

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 24, 2026 -- 4:00 p.m.

IN PERSON

Senate Chambers - DSU 2081

Called to Order: 4:00 p.m. by Dan Clark

Attendance:

[Copy of Agenda](#)

A. Approval of previous months Senate Meeting:

1. [Faculty Senate Minutes 8-27-26](#)

Approved: Unanimous

1. Chair - Dan Clark

- Called the meeting to order and confirmed the attendance of senators and alternates.
- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved without any additions or corrections.
- President Caboni was introduced as the guest speaker for the session.

B. President Caboni

President Caboni addressed faculty regarding university compensation, research growth, and strategic enrollment management.

Financial Priorities

Caboni discussed the institution's fiscal position, noting that while compensation is a top priority, the university must remain fiscally conservative. He highlighted past successes, such as providing a 2% raise and a flat \$1,600 increase for 80% of faculty to address lower-salary gaps.

Budget Outlook

- No salary increases are built into the current budget due to enrollment uncertainty.
- The **BEC** and leadership will evaluate financial flexibility in September and October, with updates expected in November.
- Caboni emphasized that the university has moved toward structurally balanced budgets after closing a \$40 million gap.

Academic Growth

- The discussion focused on transitioning to an R2 research status and modernizing curricula. Cabot noted that scaling research requires increased capacity in grant support and graduate funding.

Research Strategy

- To reach R2, the university must expand research doctorates, such as the new Data Science PhD.
- Faculty are encouraged to build stipends for graduate students and summer salary/buyouts into grant proposals.
- Cabot urged department chairs to utilize flexible workload policies to support high-performing researchers.

Curriculum and Instruction

- The university is reviewing general education frameworks to ensure student value and clarity.
- There is a focus on aligning degree programs with market needs, citing successful examples like the intersection of art, design, and engineering.

Enrollment Management

- Caboni addressed the challenges of declining higher education interest and shifting demographics. He defended the university's shift from focusing on pure headcount to prioritizing student success and retention.

Strategic Shifts

- The university has improved its four-year graduation rate from 29% to over 50%.
- While local Kentucky populations may decline, the university is targeting markets in Alabama, Atlanta, and Nashville.
- Caboni clarified that the restructuring of international programs was a response to changing global funding landscapes and visa denial rates rather than a loss of commitment.
- Regarding campus facilities, Caboni explained that the **Student Life Foundation** held responsibility for previous residence hall failures, but the university has since implemented third-party monitoring for all new construction projects.

Action Items

- Evaluate the university's financial position in September and October and determine whether funds are available for faculty salary increases.
- Work with university leadership and the BEC on the compensation review, then communicate the salary-increase outlook to faculty by November.

a. [Questions for President Caboni \(Posted\)](#)

c. [General Education Oversight, Assessment, and Improvement Committee \(Posted\)](#)

- General Education Assessment and Improvement Committee membership was approved.
- **Big Red Gen Ed** will proceed through Senate review, subject to procedural requirements.
- Faculty welfare discussions addressed AI disclosure, privacy, and survey practices.
- A second student representative was added to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

2. [Vice-Chair - Brooke Gross \(Report Posted\)](#)

- Standing committees are fully staffed.
- Faculty regent nominations and eligibility checks are continuing.
- A senator is still needed for the Parking and Transit Advisory Board.
- Announced her departure for a position at the University of Louisville.

3. Secretary - Jennifer Walton-Hanley

- Attendance sheets are available, please sign beside your name, if you are a guest please write your name at the end of the sheet, if you are filling in for someone write your name beside theirs

D. Standing Committee Reports:

1. Academic Quality, Missy Travelsted (Chair): (No Report)

2. [Budget and Finance, Eric Kondratieff \(Chair\): \(Report Posted\)](#)

Approved: Unanimous

3. Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities, Andrew Rosa (Chair): (No Report)

- So we met on the 18th.
- Consider new approach to digital AI moving forward.

- Some of the things we mentioned was thinking about how/if to use AI, quantitative qualitative data, and then also including disclosure statements in the survey, and giving people the opportunity to ask how, and then think about again
- So those are ongoing conversations that we will be looking at the next meeting.
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4. [Graduate Council, Whitney Stone \(Chair\): \(Report Posted\)](#)

Approved: Unanimous

5. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Ashley Fox (Chair): (No Report)

6. Faculty Handbook, Mac McKerral (Chair): (No Report)

E. Other Committee/Organization Reports:

1. American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
2. Budget and Executive Committee (BEC)
3. Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leadership (COSFL) / ONE WKU

F. Advisory Member Reports:

1. Provost, Robert "Bud" Fischer

- Budgets we're still working including the 2026 one.
- CPE wants 90 credit hour degree programs continue to move forward.
- So hopefully, it dies somewhere as we move forward, or at least goes away or becomes something different than a bachelor's degree.
- General education transfer policy is on the board now for CPE to take a look at,
- Advising committee put out its recommendations to the staff to the prep to Dan and SGA as well as staff senate, so you will see those, I'm sure, very soon.
- I would say, let's remember that the presidential seminar series is on November 3rd at 7 p.m. It's on AI, which has certainly got a lot of interesting discussion online
- I also would encourage you, if you haven't looked, to take a look at Top Road Teaching Tree Up Tour and take advantage of it. Get to see what other people are doing and how they're teaching, and get some new and fresh ideas about how to teach. It's in CITL, and it goes through October.
- Data science, the NOI for data science, UCP asked yesterday, so it continues to move forward. 2. SGA President, Caden Lucas
- There is now an optional statement on their part syllabus website for you all that has to do with mental health and well-being.
- That was something that came out from SGA, but worked its way up. That's an optional statement, so it includes info about both the counseling center and the resources for students related to mental health and well-being.
- I know there are mixed sentiments about the effectiveness of syllabus or syllabi statements and whether students read them or not.
- This is step one of whatever for SGA in terms of mental health and well-being.
- There is a new model for the counseling center that students need to know about, and two, hopefully it will take some work off of your plate if you can refer students to our professional mental health counseling services versus students relying on you all.

3. Staff Senate Liaison, Andria Henry

- President Caboni came to speak with us last month
- I do want to, you know, you guys work with any staff closely.
- Encourage them to participate in the staff project.

- The more people participate, the more our staff team can work to help develop our staff
- So we're going to survey.

4. Faculty Regent, Shane Spiller

- Attending dinner for newly tenured faculty, a program that started three years ago to recognize that people want tenure
- Caboni supports tenure
- Board meeting in November

G. Old Business:

H. New Business:

H. Adjourn to Summer