

UNIVERSITY SENATE
Meeting Minutes
March 31, 2025

The University Senate was called to order at 3:30 p.m., in 111 Harrison Hall on Monday, **March 31, 2025**.
Members absent: Olga Brezhneva, Murat Dinc, Carol Fabby, Michael Gowins, Jennifer Green, Nya Hodge, Patrick Houlihan, Haim Kassa, David Motta, Nelchi Prashai, Ayako Reiff, Caitlin Spyra, Maria Weese, Cheryl Young

Two Minutes Speech: From Senator Kevin Reuning (**Attachment A/pg. 12**)

1. **Call to Order and Announcements and Remarks** – Rosemary Pennington, Chair of University Senate Executive Committee
 - a. After the Budget Symposium on the 14th we will be meeting every week. Which means we will hear something one week and vote on it the next week. I ask that everyone be prepared, stay current, and ready for that as I believe there is a lot of curricular coming.
 - b. SB1 has passed in Ohio
 - i. I've been thinking a lot about David Foster Wallace's speech - This is Water. In it, he told Kenyon College graduates that the purpose of a liberal arts education wasn't about getting them a job or a white picket fence with a big yard and two kids, but - instead - to teach them how to think.
"The really important kind of freedom," he said, "involves attention, and awareness, and discipline, and effort, and being able truly to care about other people and to sacrifice for them, over and over, in myriad petty little unsexy ways, every day."
Higher education is going to need those kinds of every day sacrifices if it is to survive in the current environment. While we were away, Senate Bill 1 was signed into law in Ohio - upending the work we do and jeopardizing academic freedom. One of the bill's stated goals was to ensure a diversity of viewpoints on college campuses - something that has always existed , but which laws like this one threaten. The law attempts to regulate class discussion according to the Ohio Capital Journal and will force death threats for their work and who has been targeted by white supremacists. I do not feel safe in this situation. And I know many of you feel the same. I hope that our institution, and institutions across Ohio, are working to ensure that their faculty and staff are safe to do the work they've been hired to do and that their students get the educational experiences they paid for.
But that experience, again, is not just about a job or internship or career trajectory - it's also - Foster Wallace suggests - about learning how to think. Learning how to be in the world. Learning to care about others when you don't want to or when it's not easy. That, he says, is the power of an education and I agree.

Since our last meeting, an executive order has been issued from the White House that seeks to dismantle the Department of Education. ED administers federal financial aid, which allowed this child of poverty to rise above her station. It administers Title 9, which has made the participation of women in a wide array of sports at the collegiate level possible. It also studies teaching effectiveness so that we can all be better teachers. It upholds federal standards so that a student can be sure the education they get in one state is on par with the education they might receive in another.

NIH, NEH, NSF - important funders for many of us in this room - are under threat in the name of efficiency.

All of this is happening while so many of the people in power who should be our champions are silent.

I don't know what higher ed is going look like after all of this, but I do know on one is coming to save us.

It's up to us to do what we can to protect what we can. To protect each other. To project our fields and our values. It's going take lots of small, unsexy every day sacrifices to save ourselves.

To quote Foster Wallace again - It is unimaginably hard to do this, to stay conscious and alive, day in and day out - but the other option is to watch all we care be destroyed without a fight. I'd rather go down fighting.

2. **Approval of University Senate Minutes**

- a. University Senate Full Meeting Minutes_03.10.2025 (Results: 42-Yes, 00-No, 03-Abstain)

3. **Consent Calendar:** The following items were received and accepted on the Consent Calendar:

- a. Curricular Items 03/12/2025
- b. Graduate Council Minutes 03.11.2025
- c. LEC Meeting Minutes 03/04/2025
- d. LEC Meeting Minutes 03/11/2025

4. **Old Business**

- a. SR 25-13 Policy Revision: Degree Honors and Distinction Policy, Zeb Baker, Executive Director, Honors College - ***Discussion and Anticipated Vote on March 31, 2025*** - (Results: 45-Yes, 00-No, 00-Abstain)
 - i. Current Policy Language
 - 1. To graduate with University Honors, a student must have completed course and program requirements of the Honors College. To achieve University Honors with Distinction, students must achieve the University Honors course and program requirements, achieve a 3.50 cumulative grade point average upon completion of the required credit hours for graduation, and complete an approved large-scale project or an intensive pre-professional experience.

- ii. Proposed Changes to Existing Policy
 - 1. To graduate with University Honors, Honors College students must complete the Honors course and program requirements, achieve a 3.25 cumulative grade point average upon completion of the required credit hours for graduation, and complete an approved Honors Senior Project.
 - iii. Amended Proposed Language For Policy Changes
 - 1. To graduate with University Honors, Honors College students must complete the Honors program requirements, including an approved Honors Senior Project, and achieve a 3.25 cumulative GPA.
 - iv. All three of these honors colleges use a 3.25 GPA threshold to earn their versions of University Honors
 - v. Honors students must maintain a 3.2 GPA in order to graduate as University Honors
 - vi. Simply requires the completion of an honors project to earn "with Honors" distinction. No GPA requirement.
 - vii. Amended proposed language for Policy changes
 - 1. To graduate with University Honors, Honors College students must complete the Honors program requirements, including an approved Honors Senior Project, and achieve a 3.25 cumulative GPA.
 - viii. Senator Questions and Comments
 - 1. Senator: The language of the proposal is self-contradictory and, thus, confusing. It says, "achieve a 3.50 cumulative grade point average upon completion of the required credit hours for graduation." However, "cumulative" means ALL hours and "required credit hours" excludes elective hours. So, which is it? Is it 1) a cumulative 3.50 or 2) a 3.50 in your "required credit hours?" They are not the same thing. I suggest deleting "completion of the required credit hours for" so that the sentence simply says "achieve a 3.50 cumulative grade point average upon graduation," which seems to be the spirit of the proposal. (A) The elimination of confusing language in policy is something to which all of us should always aspire. I am working with suggestions from Ted Peters, other senators, and members of the Honors College advising staff to craft revised language that should avoid such confusion moving forward. I would imagine that the senator who offered this question will be pleased that any mention of "required credit hours" will be eliminated from this revised language, principally because they are correct: it needlessly obfuscates the intent of the policy. I will be sharing this revised language with Rosemary for her to distribute among the senators shortly.
- b. SR 25-14 Graduate Degree Requirements - Doctor of Nursing Practice, Jason T. Abbitt, Acting Associate Dean of the Graduate School - ***Discussion and Anticipated Vote on March 31, 2025*** - (Results: 45-Yes, 00-No, 00-Abstain)

- i. Senator Questions and Comments - None
- c. SR 25-15 Proposed Policy Change: Teaching, Clinical Professors, & Lecturers (TCPLs) - Melissa Thomasson, Associate Dean for Faculty Excellence & Professor of Economics - ***Discussion and Anticipated Vote on March 31, 2025*** - (Results: 24-Yes, 12-No, 09-Abstain)
 - i. Faculty Composition Task Force
 - 1. Original Proposal (will become FSB Governance)
 - a. The three-year average ratio of T/TT faculty to all full-time instructional faculty shall be no lower than 60.00%
 - 2. Revised Proposal
 - a. TCPLs may not exceed the following percentages of continuing faculty (full-time TCPL and Tenure/ Tenure Track) within each division:
 - b. CAS: 23.0%
 - c. CCA: 29.0%
 - d. EHS: 29.0%
 - e. CEC: 29.0%
 - f. FSB: ~~29.0%~~ 40.0%
 - g. CLAAS: 29.0%
 - ii. Senator Questions and Comments
 - 1. Senator: Have you considered asking Senate to raise TCPL cap to 40% of continuing faculty and using the 60% T/TT and 40% (TCPL & VAPs) in your own FSB governance? The current policy that governs faculty composition is a "TCPL" policy. Currently, there isn't a section for overall faculty composition which would govern TT, TCPL, and VAPs. Remember to take the word "ratio" of the proposed language since current policy uses percentages, not ratios. (A) Thank you so much for this very insightful and creative proposed solution. We are following it, and will propose a 40% TCPL cap to Senate on 3/31, and have the 60% T/TT floor be part of FSB governance. This preserves all elements of our original proposal and maximizes consistency at the MU level.
 - 2. Senator: Normally, there is a rationale for this change. What is the rationale for this?(A) The committee that was formed discussed this and to us there is no reason to cap them as we really value TCPLs. To us to have the freedom to convert VAPs to TCPL faculty. ASCB accreditation we have to have a minimum number of tenure stream faculty and to keep that standard in the department and division. We asked the committee what percentage would help us to maintain this value here.
 - 3. Senator: Given the teacher load differences. How does this impact that for the bottomline?(A) Right now FSB is under enrollment pressure. So I don't think that it won't increase the number of courses being offered. Right now we are already around 28 to 29 percent TCPLs. This will allow us to increase those TCPL without replacing that VAP position. It give

faculty the job security that they have earned and we don't have to replace them with VAPs because they can become TCPL. The only flexibility it gives us is converting those VAPS into TCPL.

4. Senator: You said you are doing this to convert VAPs to TCPLs, but I thought we weren't doing that?(A) Language used very loosely. They would have to go through the application and due process.
5. Senator: The language of conversion has been a great source of controversy across the campus and we should not use that language. Every TCPL requires a competitive search by policy.(A) Thank you for noting that.
6. Senator: Why go for converting into TCPL lines is it mostly money or the nature of the positions that you are looking at?(A) It is more like filling the needs across the department. It gives us the flexibility to fill that.
7. Senator: What is the current 3 year average ratio of Tenure/ Tenure Track Faculty ? What holds the FSB honest in maintaining this 3 year average over time?(A) 57-60 most of the time. This is all going into FSB governance.
8. Senator: There are some departments that have more VAPs than others. Are there some departments in FSB like that? (A) For anything with a major in it ASCB is very specific but the minimum has to be 40% Tenure/ Tenured Track.
9. Senator: I haven't put together the 2 minute speech I wanted to give before this happened, but we have to have a different process for this type of request in my opinion. This is an absolute budget drag and what is the number of VAPs converting to a TCPL. There is a cost to that because TCPLs make more than VAPs. Budget wise 10 years out, how will this help us? We have a financial issue that is costing us departments and faculty. I would like to ask us within the next year to come up with some sort of guidance that we can either share with the BOT or for the BOT to share with us what the rules are for adding budget liability, because we are going to see more of them while there are cuts being made across the university. It is not really a question because I don't think you will have the numbers for us, but if we push FSB up to 40% what is the cost impact of that and we don't have a process to help with that. (A) Numbers would be great I agree. Under the current budget models and if it runs in the red FSB would have to make cuts somewhere else.
10. Senator: If you are hiring TCPL you would get several hundred applications, VAPs you would get maybe 30 or so. You can't put a VAP in a class of 140, but you could easily put TCPL in a class of 40. TCPL in economics is cheap, but the reason we can't do it is because of Caps.

The TCPL is going to be a lot better for the students and increase education value in my opinion.

11. Senator: I think we need to have budget numbers on these items moving forward. There are divisions on this sheet that do not have the same accreditations as a backstop. I am concerned that in the future that other Deans will come to us with a proposal similar to this one. I am not saying that is a good or bad thing, but this body will have to deliberate on that division by division basis. Without a uniformed accrediting body this is going to look very different than for example like engineering. So I really do think that we need to do a much better job as a body on these policies moving forward as we consider the request.
12. Senator: From the budget approach, I believe that the BOT will push the Divisions to do this for everyone because it is cheaper to hire a TCPL and they will teach more than folks in tenure track. The university would get a $\frac{1}{3}$ more courses at a $\frac{1}{3}$ less cost across the university and that is my biggest concern. This would erode the whole notion of teacher scholar model not that I am dismissing but something about tenure track position is important for us to preserve.
13. Senator: I agree with looking at this again in the future more broadly and how VAPs are not included in these calculations at all. That could create something weird like having a department with 100% VAPs. I know that is not something that they would want, but it just seems weird that they are not included at all in this. I think all of this is something we should consider more broadly, not with just FSB.
14. Senator: I don't think TCPL is a threat to teacher teacher-scholar model. Every TCPL that I know is a Teacher Scholar, but my concern is actually academic freedom and the protection of tenure, especially in the world that was layout of us earlier. Which is not a FSB problem, but that FSB brought this to the table when we have a larger set of concerns to think about.
15. Senator: For too long, the VAP position has been an unknown variable that we are not controlling, and it misses things up the calculations. I would prefer to have something more similar and universal for all the divisions, that is perhaps something like the 60% Tenure line Faculty so that VAPs are not becoming an issue instead of feeling like we are putting a bandaid on here and there. To have something more universal instead of having different policies for different divisions.
16. Senator: When we passed the TCPL cap policy during COVID, we expanded the right to decide TCPL caps to the divisions, but we maintained Senate's right of approval. At that time, we talked over all of these issues, including the need to know budget contexts and to know about the faculty mix, including VAPs. The resulting policy said that we

must hear about the context for the changes, and also that the Provost will provide updates to Senate on overall faculty mix. So we do address these concerns in policy already. We need to be following the policy and thinking about budget and faculty mix when thinking about TCPL caps.

