



University Senate Meeting
Thursday, September 18, 2025 -- 4:00 p.m.
Senate Chambers - DSU 2081
Draft Minutes

Call to Order:

- Chair Dan Clark called the regular meeting of the WKU Senate to order on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 4:00 pm in the Senate Chambers - DSU 2081. Senate Chambers. A quorum was present.
- **Members' Present:** Robin Ayers, David Bell, Kristin Bennett, Scott Bohnam, Dan Clark, Margaret Crowder, William Czekanski, Gihan Edirisinghe, Brian Elliott, Sheila Flener, Said Ghezal, Amber Giacona, Brooke Gross, Phillip Gunter, Kate Hudepohl, Sara Herbert, Nancy Hulan, Angie Jerome, Sebastian Leguizamon, Yuyun Lei, Mac McKerral, Andrew Mienaltowski, Yaser Mowafi, Yvonne Petkus, Kimberly Pharris, Matt Pruitt, Kelly Reames, Michelle Reece, Stephanie Riehn, Pinky Rusli, Sarah Scali, Matthew Shake, Kandy Smith, Jason Stewart, Dan Strunk, Thomas Blair, Melissa Travelsted
- **Alternates Present:** Matt Nee (Zhang Rui) and Kim Pharris (Miranda Peterson)
- **Absent:** Brandon Barber, Pallav Bera, Erica Billingley, Daniel Boamah, Xingang Fan, Ashley Fox, Gregory Ellis Griffith, Gary Houchens, Tom Hunley, Kerron Joseph, Eric Kondratieff, Meghen McKinley, Karen Schifferdeckere, Matt Tullis, and Aaron Wichman
- **Guest:** Whitley Stone, Kirk Atkinsun, Danita Kelley (CHHS), and Jennifer Klemm (CEBS)

A. Approve May Minutes

1st/2nd: Pruitt/Jerome, motion passes unanimously

B. Officer Reports:

1. Chair – Dan Clark
Dan wants to make the senate experience meaningful and have a purpose for what we are doing. He has met with committees and has been charged with making the experience meaningful this year. We will advocate for faculty welfare. If you would like to learn more about the Senate, please get in touch with him. Don't be afraid to discuss topics.

2. Vice Chair – Brooke Gross

Elections

CEBS representatives for faculty welfare and handbook.

Brooke asked for volunteers to support Dr. Caboni's request for four new committees.

Wellness: Sarah Scali (CHHS0, Michelle Reece (CHHS) and Missy Travelsted (CHHS)

Faculty house-Sheila Flener (CHHS) and Nancy Hulan (CEBS)

Ramp Discussion Model-Dan Clark (OCSE)

Fiduciary Committee Discussing Retirement options- Need a volunteer

BEC Faculty Rep Vote: Ron Rhoades (GFCB)

Alex Olson (PCAL)

Eric Reed (PCAL)

Roh Rhoades (GFCB)

3. Secretary– Sheila Flener

- No report

C. Standing Committee Reports:

1. Academic Quality, Missy Travelsted (Chair): (No Report)
2. Budget and Finance, Eric Kondratieff (Chair): (No Report)
3. Colonnade/General Education, Andrew Mienaltowski (Chair): (Report Posted)
1st/2nd: Mienaltowski, motion passes unanimously
4. Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities, Ashley Orehek (Chair): (No Report)
5. Graduate Council, Kirk Atkinson (Chair): (Report Posted)
1st/2nd: Whitney Sound, motion passes unanimously
6. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, TBD (Chair): (No Report)
7. Faculty Handbook, Mac McKerral (Chair): (No Report)
Only missing one person from CEBS.

D. Other Committee/Organization Reports:

- a. American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
no report
- b. Budget and Executive Committee (BEC) (Report Posted)

The report is posted online. Permanent nonvoting member from athletics

- c. Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leadership (COSFL)
No report HB4
- d. ONE WKU
no report

E. Advisory Member Reports

a. Faculty Regent: Shane Spiller

1. Board regents summer meeting. Generalities: Things are very positive, pressures are very intense, and we are viewed in a positive light regarding our beliefs. Members of the board are quite engaging and curious about what we are doing. Resolutions: Academic quality: 14 months left in his term. Challenge of living in both worlds. His role is to support the president and the challenges. Concerns with workload and challenges in academic quality. We need a new term (academic capacity), Less staff support, fewer TAS and GAs. Pressure is on the faculty. We are struggling to do the basic job. The Faculty Senate should be focused on the curriculum. Is there a problem with academic capacity? We need to have data, not anecdotal stories. Academic quality or institutional instruction? Is the Ramp model a valid concern? He needs data and not anecdotal stories. HB4: Retaliation against faculty and staff at institutions. We had to adopt an institutional neutrality. Everything we say can be used against us.

Matt Knee: Can we post our opinions?

Shane Spiller: Be careful!

Provost Fischer advises expressing your beliefs, but not on your WKU account. “Don’t be stupid.” “Clemson Story.” He is always available.

b. Provost—Bud Fischer

New faculty ombudsperson. Bunch of committees, Health and Welfare (3), Faculty House (3), Budget Ramp (1). KGP in the state of Kentucky has to be in place by 2028. A suitable co-curricular resume accompanies KGP and UDP discussions and will address some of the items they have requested. Sonic Ky museum exhibit. -Please go. CNN reports on who has been fired.

c. SGA President— Rush Robinson

No Report

F. Old Business no

G. New Business:

President Tim Caboni's address to the Faculty Senate

Donor celebration for the Chandler Hall

A. Why do we use the format we do

B. Positivity is a choice (This job is not easy, and how we get up and focus on opportunity, the ability to do work that is meaningful, and the power to do so. Terminally negative people hurt everyone.

