



FACULTY SENATE

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2024

Senators Present: Ann Abraham, Omid Bagheri, Christopher Banks, Tina Bhargava, Casey Boyd-Swan, Lauren Copeland, Jennifer Cunningham, Mark Dalman, Ed Dauterich, Kimberly DePaul, Julie Evey, Michele Ewing, Michael Fisch, Michelle Foster, Claudia Gomez, Tianyuan Guan, David Kaplan, Sean Kennedy, Edgar Kooijman, Janice Kroeger, Velvet Landingham, Tracy Laux, Richard Mangrum, Mahli Mechenbier, Taraneh Meshkani, Vic Perera, Amy Petrinec, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Lydia Rose, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, James Seelye, Deborah Smith, Diane Stroup, Jennifer Taber, Eric Taylor, Robin Vande Zande, Laurie Wagner, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Sue Wamsley, Christopher Was, Kyle Winkler

Senators Not Present: Tamra Courey, Vanessa Earp, Todd Hawley, Karen Mascolo

Ex-Officio Members Present: : President Todd Diacon, Associate Provost Kevin West for Provost Melody Tankersley; Senior Vice President Mark Polatajko; Vice Presidents: Sean Broghammer, Doug Delahanty, Amoaba Gooden, John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Peggy Shadduck, David Ochmann for Willis Walker, Stephen Ward; Deans: Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Allan Boike, Ken Burhanna, James Hannon, Versie Johnson-Mallard, Mark Mistur, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk, Diane Petrella, Elizabeth Piatt*, Alison Smith, Emmanuel Dechenaux for Deborah Spake, Christa Porter for Manfred van Dulmen

*Interim

Ex-Officio Members Not Present: Interim Senior Vice President Eboni Pringle, Vice President Valoree Vargo, Dean Amy Reynolds

Observers Present: Emeritus Professor Thomas Janson, Kelly Cichy, Brett Tippey

Observers Not Present: Ms. Olivia Eader, Ms. Emily Erb

Guests Present: James Ahmad, Daniel Alenquer, Michael Beam, Brenda Burke, Heather Caldwell, Daniel Clarke, Sue Clement, Andrew Crawford, Shannon Driscoll, Aimee Dudas, Michael Ellis, Christopher Fenk, Jay Frye, Nick Gatozzi, Ellen Glickman, Tony Hardin, Paul Haridakis, Jennifer Hebebrand, Torsten Hegmann, Kristina Kamis, Michael Kavulic, Jennifer Kellogg, Dana Lawless-Andric, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Julie Mazzei, Babacar M'Baye, Erin Michael McLaughlin, Michael Neenan, Collin Palmer, Amy Quillen, James Raber, Denise Seachrist, Scott Sheridan, Jillian Sokso, Lashonda Taylor, Therese Tillett, Kristen Traynor-Mitko, Sonya Williams

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 3:20 p.m. in the Governance Chambers, Kent Student Center.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Dauterich called the roll.

3. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda (Cunningham/Smith). The agenda passed unanimously.

4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2024

Chair Laux asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2024, Faculty Senate meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Cunningham/Piccirillo-Smith).

The minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.

5. Chair's Remarks

Chair Laux presented his remarks. [\[Attachment\]](#)

6. President's Remarks

President Diacon began his remarks by mentioning Professor Meredith Woo (Arizona State University) who he had heard at a conference on strategy at institutions. Professor Woo said that human beings with real lives *are* the institution as are our students. President Diacon said he will do his best to remember that we are all real humans. He reminded the audience that our students graduating this year will experience their first graduation ceremony because of COVID. He also

praised faculty and staff for their commitment to teaching, research, and preserving the communities in which they reside.

He moved on to a discussion of the budget to talk about what has been done to reduce expenses since 2017. This included yearly expense reductions every year for the last ten (excepting one) and for the next four years, which reduced or will reduce the budget between \$10-25 million per year. This is happening because of reduction in enrollment, state legislation guaranteeing cohort tuition, steady room and board rates (good for student access but not for finances), lagging state support, fierce competition for a dwindling pool of students, and massive increases in tuition discounting. He then talked about what they had done since he became president: (1) halved the number of employees in the President's Office (18-9); (2) eliminated contracts with 2 outside speech writers (saving \$400,000); (3) combined WKSU with Ideastream (saving over \$400,000); (4) closed the Kent State Golf Course (saving \$250,000 and selling the property for enough to pay it off); (5) eliminated spending on the ice rink downtown (\$400,00 savings, but the community was sad); (6) eliminated outdoor commencements (saving \$1.2 million/year); (7) eliminated cell phone stipends for central administrators (saving \$500,000/year); and (8) refinanced the debt three times since 2017 (saved \$2.2 million total).