5. **New Business**

- a. Policy Revision: Admission, Cynthia Klestinec, Associate Dean of the Graduate School - ***Presentation only; Discussion and Anticipated Vote on April 14, 2025***
 - i. Policy Revision #1: Admission
 - 1. Continuing Graduate Status (unlimited number of graduate hours within an indefinite period of time)
 - 2. If a CGS student applies for admission to a degree or certificate program, no more than 12 of the most recently earned hours can be applied toward the graduate degree, or no more than 3 hours can be applied toward a graduate certificate
 - ii. Senator Questions and Comments
 - 1. Senator: You are saying an indefinite period of time. So someone who has been here 4 years can't get more than that 12 hours across that 4 year period of time? (A) Correct, it really applies to those 3 hours applied to the certificate and nothing else has changed.
- b. Policy Revision: Certificate in Cognate Area, Cynthia Klestinec, Associate Dean of the Graduate School - ***Presentation only; Discussion and Anticipated Vote on April 14, 2025***
 - i. Policy Revision #2: Certificate in Cognate Area
 - 1. Shifting from 12 credit hour minimum to 9 credit hour minimum
 - a. Take less time to complete a certificate
 - b. It also brings us in line with other institutions.
 - ii. Senator Questions and Comments
 - 1. Senator: Is this uniform across other Ohio Schools?(A) Yes, it is.

6. **Special Reports**

- a. Updates on Grant Funding, Sue McDowell, Vice President for Research and Innovation
 - . How Miami is staying up to date with changing regulations over federal funding
 - 1. With our principal investigators (PI,) how we have been staying up to date
 - a. Email communication is key
 - a. Dr. Rick Page and I held forums for them. Rick and I are Research Fellows in the Association for Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) Council on Research (CoR). This helps us stay up to date with the landscape and changes to the grant funding that have been coming through federal agencies.
 - a. We meet with APLU CoR members every 2 weeks, but recently we have been meeting weekly with other universities. This

allows us to see how different institutions are handling the changes coming in.

- a. The approach we are taking here is not just what Rick and I decide, but with taking advice from other institutions and working with General Counsel Amy Shoemaker to help guide us through this process.
- a. Another guiding influence has been what is in our current contracts, to make sure we are staying within those contract requirements.

2. Status of indirect cost recovery rates

- a. For example: The negotiated rate that Miami has with the National Institute of Health can be as high as 44.5% on some awards and there are lower rates too. This is based on a large part of where the work is going to be done because the indirect recovery cost dollars are to reimburse the institution on things like HVAC and lights.
- a. Indirect cost recovery dollars are very important here at Miami. It is a negotiated rate that we entered into a contract with the NIH.
- a. Future rates are unknown, and a decrease in rates would impact a lot of institutions.
- a. Dr. Page and I went to DC to advise how losing those dollars would majorly impact our small community.

2. What should a principal investigator (PI) on a current award be doing

- a. Keep doing work that they are obligated to do under an existing contract unless they receive a stop work order.

3. If Miami is a subaward on an award through another institution, what should the PI be doing

- a. Keep doing the work unless the other institution notifies them to stop work

4. When to communicate with Office of Research and Innovation (ORI)

- a. Whenever anyone hears from a funding agency

5. What Miami faculty and staff should do if they are considering submitting a funding proposal.

- a. We are encouraging people to put together a proposal as long as those forms are still out there. Also we are always here to support you if you need assistance.

i. Senator Questions and Comments

- 1. Senator: Thank you because you have such a steady hand and we would not be in the position that we are currently in without the work that you have done. My concern about what the future is going to look like. How much effort should we put into these programs that depend on grants?(A) We are one of the smallest schools represented and schools are being very calculating and I think that is what we also have to do. There are going to be areas that will continue to be funded and funded very well. If we have strength in that area and see it being a growth

area. Even though we are seeing such devastating effects on some of our PI's in some very important areas that we as a nation set aside money for and that is why so much of this is illegal. There are going to be some areas that I would take into calculus and what it looks like at a national level. Many of these were made by executive order and when congress has to deal with the impact of some of the decisions. There is not a crystal ball here but there is an economic impact that those in leadership positions will have to deal with as well. Strategic investment and make the most of the moment.

2. Senator: Has there been talk about how Tenure and Promotion would be affected for the PIs who are experiencing funding cuts and rather there is any pause being enabled? Also for our grad student researchers who might be affected by the cuts? (A) There is a lot of data on Tenure Track pause and how devastating that could be to a career. I would really encourage scholarship to look at data and it is not like the pandemic and it is going to take a lot of communication with your Chair and Dean. If I am not getting these notifications then they are not getting them either. Let them know about the hindrances to progress so that they can make a plan. Data would show that it would be a horrible idea. For Graduate Students, I have not spoken to Mike Crowder about that.
3. Senator: I didn't get any emails regarding forums taking place. Have you had conversations about those who have lost their grants entirely to reach out to the media? I think given that opportunity to share the impact of that with the media to change the conversation about what grants do as I don't think a lot of people understand. (A) I haven't been advocating for publicity, the landscape is changing so on an individual basis, I would be cautious of that. I would advocate to be a part of a professional organization instead.

