



FACULTY SENATE

APPROVED MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2025

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

The 10th Meeting of the Faculty Senate AY 2024-2025 was held on February 12, 2025, at 12:11 p.m. via Zoom.

Attendance

FIRST	LAST	DEPARTMENT	TERM ENDS (SPRING)	ATTENDANCE	TOTAL
Lisa	Haylon	Accounting	2025	✖	3/10
Valerie	Andrushko	Anthropology	2026		8/10
Jeff	Slomba	Art & Design	2027		10/10
		Athletics	2026		
Nicholas	Edgington	Biology	2026		9/10
Kate	Toskin	Business Information Systems	2025		10/10
Jeff	Webb	Chemistry & Biochemistry	2026		9/10
Shawneen	Buckley	Communication Disorders	2027		10/10
Melanie	Savelli	Communication, Media & Screen Studies	2025		7/10
Shafaeat	Hossain	Computer Science	2025		9/10
Matthew	Ouimet	Counseling	2027		8/10
Laurie	Bonjo	Counseling & School Psychology	2026		7/10
Beena	Achhpal	Curriculum & Learning	2027		10/10
Maria	Diamantis	Curriculum & Learning	2024		10/10
Jennifer	Cooper Boemmels	Earth Science	2025		10/10
Younjun	Kim	Economics	2027		10/10
Peter	Madonia	Educational Leadership & Policy Studies	2026	✖	5/10
Paul	Petrie	English	2026		9/10
Mike	Shea	English	2027		8/10
Eric	West	Environment, Geography, & Marine Sciences	2025		9/10
Sandip	Dutta	Finance & Real Estate	2025		8/10
Amanda	Strong	Healthcare Systems & Innovation	2025		9/10
Matthew	Rothbard	Health & Movement Sciences	2025		7/8
Daniel	Swartz	Health & Movement Sciences	2025		10/10
Christine	Petto	History	2026		10/10
Polly	Beals	History	2026		10/10
Yan	Liu	Information & Library Sciences	2027		10/10
Cindy	Simoneau	Journalism	2027		10/10
Elizabeth	Wilkinson	Library Services	2026		10/10

Amy	Jansen	Library Services	2025		9/10
Alison	Wall	Management & International Business	2025		10/10
Melvin	Prince	Marketing	2026	✖	4/10
Sebastian	Perumbilly	Marriage & Family Therapy	2025		9/10
Ray	Mugno	Mathematics	2025		9/10
Owen	Biesel	Mathematics	2025		10/10
Jonathan	Irving	Music	2026	✖	6/10
Deborah	Morrill	School of Nursing	2026		10/10
Elizabeth	Hurlbert	School of Nursing	2027		9/10
Virginia	Metaxas	Part-Time Faculty (HIS)	2026		9/10
Garbielle	Ferrell	Part-Time Faculty (JRN)	2025		10/10
		Part-Time Faculty	2027		
		Part-Time Faculty	2027		
Heidi	Lockwood	Philosophy	2026		3/3
Evan	Finch	Physics	2027		10/10
Jonathan	Wharton	Political Science	2025		1/1
Katherine	Marsland	Psychology	2025	✖	5/8
Patricia	Kahlbaugh	Psychology	2027		3/3
John	Nwangwu	Public Health	2027		10/10
Deron	Gabel	Recreation, Tourism, & Sport Management	2026		9/10
Isabel	Logan	Social Work	2026		10/10
Stephen Monroe	Tomczak	Social Work	2025		10/10
Gregory	Adams	Sociology	2026		9/10
Joan	Weir	Special Education	2027		8/10
Douglas	Macur	Theatre	2027		8/10
Tricia	Lin	Women's & Gender Studies	2025		9/10
Luke	Eilderts	World Languages & Literatures	2026		8/10
Natalie	Starling	SCSU Faculty Senate President	2025		10/10
Dwayne	Smith	Interim SCSU President			9/10
Barbara	Cook	Chair, Graduate Council			10/10
Meghan	Barboza	Chair, Undergraduate Curriculum Form			9/10
Riyanna	Singleton	SGA		✖	0/3

GUESTS

Brian Johnson
 Craig Hlavac
 Dyan Robinson
 Jules
 Julia Irwin
 Lillian Wanjagi
 Tracy Tyree
 Trever Brolliar

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.

Faculty Senate Representation	Faculty Senate Representative(s)
Ad Hoc Committee for Formalizing Faculty Advising	Michael Shea Stephen Monroe Tomczak Virginia/Ginny Metaxas Jeffrey Webb
ACT/KPI Committee	Natalie Starling
Administrative Faculty Senate	Kate Marsland
Chief Information Officer (CIO) Search Committee	Matt Rothbard
Commencement Planning Committees	Maria Diamantis
Dean of the College of Education Search Committee	Joan Weir
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"> • Advancing Social Justice • Maintaining Academic Excellence • Engaging our Community 	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

February 12, 2025

Faculty Senate President Natalie Starling called the 10th meeting of the Faculty Senate to order at 12:12 p.m. via Zoom.

- I. Announcements
 - A. T. Lin shared that the Department of Women's & Gender Studies is co-organizing an event entitled "Palestine Solidarity and Movements for Gender, Racial, and Intersectional Justice" on March 5, 2025, from 5:30-7 (virtual). Please contact wgs@southernct.edu for more information. An informational flyer is attached below.
 - B. L. Eilderts shared that the French section in the Department of World Languages & Literatures, with support from the Department of Communication, Screen & Media Studies, is organizing the French film series "Mal à l'aise | Uncomfortable" that will kick off on March 13 at 5:30 in the Adanti Student Center Theater with the classic film *Belle de Jour*. More information can be found on the website: <https://sites.google.com/view/southernct-french/2025-film-series>. An information flyer is attached below.
- II. Minutes of the previous meeting held on January 29, 2024, were accepted as distributed.
<https://inside.southernct.edu/faculty-senate/meetings>
- III. N. Starling asked the body if there was any objection to changing the order of business. Hearing none, the body welcomed Dr. Lillian Wenjagi, Chief Financial Officer and Vice-President for Finance and Administration.
- IV. Guest: Dr. Lillian Wenjagi, CFO and Vice-President for Finance and Administration.
 - A. Budget Overview and Impact on Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU):
 - i. L. Wanjagi provided an update on Governor's Proposed Budget, highlighting significant funding reductions for CSU campuses:
 1. FY26 Allocation: \$192.7 million for CSU campuses
 2. FY27 Allocation: \$198.7 million for CSU campuses
 3. Southern's Share:
 - a. FY26: \$56.7 million
 - b. FY27: \$58.5 million
 4. These figures do not provide sufficient funding to offset existing budget deficits at Southern, intensifying the need for cost-cutting measures.
 - ii. Personnel Fringe Benefits and Five-Year Sustainability Plan:
 1. The budget figures were revised less than an hour before the meeting, reflecting the impact of personnel costs and fringe benefits on institutional finances.
 2. A task force is currently working on a five-year sustainability plan to mitigate financial shortfalls.
 - B. Hiring Freeze and Position Eliminations:
 - i. L. Wanjagi outlined the plan to freeze 30 positions, with 27 already identified:
 - ii. A strategic hiring freeze has been implemented by the CSCU system office.
 - iii. All newly vacant positions must undergo criticality review, assessing their impact on:
 1. Institutional mission
 2. Student support
 3. Instruction
 4. Campus safety
 - iv. Details on the 27 Frozen Positions:
 1. The positions represent \$2.8 million in savings.
 2. The estimated savings from freezing 30 positions is \$3.2 million.

3. The three additional positions to be frozen are yet to be identified, as they will depend on upcoming vacancies.
- v. System-Wide Hiring Freeze Requirements:
 1. All vacant positions must be evaluated before approval for rehiring.
 2. Exceptions may be granted by the President based on:
 - a. Risk mitigation
 - b. Regulatory compliance
 - c. Revenue generation
 - d. Strategic institutional priorities
 3. Southern is required to report every hiring exception and denial to the system office, with implementation set to begin on February 14.
- vi. Discussion on the Hiring Freeze:
 1. C. Simoneau inquired about the process for filling vacancies. L. Wanjagi confirmed that frozen positions are permanently eliminated unless the financial situation improves. Future vacancies will be subject to the system-wide hiring freeze but may be filled under exceptional circumstances with presidential approval. C. Simoneau also noted that no administrative positions were included in the freeze. L. Wanjagi responded that the institution is required to maintain a President and Provost for accreditation and that the current interim status does not reduce overall costs. Interim President D. Smith added that the budget shortfall remains substantial even with the hiring freeze, as Southern did not receive additional funding to offset the \$21 million budget shortfall from the previous year.
- C. Discussion on Administrative Positions and Cost-Saving Measures:
 - i. Several faculty members raised concerns about administrative costs and potential cost-saving strategies:
 1. C. Simoneau questioned why administrative positions were not included in the hiring freeze. She suggested maintaining interim leadership roles for positions like Provost and DEI Director to save costs rather than immediately launching searches for permanent replacements. Interim President Smith explained that freezing leadership positions does not generate cost savings since those salaries remain active regardless of interim status.
 2. H. Lockwood inquired about the financial cost of the ongoing presidential search, suggesting postponing the search as a cost-saving measure. L. Wanjagi acknowledged that executive searches are expensive but did not have the exact figures at the time. She committed to researching and sharing the total costs associated with the last presidential search.
 - ii. Discussion on Decision-Making Authority for Leadership Appointments:
 1. H. Lockwood further inquired whether Southern has the authority to delay the presidential search or if it is a system office decision. L. Wanjagi indicated that the President reports to the Chancellor, making final authority on leadership searches a system-level decision. C. Simoneau clarified that faculty concerns were not about eliminating leadership roles but rather delaying searches to allow for cost reductions during budget constraints.
- D. Next Steps and Follow-Ups:
 - i. L. Wanjagi committed to providing financial details on the cost of presidential and executive searches.
 - ii. Southern will comply with the System Office hiring freeze mandates, but faculty input will be considered in budget discussions.
 - iii. Ongoing discussions will be necessary as additional budget adjustments may be required in response to legislative outcomes.

V. Remarks from Interim-President D. Smith

- A. Following the discussion on budget reductions and hiring freezes, Interim-President D. Smith provided further insights into both statewide financial challenges and federal policy shifts impacting SCSU.
- B. University Budget Composition:
 - i. Southern's \$230 million budget is primarily funded by:
 - 1. State appropriations (~33-34%)
 - 2. Tuition and fees (remaining ~66%)
 - ii. The Board of Regents voted to freeze tuition for the next biennium, meaning that while costs will continue to rise, the university cannot generate additional revenue through tuition increases.
- C. Exploring Auxiliary Revenue Streams:
 - i. Unlike flagship institutions (e.g., UConn, which derives significant revenue from auxiliary enterprises like medical schools and professional programs), SCSU's auxiliary revenue remains limited.
 - ii. Discussions are ongoing regarding how to monetize existing university services, including:
 - 1. Clinical services (e.g., the Autism Clinic)
 - 2. Medicaid reimbursements
 - 3. Other entrepreneurial ventures
- D. Federal Policy Changes and Their Potential Impact on SCSU
 - i. Interim-President Smith also provided an update on federal-level policy changes that could have implications for the university's funding:
 - ii. NIH Grant Indirect Cost Cap:
 - 1. The Trump administration previously capped indirect costs at 15%, down from 65%, significantly reducing overhead funding for institutions.
 - 2. Interim-Provost J. Irwin confirmed that Southern's current indirect cost rate is 65%, meaning a shift to 15% would reduce federal grant-based funding.
 - 3. Although SCSU has few NIH grants, this policy could impact future grant-seeking efforts.
 - iii. Cuts to DEI-Related Federal Grants:
 - 1. Federal agencies are rapidly complying with directives to strip Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) funding from federal grants.
 - 2. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has already announced a 50% staff reduction, which could impact SCSU's grant funding.
 - 3. Southern receives approximately \$14 million in grant funding, employing 137 full-time and part-time positions—making any cuts to federal grants a potential risk to university employment.
 - iv. IPEDS Data System Under Threat:
 - 1. The Trump administration has proposed eliminating IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System), which is essential for federal reporting and institutional research.
 - 2. ASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) has recommended that institutions download their IPEDS data immediately in case of elimination.
 - 3. Southern's institutional research office has already secured its data to prevent disruptions.
- E. Proactive Strategy:
 - i. A dedicated university webpage will be launched to track federal policy changes and their impact on SCSU.
- F. Five-Year Sustainability Task Force and Enrollment-Driven Budget Planning
 - i. C. Simoneau, faculty representative on the Five-Year Sustainability Task Force, provided an update on the university's long-term financial strategy:

