



## FACULTY SENATE

### APPROVED MINUTES OF OCTOBER 30, 2024

<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>

The 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Faculty Senate AY 2023-2024 was held on October 30, 2024, at 12:11 p.m. via Zoom.

#### Attendance

FIRST	LAST	DEPARTMENT	TERM ENDS (SPRING)	ATTENDANCE	TOTAL
Lisa	Haylon	Accounting	2025	x	3/5
Valerie	Andrushko	Anthropology	2026		4/5
Jeff	Slomba	Art & Design	2027		5/5
		Athletics	2026		
Nicholas	Edgington	Biology	2026		5/5
Kate	Toskin	Business Information Systems	2025		5/5
Jeff	Webb	Chemistry & Biochemistry	2026		4/5
Shawneen	Buckley	Communication Disorders	2027		5/5
Melanie	Savelli	Communication, Media & Screen Studies	2025		4/5
Shafaeat	Hossain	Computer Science	2025		5/5
Matthew	Ouimet	Counseling	2027		3/5
Laurie	Bonjo	Counseling & School Psychology	2026		4/5
Beena	Achhpal	Curriculum & Learning	2027		5/5
Maria	Diamantis	Curriculum & Learning	2024		5/5
Jennifer	Cooper Boemmels	Earth Science	2025		5/5
Younjun	Kim	Economics	2027		5/5
Peter	Madonia	Educational Leadership & Policy Studies	2026		4/5
Paul	Petrie	English	2026		5/5
Mike	Shea	English	2027	x	3/5
Eric	West	Environment, Geography, & Marine Sciences	2025	x	4/5
Sandip	Dutta	Finance & Real Estate	2025	x	3/5
Amanda	Strong	Healthcare Systems & Innovation	2025		4/5
Matthew	Rothbard	Health & Movement Sciences	2025		3/3
Daniel	Swartz	Health & Movement Sciences	2025		5/5
Christine	Petto	History	2026		5/5
Polly	Beals	History	2026		5/5
Yan	Liu	Information & Library Sciences	2027		5/5
Cindy	Simoneau	Journalism	2027		5/5
Elizabeth	Wilkinson	Library Services	2026		5/5
Amy	Jansen	Library Services	2025		5/5

Alison	Wall	Management & International Business	2025		5/5
Melvin	Prince	Marketing	2026	✖	4/5
Sebastian	Perumbilly	Marriage & Family Therapy	2025		5/5
Ray	Mugno	Mathematics	2025		5/5
Owen	Biesel	Mathematics	2025		5/5
Jonathan	Irving	Music	2026		4/5
Deborah	Morrill	School of Nursing	2026		5/5
Elizabeth	Hurlbert	School of Nursing	2027		4/5
Virginia	Metaxas	Part-Time Faculty (HIS)	2026		5/5
Garbielle	Ferrell	Part-Time Faculty (JRN)	2025		5/5
Michael	Sormrude	Part-Time Faculty (BIO)	2024	✖	0/5
Michele	Delucia	Part-Time Faculty (PSY)	2024	✖	0/5
Rex	Gilliland	Philosophy	2026		5/5
Evan	Finch	Physics	2027		5/5
Jonathan	O'Hara	Political Science	2025	✖	0/5
Katherine	Marsland	Psychology	2025		3/3
		Psychology	2027		
John	Nwangwu	Public Health	2027		5/5
Deron	Grabel	Recreation, Tourism, & Sport Management	2026		5/5
Isabel	Logan	Social Work	2026		5/5
Stephen Monroe	Tomczak	Social Work	2025		5/5
Gregory	Adams	Sociology	2026		5/5
Joan	Weir	Special Education	2027		5/5
Douglas	Macur	Theatre	2027		4/5
Tricia	Lin	Women's & Gender Studies	2025		5/5
Luke	Eilderts	World Languages & Literatures	2026	✖	4/5
Natalie	Starling	SCSU Faculty Senate President	2025		5/5
Dwayne	Smith	Interim SCSU President			5/5
Barbara	Cook	Chair, Graduate Council			5/5
Meghan	Barboza	Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Form			5/5
Riyanna Sarah	Singleton Wittman	SGA		✖	

#### GUESTS

Cindy Stretch  
 Dyan Robinson  
 Julia Irwin  
 Marilu Rochefort  
 Mark Rozewski  
 Michael Kingan  
 Steven Hoffler  
 Tracy Tyree  
 Trever Broliar

The following senators are empowered by the Faculty Senate to represent the Faculty Senate and thereby represent the faculty body in their role and contributions to the respective committee/group in which shared governance of business is being conducted with a duty to report back to the Faculty Senate minimally once per semester (additional reports determined by the respective representative or upon request by the Faculty Senate). It is recommended representatives also seek the Faculty Senate's support and endorsement for matters determined by the respective representative or upon request by the Faculty Senate.

<b>Faculty Senate Representation</b>	<b>Faculty Senate Representative(s)</b>
Administrative Faculty Senate	Kate Marsland
Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Search Committee	Natalie Starling
Chief Information Officer (CIO) Search Committee	Matt Rothbard
DEI Advisory Council	Laurie Bonjo
Early College Experience	Joan Weir
Faculty Development Advisory Committee (FDAC)	Kate Marsland
Social Venture Partners	Mike Shea Jeff Webb Melanie Uribe Stephen Monroe Tomczak Michael Sormrude
Strategic Action Plan Subcommittees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancing Social Justice</li> <li>• Maintaining Academic Excellence</li> <li>• Engaging our Community</li> </ul>	Miriah Kelly Kenneth McGill Michael Sormrude
Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF) liaison	Cindy Simoneau
University Budget and Space Committees	Nicholas Edgington Cindy Simoneau Christine Petto
University Library Committee (ULC)	Amy Jansen 1 Representative Unfilled
VP of DEI Search Committee	Laurie Bonjo Elizabeth Hurlbert

October 30, 2024

Faculty Senate President Natalie Starling called the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate to order at 12:11 p.m. via Zoom.

- I. Announcements
  - A. N. Starling shared that there is an online form that can be used for questions/comments. That link is <https://forms.office.com/r/RvsQ8wfEe3>.
- II. Minutes of the previous meeting held on October 16, 2024, were accepted as distributed.  
<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>
- III. Guest(s)
  - A. N. Starling asked the body if there were any objections to changing the order of business. Hearing none, the body welcomed C. Stretch to take the floor.
    - i. C. Stretch provided an overview of the NCHEMS draft report. She explained that this draft is the first part of a two-part report, with a focus on diagnostics, while the second part will propose solutions. She highlighted that the report was commissioned by Governor Lamont, motivated by a desire to reduce funding to the CSCU system. The report emphasizes cost-cutting measures and "right-sizing" rather than examining the benefits that state universities provide to Connecticut. She noted concerns with the report's methodology and data sources, including comparisons with right-to-work states that do not fully account for the regional context. She encouraged faculty to review the report critically, communicate its implications to their departments, and contact her or K. Swanson with feedback. C. Stretch reiterated that the report poses a political challenge, which will require a response that emphasizes the value of public higher education and the essential contributions of faculty and staff.
    - ii. Key Points Raised During Q&A
      - 1. Timeline and Audience: The final report is expected in November 2024. It is primarily directed at state legislators and the Higher Education Sustainability Group, with implications for the Board of Regents (BoR) decision-making.
      - 2. Impacts on Faculty Negotiations: C. Stretch suggested that the report's emphasis on budget constraints may affect collective bargaining, with potential limitations on resources for faculty salaries and benefits.
      - 3. Curricular and Structural Impacts: Faculty expressed concerns that system-wide changes in program offerings might limit innovation and reduce responsiveness to student career needs.
      - 4. Continued Engagement: C. Stretch emphasized the importance of faculty advocacy and staying informed, as decisions stemming from this report could affect program availability, staffing, and university structure.
- IV. Faculty Senate President's Report  
<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>
- V. Reports of the Standing Committees
  - A. The reports of the Standing committees were received.
  - B. Academic Affairs (M. Diamantis): Drew senators' attention to the drafts of resolutions in the packet regarding pass/fail policies at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Feedback should be sent to the committee co-chairs, O. Biesel or M. Diamantis.
    - i. B. Cook shared that the Graduate Council would not meet before the next meeting of the Faculty Senate and inquired about the possibility of voting on the resolutions after that

body could meet. N. Starling shared that she would bring this concern to the Executive committee.