7. Provost Update

- a. SB1 email just came out while we have been here in Senate. It has become law and will go into law in 90 days which we believe would be by June 26th. We look forward to having rich conversations with the General Counsel and sharing that information with you. We will start the work of implementing the changes to follow the law. During a previous IUC meeting there was talk about giving universities a checklist to handle everything that is included in this law as it covers a lot of different things. The email that everyone received provides a link to the law and I encourage everyone to review it. If you have any questions, please feel free to send questions to me, Elise and Marko.
 - i. Academic Affairs what we will need to do regarding the following areas:
 1. Student Evaluations we will have to add a question to those. The question is does the faculty create a classroom atmosphere free of political, racial, gender, and religious bias? The chancellor will be

drafting additional questions, and I will learn more on Thursday about this.

2. Annual Evaluations - Will need to be tweaked. The BOT will need to approve our annual evaluation process. It must contain a summary assessment in each section that exceeds, meets, or fails to meet which is mentioned in the CBU. So we will be looking to see how those docs inform each other and how we proceed there. Annual Evaluations must now include workload assignments from the following year. Deans and Provost must review the annual evaluations and a written system for peer evaluation for teaching must be established. We will work with CTE and others regarding that portion.
3. Annual Review Low Enrolled Majors - We must establish a process to review low enrolled majors and we have been monitoring that already. As most of you know, programs that are graduating less than 5 students a year on a rolling average will be eliminated.
4. We also have to stand up a new course on American Civics - Marko has been working with a group of colleagues on this. We do have a little bite of time to figure this portion out as we have 5 years to solve that problem.
5. Syllabus - We do have a little bite of time to figure this portion out as I believe we have until the fall of 2026.
6. Tech and software we have advisors to help us on that part as while
7. We are hoping to get more answers soon.

b. Comments

- i. Senator: This is just a thought for IUC. Would it be possible to track the cost of this? So that if there are court cases or amendments that might come up we would have the data. (A) When SB83 was proposed, Universities did have to supply a lot of data about projected cost, and we also had to deliver for example what it would cost for the Civics class. I will bring that back up to them.
- ii. Senator: We have heard that the IUC decided not to lobby against SB1 at all. Is that accurate and if so why? (A) I don't know why. I would imagine that because of State Funding could have been in jeopardy by doing that is the reason behind that decision. There was an article in the Chronicle about it.
- iii. Senator: On the matter of the civics course, I know we want to comply with the law. I think it would be good to have any conversation before it becomes implemented, that it should come before this body for a vote. I don't know that we are required to have it replaced our general curriculum or Miami Plan. It seems like a complement to it. (A) I don't think that the law requires us to make it a part of general education. That is our understanding so far of the law.
- iv. Senator: Is there any inside conversation regarding the enforcement angle on this? (A) If you read the law there is a lot about failure to compile.

- v. Senator: I don't know how you can say anything that is not political.
- vi. Senator: What is the perception? Do you think that they feel like they have slapped higher education enough and they will move onto something else or is there going to be more to come? (A) My sense is that the Ohio General Assembly feels that it is a robust law for higher ed. I have not heard of anything else coming down the track at this time. I think it is going to take a lot of work to implement this and figure out how to be in compliance in a number of different areas. We are in conversations with the Ohio Department of Higher Ed so they know that we have a lot of paperwork to do all the time. So, I think that they are sensitive to how much more this is going to add.
- vii. Senator: Regarding the Syllabus database there will be faculty targeted based on experiences in other states. I would strongly recommend a policy or committee for faculty who may receive communication in response to the syllabus so they know who they can forward it to, to make sure general counsel is brought in as soon as possible, because it can be severely abusive to those targeted and I want to make sure we are engaging on the union with that. As I know that this sort of thing can happen very quickly and could put our colleagues' lives at stake. (A) I have heard that feedback before. Page 18-19 is where you will find the information about the syllabus.
- viii. Senator: I noticed that other schools are not posting people's office locations, phone numbers, and even emails. So maybe it's time that we started doing that to make it harder for people to locate us.
- ix. Senator: Are there plans on how to deal with controversial topics? (A) For example, C\climate change is defined as a controversial topic. We are going to be diving into all of that and trying to figure out what the protocols will be, along with how to best support/ protect faculty as we implement this.

8. Adjournment