

WFU Faculty Senate Agenda – August 27, 2025
Farrell Hall, Room 111

Call to Order – 4:00pm

Introduction of New Senators.

1. Approval of April 16, 2025 meeting minutes - Approved

2. Announcements

- a. Next iteration of Faculty Handbook –
 - i. Working on redline of the doc for our review
 - ii. Circulated annually through Senate
- b. Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees
 - i. Some serve by virtue of their position on a faculty committee
 - ii. Some by recommendation – need suggestions by Friday (academic, administrative, advancement, communication, finance)
- c. Integration Committee - Open Chair
 - i. Need a chair – issues between the medical school integrating with Reynolda campus: Deacon OneCard and emails, etc.
- d. Presentation by Dr. Denisha Champion – Counseling Center survey that begins Sept 8 thru Oct 6 (see attached report)
 - i. Healthy Minds Study – done every 2 years
 - ii. For all students; population level survey; see only 12% of students
 - iii. Reynolda campus students only
 - iv. Guide strategic direction for mental health at WFU
 - v. Confidential
 - vi. Will get frequency data
 - vii. Through University of Michigan – can't offer extra credit or anything that requires the student to provide proof that they completed the survey
 - viii. Takes 20–30 minutes
 - ix. Follow on Instagram – prizes will be awarded
 - x. Could have access to data set
 - xi. Anyone who completes the survey during the first week will get a free cup of coffee
 - xii. First time got a 30% response rate – hoping for the same this time

3. Old business

- a. Julie Jackson-Newsom will provide updates on the following: (see attached report):
 - i. Changes to student aid
 - ii. On behalf of Strategy Steering Committee – meets twice a week for an hour (since February)
 - iii. Representation across campus and the Medical School
 - iv. Many things still in flux, mitigating in courts,
 - v. Advocate in the background where we think we can make a difference; elected official and their staff
 - vi. Budget reconciliation outcome
 - Endowment tax – not affected
 - Pell grant changes were minor
 - PLUSed up
 - Changes in the federal student aid program
 - Begin 7/1/26
 - Lifetime cap on federal borrowing \$257.500 – requires foresight and thought among students
 - Parents Plus Program capped at %65,000
 - Graduate students borrowing capped on unsubsidized loans
 - Grad PLUS program eliminated (big hit)

- If currently enrolled, can complete as long as they stay continuously enrolled or receive 3 years of funds, whichever is shorter
- vii. Proposed changes to IPEDS data
- viii. VISA processes update and impact
- ix. ISSS sharing information as expeditiously as possible
- x. 20-30% reduction in international students in the US
- xi. We didn't suffer as much of a loss because of GPS team's work
- xii. None of our students had trouble getting into the country
- xiii. Offered support and didn't have too many who needed this
- xiv. Most are on F visas – J visas are for scholars
- xv. The latest on research (specifically indirect cost rates)
 - Flurry of grants terminate or paused this summer – some reinstated
 - Delays in receipts
 - NIH
 - Concern about guidance related to illegal DEI– rescinded
 - Indirect costs
 - Current continuing to use our negotiated rate
 - NSF – from July 1 forward, if we're allowed to go to 15% rate, we'll do it retroactively
 - Reach out if there are faculty who are struggling with their grants – they should be working with their dean and department chair first
 - Changes to reporting of admission data are significant
 - Cross-tabbed by race and sex
 - Relations between GPS and test scores and admissions
 - Now includes graduate admissions
 - Would be 150 more tables of data
- xvi. Govaffairs.wfu.edu/updates
- xvii. govaffairs@wfu.edu
- xviii. Weekly newsletter coming
- b. Senate role regarding the Chalking and Demonstration Policy
 - i. Policy has undergone some updates – two senators participated in the process
 - ii. Lots of people working on it – facilities, compliance, campus life, SAC, Senate
 - iii. Ran scenarios
 - iv. Freedom of Expression statement and this policy should come together

4. Current business

- a. Senate President Report
 - i. ExCom met in summer with administration leaders throughout the summer
 - ii. Faculty governance remains vital and important
 - iii. Much externally-driven complexity in this moment; this is significantly different from the internally focused governing work of the past
 - iv. How do we respond to these external forces
 - v. Lead by example, that represents our core values and mission
 - vi. Work to understand how the University responds to challenges in this moment
 - vii. Work to support our core values and our important work as teachers and scholars
- b. Invitation from the Office of the President
 - i. Enrollment growth – how it impacts what we do; where will they go – Pres. Wentz's blog has more information
 - ii. Impacts of changes in Athletics
 - iii. Senate President and University President discussed coordinating two meetings with leaders in these areas on both topics for the Senate
 - Information will circulate in advance, including pre-readings and meeting times
 - Dates TBD; could be a specially called meeting or a regular Senate meeting
- c. Standing Committee reports
 - i. Athletics (Parsley) – see attached report

