

Academic Faculty Senate (2025-2026) Meeting MINUTES 01/16/26; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

<b>Academic Senate</b>	<b>Call to order at 1:31 pm</b>	<b>ZOOM</b>
<b>Members Present</b>	Eric York (Chair)	Present
	Jessica Rowe (Vice Chair) Proxy Present (Jolene Coverston)	Present
	Jaspreet Gill (Senator Carson)	Present
	Brigitte Dillet (Senator Fallon/Douglas)	Present
	Heather Reardon (NAH Senator)	Present
	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
<b>Members Absent</b>		
<b>Guests</b>	Kyle Dalpe, Ron Belbin, Rachelle Bassen, Margaret Craig, Scott Morrison, Josue Pacheco, Rebecca Bevans, Jeff Downs, Elizabeth Tattersall	

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>1. Call to Order</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Time: 1:31 pm

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>2. Roll Call</b>
---------------------	---------------------

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>3. Executive Updates (Dr. K. Dalpe)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info
	<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Dalpe providing executive updates. He discussed the search for an interim director for liberal arts and sciences, ongoing interviews, and the potential for a student fee increase.</li> <li>• Dr. Dalpe expressed support for a 9% student fee increase, phased in over three years, to address rising costs and sustain improvements at WNC.</li> <li>• With WNC relying primarily on state funding and student fees, a longer three-year phase-in was preferred over two years.</li> <li>• The Board of Regents will make the final decision on any student fee increase.</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>4. Student Survey Results (Ron Belbin)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Spring 2025 Student Engagement Survey gathered student feedback on demographics, enrollment status, learning modalities, and overall satisfaction at WNC.</li> <li>• The survey explored students’ sense of belonging, connection to the campus community, and the importance of feeling supported by peers, faculty, and staff.</li> <li>• Results also focused on academic engagement, including students’ motivation, classroom experiences, perceptions of instructor care, and access to academic support.</li> <li>• Additionally, students shared preferences for college activities and events, along with open-ended feedback on what is missing or could better support their success and overall experience at WNC.</li> <li>• The survey had nearly 500 respondents and revealed high satisfaction among students, with 90% reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with their college experience.</li> <li>• Students felt connected to the college community, valued clear instructions and communication from instructors, and found it easy to get help when needed.</li> <li>• The survey results highlighted the importance of instructors in fostering a sense of belonging among students.</li> <li>• The survey results will be shared with WNC faculty and staff.</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>5. Approval of Minutes (November)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Action
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><b>Discussion:</b> Correction made to spelling of Elizabeth Tattersall’s last name.</p> <p><b>Motion:</b> Approval of December 2025 meeting minutes  <b>Motion to Approve:</b> Curtis K.  <b>Second:</b> Jacob C.  <b>Approval:</b> Unanimously  <b>Abstained:</b> None</p>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>6. Policy/Bylaws Revisions</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	First Reading/Possible Action
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p><i>a. Policy 7-2-1-1_ Student Team or Group Travel</i>  <i>Some concerns with definitions between field trip and travel (no change). Clearly defined in policy. Minor revisions in punctuation.</i></p> <p><b>Motion:</b> Approval policy 7-2-1-1  <b>Motion to Approve:</b> B. Dillet  <b>Second:</b> Curtis K.  <b>Approval:</b> Unanimously  <b>Abstained:</b> None</p> <p><i>b. Culture of the Campus Committee Bylaws</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion: Culture of the Campus Committee focuses on the culture of the entire college community. Still looking for members for next year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion:</b> Approval Culture of the Campus Committee Bylaws (no edits or modifications proposed)  <b>Motion to Approve:</b> B. Dillet  <b>Second:</b> Curtis K.  <b>Approval:</b> Unanimously  <b>Abstained:</b> None</p> <p><i>c. Enrollment Management Committee Bylaws</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Enrollment Management Committee, led by Rebecca B. and co-chaired by JW, has been operating for four years following an accreditation recommendation to address enrollment challenges and improve student access to services.</li> <li>• The committee reports to the president, with Kyle providing agenda topics, and focuses on analyzing enrollment data, identifying trends, collaborating with marketing, and streamlining processes through cross-departmental collaboration.</li> <li>• Membership includes directors, faculty, and staff from a range of departments; while each director’s area is represented, not all directors are required to attend every meeting.</li> <li>• The committee’s work includes data-driven initiatives such as student satisfaction analysis, recently presented by Ron B., and the finalization of committee bylaws drafted by Rebecca and edited by Kyle.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee does not address curriculum or instructional issues. Concerns related to course readiness, prerequisites, or student preparedness—such as dual credit students entering courses without adequate skill levels—were redirected to appropriate channels, including division directors, the curriculum committee, or the counseling office.</li> <li>• A senator raised concerns about college and career readiness and recommended requiring placement testing for dual credit students; was advised consulting with the director of Academic Advising and Access for guidance on enrollment prerequisites and placement policies.</li> <li>• Administrative items discussed included proposing minimum faculty representation on the committee and clarifying the length of committee assignments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion:</b> Approval Enrollment Management Committee Bylaws (recommended faculty members serve a two-year staggered term rather than one-year term).</p> <p><b>Motion to Approve:</b> B. Dillet</p> <p><b>Second:</b> Mary G.</p> <p><b>Approval:</b> Unanimous</p> <p><b>Abstained:</b> None</p>
--	---