- ii. Task Force Status:
 - 1. The five-year sustainability report is in its final drafting stage, with submission now due on February 19.
 - 2. Task force leadership includes Provost Irwin, Tracy Tyree, Kelvin Rutledge, and the Finance Office.
 - iii. The Central Role of Enrollment in Financial Stability:
 - 1. Interim-President Smith emphasized that enrollment is the primary driver of university revenue, reinforcing the push for student recruitment and retention.
 - 2. Census Day enrollment figures indicate a 2.7% increase, adding approximately 500 new students—a significant boost to the budget.
 - 3. On-campus housing and meal plan participation remain critical to university finances.
 - iv. Contingency Planning for Further Budget Cuts:
 - 1. If the state fails to provide additional funding, the only remaining cost-cutting option will be personnel reductions through attrition.
 - 2. While layoffs are not currently planned, future position freezes or non-renewals may be necessary if financial conditions worsen.
 - 3. Faculty advocacy remains crucial in securing additional legislative support.
- G. Faculty Discussion on Cost-Saving Measures
- i. Administrative Costs & Leadership Searches:
 - 1. C. Simoneau noted that no administrative positions were included in the hiring freeze.
 - a. L. Wanjagi clarified that Presidential and Provost roles are required for accreditation, making them non-negotiable.
 - b. Interim roles do not result in cost savings, as salaries remain unchanged whether a position is interim or permanent.
 - 2. H. Lockwood questioned the cost of the ongoing Presidential search and whether it could be postponed to save money.
 - a. L. Wanjagi committed to providing data on previous search costs but reaffirmed that executive searches are expensive and often necessary to attract high-quality leadership.
 - ii. C. Simoneau emphasized that faculty concerns were not about eliminating positions but rather about strategic delays in hiring to reduce costs.
- H. Next Steps and Follow-Ups
- i. L. Wanjagi will provide financial details on past Presidential and executive searches.
 - ii. A webpage will be launched to track federal policy changes affecting SCSU.
 - iii. Task force members will finalize the Five-Year Sustainability Report by February 19.
 - iv. Faculty leadership will continue advocating for increased legislative funding.

VI. SCSU AAUP (S. M. Tomczak)

- A. Legislative Advocacy and Upcoming Actions at the Capitol
 - i. Appropriations Committee Hearing on CSU Funding
 - 1. Date: Wednesday, February 19th
 - 2. Time: Public hearing begins at 7:30 PM
 - 3. Objective:
 - a. Demonstrate strong faculty presence to advocate for greater state investment in public higher education.
 - b. Push for a larger budget allocation than what the governor has proposed.
 - 4. Action Items for Faculty:
 - a. Attend the hearing in red shirts to show support.
 - b. Submit written testimony to bolster advocacy efforts.

