

Academic Faculty Senate (2025-2026) Meeting MINUTES 04/17/26; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Academic Senate	Call to order at 1:35 pm	ZOOM
Members Present	Eric York (Chair)	Present
	Jessica Rowe (Vice Chair)	Present
	Jaspreet Gill (Senator Carson)	Present
	Brigitte Dillet (Senator Fallon/Douglas)	Present
	Vacant (NAH Senator)	Absent
	Curtis Kupferschmid (Senator LA 1)	Present
	Christian Copley Salem (Senator LA 2)	Present
	Mary Gillespie (Senator LA 3)	Present
	Patrick Bell (Senator WCTE/Recorder)	Present
	Jacob Council (Senator Adjunct Carson)	Present
	Kelsey Penrose (Senator Adjunct Fallon/Douglas)	Present
	Martin Schmidt (Past Chair)	Present
	Members Absent	NAH senator position vacant.
Guests	R. Belbin, M. Duley, J. Downs, R. Bassen, R. Bevans, K. Strain, M. Williams, A. Price, A Olson, M. Williams, M. Gillespi, S. Priest, J. Coverston, Winnie K., E. Tattersall	

Agenda Topic	1. Call to Order
Action Taken	Time: 1:35 pm

Agenda Topic	2. Roll Call
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Agenda Topic	3. Executive Updates (M. Duley)
Action Taken	Info
	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The executive update highlighted ongoing planning for the upcoming year, including broader strategic planning efforts. Faculty are encouraged to participate in a review of the draft plan on April 24th from 10:00 a.m. to noon at Carson Nugget Hall. The institution is also launching a marketing campaign aimed at adult learners. Additionally, field trip procedures have been distributed, and planning is underway for Employee, Teaching, and Nurse Week celebrations scheduled for the first full week of May.

Agenda Topic	4. Faculty consultation group with L&I (R. Belbin)
Action Taken	Discussion:
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion: This group is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate open, two-way communication • Provide faculty perspectives on L & I services, systems, and student support initiatives • Share information about divisional priorities, changes, and innovations • Identify opportunities to improve student success • Increase faculty awareness of available services and resources • Improve the usability and effectiveness of divisional offerings • Build trust and collaboration between faculty and L & I support units • Highlight issues early before they become systemic challenges <p>The Senate discussed the creation of a Learning and Innovation Consultation Group, proposed by Ron B., as a collaborative forum between faculty and the Learning and Innovation department. The group is intended to strengthen communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding, while supporting initiatives such as OER use and improving awareness of services and resources.</p> <p>It was emphasized that the group would not be a decision-making body, but rather a space for dialogue, consultation, and sharing updates on projects, priorities, and faculty needs. The structure would involve shared participation, with Ron B. facilitating meetings, and processes would allow for immediate faculty concerns to be addressed as they arise.</p> <p>The group is positioned as a proactive mechanism to enhance communication, address issues early, and build stronger partnerships between faculty and Learning and Innovation.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron: Solicit members for the new Learning and Innovation Consultation Group and coordinate with Eric/Chair for notification to faculty. <p>Motion: Approval to support the formation of the Learning and Innovation consultation group to promote communication and collaboration with faculty and learning and innovation.</p> <p>Motion to Approve: Curtis K.</p> <p>Second: B. Dillet</p> <p>Approval: Unanimously</p> <p>Abstained: None</p>

Agenda Topic	5. Approval of Minutes (March)
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Action Taken	Action
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion: None</p> <p>Motion: Approval of March 2026 meeting minutes</p> <p>Motion to Approve: Curtis K.</p> <p>Second: J. Gill</p> <p>Approval: Unanimously</p> <p>Abstained: None</p>

Agenda Topic	6. Elections (J. Downs)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p>J. Downs shared results of senate election. The elected Vice Chair is Patrick Bell. All senate seats ran unopposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Patrick Bell • Carson Campus Senator: Winnie Kortemeier • Fallon/Douglas Senator: Jolene Coverston • LAS Senators: Brigitte Dillet and Scott Morrison • NAH Senator: Michael Coudriet • WCTE Senator: James Spiker