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>7. NFA Updates (R. Bassen, H. Reardon)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bargaining has resumed using proposals similar to last year, requiring negotiations to restart.</li> <li>• Key issues include proposed changes to grievance definitions and processes, potential revisions to tenure-track procedures—specifically concerns about removing the PDC review and expanding presidential authority—and ongoing faculty hiring practices.</li> <li>• Rachelle B. reported that a faculty survey is being developed to support stronger protections and compensation, and faculty input will be sought to respond to proposed hiring and tenure changes.</li> <li>• Concerns were also raised about the lack of clear pathways to tenure for long-term emergency hires and the need for better tracking and role clarity for non-tenure and emergency positions in Workday.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rachelle B. and Jeff D. offered to assist with facilitating communication on these issues, and Heather requested support reviewing bargaining proposals due to workload.</li> <li>• Updates on NFA negotiations highlighted that while many proposals mirror last year's, contentious areas remain around grievance policies and tenure processes.</li> <li>• Additionally, the importance of identifying available funding sources to ensure contract proposals remain fiscally viable was emphasized.</li> </ul>
--	---

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>8. Senate Statement re Equity Study (E. York)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Action
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><i>Faculty Senate would like to express its appreciation for the clarity, transparency, and completeness of the materials presented regarding the evaluation of potential providers of an Equity Study for WNC. The materials provided and the time taken to explain them have led Faculty Senate to conclude that either finalist would be a viable and high-quality provider. Faculty Senate endorses HR's selection from among the two presented finalists, with the understanding that the final scope of work will include a comprehensive external market analysis utilizing appropriate comparator institutions or regional averages, and that Faculty Senate will have a defined role in the identification and approval of the comparator institution/s or regional benchmarks used in that analysis.</i></p> <p><b>Motion:</b> Approval of Senate Statement on equity study  <b>Motion to Approve:</b> H. Reardon  <b>Second:</b> P. Bell  <b>Approval:</b> Unanimously  <b>Abstained:</b> None  <b>Note:</b> Vote was conducted by email vote prior to faculty senate meeting. All senators participated in vote.</p>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>9. Discussion of Votes of No Confidence (Senate)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Discussion
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><i>Intent, results, challenges, implications</i></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to an anonymous letter raising concerns about leadership, transparency, and unresolved issues communicated to administration the Faculty Senate discussed votes of no confidence in general, focusing on</li> </ul>

	<p>who should vote, the purpose of such a vote, and the absence of a clear institutional policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research shared by Eric Y. indicated that at many colleges, votes of no confidence involve the full faculty rather than only the Faculty Senate, and that such votes are advisory in nature, often lack legal weight, and can have limited or negative impact.</li> <li>• There was broad agreement that a Senate-only vote would be insufficient and that any consideration of a vote of no confidence should be informed by clear communication and meaningful faculty feedback.</li> <li>• The Senate agreed to delay any consideration of a vote of no confidence. Instead, members supported first administering a faculty climate survey to gather data on faculty sentiment. The survey will be distributed to all faculty and made accessible to key stakeholders, providing critical information to guide any future decisions or actions by the Senate.</li> </ul>
--	--

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>10. Chair Report (E. York)</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info/Discussion
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><i>Intent, results, challenges, implications</i></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Communication &amp; Email Access: Ongoing concerns since August about student emails sent from outside WNC being routed to junk folders. Recommendation to use Canvas for student–faculty communication. Discussions underway with IT and Learning and Innovation to determine whether Canvas email access can be configured. Request for students to be able to email through Canvas immediately upon enrollment and for extended access before and after semesters. IT is reviewing Canvas configurability and potential timelines.</li> <li>• Fees, Budget, and Institutional Planning: Concerns were raised about framing non–fee increases as catastrophic without clear strategies for reducing non-academic expenditures. Additional reservations were expressed about the optics and timing of fee increases alongside other system decisions, including the purchase of property in Carson City. Discussion emphasized the need for clearer budget-trimming strategies outside academic programs.</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>11. Faculty Open Discussion</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Discussion
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><i>Faculty are welcome to openly discuss issues involving the institution.</i></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Faculty Senate open discussion centered on concerns related to emergency hires, faculty workload, compensation, and shared governance, with particular emphasis on issues within the Nursing division.</li> <li>• Faculty member raised significant concerns about emergency hires bypassing standard screening and hiring processes, leading to challenges with course quality, curriculum consistency, workload distribution, and inadequate communication and support for existing faculty.</li> <li>• Additionally, a faculty member expressed concerns with possible misalignment between faculty compensation and current expectations for course development, instructional delivery, and varied course modalities, and requested Faculty Senate support in addressing pay structures and workload equity.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed with faculty remaining on emergency hire contracts for extended periods of time.</li> <li>• Discussion of some faculty also included confusion around pathways to tenure, presidential authority, and the role of the PDC process. Broader concerns were raised about insufficient tracking and role clarity for emergency and non-tenure-track faculty within Workday.</li> <li>• Finally, discussion included concerns with the ease of Workday for faculty and perhaps the accuracy of information currently available in the platform.</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>12. Old Business</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info/Discussion
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p>a. <b>Senate Committee Task Force (possible action):</b></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> The Senate Committee Task Force still needs members. Martin S. is serving as temporary lead, with Brigitte D. and Jolene C. volunteering. Eric Y. will send another recruitment email to encourage faculty participation. The group decided to maintain the current committee structure for now, agreeing that more involvement is needed before making changes. Adjunct faculty participation will be handled on a case-by-case</p>