- c. Material on this initiative was distributed at the recent Pens & Pizza faculty event; additional resources are available in PDF format upon request.
- B. Higher Education Committee Hearing on PAC Program Expansion
 - i. Date: Tuesday, February 25th
 - ii. Time: TBD (most recent hearings have been at 1:30 PM)
 - iii. Objective:
 - 1. Advocate for the expansion of the PAC (Pledge to Advance Connecticut) program to include CSU institutions.
 - 2. Ensure that CSU students can benefit from tuition assistance programs similar to those available at community colleges.
 - iv. Action Items for Faculty:
 - 1. Monitor the hearing agenda once posted.
 - 2. Attend the hearing if possible (despite the time being less convenient for faculty).
 - 3. Submit written testimony to support the expansion effort.
- C. General Note on Advocacy Efforts:
 - i. Additional legislative actions will follow, and updates will continue to be shared via the CSU-AAUP newsletter.
- D. Contract Negotiations and Interest-Based Bargaining
 - i. The AAUP negotiation team has begun formal discussions on a new contract.
 - ii. The team is pursuing Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB) as the negotiation strategy.
 - iii. Updates on the negotiations, strategy, and key proposals are being regularly shared via:
 - 1. CSU-AAUP newsletters (distributed to all members).
 - 2. Table Talks, which provide faculty with opportunities to engage in discussions about contract priorities.
- E. Next Steps and Additional AAUP Input
 - i. S. M. Tomczak invited other AAUP Executive Committee members present at the meeting to add any additional remarks.
 - ii. No further additions were made at this time.

VII. Faculty Senate President's Report

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

- A. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has been informed of recent leadership changes at CT State Community Colleges.
 - i. Concerns have been raised regarding the decision-making process behind these changes.
- B. No Confidence Resolutions Against Chancellor Chang
 - i. CT State Community College Faculty Senate recently passed a no-confidence resolution against CSCU Chancellor Terrence Cheng.
 - ii. This follows a previous no-confidence vote at Eastern Connecticut State University in December 2023.
 - iii. The Executive Committee acknowledges that faculty may have questions and will discuss next steps regarding these developments.
 - 1. Initial Faculty Discussion on a Potential No Confidence Vote at SCSU
 - a. M. Shea advised caution against initiating a no-confidence vote at SCSU, citing potential negative consequences:
 - i. While Chancellor Cheng previously faced criticism, Shea noted that he has become more engaged with faculty and campus meetings following the Eastern vote.
 - ii. Risk of Replacement:
 - 1. Removing Cheng could result in a harsher replacement, potentially someone with more aggressive cost-cutting priorities.

2. A corporate-style appointee might be less receptive to faculty concerns.
 - iii. M. Shea emphasized that Chancellor Cheng was considered the strongest candidate during the hiring process, according to faculty members who served on the search committee.
 2. N. Starling clarified that the Faculty Senate was not engaging in a formal discussion or vote at this time.
 3. The topic was shared for faculty awareness, and further discussions could be scheduled if faculty express interest.
 4. The Senate's role is to facilitate discussions and represent the collective will of faculty.
- C. Presidential Search Process at SCSU
- i. H. Lockwood inquired about the decision-making process behind launching a Presidential Search at SCSU.
 1. N. Starling provided an overview of faculty involvement:
 - a. Fall 2023: The Faculty Senate advocated for faculty input in the search process.
 - b. September 2024: Chancellor Cheng met with the Senate and confirmed that the search would follow past procedures.
 - c. November-December 2024: Invitations were extended for faculty participation on the search committee.
 - d. The search website now contains details about:
 - i. Selection procedures
 - ii. Timeline
 - iii. Committee roles and responsibilities
 - ii. H. Lockwood expressed concerns that Eastern's no-confidence resolution stemmed from dissatisfaction with their Presidential Search.
 - iii. N. Starling acknowledged the concern, reiterating that faculty representation in the search was a priority for the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- D. Clarifications on No Confidence Votes at Other Institutions
- i. T. Lin asked for confirmation that the no-confidence resolutions at CT State and Eastern have already been finalized.
 1. N. President Starling confirmed that both votes passed.
 2. M. Shea clarified that each vote arose from different concerns:
 - a. Eastern's vote stemmed from dissatisfaction with their Presidential Search process.
 - b. State's vote was driven by broader concerns over institutional restructuring and governance.
- E. Supporting Documents:
- i. The CT State no-confidence resolution and a recent audit report on Chancellor Cheng's spending were attached to the Faculty Senate President's Report for faculty review.
- F. Faculty Elections for Presidential Search Committee
- i. Faculty self-nominations for the Presidential Search Committee remain open until noon.
 - ii. If more than three nominations are received, an online election will take place later in the week.
 - iii. Faculty were encouraged to share the search website link and stay informed about the process.
- G. Next Steps and Conclusion
- i. Faculty Senate Executive Committee will continue discussions on how to support faculty concerns regarding the CSU leadership and budgetary challenges.
 - ii. Faculty senators were encouraged to share updates with their departments and gather feedback.