C. Academic restructuring: CHHS and PCAL, the Deans have the power to restructure the academic unity. Cost saving. Academic units are thinking about who they want to be or what they can become. Keeping faculty lively. Questions are on the edges of programs, silos to connect across disciplines. “What does the world want from a WKU student. User Experience, collaboration between silos, Art, Computer Technology, Design, and Communications. Faculty get excited about teaching something new. “How can we think about how to work together?” We need to listen and be responsive.

- D. Ramp Budget: We need to be flexible, meet the needs of our students and ourselves, and stay within budget. The Dean's office has reviewed its staff over the past seven years. 3 Colleges shrank their staff. How to improve staff's skills and not pull them away from their calling. Wellness Coordinators have been hired from student fees, along with advisors. If we can alleviate the advising burden, it will enable the faculty to focus on student success.
- E. Part-time faculty hires: They give an opportunity for people from the real world and students to be able to connect the coursework to real life. The faculty needs to correlate the number of students with the major. Help with the workforce. Research draws on faculty teaching, and there is a need for part-time assistance with that. We will not drive our curriculum with temporary personnel.
- F. Budget: Thank you to all the faculty for staying with us and closing the budget gap. This year was the first time the Board of Regents approved a budget that did not include carry-forward dollars. We all feel the increased pressure of healthcare costs and the rising cost of living. The legislature needs help with funding. The BEC is here for a reason. Their job is not to sit in a room and make decisions about the budget; it needs to include faculty. We need to be creative and intentional, focusing on what we need to do.
- G. PHD program funding: Can we support academics more? The next campaign should focus on dollars to support faculty excellence.
- H. PHD programs, a group will be working on that. They need to be interdisciplinary and not in silos. Data science can drive healthcare, etc. How can we build different areas of discipline? A group of faculty will be working on it. We need to get this right. CPE, credibility, and resources to be successful
- I. 40% drop in graduating high school students. There is a great skepticism about what we do. Is my student coming back home, students coming home thinking differently, coming to WKU, and coming home in high debt? Loss of foreign exchange students and the number of KY high school students not going to college. We are relying on net tuition revenue. We are targeting students who can be here. We are no longer targeted at discount rates. Our retention rate is now 80%. Graduation rate 57.75%, producing 33% graduates than other institutions in the state.
- J. Why am I teaching 18 hours? No one should be doing this. "Say no." Talk to your department chair.
- K. Why are we building more buildings? He will not say no to the legislature appropriating money for capital campaigns.
- L. 18% decline in faculty and staff. Students don't decide to attend a university based on who the president is. We began our focus on colleges, deans, and faculty. We want to create an atmosphere where students thrive. We pull the levers on the centralized portion. Centralized advising. We have not reconciled what COVID did to us. Students and faculty are hurting. Spiritual and financial health are just as important as physical health
- M. AI: Is going to disrupt (Google-Gensis") Conversation around going back to blue books. Help students understand that it is a tool. How do we integrate it into academics? Significant implications for pedagogy. How does it change what we teach for the real world? We will figure it out, because it is happening quickly.
- N. Faculty heard: Workload policy-allow faculty to craft what they want to do. It will enable people to achieve the work-life balance they desire. Academic quality is not necessarily TA or GA. We need educational programs that match real-world needs.

- O. Why did we not allow adjuncts from other universities? Unethical: 100% effort is needed. Being with students and colleagues needs community.
- P. Discourage publishing in predatory journals. The university should have rules on impact scores. Colleagues need to know we are publishing in the correct areas.
- Q. What are you doing to attract students to WKU, not UK, UofL, and UT?
Goldilocks institution. We should not aspire to be an R1 institution. Focus should be on quality. Rigorous academic, deep engagement, high-impact quality programs. This is our niche. We are not built on an R1 model. Totality of the experience. Mentorship production of outcomes. 2/3 from KY and 1/3 out of state. We have a competitive advantage by offering in-state tuition to bordering states. We need to expand the pool. Admissions is focusing on Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama.
- R. Group Unite: Development and athletics are now coordinating with partners, so we are not frustrating everyone.
- S. Salary: Salary is correlated with morale. We worked to keep everyone above the 80% mean. Faculty salaries nationwide are not keeping pace. Inflation is out of control. No one is keeping up. He will continue to work on. Goes hand in hand with healthcare. The faculty has representation on the benefits committee. 1. Figure out how to constrain the cost.
- T. Why are university administrators being paid more? They don't have the benefit of tenure. Risk is involved. He encourages us to be involved in administration. These jobs are vicarious
- U. Part-time pay needs to be assessed.
- V. Can we have standardized across the university? No.
- W. Student life foundation: It is important to have outside business partnerships. We need professional firms. We need to meet a different demand from the student lifestyles they are coming from.
- X. Weight loss shot will bankrupt us. Bowling Green is known as the weight-loss capital of the US.
- Y. HB4 does not affect academic freedoms, student work, 31st addition in the faculty handbook. Students should be able to pick the lenses they want.
- Z. He is thankful for what we do and proud to be part of it.

Meeting adjourned. Pruitt/Scali motion passes unanimously.

Faithfully submitted: Sheila S. Flener