basis, with clear criteria and tracking to address eligibility and compensation concerns.

**b. Faculty Climate Survey (possible action):**

**Survey Scope and Purpose:**

- Preference is for the survey to include the entire campus community, not just faculty, though there is discussion about limiting distribution to faculty only.
- Purpose: gather data to identify issues or concerns that can be addressed, with initial results intended for Faculty Senate review before deciding on broader sharing.
- Survey results may eventually inform proposals for solutions and could be shared with administration (President, VP) or, if needed, the Board of Regents.

**Survey Design and Anonymity:**

- Questions can be optional; participants are not required to respond.
- Demographic questions will include a “prefer not to answer” option.
- Employment length categories modified to broader ranges (0–5, 5–10, 10+ years) to reduce identification risks.
- The survey will be sortable by categories such as division and full-time status.

**Administration:**

- Discussion on using an external vendor versus internal administration through HR (Survey was shared with WNC president and he recommended an external vendor):
  - Kyle will research potential vendors and associated costs, aiming for Faculty Senate to collaborate with the vendor on survey development.
  - Kyle did note that the faculty senate may complete an internal survey to faculty as part of its purview as faculty senate.
  - Eric recommends limiting survey administration to faculty if done internally.
  - Timing, cost, and transparency are key considerations in deciding the administration method.

**Access and Transparency:**

- Some faculty experienced issues accessing the draft survey link; Eric will verify sharing settings and address access problems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a new Faculty Senate website is underway to host all agendas, meeting minutes, and related materials, increasing transparency and access to faculty senate materials to all faculty and stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Points of Agreement / Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial survey results will be reviewed by Faculty Senate before decisions on broader sharing or actions.</li> <li>The survey is intended to inform potential solutions and address concerns raised (including those outlined in the no-confidence letter).</li> <li>Faculty Senate retains discretion in surveying faculty if desired.</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion:</b> Move to distribute the survey to faculty to gather data  <b>Motion to Approve:</b> B. Dillet  <b>Second:</b> K. Penrose  <b>Approval:</b> Unanimously  <b>Abstained:</b> None</p> <p><b>c. Letter received by Faculty Senate (Discussion)</b>  Faculty senate proposed completing the climate survey for faculty as a base line to more effectively address the concerns outlined in the letter.</p> <p><b>d. Policy 3-3-1-1 Distance Learning/3-2-3 Academic Faculty</b>  <i>Propose removing Section 4E (email response time) from 3-3-1-1. Propose adding a statement regarding email response to 3-2-3. One possibility: Add Section 1.B.4.g: "Faculty will include their policy on response times to student emails in all course syllabi and will adhere to said policy."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Discussion:</b> Recommendation to remove E and F and revise into one statement and replace with "Outlines communication and grading policies within their course syllabus." Policy will still be presented to College Council and Faculty Senate prior to final approval.</li> </ul>
--	--

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>13. New Business</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info/Discussion
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	No new business discussed.

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>14. Public Comment</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	Info
<b>Summary of Discussion</b>	<p><i>Opportunity for faculty to bring forward concerns, questions, or suggestions for future agenda items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Calendar &amp; Grading Days: Proposal to align the number of grading days after the end of the semester with the start-of-semester schedule. Changes are planned for implementation in the 2027–28 academic year. Discussion included maintaining consistent semester start dates.</li> <li>• Eric Y. clarified that disagreements in faculty senate discussions are perfectly OK in this forum.</li> </ul>

<b>Agenda Topic</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>
<b>Action Taken</b>	<p><b>Motion:</b> Adjourn meeting  <b>Motion to adjourn:</b> B. Dillet  <b>Second:</b> Patrick Bell  Unanimously Adjourned at 4:50 pm</p>
<b>Comments/Information</b>	Submitted by Patrick Bell, Recorder