

Academic Faculty Senate (2024-2025) Meeting MINUTES 03/14/25; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Academic Senate	Call to order at 1:30 pm	ZOOM
Members Present	Martin Schmidt (Chair), Jessica Rowe (Vice Chair), Jaspreet Gill (Carson Senator), Tim Mayo (Fallon Senator), Heather Reardon (NAH Senator), Curtis Kupferschmid (LA Senator 1), John Duerk (LA Senator 2), Patrick Bell (WCTE Senator/Recorder), Robin Eppard (Carson Part-Time Senator), Rachelle Bassen (Past Chair)	
Members Absent	Mary Gillespie (LA Senator 3)	
Guests	Jeff Downs, Kyle Dalpe, Amy Ghilleri. Scott Morrison	

Agenda Topic	1. Approval of Minutes for 02/14/
Action Taken	Action
Summary of Discussion	Tim M. – move to approve Heather R. – second No discussion. Passed unanimously

Agenda Topic	2. Executive updates (Dalpe)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Council: A major budget hearing was held, during which questions were raised about weighted credit hours for dual enrollment. An official request for these hours has been submitted. • Western Nevada College (WNC) has experienced a 17% increase in enrollment, which should lead to increased funding for the college. However, budgets will not be finalized until May. • Discussions during the state legislative session addressed disruptions at the federal level affecting grant-funded services and federal funding cuts. K-12 education is funded first, followed by higher education. Concerns were raised about the impact of federal funding cuts on student financial aid and other programs within the Department of Education. • WNC and Great Basin College (GBC) will participate in a Rural Community College Day at the legislature on Monday, March 24. • A Faculty Forum Meeting is planned for the end of the month.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulations to John D. and Jaspreet G. on receiving tenure!
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Agenda Topic	3 Sabbatical Announcement (J. Flemming)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Announcement of Jessica Rowe’s approved sabbatical for 2025-2026, including objectives focused on writing, community engagement, and pedagogy development.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congrats to Jessica R. on sabbatical.

Agenda Topic	4. Senate Elections Process (J. Downs)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Overview of the upcoming Senate elections (Section 7 in the Bylaws), including nomination procedures and voting timelines.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email will be sent out today notifying the faculty of open positions for the 2025-26 Faculty Senate. John D. asked whether there are term limits. There are none—a person may be re-elected after serving a two-year term. <p>For Spring 2025, <u>We</u> will be electing the following seats:</p> <p>Fallon/Douglas Campus Senator LAS Senator Seat 2</p> <p>The proposed schedule is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomination period: March 14 - 28 • Nominee withdrawal period: March 14 - April 2 • Elections held (online): April 4 - April 11 • Results Presented at April Faculty Senate Meeting <p>2025-2026 Faculty Senate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair – Martin Schmidt (2nd year of possible 2) • Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect – Jessica Rowe (2nd year of 2) • Carson Campus Senator - Jaspreet Gill (2nd year of 2) • Fallon/Douglas Campus Senator – To Be Elected (1st year of 2) • NAH Senator - Heather Reardon (2nd year of 2) • LA Senator 1 - Curtis Kupferschmid (2nd year of 2) • LA Senator 2 – To Be Elected (1st year of 2) • LA Senator 3 - Mary Gillespie (2nd year of 2) • WCTE Senator - Patrick Bell (2nd year of 2) • Part-Time Senator Carson Campus – As appointed • Part-Time Senator Fallon/Douglas Campus – As appointed • Past-Chair - Rachelle Bassen

Agenda Topic	5. Presidential Transition Process
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Review of the NSHE Handbook policies regarding presidential vacancies, including the process for appointing an interim president and potential faculty involvement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle D. is actively exploring opportunities to serve as president at other colleges. Questions were raised about the process that will follow if he departs. • Martin S. explained that the NSHE handbook outlines the procedure for selecting a new president. When a vacancy occurs, the chair, vice chair, and chancellor consult with administration, faculty, and students to determine whether an acting or interim president should be appointed or if a full search is needed. • Martin S. discussed with Dana R. the possibility of serving as acting president. She expressed willingness to do so but does not wish to serve as interim president or pursue the permanent position. Dana R. also raised concerns about bringing in an external candidate. • Jeff Downs: If no transition period is planned, an officer in charge can be appointed until an acting or interim president is named. If a decision is made before summer, the process can begin while faculty are still under contract. • Martin S. will meet with the current chancellor to discuss the transition, though a new chancellor is also being selected, with interviews ongoing in a special board meeting. • Tim M. noted concerns about faculty input in the process, though faculty primarily serve in an advisory capacity.

Agenda Topic	6. Chair Report (M. Schmidt)
Action Taken	Info/Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Updates from the Faculty Senate Chair, including ongoing initiatives and upcoming priorities. Discussion of the most recent Board of Regents meeting, including the failure of the passage of Chapter 6 revisions on appeals to termination of tenured faculty. Faculty should also keep an eye on AB 191, and the election of a new chancellor.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College Council voted on policy changes that had been presented during recent Faculty Senate meetings. Discussions included ensuring representation for WTCE and Allied Nursing. • At last week's Board of Regents meeting, the NFA presented on AB 191 regarding collective bargaining. A proposed change to the appeals process for termination of tenured faculty was rejected—decisions will remain with the Board of Regents rather than being escalated to the chancellor.

Agenda Topic	7. Remote Stipends and Equity Concerns
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Faculty will discuss whether the current stipends for remote teaching assignments, particularly for faculty traveling to external sites, are adequate and equitable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott M. to discuss (but left meeting early)

Agenda Topic	8. Shared Governance and Hiring Decisions
Action Taken	Discussion
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Examination of recent hiring decisions, including why certain full-time positions are not being replaced, such as the lack of a full-time science faculty member in Fallon.</i></p> <p>Faculty Involvement in Search Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns were raised about faculty participation in hiring decisions and search committees. Some faculty questioned why certain positions are being searched while others are not, and whether faculty input is being considered. • Most new searches are focused on WCTE due to program growth. • In nursing, faculty feel they are not being consulted on position structures before job postings. Some positions are posted without clarity on whether they are tenured, non-tenured, emergency, or temporary. • Heather R. requested adherence to contract guidelines requiring faculty input in hiring decisions. • Martin S. noted that some faculty who volunteered for search committees were not selected, raising concerns about preferred choices. The goal remains to ensure diverse membership on search committees. • John D. inquired about the current status of search committees. Martin S. confirmed that names have already been selected. • Rachelle B. expressed concerns that faculty input channels have narrowed, with less access to open-door discussions. Faculty are increasingly directed to the Faculty Senate, NFA, or department directors instead of being directly involved in decision-making. <p>Concerns About Academic Freedom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues were also raised regarding academic freedom and faculty autonomy in curriculum and resource selection. • Heather R. highlighted a concern in nursing, where faculty want to choose their curriculum and resources, but administration has mandated a specific vendor contract without faculty input.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim D. opposed the idea of being forced to use a specific publisher or vendor based on profit motives, stating this is neither an appropriate nor effective practice. • Curtis K. agreed that outside vendors should not have the authority to dictate instructional resources. Faculty and subject matter experts (SMEs) should have a greater voice in these decisions.

Agenda Topic	9. NFA Updates (R. Bassen and H. Reardon)
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	<p><i>Updates on contract negotiations and faculty advocacy efforts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bargaining updates. Proposal of new items. Delays are occurring in proposals reviews from administration. <p>Tentative Agreement</p> <p>Adding non-discrimination language</p> <p>"WNC Administration and WNC-NFA affirm their dedication to the principles of equal opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination; as such, the parties will not discriminate on account of any of the following: racism, antisemitism, age, disability, gender, military status or obligations, sexual orientation, women (including women with pregnancy related conditions), gender identity or expression, national origin, race, color, and religion, or other protected classes as defined by NSHE Title 4, Chapter 8.."</p> <p>Revision to class cap language (clarification):</p> <p>7.3.2.2.1 "All classes will have a default cap of 30 students except in the following circumstances: a) classroom capacity, availability of equipment, safety considerations or other operation limitations that affect class size, or b) the teaching faculty agrees to a higher cap."</p> <p>7.3.2.2.2 When a class reaches enrollment of 46 students, the instructional units (IU) for the course will be doubled (equivalent to two sections) for the purpose of calculating the Teaching Faculty member workload, with a cap of no more than 64 students.</p> <p>7.3.2.2.2.1 The Teaching Faculty member, in collaboration with the Academic Director, may request that a second section be created for students.</p> <p>Syllabus language</p> <p>9.6.2.2.1 "Publishes their course LMS with updated course syllabi and faculty contact information." <i>(aligns to current informal "policy" but prevents expanded requirements)</i></p> <p>9.1.2.3.3 "Outlines communication and grading policies within their course syllabus. Prepares and distributes individual course syllabi to students and the appropriate Academic Director on or before the first day of class."</p> <p>NFA Proposals this week</p> <p>Expanded procedures on Article 14: Additions to the Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning to TMCC-NFA procedures • Tenure track faculty search committee definitions – must include four faculty, preferably tenured, with one classified advisory role • Emergency-hire/temporary hires must have a search except for a 15-day window before the start of the semester • Full-time to adjunct faculty ratios: divisions must have a 75% full-time faculty ratio with procedures in place to consider or add positions if the full-time ratio drops below that <p>Academic Leadership Restructuring Reopener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the college goes through any leadership restructuring, then there will be consultation processes in place for current leadership to first meet with Faculty Senate Chair and NFA president to discuss the plans, then... • When the process for restructuring begins, administration will meet with

	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px;"> <p>Release time/additional assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines procedures described in TMCC-NFA contract • Creates a minimum of 3 units/semester for all additional assignments • Clarifies that additional assignments may include release time, B+ contracts or stipends • Expanded expectations for faculty participating in “community engagement roles” (art gallery coordinator, musical theater, observatory manager, prison ed, faculty senate chair): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 6 units / semester • Eligible for B+ contracts (chair shall have no less than 6 Plus days) • Additional support staff as needed </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Reassignment, Reductions, Retrenchment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded language based on TMCC-NFA and CSN contracts to protect faculty under financial exigency or program closures </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Sick Leave policy/working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand language on sick leave • Creating a sick leave donation bank to protect faculty from being fired for needing to take extended leave • Creating a sick leave donation bank might be complicated language, so we are proposing a working group (required meeting) • Admin countered that we don’t need a required meeting, but want an “MOU” </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Division protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing consultation processes with faculty for division protocol changes which will not supersede WNC policies • Division protocols should be transparent and available to faculty at all times • (essentially establishing shared governance at the division level) • Admin countered that this is not a “mandatory topic” in bargaining and don’t want to negotiate on this </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <h2>Admin proposals & counterproposals</h2> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested to pull their proposal on nursing clinical capacities </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin S. When will the draft be available? Ideally in late April after the accreditation visit. Will be a voting process by faculty. </div>
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Agenda Topic	10. Public Comment
Action Taken	Info
Summary of Discussion	No public comment.

Agenda Topic	Adjournment
Action Taken	Unanimously Adjourned at 2:40 pm
Summary of Discussion	

Assignments/Potential Agenda Items	Martin is still following up with equity study, will be presented at next faculty senate. Digital learning proposal will also be discussed.
Comments/Information	Submitted by Patrick Bell, Recorder