Agenda Topic	7. Policies – First Reading
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p>a. 3-3-2 CTE College Credit: Proposed to retire, content rolled into 3-3-5 Discussion: Proposed policy to be retired as contents will be rolled over into policy 3-3-5. No significant changes, just titles and contact information.</p> <p>b. 3-3-5 Credit for Prior Learning: Technical changes only Discussion: The Senate discussion on the credit for prior learning (CPL) policy centered on concerns about student preparation, advising, and the scope of the policy itself.</p> <p>K. Penrose (Adjunct Senator Fallon/Douglas) requested postponing further discussion to consult with administration, emphasizing the need for clearer guidance on how students are counseled when accepting CPL. A key concern was that students may miss essential foundational skills—particularly in areas like college-level writing—if they receive</p>

credit based on prior coursework (e.g., AP or dual enrollment). Penrose advocated for policy language ensuring students are fully informed of potential gaps and have the option to decline CPL in favor of taking the full course.

Discussion also addressed student placement processes. Jessica R. confirmed that placement exams like Accuplacer are no longer required, with placement now based on a combination of prior academic performance and evaluation. While some members expressed confidence that existing systems adequately support student readiness, others suggested that concerns about preparation may be better addressed through counseling and admissions rather than policy changes.

Other members noted that many aspects of CPL, including exams and credit decisions, are determined at the system (NSHE) level and fall outside the Faculty Senate's direct authority. Eric Y. clarified that the current discussion was extending beyond policy review into broader placement practices, which are handled through multiple measures such as coursework, grades, standardized tests, and advising—not a single policy. He agreed to bring feedback forward to the College Council.

Overall, the group expressed support for stronger advising clarity and transparency, particularly around CPL decisions, while recognizing that many concerns relate to broader, system-level policies. Penrose requested that the issue return as a future agenda item, with potential additions to policy language ensuring students are adequately prepared and clearly directed to relevant placement policies.

c. 3-4-1 Admission Registration Grades and Examinations: Alignment with Board Policy

Discussion: Edits to align with NSHE board policy.

d. 11-3-18: Hazard Communication Program (K. Strain, Amelia O.):

Discussion: The Senate reviewed an update to the Hazard Communication Policy, which had not been revised since 2008. The policy outlines procedures for the safe handling, labeling, storage, and

communication of hazardous chemicals on campus, in alignment with OSHA regulations. It affirms that supervisors and directors are responsible for ensuring employees understand workplace hazards, chemicals are properly labeled, safety data sheets (SDS) are current and accessible, and that staff receive regular, required training.

A key update includes the work of newly hired chemist A. Olsen, who is supporting chemical safety efforts by organizing inventories, updating SDS binders, improving labeling and signage, and reducing unnecessary materials. The policy also incorporates Global Harmonization (GHS) standards, including standardized hazard symbols and clear usage instructions. SDS information must remain readily accessible to employees, students, and the public, with physical binders recommended to ensure access when digital systems may not be available.

Discussion included clarification requests, such as spelling out acronyms and confirming access to SDS materials. No objections were raised to the policy content, and it will move forward to College Council for further review.

Overall, the update reinforces compliance, improves chemical safety practices, and highlights ongoing efforts to strengthen both procedural and physical safety measures across campus.

11-2-1: Emergency Preparedness Operations and Recovery (M. Williams): Updates include hazardous materials labeling, contractor requirements, safety data sheets, PPE, and supervisory responsibilities.

Discussion: (Matt Williams) Emergency management policy has been updated to clarify emergency response plan. Signed by K. Dalpe, discussed in College Council. Applicable to all departments and clarifies departmental responsibilities. Annual review of department plans.

Additional safety concerns emerged, particularly regarding campus facilities. Questions were raised about door-locking mechanisms, especially for outward-opening doors that may not automatically secure.

Facilities representatives agreed to investigate

	improvements, including potential manual locking systems and coordination with campus police on enhanced safety measures. Alarm system options were also discussed as a possible supplement to existing safety infrastructure.
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Agenda Topic	8. Special Course Fee Changes
Action Taken	Possible Action
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>All new Nursing course fees (\$90, 22 courses) except for NURS 129, 130: Implementation of these fees will provide comprehensive access to a study aid that reinforces educational content, provides skill practice and competency tracking, and assists students in preparing for the NCLEX. Implementing these fees will a) ensure students no longer have to make large lump sum payments to the vendor at the beginning of each semester; b) allow the fee to be attached to the college charges so that Financial Aid funding can be applied; provide students with access to the WNC payment plan options if funding is an issue; remove the need for individual students to navigate/coordinate with a 3rd party vendor; and ensure all students have access to the materials at the beginning of each semester with no delay in accessing critical course content. Multiple other courses have continuation of temporarily reduced fees.</i></p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Senate discussed a proposal to increase nursing program fees, primarily to fund the campus-wide implementation of ATI test-preparation software. The proposed fee structure includes charges of up to \$90 per credit, exceeding the previously approved \$50 threshold (which allowed for inflation-based adjustments). • Supporters explained that the new model would shift costs from students paying out of pocket to a centralized fee, ultimately reducing overall student expenses and allowing the cost to be covered by financial aid. The software is intended to be fully integrated across all nursing courses, supporting assessments and learning activities while also helping programs collect data required by the Nevada Board of Nursing. • Concerns were raised about the cost and past inconsistency in software use. R. Bassen questioned whether the tool had been used effectively by all faculty and suggested gathering student feedback on its value. A. Price acknowledged prior inconsistencies but emphasized that the software is now more consistently embedded in coursework. Questions were also raised about whether students enrolled in

	<p>multiple nursing courses would face repeated fees, though it was noted that costs would still be lower than previous out-of-pocket expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional discussion addressed potential impacts on student enrollment and competitiveness with other institutions. While some expressed that higher fees could deter students, Eric Y. noted that students were already incurring similar or higher costs independently, and the new structure improves affordability through financial aid eligibility. • It was also noted that some students had not recently paid for the software due to temporary grant funding, which is no longer guaranteed. Broader comparisons with other NSHE institutions and the possibility of future software alternatives were briefly discussed, with an emphasis on balancing cost, effectiveness, and program needs. • Following discussion, the motion to approve the fee increase was passed. <p>Motion: Motion to Approve nursing fee increase Motion to Approve: Curtis K. Second: Patrick B. Approval: Unanimously Abstained: None</p>
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Agenda Topic	9. Senate Bylaws (J. Downs, B. Dillet)
Action Taken	Discussion/Possible Action (J. Downs, B. Dillet)
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Senate reviewed and discussed updates to the Faculty Senate bylaws, focusing on clarifying roles, responsibilities, and document management. Proposed revisions included establishing a clear, centralized location for bylaws and Senate records, as well as defining who is responsible for maintaining and enforcing them. • It was agreed that the Senate recorder will manage the Faculty Senate website and be responsible for archiving agendas, minutes, and related documents to ensure consistent access to current materials. Additionally, the group discussed assigning bylaw enforcement to the Vice Chair, who would serve in a parliamentary role to ensure procedures are followed. • Other discussion points included potential changes to the number of Senate representatives, the need for a

	<p>fully updated and accessible bylaws document, and clarification of processes related to tenure and emergency hires. The group reaffirmed that any bylaw revisions must follow the formal approval process, requiring both Senate approval and a vote by the full faculty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the conversation emphasized improving clarity, accountability, and organization in how the Faculty Senate operates and maintains its governing documents. <p>Motion: No action at this time Motion to Approve: Second: Approval: Abstained:</p>
Agenda Topic	10. Faculty Senate Climate Survey (E. York)
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Senate discussed how to interpret and share results from a recent faculty senate climate survey, which had a limited response rate of 20 participants. Initial feedback suggested that faculty remain committed to students and the institution, but there are notable concerns about gaps in communication, shared governance, and top-down decision-making from administration. • A central focus of the discussion was how to share survey results while protecting anonymity, particularly regarding open-ended comments that could inadvertently identify respondents. While some members supported broad transparency and sharing results with all faculty, others emphasized the need to first review and contextualize the data within the Senate. There was general agreement that a summary of key themes would be the most appropriate way to communicate findings while minimizing risk. • The group considered using AI tools to help analyze and synthesize survey responses. Christian C. volunteered to lead this effort and the Senate approved a motion to continue the discussion until a summary report is developed and reviewed at a future meeting. The FS executive members may also assist in preparing this summary. • Additional considerations included potentially sharing results through a faculty-only access folder, though concerns were raised about maintaining restricted