- a. Teams are successful – national champions in men’s tennis; women's soccer runner-ups
 - b. Greater role than in the past
 - c. House case settled on June 6 – ushered in revenue sharing as of July 1 –
 - d. Nil deals till permissible through 3-part clearinghouse
 - e. FAR – Nate Plageman (History)
 - f. Faculty Athletics Committee chair: David Wren (Chemistry)
 - g. New Basketball General Manager: Steve Weinman
- ii. Capital Planning (Castro)
 - a. Large projects completed this summer in ZSR Library (including the Writing Center) and Carswell
 - b. Work proceeding on Alumni Hall
 - c. Work on the Grounds is on track
 - d. Conversations about space governance – building a “space governance framework” that includes leadership and expertise from multiple areas of the university
 - e. Meeting September 8th
- iii. College Senators (Tarte/Breckenridge)
 - a. Convened over the summer; met with Pres. Wente about the Provost transition
 - b. Chairs have met with Dean Krasas multiple times over the summer about Provost transition, hiring practices, etc.
 - c. First meeting September 3rd
- iv. Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (Morath)
 - a. Meeting forthcoming
 - b. Senate committee but with University-wide membership
- v. Fringe Benefits (Kirkman)
 - a. Runs from January through the calendar year (instead of the academic year)
 - b. Last meeting was in May
 - c. Upcoming meeting to discuss this benefits cycle
 - d. No changes to providers anticipated
 - e. Financial indicators are good compared to previous year
 - f. University contribution to dental coverage has been decreasing, so look for changes in October
 - g. Disease-management programs have been successful; there is consideration of adding more programs targeting other diseases with emphasis on both management and prevention
 - h. Vision plan benefits change may be coming (more frequent prescription updates)
 - i. Flu shots are available; Covid vaccine coverage still available (for now)
 - j. HR is interested in improving staff salaries and has both a new staff hire and outside consulting working on this; also career path creation and transparency
 - k. More study of high deductible health plans with health savings accounts
 - l. Commend HR on transparency and collaboration
- vi. Medical School (Cartwright) – none
 - a. First Charlotte class started in July
- vii. Salaries (Evans)
 - a. Living wage for contractors and employees
 - b. Position ourselves to be competitive with city and our own healthcare system
- viii. University Integration (OPEN) - none
- d. Provost Transition
 - i. Michele Gillespie stepped down; Nell Newton is Interim Provost as of August 1st
 - ii. Search for a permanent Provost has not officially begun but will begin soon
 - a. Selection of a search firm
 - b. Composing a search committee
 - c. Senate anticipates representation on that committee
 - d. As the process moves forward, information will be disseminated from the ExCom to the Senate at large
- e. Sunsetting of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (See Pres. Wente’s Aug 8 email on

this issue.)

- i. Pres. Wenthe and V.P. Villalba met with the ExCom and had a productive conversation
 - i. Student-facing entities still remain
 - ii. Discussed services to faculty and staff
 - iii. Work continues and administration is committed to providing services to our community that respect the dignity of all
 - iv. Since January, being careful to be in compliance with executive orders as best we can
 - v. Assessing risks in that regard
 - vi. Paused RIDE plans in April because of the difficulty of determining how to be compliant
 - vii. May announced re-envisioning process and data gathering
 - viii. Clear in July that across the country, centers were being moved to or were part of Campus Life instead of a free-standing entity
- ii. Questions remain about faculty and staff support and groups
- iii. Work continues to provide space and support for all students and all people on campus
 - i. Focus on campus culture and campus climate
 - ii. 9-page memo from DOJ trying to define what is “illegal DEI” came after decision, but reinforced making this move
 - iii. Centers will report directly to Campus Life for the foreseeable future
 - iv. Website updates – WFU internally identified websites and shared with outside firm because we didn’t have manpower to evaluate all and make recommendations – then met with units for them to decide what change/updates to make
 - v. DOJ memo of July 29
 - 1. Section about proxies
 - vi. Compliance begins when you know what the law is – problematic right now. If the DOJ is saying this is what the law is, that guides how we understand compliance.
- f. Campus Climate Task Force ([See here.](#))
- g. The increasing number of federal orders and directives targeting higher education –
 - i. Strategy steering group is monitoring
 - ii. Brian White offered the suggestion that members of the Senate participate
 - iii. Let Senate President or Exec Comm know if you have interest in Faculty Senate working group on Federal Action
 - iv. DOJ Guidance to Federally Funded Universities ([See here.](#))
 - v. Ensuring Transparency in Higher Education Admissions ([See here.](#))
 - vi. Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking ([See here.](#))

5. New Business

Adjourned 5:34pm.

End notes

Executive Committee Membership:

- Steve Virgil (Law) - President
- Katherine Shaner (Divinity) - Vice President
- Ryan Shirey (College/English/Writing Program) - Secretary and Chair
- Bret Nicks (Medicine) - Member-at-large
- Saylor Breckenridge (College/Sociology) – Past President, Co-chair, College Senators
- [**Open**] – Chair, University Integration
- Ellen Kirkman (College/Mathematics) – Chair, Fringe Benefits
- Kendall Tarte (College/French Studies) - Co-Chair, College Senators
- Rodrigo Castro (Library) - Chair, Capital Planning
- Mark Evans (Business) - Chair, Salaries
- Jason Parsley (College/Mathematics)- Chair, Athletics
- Michael Cartwright (Medicine) Chair, Medical School
- Sarah Morath (Law) - Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility