

Academic Faculty Senate (2025-2026) Meeting MINUTES 02/20/26; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Academic Senate	Call to order at 1:31 pm	ZOOM																								
Members Present	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Eric York (Chair)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Jessica Rowe (Vice Chair)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Jaspreet Gill (Senator Carson)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Brigitte Dillet (Senator Fallon/Douglas) Proxy Present (Tim Mayo)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Heather Reardon (NAH Senator)</td><td>Absent</td></tr> <tr><td>Curtis Kupferschmid (Senator LA 1)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Christian Copley Salem (Senator LA 2)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Mary Gillespie (Senator LA 3)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Patrick Bell (Senator WCTE/Recorder)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Jacob Council (Senator Adjunct Carson)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Kelsey Penrose (Senator Adjunct Fallon/Douglas)</td><td>Present</td></tr> <tr><td>Martin Schmidt (Past Chair)</td><td>Present</td></tr> </table>		Eric York (Chair)	Present	Jessica Rowe (Vice Chair)	Present	Jaspreet Gill (Senator Carson)	Present	Brigitte Dillet (Senator Fallon/Douglas) Proxy Present (Tim Mayo)	Present	Heather Reardon (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
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Guests	Rachelle Bassen, Margaret Craig, Rebecca Bevans, Elizabeth Tattersall, JW Lazzari, Chelsie Hamtak, Victor Navarro, Jeff Downs, Winnie Kortemeier, Coral Lopez, Jolene C., Kim D.																									

Agenda Topic	1. Call to Order
Action Taken	Time: 1:30 pm

Agenda Topic	2. Roll Call
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Agenda Topic	3. Executive Updates (Dr. K. Dalpe)
Action Taken	Info
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not completed this meeting.

Agenda Topic	4. Approval of Minutes (January)
Action Taken	Action
Summary of Discussion	Discussion: None Motion: Approval of January 2026 meeting minutes Motion to Approve: Curtis K. Second: J. Gill Approval: Unanimously

	Abstained: J. Rowe, Tim M. (proxy)
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Agenda Topic	5. Faculty consultation group with L&I (R. Belbin)
Action Taken	Discussion:
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ron B. not able to attend. Postponed until next FS.

Agenda Topic	6. Credit for Prior Learning (JW Lazzari. C. Hamtak)
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion: The discussion focused on two main agenda items: ICE protocols and credit for prior learning (CPL) policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICE Protocols: JW and Chelsie H. discussed the ICE protocols, emphasizing that faculty and staff should contact University Police if ICE agents visit campus, and outlined the chain of contacts. A handout/guide will be provide to WNC via email (not available on the website). Credit for Prior Learning Process Document: The discussion focused on the development of a Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) process document, which will guide the evaluation of student certifications and course equivalencies. JW explained that the document will include crosswalks and reference tables to streamline updates to equivalencies. This structure is intended to allow for more efficient processing of CPL requests without requiring students to complete extensive or duplicative steps. The group also reviewed the broader CPL policy, which is designed to consolidate existing credit transfer processes into a single, comprehensive policy aligned with Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) standards. The new CPL policy will replace the current Challenge Exam Policy (Policy 335), which will be removed. JW and Chelsie are available at any time to answer questions.

Agenda Topic	7. Policy Updates First Reading
Action Taken	First Reading/Possible Action

Summary of Discussion

a. 3-3-5 Challenge Exams (JW Lazzari. C. Hamtak)

This policy is being rewritten to reflect current process, by removing challenge exam policy and replacing with credit for prior learning policy. It is easy to communicate, and the goal of the updates is to attract the adult population.

Discussion: See JW/Chelsey discussion credit for prior learning policy in item 6.

Motion: Approval policy 3-3-5 to be replace with credit for prior learning policy.

Motion to Approve: J. Rowe

Second: Patrick B.

Approval: Unanimously

Abstained: None

b. 4-2-1 Equal Opportunities (V. Navarro)

Updates are being made to be in compliance with federal executive order

Discussion: The discussion centered on reviewing technical revisions the 4-2-1 policy to ensure compliance with federal and state law, particularly alignment with requirements from the Office of Civil Rights. Victor Navarro explained that the updates involved removing outdated terminology, renaming titles, and revising definitions for clarity and compliance purposes. He emphasized that no substantive changes were made to the policy's content.

A senator raised concern about access to the updated version of the document and whether members had sufficient time to review it prior to approval. It was clarified that Eric Y. had distributed a copy, but the version shared did not visibly highlight the revisions because the PDF formatting removed the tracked changes, even though the edits were included. Victor N. indicated that similar technical updates may be forthcoming and suggested improving communication about document revisions in the future to ensure transparency and adequate review time. After discussion and review, Faculty Senate members agreed the revisions were technical rather than substantive.

Motion: Approval policy 4-2-1

Motion to Approve: K. Penrose

Second: J. Council

Approval: Unanimously

Abstained: None

	<p>c. 7-2-1 Travel (C. Lopez)</p> <p><i>Updates to the travel policy include requiring a spend authorization for instate travel. This brings WNC in line with what the other NSHE schools are doing.</i></p> <p>Discussion: Coral Lopez presented updates to the Travel Policy, highlighting several technical and procedural revisions. The most significant change affects Section 1 regarding in-state travel, which will now require employees to obtain approval from their immediate supervisor prior to travel. The primary purpose of this change is to ensure the institution is aware of when and where employees are traveling for emergency response purposes, while also improving budget tracking and reporting. It was noted that although the added approval step may slow some processes, it strengthens oversight and accountability.</p> <p>Additional updates included improved organization and flow of the policy document, updated links, and minor cleanup revisions to the out-of-state travel section. Both revised policies were approved without further discussion. The segment concluded with a note that Rachelle would present NFL updates in the next portion of the meeting.</p> <p>Motion: Approval policy 7-2-1 Motion to Approve: Curtis K. Second: Mary G. Approval: Unanimously Abstained: None</p>
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Agenda Topic	8. NFA Updates (R. Bassen, H. Reardon)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p>Discussion:</p> <p>Rachelle B. provided an update on faculty contract negotiations and raised concerns about significant nursing faculty departures, noting that only two full-time nursing faculty members remain. She reported that Winnie K. has stepped in to assist with contract review processes and that Stacey Walters from CSN has joined the bargaining team, reflecting cross-institutional collaboration among four colleges currently engaged in negotiations.</p> <p>Key priorities in bargaining include securing arbitration rights and ensuring faculty receive equal COLA increases in alignment with other state employees, particularly classified staff.</p>

	<p>Although arbitration was rejected in the first round by state attorneys, the team plans to continue advocating for it as a means of avoiding costly lawsuits. Final COLA determinations will require approval from the state legislature.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about vague contract language, particularly related to employee evaluations and the receipt of completed evaluation reports. Rachelle B. emphasized the need for clearer faculty expectations. The departure of H. Reardon to another institution further underscored staffing instability within the nursing program.</p> <p>Faculty input is being actively solicited through emails and a faculty climate survey, including outreach to nursing faculty. Survey results are intended to guide bargaining priorities, particularly around faculty needs such as stipends and working conditions.</p>
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Agenda Topic	9. Chair Report (Eric York)
Action Taken	Info/Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p>Eric Y. discussed several institutional updates related to IT security, employee benefits, and system-level governance issues.</p> <p>IT and Email Security: Eric provided an update on IT initiatives aimed at addressing ongoing challenges with Outlook email. There is growing concern about the magnitude and sophistication of attacks on the institution’s email system, including spam and AI-related phishing threats. IT is exploring the potential purchase of a customer management system (CMS) that would create an additional interface for screening external emails to enhance security. The group also continued discussing whether all students should be issued WNC email accounts. While this could improve communication and consistency, there are significant concerns about security risks and the added burden of managing an additional 4,000–5,000 accounts.</p> <p>Health Insurance Premium Increases: The Senate discussed the potential for substantial increases in health insurance premiums through PEBP, with projections indicating increases of up to 80% in some scenarios. Eric shared information from a board member explaining that the projected increases are largely due to reserves falling below federally mandated minimum levels. Possible strategies to mitigate premium spikes include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing out-of-pocket costs to offset premium increases. • Phasing in premium increases over a longer period to rebuild reserves gradually. <p>The most likely outcome appears to be a phased premium increase designed to restore required reserve levels. Contact information for a board member was made available for those seeking additional details.</p> <p>Board of Regents and Presidential Appointment Policy: Eric also updated the Senate on a recent agenda item at the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents meeting concerning the appointment of the acting president at Nevada State University. Under current NSHE policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting presidents serve in temporary roles and may not apply for the permanent position. • Interim presidents, however, are eligible to apply. <p>The BOR agenda item proposed a deviation from existing policy to allow the acting president to apply for the permanent position. Concerns were raised that such a deviation could undermine shared governance practices and limit broader institutional collaboration. It was noted that a majority of NSU faculty appeared to oppose the proposed change, viewing it as an attempt to bypass established policy safeguards. Ultimately, the motion was tabled.</p>
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Agenda Topic	10. Old Business
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p>a. Faculty Climate Survey</p> <p>The discussion focused extensively on the Faculty Senate (FS) Climate Survey, including its distribution, administration, and concerns about anonymity.</p> <p>Amy G. confirmed that the FS climate survey will be administered through Evaluation Kit, the same platform used for course evaluations, which provides strong anonymity protections. She emphasized that responses are fully anonymous, individual data cannot be accessed by administrators or others, and only aggregated results will be</p>

	<p>reported. Although respondents will enter an NSHE ID to prevent duplicate submissions, the software separates identifying information from survey responses to maintain confidentiality.</p> <p>Senators raised concerns about faculty hesitation to participate due to privacy fears. In response, it was reiterated that the system is secure and suggested including background information about Evaluation Kit’s anonymity safeguards when distributing the survey to reassure faculty. There were also reports that a previous survey had gone to spam folders, prompting the group to agree on sending reminders to ensure broad participation.</p> <p>The Faculty Senate climate survey will be separate from the strategic planning survey previously released by IRE, which contained different questions. The group discussed the possibility of offering paper surveys; however, concerns were raised that paper responses could compromise anonymity and cannot be integrated into the electronically aggregated results. As a result, the survey will remain fully electronic.</p> <p>The Senate agreed to move forward with distributing the FS survey as soon as possible, given high faculty interest. The survey will remain open for approximately two weeks, with Amy sending three reminder emails during that period. Because of development and response timelines, results may not be available by the next regular meeting; Eric suggested holding a special meeting to review aggregated results once they are ready.</p> <p>Motion: To send out the FS climate survey as soon as possible (2 weeks to develop, 2 weeks for responses) Motion to Approve: J. Rowe Second: Christian C. Approval: Unanimously Abstained: None</p>
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Agenda Topic	11. Direction of Faculty Senate Chairship
Action Taken	Action

<p>Summary of Discussion</p>	<p>Discussion: Faculty Senate Leadership and Bylaws</p> <p>Jessica clarified the succession process for the Faculty Senate (FS) chair position. In accordance with the bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order, Eric had been elected to complete a single-year term completing Martin S. two-year appointment after exiting after year 1 . As current vice chair, Jessica will assume the role of chair in May when Eric’s term concludes. It was emphasized that this is a procedural matter dictated by the bylaws and not an action item requiring a vote.</p> <p>Additional leadership updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing revisions to the Faculty Senate bylaws, with Jeffrey working alongside Brigitte to better align the document with current practices. • Recognition and appreciation expressed for Eric’s service during his interim year as chair. • A vice chair election to be held once Jessica assumes the chair role. • Upcoming elections for new senators in divisions where representatives have completed their two-year terms. • Clarification regarding adjunct (part-time) senators, with a suggestion that adjunct representatives not be assigned to specific campuses.
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<p>Agenda Topic</p>	<p>12. Faculty Open Discussion</p>
<p>Action Taken</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
<p>Summary of Discussion</p>	<p><i>Faculty are welcome to openly discuss issues involving the institution.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Roles and Communication: Elizabeth T. clarified her role as Lead Faculty for Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and followed up with an email to ensure colleagues understood the scope and responsibilities of her position. • Snow Day Policies and Remote Instruction: Faculty discussed snow day procedures and whether instructors may independently shift classes to remote delivery without formal administrative guidance. Concerns were raised about inconsistent messaging from the college during weather-related closures. A request was made for greater faculty input in developing and communicating snow day messaging to ensure clarity and consistency.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICE-Related Concerns and Campus Safety: Faculty discussed concerns related to potential ICE presence on or near campus, particularly the possibility of faculty being placed in situations involving law enforcement. It was noted that such concerns have been more prominent in southern regions, but faculty were encouraged to review the institutional guidance flier and direct specific legal or procedural questions to appropriate administrative sources. A request was made to place the ICE process on a future Faculty Senate agenda, particularly in connection with long-standing concerns about the ability to lock classroom doors. This safety issue has been raised repeatedly over the past decade. • PEBP Insurance Premium Documentation: A question was raised regarding documentation supporting the proposed increases in PEBP insurance premiums. Members were asked to forward any relevant documentation to the Chair, Vice Chair, or Recorder for distribution to faculty. • Strategic Planning: Availability requests will be sent out to schedule strategic planning meetings, including Zoom options. Efforts will be made to accommodate as many faculty as possible. The stated goal is to produce a strategic plan document that is clear, concise, and accessible. • Request for Agenda Item: Kelsey P. requested the opportunity to draft a formal discussion item for Faculty Senate consideration and asked that Facilities representatives attend the meeting when the issue is discussed.
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Agenda Topic	12. New Business
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	No new business

Agenda Topic	14. Public Comment
Action Taken	Info

Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Opportunity for faculty to bring forward concerns, questions, or suggestions for future agenda items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public comment
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Agenda Topic	Adjournment
Action Taken	<p>Motion: Adjourn meeting Motion to adjourn: Adjourned by unanimous consent Second: Adjourned by unanimous consent Unanimously Adjourned at 3:42 pm</p>
Comments/Information	Submitted by Patrick Bell, Recorder