The Senate voted to approve the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Policy and Guidelines edits that had been presented at the previous meeting. No questions were raised about these revisions.

4. Faculty Senate Executive Committee Election Update, Dr. Soma Banerjee (5 minutes)

Dr. Banerjee, on behalf of election committee members Senators Miller and Chaparadza, announced nominations for all vacancies in the upcoming Faculty Senate Executive Committee:

- *Vice President/President-Elect*: Bill Rayburn, Sergei Markov, Darren Michael, and Wes Atkinson

- *Secretary*: Donna Short and Alice Lin
- *Member-at-Large*: Jane Semler and Asit Bandyopadhyay
- *University Curriculum Committee Representative*: Leslie Binford (unopposed)
- *Provost Council Representative*: Uma Iyer (unopposed)
- *Treasurer*: Susan Cockrell (unopposed)

The election will be held on May 1 at 3:00 PM. Per Robert's Rules of Order, elections will only be held for positions with multiple nominees (Vice President/President-Elect, Secretary, and Member-at-Large). For the Vice President/President-Elect position, there will be two rounds of voting if no candidate receives a majority in the first round, with the second round between the top two vote-getters. For Secretary and Member-at-Large, winners will be determined by a simple majority.

Dr. Banerjee emphasized that no nominations would be taken from the floor. Only current voting senators who will continue in 2025-26 (approximately 45 individuals) are eligible to vote. During the voting process, all guests and senators who are rolling off must leave the room. The election committee will bring paper ballots and conduct multiple counts to ensure accuracy. In case of a tie, a re-vote will be conducted.

5. Faculty White Committee Report, Dr. Andrew Kostakis, Dr. Anna Carrie Webb, and Julie Hodges (10 minutes)

The Faculty White Committee presented findings from their study on Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in online teaching. Their web scan of peer institutions revealed that APSU ranks among the top 23.2% in RSI resources. Their faculty survey showed that while 73% of respondents reported attending RSI training, knowledge of compliance requirements varied significantly. Despite knowledge gaps, 88.2% of faculty believed their course design meets RSI standards. The committee identified several improvement areas, including fine-tuning the RSI form, improving training, better reaching part-time faculty, strengthening compliance tracking, and ensuring equity in workload.

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