

Austin Peay State University Faculty Senate

Official Minutes

Meeting of Thursday, April 23, 2026

Morgan University Center (MUC 307) | 3:00 PM

Call to Order

Faculty Senate President Dr. Brandon Di Paolo Harrison called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Recognition of Guests

Guests recognized included President Mike Licari, Provost Mitch Cordova, Associate Vice President Leonard Clemons, Executive Director Kyle Christmas, Faculty Senate Parliamentarian Christina Chester-Fangman, Faculty Senate Past President Ozzie Di Paolo Harrison, Faculty Senate Board of Trustees Representative Nancy Gibson, Soma Banerjee, Ombudsman Mickey Wadia, Associate Vice President and Dean Loretta Griffy, Associate Provost and Dean Chad Brooks, Dr. John Schnettler, and ORSP Assistant Director Kelly Pitts.

Roll Call

Roll was conducted by Senate Vice President/President-elect and Secretary Protem Darren Michael.

Absentees: Asit Bandyopadhyay, Ronnel Berry, Charles Gonzalez, Mahesh Pallikonda, Michelle Robinson, Bettina Shank, Donna Short

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved upon proper motion and second.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the March 26, 2026 Faculty Senate meeting were approved upon proper motion and second.

Awards and Recognitions

Staff Service Award

Kelly Pitts was recognized for outstanding staff service to Austin Peay State University.

Dr. Solie Fott Faculty Senate Leadership Award

Dr. William Rayburn received the Faculty Senate Leadership Award in recognition of exemplary leadership, service, committee work, and longstanding dedication to faculty advocacy and shared governance.

Remarks from University Leadership

President Mike Licari

President Licari:

- Congratulated award recipients.
- Announced upcoming commencement ceremonies on May 8, including expanded graduation scheduling and ROTC commissioning.
- Addressed implementation of new Tennessee state legislation affecting faculty policies.
- Reaffirmed commitment to shared governance, due process protections, and collaborative policy revision.
- Emphasized that interim compliance measures would be revisited in Fall 2026 for broader faculty input.

Provost Mitch Cordova

Provost Cordova:

- Provided detailed updates regarding required revisions to university tenure, disciplinary, and faculty misconduct policies to comply with state law.
- Clarified distinctions between tenure protections and misconduct procedures.
- Outlined review timelines for Policies 1.025, 2.066, and 5.029.

- Announced legal affairs workshops and future faculty governance opportunities.
- Updated Senate on the proposed Honors College creation and University College restructuring.
- Discussed reallocations of degree programs, resource planning, and anticipated implementation timelines.

Associate Vice President of Student Success Leonard Clemons

Vice President Clemons reported:

- Progress toward a public-private partnership for new residence hall construction.
- Development of a new expanded campus food pantry through philanthropic funding.
- Exploration of restructuring existing cultural centers into a unified Community Belonging Center to proactively address student needs and external political pressures.

Kyle Christmas, Executive Director of Accreditation and External Compliance

Mr. Christmas:

- Presented updates on the implementation of the Concourse syllabus platform.
- Introduced discussion regarding institutional syllabus language related to divisive concepts legislation.
- Solicited Senate feedback on proposed university-wide syllabus statement modifications.

Committee Reports

Nominations Committee (Dr. Kathy Heuston)

- Reported completion of nominations for approximately 40 committee positions.
- Encouraged broader faculty participation in future nomination surveys.

University Curriculum Committee (Dr. Leslie Binford)

- Presented year-end summary of curriculum changes.
- Highlighted implementation of CourseDog curriculum management system.
- Reported multiple academic program developments, including healthcare, aviation, and leadership initiatives.

Faculty Handbook Committee (Prof. Christina Chester-Fangman)

- Presented extensive handbook revisions, including:
 - Updated office names and institutional terminology.
 - Revised faculty procedures.
 - Integration of Concourse syllabus requirements.
 - Adjustments to records retention, office hours, and faculty development funding.
- Handbook revisions were approved by motion.

Board of Trustees Report (Nancy Gibson)

- Shared recent policy updates and fee changes.
- Announced new student trustee appointment.
- Reported on institutional capital projects.

Executive Committee Election Update (Dr. Ozzie Di Paolo Harrison)

- Explained nomination and election procedures for upcoming Faculty Senate executive leadership positions.
- Announced timeline for candidate presentations and voting.

Special Announcements

- A moment of silence was observed in memory of Dr. Follett, inaugural Faculty Senate President.
- Christina Chester-Fangman was congratulated on appointment as Interim Director of the Library.
- Senate leadership expressed appreciation for participation in the Faculty Senate 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Adjournment

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Darren Michael

Secretary Pro-tem, Faculty Senate

Austin Peay State University