

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: October 16, 2025

Time Called to Order: 12:30 PM

Location: Sandel 238 & MS Teams

Presiding: Hilary Tice, Faculty Senate President

Recording: Mark Johnson, Faculty Senate Secretary

1. Call to Order

President Tice called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM.

Senators in attendance: Hilary Tice, Tyesha Hardy, Heather Pilcher, Josh Tolleson, Gregory Koers, Siva Murru, Jason Ashby, Janelle McDaniel, Nancy Carey, Mark Johnson, Pat McGuire, Paula Robinson Jones, Leah Hawsey, Adam Traweek, Ashanti Jones, Bruce Walker, Brendan Rowley, James Boldin, Cliff Tresner. No guests. A quorum was confirmed.

An introductory icebreaker was conducted.

2. Approval of Minutes

- **Minutes from September 18, 2025** were presented for approval.
 - **Motion:** Senator McGuire
 - **Second:** Senator Robinson-Jones
 - **Vote:** Unanimous approval (in room and on Teams)
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3. Bylaws & Constitution Amendments – Voting

The Senate addressed four amendment areas. Votes were taken by section at the Senate's request.

3.1 Amendment: Faculty Senate Representation on University Council

Key Discussion Points:

- Several senators expressed concern regarding lack of guaranteed representation from all four colleges.

- Debate included:
 - Whether the Senate should request proportional/college-based representation now.
 - Whether the timeline imposed by upper administration limits negotiation.
 - Whether amendments would need to return to general faculty for another 10-day review if altered.
 - Whether the Senate has leverage now vs. after joining the Council.
 - Clarification that the “positions” wording (with “s”) leaves open the possibility of future increases.
- Senators noted that the University Council Constitution was created by upper administration without full Senate negotiation.

Vote:

- **Result:** Unanimous approval (room and Teams)
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3.2 Amendment: Defining Senate Purposes & Decision Pathways Related to University Council

Members reviewed proposed language in the Constitution and Bylaws regarding:

- How Senate decisions are communicated to the University Council
- Defined purposes of Senate actions in the context of the Council

Vote:

- **Result:** Unanimous approval
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3.3 Amendment: Inclusion of the Faculty Handbook Committee Under the Faculty Senate

Major Discussion Points:

- Question raised: Why is the Provost excluded from serving “in any capacity” on this committee?
 - President Tice reported guidance from AAUP:
Including an administrative member obligates the committee to treat them as a full participant, which may inhibit open discussion.
 - Senate members emphasized:
 - Protecting faculty freedom to deliberate
 - Ensuring the committee may still *consult* administrators without granting them membership
- Concern raised regarding political/administrative pushback.

- Acknowledgment that the Provost ultimately has authority over handbook changes regardless of committee composition.

Vote:

- **In Favor:** 14
- **Opposed:** 0
- **Abstentions:** 3

Outcome: Amendment approved.

3.4 Amendment: Communication with General Faculty

Purpose: To create a formal requirement for faculty senators to hold regular meetings or communicate updates to their college faculty.

Discussion:

- Some colleges have well-structured communication; others currently do not.
- Senators discussed feasibility and necessity of consistent communication expectations.

Vote:

- **Result:** Unanimous approval (no opposed, no abstentions)
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4. Provost Search Committee Report

Presenter: Senator Ashanti Jones

Summary of Report:

4.1 Committee Composition

Nine members total, which included two deans, two faculty representatives from CAES and CBSS, and the remainder Director-level individuals. Senator Jones served as the Faculty Senate representative (not identified as such until contacted later by President Tice).

4.2 Timeline

- **Sept 16:** Committee invitation email received
- **Sept 22:** First committee meeting
- **Sept 22:** HR provided access to applicant files in NeoEd

- **Sept 26:** Deadline for rating 26 applicants using scoring rubric and submitting top 3 selections
- **Sept 29:** Second meeting; top candidates determined
- **Oct 6:** Candidate interviews (three finalists)

4.3 Candidate Ratings & Interview Structure

- 26 applicants rated 1–5 based on job-description rubric
- Top three candidates invited to interviews:
 1. **Dr. Ronald Loggins** — Wayne State College
 2. **Dr. Nolan McMurray** — Tennessee State University
 3. **Dr. Michelle McEacharn** — ULM Interim Provost
- Each interview:
 1. 45 minutes Q&A from committee
 2. 15 minutes candidate questions

4.4 Committee Discussion & Recommendation

- Committee concluded Dr. McEacharn demonstrated superior understanding and readiness for the role.
- Noted strengths:
 - In-depth operational knowledge of ULM
 - Proven budgeting/finance experience
 - Familiarity with the academic/student affairs integrated structure
 - Viewed as committed long-term rather than treating ULM as a “starter job”
- Other candidates:
 - Dr. Loggins: Strong personality, weak familiarity with ULM specifics; some factual errors; concerns about fit and readiness.
 - Dr. McMurray: Limited executive-level experience; strong emphasis on shared governance; perceived as presenting more from a dean’s perspective.

Committee Decision:

Unanimous recommendation to forward only Dr. McEacharn’s name to the President.

Rationale: The second-ranked candidate was not competitive enough to warrant a campus visit.

4.5 Concerns Raised by Senators

- Lack of transparency in the search process
- Compressed timeline prevented broader faculty engagement
- Absence of open forums required by **UL System Policy #5** (pointed out by Senator McDaniel)
- Many senators unaware that a search was even underway

President Tice will meet with the Executive Officers to determine next steps, including a potential meeting with President Castille, the Provost, and VP Graves to address procedural concerns.

5. Faculty Welfare Committee Report

Presenter: Senator Rowley (Chair)

5.1 Workload Policy

- Committee reviewed workload policy last updated in 2023.
- Discussion: Whether to begin revising again or wait due to administrative flux.
- Concerns:
 - Significant variation among colleges
 - Risk of major effort being ignored if administration not receptive

Senate feedback leaned toward delaying major revisions for now.

5.2 Committee Minutes Transparency

- Concerns raised that many program/school/college committees do not make minutes available.
- Recommendation:
 - Each college should maintain a public list of active committees and membership (Pharmacy cited as a good model).
 - Senator Rowley will forward the recommendation to the Provost.

5.3 Emeritus Status Renominations

- Question: Can a candidate denied emeritus status be nominated again?
- Policy does not explicitly forbid renomination.
- Committee noted:
 - The candidate learns the outcome from the President.
 - Renomination would require a new, independent nomination.
- Issue to remain open; no action taken.

5.4 Committee Leadership

- Senator Rowley elected Chair again for 2025–26.
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6. Other Items

Time expired before remaining agenda items were addressed. They will carry over to the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

- **Motion:** Senator Traweek
- **Second:** none. Approved by President Tice
- **Adjourned at:** 2:05 PM