He concluded his remarks by talking about cash on hand, which is around \$425 million, but he said it is not all available for immediate use. If we did run a deficit, money could be pulled from it, but he explained that doing so would be bad because our investment income from this fund is 2.6 % of our yearly operating budget. He said that this is different from the endowment and reminded us that Vice President Vargo will explain this all in May.

He then invited comments or questions.

Senator Smith observed that the elimination of cell phone stipends was partially the result of an information request about them from AAUP-KSU. The program stopped shortly afterward.

Senator Banks asked how the budget information affects our R1 status.

President Diacon said that we have carved out \$800,000 in recurring funding and \$300,000/year for postdoctoral positions to help with investment in research to maintain that status.

Chair Laux asked when the decision would be made about additional separation plans for regional campuses.

President Diacon replied that they still have to figure out how to incentivize people to do it, but it also needs to be done in a way that the university can afford. He hopes that attrition rather than eliminating positions would lead to the reduction in staff and faculty that will be needed in the future. He also defined attrition. Overall, he could not answer with certainty, but he added that he hoped it could be done by FY 26.

Senator Taylor asked whether they had examples of what was being done differently in his office.

President Diacon answered that the comprehensive print initiative policy (removing a lot of dedicated office printers) was one example.

President Diacon also addressed the announcement from Ohio University that they were pausing all awarding of race-based scholarships including those from private donors. He said that Kent is working on alternative language for donors, so that the awards would meet the definitions and terms of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, who they will meet with on April 16 to consult further before moving forward.

7. Presentation on Office and Responsibilities of Faculty Ombuds (presented by Faculty Ombuds Shannon Driscoll and Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs Kevin West)

Ombuds Driscoll presented the role and responsibility of the new office through a PowerPoint [\[attached\]](#) and a distributed charter [\[attached\]](#). Throughout the presentation, she stressed that the work of the ombuds is independent, neutral, informal, and confidential.

She then invited comments or questions.

Senator Wagner thanked Ombuds Driscoll and offered a minor edit to the charter (switching out “his and her” for “their” in the procedure and operation section).

Ombuds Driscoll agreed.

Associate Provost West thanked the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and AAUP-KSU for assistance with revising the charter and for recognizing how helpful the position could be.

Emeritus Professor Janson pointed out that the term “visitors” was used in paragraph 3 and suggested that that word be replaced with “faculty member” throughout the document.

Ombuds Driscoll said that the term in the ombuds community is “visitor” rather than “client” or other terms, but she said it could be changed in the charter.

Senator Smith said “faculty visitor” would work as well.

Ombuds Driscoll agreed.

Emeritus Professor Janson then asked for a description of her background and qualifications for the position.

Ombuds Driscoll mentioned her law degree, work doing mediation and conciliation, and her experience facilitating discussions about conflict in the government sector, as well as community mediation and group dialogs. She added that she had also provided training in these areas in the past.

Senator Piccirillo-Smith asked how this position relates to the Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC).

Senator Smith replied that the FEC hears complaints from faculty against other faculty alleging violations of the faculty code of conduct. They hear allegations, gather evidence, make adjudications, and do other things that will not happen in the Ombud’s Office. There may be things brought to the FEC that may be referred to the ombuds for remediation instead.

Ombuds Driscoll added that her goal is to be a supplement to things that exist.

Associate Provost West mentioned that there was no way to deal with conflicts without the ombud's position. FEC had filled that role at times, but our institution investing in an ombuds can help with real resolutions to conflict.

Senator Dauterich moved to approve the charter with the amendments from Senators Wagner and Smith and Emeritus Professor Janson.

Senator Kooijman seconded.

Chair Laux then asked for other questions.

Senator Boyd-Swan noted that the charter states, "The University and its agents will not retaliate against individuals for consulting with the Faculty Ombuds." She wondered whether this included other faculty within the department of concern. If so, does the Ombud's Office have any ability to enforce this if there is retaliation?

Ombuds Driscoll asked Associate Provost West to address this.

Associate Provost West said that the ombuds is not authorized; Faculty Affairs would be responsible.

Observer Tippey asked whether "faculty visitor" should be in upper- or lower-case letters.

Senator Smith responded that lower-case would cover all faculty members.

Senator Taylor asked whether the other document concerning the position that had been emailed [[attached](#)] was something that needed to be voted on.

Ombuds Driscoll said it was just an information list for visitors and did not need a vote.

Chair Laux asked about mandatory reporting for the ombuds and how it would work.

Ombuds Driscoll related her experience as a Title IX reporter, and she went into more detail about how the office will comply with state and federal law for such issues.

Chair Laux called for a vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. Additional Items

There were no additional items.

9. Announcements/ Statements for the Record

Chair Laux reminded senators to vote for the upcoming senate election and to reserve a spot at the Spring Forum.

10. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 4:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate

[\[Attachment\]](#) Chair Laux's Remarks

[\[Attachment\]](#) Ombuds PowerPoint

[\[Attachment\]](#) Ombuds Charter

[\[Attachment\]](#) Ombuds Information Sheet



**Faculty Senate Executive Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
February 20, 2024**

Present: Tracy Laux (Chair), Ann Abraham (Vice Chair), Athena Salaba (Appointed), Eric Taylor (At-Large)

Not Present: Ed Dauterich (Secretary)

Guests Present: President Todd Diacon, Provost Melody Tankersley

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. in VPA Trustees Conference Room on the second floor of the Kent State University Library. Attendees were also present on Microsoft Teams.

2. General Discussion

Chair Laux spoke about the “No Confidence Votes” procedure. The Faculty Senate is responsible for responding to requests. Senate needs a petition with 100 signatures to request action and include language. Senate cannot deny it; they have to take action. The Secretary of Senate has to validate names (most likely via email). Petitioners have to include how the referendum is decided: action item or a vote that goes to all FT faculty at Kent State University. Chair Laux suggested that the person/persons wanting the referendum should first meet with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to consult, so they can understand the process and the electorate.

3. Pathways of Distinction

The Pathways of Distinction were passed by EPC to go to Faculty Senate. There are conflicts between the Pathways of Distinction and the Kent Core. The Executive Committee decided not to take it to Senate without both programs being clearly defined and understood before motions are made. There has been a lack of consultation with Academic units in this process. Pathways went directly to the Colleges. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee needs to make sure the correct shared governance process is in place for all future changes.

Chair Laux also added that he would like Faculty Senate to keep an eye on non-credit bearing courses; he would like a consultation on all these types of courses.

4. Faculty Ombuds

Chair Laux reported that there is a meeting on 2/28/24 to discuss all issues related to the position.

5. Elections Update

Chair Laux reminded everyone of Faculty Senate elections and reminded those interested in running to turn in the necessary paperwork. He also spoke about Faculty Senate Executive Committee Elections.

6. Meeting with President Diacon and Provost Tankersley (3:00 pm.)

President Diacon reported that on 4/10/24, he will testify for one hour at 3:00 p.m. in Columbus, OH regarding the budget. The legal department advised him to prepare a report on our DEI employees and hiring trends because members of the legislature would most likely ask about these issues.

Provost Tankersley reported that there will be a Townhall for Regional Faculty on Friday February 23, 2024. The President will give his report out first, then Vice President Shaddock and the provost will give their presentation. They will open it for questions. In the presentation, regional faculty can pre-post questions as during the forum. The Townhall is scheduled to last 90 minutes. The provost is concerned that people are not understanding the urgency. The current goal is to maintain the regionals. However, we must change some of the operations and consolidate where we can.

Provost Tankersley asked how we can engage faculty to work through the changes coming to the regional campuses. The university will look different in two or three years. How do we engage faculty to make these changes? Faculty needs to be engaged and give ideas. Provost Tankersley requests faculty engage with faculty to offer solutions.

Chair Laux suggested starting with FAC's and ending with Faculty Senate.

Provost Tankersley agreed that she wants faculty to have a voice.

Chair Laux asked Provost Tankersley to keep the Faculty Senate Executive Committee up-to-date on how the process is going.

7. Additional Items

There were no additional items.

8. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Aimee Dudas (with edits from Ed Dauterich)



**Faculty Senate Executive Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
February 28, 2024**

Present: Tracy Laux (Chair), Ann Abraham (Vice Chair), Ed Dauterich (Secretary), Eric Taylor (At-Large), Athena Salaba (Appointed), Aimee Dudas (Administrative Assistant)

Not Present:

Guests Present: Associate Provost Kevin West, Faculty Ombuds Shannon Driscoll

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Faculty Senate Conference Room in 227 Michael Schwartz Center. Attendants were also present on Microsoft Teams.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting of January 31, 2024 (Abraham/Salaba).

The minutes passed as written.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of February 12, 2024 (Abraham/Salaba).

The minutes passed with a correction.

3. Senate Elections/Executive Committee Elections Update

Elections are coming. We have eight electorates. We have enough nominations for all positions for the general election.

Executive elections will be held in-person at the April meeting. Senators Vande Zande, Mangrum, and Copeland will form a committee to solicit nominees from those permitted to run.

4. Pathways of Distinction

The Executive Committee discussed whether or not to send the proposal for the Pathways of Distinction, which had been passed by the EPC, to the full Faculty Senate. The Executive Committee decided to invite administrative stakeholders to a future meeting to discuss concerns about moving forward with the project.

5. Spring Forum

The Executive Committee discussed the location, time, place, and topic for the forum. April 26, 2024 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. was decided on as a tentative date and time. It may take place in the Schwebel Room on the Kent Campus. Aimee Dudas will look into confirming the room reservation. The topic will be the new Faculty Ombudsperson (Ombuds).

6. Faculty Ombuds and Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (3:00 p.m.)

Vice Chair Abraham had to leave at 3:00 p.m. Afterward, the Executive Committee met with the newly hired ombuds. Faculty Ombuds Driscoll described her position as she understood it and addressed questions about the charter for the position and theoretical situations she might encounter during her work. Associate Provost West arrived at 3:30 to join the discussion. Many questions were focused on the level of confidentiality an ombuds could provide. Other questions concerned the scope of the ombuds' responsibilities.

7. Other Items

There were no other items.

8. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate



**Faculty Senate Executive Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
March 19, 2024**

Present: Tracy Laux (Chair), Ann Abraham (Vice Chair), Ed Dauterich (Secretary), Eric Taylor (At-Large), Athena Salaba (Appointed), Aimee Dudas (Administrative Assistant)

Not Present:

Guests Present: President Todd Diacon, Vice President Peggy Shadduck

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. in the Faculty Senate Conference Room (227 Michael Schwartz Center).

2. Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes available for review at the meeting.

3. Senate Elections Update

Chair Laux updated the Executive Committee on the elections. Results will be finalized this coming Friday. Results will be distributed to the committee next week. The percentage of votes that have come in compared to last year's total is similar.

4. Senator Elections for Colleges without Resident Faculty

College Advisory Committees (CACs) exist for the Graduate College, the University College, and the Honors College. Chair Laux called for a temporary measure to allow those CACs to nominate and elect one senator (3-year term) for the upcoming academic year. It could be TT or NTE faculty. We would get CACs' nominations after a motion, second, and the vote. After this, we can change the bylaws and charter of senate to provide for these elections. This idea will be taken forward to the Faculty Senate for consultation.

5. Faculty Senate Meetings AY 2024-2025

Chair Laux will distribute the dates, which will be up for approval at the next meeting.

6. Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda – April

Concerning the Educational Policies Council (EPC) transmittal, the graduate policies under the action items will be sent to senate. The two course inactivations will be provided to senate as information items. A motion was made and seconded to approve those actions (Salaba/Taylor). The motion passed.

Senate elections will be on the agenda as will an update on the re-envisioning of the Kent Core. The committee was also asked to look at the proposals for Pathways of Distinction before the upcoming meeting with J.R. Campbell (Design Innovation Hub).

7. Posting Senate Meeting Recordings on the Website

The Executive Committee agreed that this would not be done for the present. Chair Laux will contact those who were interested in access to the recordings.

8. Meeting with President Diacon and Vice President Shadduck (3:00 p.m.)

President Diacon and Vice President Shadduck discussed lifelong learning, budget reductions at other universities, David Hogg, Kyle Rittenhouse, and regional campus budget data with the Executive Committee.

9. Additional Items

There was a discussion of how non-credit courses are given status as “lifelong learning” at the university. The committee wanted more information about the designation.

8. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate