

Faculty Senate Minutes

February 24th, 2026: CB 104 & Teams, 2:30-4:30 PM

Call to Order; Silent Roll Call (0 min.)

[session start time 2:30]

Present:

Senator (S), ExCo (E), Other Non-Voting Member (O), Designee (D)

Abbie Fisher (E)	Douglas Gardner (E)	Kevin Smith (S)	Noelle Taylor (E)
Abdennour Seibi (S)	Evelyn Porter (E)	Laura Ricaldi (S)	Nyree-Dawn Nichols (S)
Ahmed Alsharif (S)	Frank Jones (S)	Laurie Toro (E)	Paul Morrey (S)
Alma Laney (S)	Heather Thiesset (S)	Machiel Van Frankenhuijsen (S)	Rich Paustenbaugh (E)
Brett Breton (S)	Howard Fullmer (S) (E)	Maria Blevins (S)	Richard Cho (S)
Chris Lindquist (S)	James Cox (S)	Matthew Duffin (S)	Sean Crossland (S)
Colleen Hough (S)	Jeff Packer (S)	Matti Smith (S)	Sean Tolman (E)
Craig Thulin (S)	Jennifer Shubert (E)	Max Aeschbacher (S)	Shelton Weech (S) (E)
Dan Perry (S)	Jim Oldham (S)	Mel Gurr (S)	Summer Karafiath (S)
Darin Eckton (S)	John Cornell (S)	Michaela Giesenkirchen Sawyer (S)	Tom Smith (S)
David Connelly (E)	Jordan Allen (E)	Nate Jeppson (S)	Tracy Sermon (S)
Deb Dowd (S)	Joshua Fagan (S)	Nicolas Clark (S)	Tyler Schnese (S)
Diego Alvarado Karste (S)	Karen Arteaga (E)	Nicole Gearing (E)	Vince Rossi (S)
Doug Czajka (S)	Kat Brown (E)	Nizhone Meza (E)	Wayne Vaught (E)

Absent/Excused:

Amin Zollanvari (S)	Erin Jones (S)	Matt Flint (S)	Ron Miller (S)
Carolyn Howard (S)	John Newman (S)		

Welcome & Updates, Evelyn Porter, Faculty Senate President

[2:30-2:35]

Approval of Previous Minutes (available in Faculty Senate Teams/[website](#))

- Minutes stand approved

Academic Affairs, Wayne Vaught, Provost

[2:35-2:50]

- Discussed ongoing presidential transition, the formation and role of the transition team (Cydni Tetro, Amanda Covington, and Commissioner Landward), the absence of an interim president, and the process for faculty and campus input into the presidential search, including development of a leadership profile and upcoming feedback opportunities
 - President Tuminez will remain through March for key decisions and events, with limited engagements in April
 - The transition team will be active until the new president starts and will remain in place for the first 100 days of the new president's term
 - The search is a closed process, with limited information released until the final announcement
- New reporting requirements for academic programs to the Utah Board of Higher Education
 - Departments must now report planned new programs for the next 3 years to UBHE, with the first report due April 1st, and that only pre-authorized programs can be submitted for approval

Policy

- **Introduce**
 - [361- Employee Leave](#) (*Marni Fisher*) [2:50-3:00]
 - Full revision; changes to bereavement leave, sick leave, parental leave, and vacation accruals
 - Bereavement leave is expanded from 3 to 10 days for immediate family and 5 days for extended family, with new definitions and inclusion of stillbirth, miscarriage, and failed adoption/surrogacy as qualifying events
 - Sick leave & long-term disability: employees out for more than 4 continuous months due to their own medical condition must apply for long-term disability
 - Parental leave is now 8 weeks paid for both mothers and fathers, combining previous parental and medical maternity leave, and is available in cases of stillbirth with appropriate medical documentation
 - [653- Non-Tenure Track Faculty Employment Matters](#) (*Kat Brown, Nizhone Meza*) [3:00-3:10]
 - New policy
 - Non-tenure track faculty are at-will employees, not eligible for tenure, and may be dismissed without cause, except lecturers dismissed for cause who have appeal rights similar to tenure-track faculty
 - Non-tenure track faculty are expected to meet full teaching workloads, with course assignments across various formats; service is permitted but not required, and reduced teaching loads for service or scholarship require approval
 - 3 ranks are established: Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Lecturer; advancement based on teaching excellence, 6 years of service at UVU per rank, and measurable department-approved criteria; prior service at other institutions does not count
 - Annual reviews are required, with possible NOINs and PIPs; non-tenure track faculty may participate in departmental meetings and some voting, but cannot vote on tenure/promotion of tenure-track faculty or serve in administrative roles except for accreditation
 - Appointments renew automatically unless a non-renewal notice is issued by May 15; reasonable notice is to be provided for discontinuation, and dismissals for cause follow Policy 649
- **Vote**
 - [203- Employee Fringe Benefits](#)(*Kedric Black*) [3:10-3:25]
 - [365- Consulting Leave & External Employment](#) (*Drew Burke & Kat Brown*)

VOTING RESULTS:

Policy 203: 34 agree, 0 disagree, 0 abstain

Policy 365: 31 agree, 0 disagree, 1 abstain

Non-Policy Items

- **Letter to Utah Board of Education** [3:25-3:35]
 - Review and approval of faculty letter to the Presidential Search Committee, summarizing faculty priorities for the next president, including student-centered leadership, shared governance, academic credibility, and transparent goal-setting
- **Commissioner Landward** [3:35-3:45]
 - Attending March 24th Faculty Senate meeting
 - A document will be created and distributed for faculty to submit questions and concerns in advance
- **GE Committee Bylaws** (*Mark Lentz*) [3:45-3:55]
 - Bylaws aim to formalize the GE Committee's autonomy, clarify roles, and provide continuity in response to statewide mandates, accreditation requirements, and administrative turnover
 - Proposal seeks to move the GE Committee from a subcommittee of UCC to an independent committee under Faculty Senate, aligning with practices at other institutions and ensuring faculty control over membership and leadership
- **Faculty Senate Meeting Access and Recordings** [3:55-4:15]

- The Teams channel and its recordings are restricted to Senate members due to voting and internal discussions, while official minutes are posted on the internal website
- Requests that transcriptions be made available to Senate members for departmental communication; investigation of technical solutions and will bring the question of broader access to a future agenda

- **Due Dates** [4:15-4:20]
 - Ongoing concerns about assignment due dates in Canvas; how close dates affect student perceptions
 - Faculty urged to communicate clearly with students to avoid confusion over deadlines, especially around spring break

Good of the Order [4:30-4:30]

Adjourn [session end time 4:30]

- Meeting ended at 4:30pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 17th, CB 104 & Teams

Announcements

No time allocated. Please review and send to your departments, as applicable.

[Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill Endowed Fellowship](#)

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill Endowed Fellowship is to support women scholars and their collaborators, scholars of any gender who mentor women students, or scholars of any gender whose work focuses on women.

1. *Women Scholars:* This category supports any scholarly or creative work conducted by a woman scholar on any topic. This category will also support collaborations and teams as long as the lead faculty member is a woman.
2. *Scholars Who Mentor Women Students:* This category supports any scholarly or creative work that will be carried out by one or more women students on any topic while under the direct supervision of one or more faculty mentors of any gender.
3. *Scholars Whose Work Focuses on Women:* This category supports any scholarly or creative work that focuses on women, broadly. This category will also support collaborations and teams including all scholars of any gender.

Please reach out to Maria Blevins with any questions (Maria.Blevins@uvu.edu)

Presidential Search Feedback: To submit feedback to the Board with regards to the Presidential Search email UVUpresidentalsearch@ushe.edu or <http://ushe.edu/uvu-presidential-search-feedback>

3rd Annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning: *Joy in Teaching, March 26–27, 2026*: Discover fresh ideas, inspiring practices, and renewed purpose at UVU's 3rd Annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning, hosted by the Faculty Senate's Advancement of Teaching Committee in partnership with the Office of Teaching and Learning. This two-day virtual event brings faculty together to share experiences, explore innovative approaches, and reflect on the joy at the heart of teaching.

[Symposium Website](#)
[Register for Symposium](#)

Fulton Library - Schedule Spring Instruction

As you prepare for the semester ahead, remember that our librarians offer customizable information literacy workshops to support your students' research skills. Sessions can cover a range of topics, including developing researchable questions, using subject-specific databases and search tools (such as ProQuest), evaluating sources, and analyzing information. These workshops can be held in our library instruction labs, in your regular classroom, or via Teams for livestreamed courses.

We encourage you to submit instruction requests as early as possible to help ensure your preferred dates. To schedule instruction for your English class, please use our online scheduling system: [Schedule Library Instruction](#).