

WFU Faculty Senate Minutes – August 26, 2026
Farrell Hall, Room A48

Call to Order – 4:02p

1. [Approval of April 15, 2026 meeting minutes](#)
 - a. Moved and approved
2. [Announcements](#)
 - a. Senate Ad Hoc Committee on AI ([Virgil](#))
 - i. Email Monique O’Connell (oconneme@wfu.edu) or Steve Virgil (virgilsm@wfu.edu) to join the committee
 - ii. Committee will discuss AI issues for faculty with an eye toward teaching protocols in higher education.
 - iii. [Will Fleeson](#), Associate Provost for AI Initiatives, envisioned as partnership liaison to other Provost initiatives.
 - b. [Meeting schedule](#) for 2026-2027 ([Shaner](#))
 - i. Schedule is updated on website. Email Katherine Shaner (shanerka@wfu.edu) for questions or concerns about scheduling and communication.
 - ii. Fall 2027 meetings will be in Farrell A48 with Zoom option. Zoom link provided on official calendar invitation. Email K. Shaner for link if not on invitation.
 - iii. Executive Committee meets 2nd Wednesdays each month.
3. [Old business](#)
 - a. None.
4. [Current business](#)
 - a. Update on Provost Search ([O’Connell](#))
 - i. [Monique O’Connell](#) is Senate representative on the Provost search committee:
 - ii. Publicly available information at: www.search.provost.wfu.edu
 - iii. Committee has representatives from every school and college division.
 - iv. Chair is [President Rodriguez](#)
 - v. Search firm leadership is a former university dean with a research Ph.D.
 - vi. Listening Sessions will be scheduled—encourage constituencies to attend.
 - vii. Final 4 candidates will come to campus in Spring 2028; opportunity to meet with Faculty Senate.
 - b. Standing Committee reports.
 - i. Fringe Benefits ([Kirkman](#))
 1. Health benefits way over budget. Costs could go up 10%.
 2. Benefits fair in early October
 3. Move from TIAA to Fidelity. Encourage constituents to sign up for [CAPTrust](#) consultations.
 4. New benefit: Benefits Hub offers perks and discounts at a large number of vendors
 5. Exploration begun: Health Savings Account and High-Deductible health care plans. Additional option to other plans will be being considered for January 2029.
 6. Domestic Partner benefits requested for exploration. Dropped with legalization of same-gender marriage.
 7. GLP-1 only offered for diabetes. Cost estimates for weight loss and sleep apnea prohibitively high (\$1 million extra per year estimate)

8. Health Maintenance benefits: TRIA (Pharmacy) Health and Hinge Health (Physical Therapy)
 9. Question: Why does budget forecasting seem so imprecise year after year?
 - a. University is self-insured. Budget depends on diagnoses within the employee pool
 - ii. Athletics ([Parsley](#))
 1. No Report
 - iii. Capital Planning ([Castro](#))
 1. Real Estate Planning meeting Sept. 8.
 2. [Rodrigo Castro](#) will be Faculty Senate liaison to University Security Committee and Parking & Transportation Committee
 - iv. College Senators ([O'Connell](#))
 1. No Report
 - v. Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility ([Morath](#))
 1. No Report
 - vi. Medical School ([Cartwright](#))
 1. No Report
 - vii. Compensation ([Evans](#))
 1. Continuing to work with Office of Institutional Research to generate necessary data
 - viii. University Integration (OPEN)
 1. Committee Chair needed
 - c. Proposed Resolution ([Breckenridge](#))
 - i. ([Proposal](#))
 - ii. Resolution goes to the University President and Provost, who will report on the requested review.
 - iii. Problem: multiple lists on the Office of Institutional Research website (IPEDs list, BoT Academic Committee, cross admits list, financial aid comparison group). Implications for data sharing and university decision making.
 - iv. Proposed resolution 1: Updating peer institutions lists
 - v. Proposed resolution 2: Consider eliminating ACC schools comparison and SACS-COC regional group.
 - vi. Proposed resolution 3: Plan for regular updates
 - vii. Discussion on uses of lists, change nomenclature from “peer” to “comparison”
 - viii. Motion: Table Resolution 2. Passed.
 - ix. Motion: Adopt Resolution 1. Passed.
 - x. Motion: Adopt Resolution 3. Passed.
 - d. Proposed Senate Policy on Honorary Degrees ([Virgil](#))
 - i. Moved to next month’s agenda
 - e. Senate President Report ([Virgil](#))
 - i. No Report—keep agenda on schedule
5. New Business
- a. Legislative Update - Strategy Steering Committee (SSC) ([Jimmy Broughton](#)) and Office of Compliance Services ([Ken Liddle](#))
 - i. [See Report](#)
 - ii. Post January 20 SSC committee met twice a week for several months; now once a week
 - iii. Task to triage government policy changes

- iv. Task to get resources/answers to units/departments and disseminate to students/faculty/staff
- v. “Call to Action” from Department of education asks universities to look at 7 thematic areas and publish a statement online by end of year
 - 1. Some relevant questions. Only high-level answers formulated so quickly.
- vi. International collaborations and research security (compliance)
 - 1. Seven major announcements in the last year about research security; largely about relationships
 - 2. Government is policing these in more active ways
 - 3. If faculty have any new international collaborations (whether through federal grant proposals or other collaborations), call or email [Jimmy Broughton](#) or [Ken Liddle](#)
- vii. Iran sanctions: US Government suspended exceptions for academic recruitment of faculty and students
 - 1. Responding with any tips or services to someone in Iran has been criminalized.
- viii. Any questions about research security email: researchsecurity@wfu.edu
- b. Admissions Update - [Eric Maguire](#), Vice President of Enrollment
 - i. Largest and most selectively chosen class in WFU history
 - ii. Snap shot of data for IPEDs: ‘final numbers’ publicly available in November

Adjourned 5:33 pm

End notes

Executive Committee Membership:

President: Steve Virgil (Law)
 Vice President: Kendall Tarte (College/French Studies)
 Secretary: Katherine Shaner (Divinity)
 Member-at-large: Mahta McKeeBret Nicks (Medicine)
 Past President: Saylor Breckenridge (College/Sociology): Past President
 Chair, College Senators: Monique O’Connell (College/History)
 Chair, Fringe Benefits: Ellen Kirkman (College/Mathematics)
 Chair, Capital Planning: Rodrigo Castro (Library)
 Chair, Compensation: Mark Evans (Business)
 Chair, Athletics: Jason Parsley (College/Mathematics)
 Chair, Medical School Senators: Michael Cartwright (Medicine)
 Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility: Sarah Morath (Law)