	<p>access. There was also interest in comparing the results to broader college-wide survey data to inform strategic planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the Senate agreed to delay broader dissemination until a thoughtful, anonymized summary is completed, ensuring the results are both useful and responsibly shared. <p>Motion: Continue analysis of the survey to develop a summary document to be reviewed by faculty senate prior to the next faculty senate meeting.</p> <p>Motion to Approve: K. Penrose</p> <p>Second: C. Copley Salem</p> <p>Approval: Unanimously</p> <p>Abstained: None</p> <p>Next steps: Have executive council to work with AI to develop a summary of results for comparison (executive council: Chair, Vice Chair, Recorder, previous chair)</p>
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Agenda Topic	11. Proposed Faculty Senate 26-27 Meeting Calendar (E York)										
Action Taken	Possible Action										
Summary of Discussion	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>8/21/2026</td> <td>9/18/2026</td> <td>10/16/2026</td> <td>11/20/2026</td> <td>12/18/2026</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1/29/2027</td> <td>2/19/2027</td> <td>3/19/2027</td> <td>4/16/2027</td> <td>5/21/2027</td> </tr> </table> <p>Discussion: No discussion</p> <p>Motion: No action taken</p> <p>Motion to Approve:</p> <p>Second:</p> <p>Approval:</p> <p>Abstained:</p>	8/21/2026	9/18/2026	10/16/2026	11/20/2026	12/18/2026	1/29/2027	2/19/2027	3/19/2027	4/16/2027	5/21/2027
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Agenda Topic	12. NFA Updates (H. Reardon)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather R. briefly discussed updates related to NFA contract negotiations, noting that they are currently waiting on salary and workload articles from leadership before further review or action can take place. • The conversation also connected contract issues to

	<p>Faculty Senate bylaws and PDC (Professional Development Committee) processes, particularly regarding emergency hires transitioning into full-time positions. Concerns were raised that allowing such hires at the discretion of the president could bypass or weaken the traditional faculty search process for permanent positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that these procedures are already addressed within the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and PDC processes, suggesting that including them in the bylaws may be redundant or unnecessary. • Overall, the discussion highlighted a need for clarity and alignment between contract language, existing governance processes, and bylaws, while awaiting further details from leadership on key contract provisions.
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Agenda Topic	13. Chair Report (Eric York)
Action Taken	Info/Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Chair’s report, Eric Y. discussed emerging system-level conversations about implementing 90-credit bachelor’s degrees, particularly at GBC, and the potential implications for existing programs such as WNC’s traditional Project Management bachelor’s degree. • Concerns were raised that reducing credit requirements could dilute the academic rigor and perceived value of a bachelor’s degree, as well as create conflicts or competition between institutions offering differing degree structures. • Eric Y. noted that he will share guidance from the NSHE Vice Chancellor on this issue. Overall, the Senate emphasized the importance of ensuring that individual institutions have a voice in these decisions, given their potential impact on program quality, alignment, and institutional identity.

Agenda Topic	14. Old Business
Action Taken	Discussion:
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Agenda Topic	15. Faculty Open Discussion
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Action Taken	Faculty are welcome to openly discuss issues involving the institution.
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The open discussion focused on low-cost/no-cost course materials, particularly in response to system-level messaging from NSHE and requirements under AB 345, which mandates that institutions clearly identify courses using OER or low-cost materials. • The Enrollment Committee emphasized a strategy of promoting affordable course options, including OER, to support student access and reduce costs. However, faculty raised concerns about the potential impact on academic freedom, particularly the ability to choose appropriate textbooks and instructional materials without undue pressure. • Additional concerns centered on compliance expectations, including deadlines for submitting textbook information. Some faculty noted that delays could lead to punitive consequences, raising questions about fairness and feasibility. • Overall, there was agreement that these issues—balancing affordability, compliance, and academic freedom—should be more fully discussed within Faculty Senate, ensuring faculty voice and shared governance in how such policies are implemented.

Agenda Topic	16. New Business
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Agenda Topic	17. Public Comment
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

Agenda Topic	Adjournment
Action Taken	<p>Motion: Adjourn meeting Motion to adjourn: Unanimous consent Second: Unanimously Adjourned at 4:44 pm</p>
Comments/Information	Submitted by Patrick Bell, Recorder