- C. Technology (D. Macur): Shared that they met with the Faculty Senate President to discuss the digitization of the Grade Appeal documents and procedures. The committee also discussed the faculty computer refresh policy, as well as access to international sites for teaching and research purposes.

## VI. Special Committees

- A. Reports from UCF and Grad Council were received.
- B. Election Officers (D. Swartz and O. Biesel): M. Rothbard will be the Faculty Senate Representative on the CIO search committee.
- C. Search Committee for VP for DEI: L. Bonjo shared that the committee has been reviewing files; the portal for applications closes in a few weeks and announcements will be made once candidates are invited for campus visits.
- D. Early College: J. Weir shared that the program is working well; over 1,000 students are enrolled this semester. Next semester, we will be able to start offering scholarships for cooperating teachers to take courses at Southern.

## VII. Guest(s)

- A. J. Irwin, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
  - i. FlexStart Program: J. Irwin reported on the FlexStart initiative, a pilot program offering a later start for a small selection of courses aimed at increasing enrollment. Initial findings indicate an additional benefit as FlexStart allowed non-participating students to join courses, filling seats. Data from the pilot will be analyzed at the semester's end to evaluate its efficacy and potential future implementation.
  - ii. Fellows Program and Faculty Searches: J. Irwin shared that the university is finalizing budget projections, which will influence the availability of tenure-track faculty searches and positions for current fellows. Budget constraints and timelines for new hires, especially in accreditation-critical areas, remain a challenge. Concerns were raised about meeting accreditation needs and ensuring a diverse hiring pool in light of the delay in decisions.
  - iii. University Status Change (R2 Classification): J. Irwin discussed steps to address the university's anticipated R2 research status. She proposed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to address general information about the R2 classification, followed by a series of open discussions and panel events. Feedback included ensuring that the FAQ reflects faculty concerns, particularly regarding potential impacts on faculty-student ratios, resources for the library and grants office, and implications for doctoral programs. It was clarified that this classification will occur automatically based on existing IPEDS data.
  - iv. Future Planning: J. Irwin and faculty suggested using an open link for senators to submit questions, ensuring the FAQ is responsive to faculty needs and tailored to SCSU's context. This will enable an informed and collaborative approach to the transition process.
  - v. N. Starling noted that budget discussions would follow, with an invitation for senators to continue sharing questions or feedback on these topics.
- B. M. Rozewski, Executive Vice-President of Finance and Administration
  - i. Overview of Budget Status and Future Projections: M. Rozewski provided a financial update, noting a positive close for fiscal year 2024 due to higher-than-expected enrollment, housing occupancy, and one-time ARPA funds. Fiscal year 2025 is projected to break even, again supported by one-time funds. However, beginning in fiscal year 2026, the university will face significant deficits—estimated at \$9.8 million in FY26 and \$6.4 million in FY27—if no additional funding or revenue sources are secured. The university will focus on increasing enrollment, making moderate expenditure reductions (around 2-3%), and tapping into reserves. However, permanent appropriation increases will likely be necessary to maintain fiscal stability.

- ii. Five-Year Sustainability Plan Mandate: M. Rozewski outlined the BoR directive requiring each institution to develop a five-year sustainability plan. This plan will assume no tuition increases in the first two years, followed by moderate increases tied to the Higher Education Consumer Price Index in subsequent years. Personnel costs, constituting the majority of university expenses, will likely be managed through attrition and unfilled vacancies rather than layoffs, though specific positions have not yet been identified.
- iii. Questions and Faculty Input: Faculty senators raised concerns about the impact of budget cuts on the university's programs, emphasizing the need for shared governance and transparency in developing the sustainability plan. Senators were advised faculty to monitor legislative action closely, as the final appropriations will be determined during the Connecticut General Assembly's upcoming session. President Smith confirmed the university's commitment to transparency and shared governance, inviting faculty input in the budgeting process.
- iv. Transition and Recognition: M. Rozewski announced that his retirement was effective immediately (11/1/2024). Faculty and administration expressed gratitude for his transparency, expertise, and dedication, recognizing his significant contributions to the institution. President Smith assured that the transition would be managed by a capable finance team and that a new CFO would be hired soon.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. M. Diamantis **moved to** adjourn. **Seconded.**
  - i. The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

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L. Eilderts  
Secretary

