

LIX No. 10
Faculty Senate Minutes
January 22, 2025

The Faculty Senate of Southeast Missouri State University met on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, in the Redhawks Room of the University Center. The following Senators were present: Michael Aide, Michael Bezushko, Larry Bohannon, Abram Book, Christopher Bradley, Eric Clements, Jenny Cropp (chair), Corrie Dudley, Erin Fluegge, Pam Gershuny, Barbara Lamont, Hayley Love, Kelly McEnerney, Jenna Moore (chair-elect), Joe Murphy, Josh Newth, Tomoaki Nomi, Peter Oman, Anthony Scherer, Kyle Schneider, Robin Smith, Mike Taylor, Misty Tilmon, and David Yaskewich. Interim Provost Doug Koch and SGA Liaison Sophie Martin were also present. The following alternates were present: Belinda McMurry. Andy Liu was not present or represented by an alternate.

Chair Cropp called the meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. and requested approval of the minutes from the November 20 meeting. In the draft minutes, Senator Bradley was incorrectly listed as present. This error was corrected in the draft, and the minutes were approved with this revision.

The meeting began slightly later to accommodate the Faculty Senate group photo as scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion to approve Bill 25-A-XX “Removing Notification to Miss Class” together with Bill 25-A-XX “Teaching During Absences” was made by Senator Taylor and was seconded by Senator Bohannon.

Senator Fluegge explained the content of the two bills, it will be necessary to pass both bills together because the content of “Removing Notification to Miss Class” is being moved to the newly renamed “Teaching During Absences” section (formerly “Sick Leave Policy”).

The major addition here is the list of possible methods of delivery. This non-exhaustive list allows faculty members to choose the alternative delivery method that best suits both their needs and those of their students. The language in the bill regarding “unanticipated absences of more than three days” was required by Human Resources. Questions were raised about whether the three-day period refers to calendar days or business days and who is responsible for notifying HR. Senator Fluegge will verify this information with HR. Another concern was how this policy would apply when a faculty member is not scheduled to teach on consecutive days. It was suggested that if HR has specific policy language, it should be published on their website, with the Faculty Handbook linking to it. Concerns were also raised that this policy could be used to pressure faculty to teach while sick and about what happens if a faculty member is unable to notify their chair. In response, the Compensation Committee emphasized that the intent of this addition is to provide faculty with options and flexibility, not to impose a mandate. Additionally, clarification was requested on how using an alternative mode of delivery would impact verified and unverified sick leave time.

These bills will be brought back for a second reading at the next Senate meeting.

Chair Report: Chair Cropp reports that she attended the Board of Governors meeting on December 13th and informed them of all Faculty Senate activities. The Presidential Search Advisory Committee conducted airport interviews last weekend, there should be an official announcement regarding progress soon.

Regarding the upcoming academic calendars, the university's academic calendar follows a fixed structure: 17 weeks each for the fall and spring semesters, 12 weeks for summer, and 4 weeks for the winter session, with

required gaps between terms. Due to the way the calendar aligns, an extra week occasionally appears, alternating between August and the winter break. In 2026, this extra week will be in August, pushing the spring semester to start before Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Some faculty and staff have raised concerns, particularly regarding the impact on international students and faculty traveling abroad. While the total winter break remains four weeks, the university's closure over the holidays can create the perception of a shorter available break for student services. Faculty members emphasized the need for flexibility and accommodation for students facing travel delays. Adjustments could be made, such as shifting the extra week from August to December to extend the winter break but doing so would alter pre-approved academic schedules. Discussions are ongoing to determine the best approach for future calendar adjustments.

Interviews for the Administrative Assistant for the Senate have been completed, offers are being made.

Administrative Liaison Report:

Interim Provost Doug Koch provided updates on several important issues. He began by acknowledging the unexpected passing of Dean Alberto Davila, sharing that the university is currently working on processes to appoint an interim dean and determine the next steps. In the meantime, efforts are underway to identify who is in which office, with student workers and facilities management staff assisting with office checks. Koch noted that Brandt Hall would be offline by this summer, prompting significant relocations. Departments including Criminal Justice, Social Work, and Sociology will move into Graul Hall, while some Anthropology faculty will occupy former chemistry spaces in Rhodes Hall. Despite these changes, the University is striving to keep departments intact as much as possible. These moves are part of a broader effort to address the University's aging infrastructure, with Facilities Management working closely with the Budget Office and the President's Office to secure funding for offline buildings.

Regarding class scheduling, Koch confirmed that centralized scheduling would continue, allowing departments time to review and adjust schedules for efficiency. Interim Provost Koch also responded to concerns raised by faculty about the system's effectiveness. He promised that a committee would be reconvened to assess the data and noted that the Registrar's Office is exploring other scheduling systems, especially given the high cost of the current system. In terms of enrollment, Koch shared that many programs only accept new students in the fall, which limits enrollment flexibility. Discussions are ongoing with the company Archer Education to better promote programs with flexible start dates, such as spring or summer intakes.

Additionally, he mentioned that free faculty/staff lunches are being offered at select campus locations, an initiative that has been well-received.

SGA Report: SGA Liaison Martin reported that the SGA will have its first meeting on January 27 and that she is excited to be interviewing some candidates for SGA senate seats, the SGA will be full with the exception of a few EHHS seats.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs: Senator Love reported that the academic calendar bill will be presented at the next meeting.

Compensation: Senator Fluegge reported that the faculty compensation met on December 4 and drafted the bills presented in this meeting. They met via email to verify the changes.

Documents: Senator Bohannon reported that the documents committee received feedback on how departmental elections of Senators are done and will be writing an amendment with the governance committee.

Governance: Senator Newth reported that the governance committee has been working with the membership to draft and finalize a bill on “Standing Committees and Councils”, and it should be presented to the Senate at the next session. They will also be working with the documents committee on drafting the amendment to section IV of the constitution.

Professional Affairs: Senator McEnerney reported that the professional affairs committee has been working on an emeritus bill, it should be presented soon. They are researching more about RNTT designations and to get feedback/input from RNTT, they will form a focus group from various departments across all the colleges. They will prepare a call for this focus group and forward it to the membership committee.

Membership: Senator Murphy reported that the membership committee has been working with the governance committee to approve the language in the “Standing Committees and Councils” bill. A call for the faculty senate liaison to the SGA Spring 2025, will be issued soon, as soon as any responses are received, the liaison will be appointed. Waiting for the professional affairs committee to draft an announcement to be circulated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Schneider: The department has received official notice that the MS in Athletic Training has been accredited.

Bezushko: Mobius is back online, contact library with questions, new Library Dean has started.

Murphy: Night sky observations to be finalized soon, will circulate a schedule.

Adjournment: Chair Cropp called for a motion to adjourn. Senator Taylor made the motion; seconded by Senator Love. The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, from 3-5 pm in the Redhawks Room of the University Center.