- iii. No formal actions were taken regarding a no-confidence vote or Presidential Search concerns at this time.

VIII. Standing Committees

A. Standing Committee Reports received.

B. Finance (C. Simoneau)

i. Faculty Travel Budget Updates

1. Encumbrances and Available Funds:

- a. Faculty have begun booking conferences and encumbering funds for spring and summer travel.
- b. Travel funds remain available through August, until the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.
- c. Special Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Travel Fund (\$85,000):
- d. Southern has a unique MoU agreement with the administration that provides an additional \$85,000 for faculty travel.
- e. This funding does not roll over and must be spent first before using other travel funds.
- f. The Finance Committee has requested Accounts Payable to prioritize spending from this fund before accessing regular AAUP travel funds.
- g. AAUP Travel Fund (769 Fund):
 - i. The AAUP travel fund includes full-time and part-time faculty travel funds, which do roll over if not fully spent.
 - ii. The fund accumulated significant surplus due to reduced travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing for a temporary increase in faculty travel allotments this year.

C. Current Faculty Travel Allotments

i. Full-time faculty travel funding:

- 1. Standard contractual amount: \$1,500 per year (as outlined in the CBA).
- 2. Current year (due to surplus): \$2,000 + step increases for eligible faculty.

ii. Future funding levels:

- 1. Next year's amount is not guaranteed to remain at \$2,000.
- 2. Future allocations depend on fund balance and university budget decisions.

iii. Process for Requesting Travel Funds:

- 1. Faculty may use their \$2,000 allotment in multiple ways (e.g., multiple conferences, in-state travel, etc.).
- 2. Once a faculty member has reached their \$2,000 cap, no additional funds are available from the AAUP contractual travel budget.

iv. Additional funding sources: Faculty needing more funding must seek support from:

- 1. Department budgets
- 2. Dean's office allocations
- 3. Other university funding opportunities

v. Travel Fund Expiration and Deadline:

- 1. Funds must be used by early August 2025 (before the start of the 2025-2026 academic year).
- 2. Conferences occurring in late July or early August are still covered under the current academic year's budget.

D. Key Reminders and Next Steps

- i. Faculty were encouraged to use available travel funds, as the administration supports full utilization.
- ii. The Finance Committee will begin discussions in March regarding travel allotments for the next fiscal year.

- iii. Faculty were advised to plan travel in advance and submit reimbursement requests before the deadline.
- E. Technology: N. Starling reminded Senators to share with department and share back with Executive committee or Technology committee the impact of challenges with Blackboard this semester to better understand the scope of the problem.

IX. Special Committees

- A. UCF (M. Barboza): Committee report received.
 - i. M. Barboza asked the Elections Officers about vacant positions and what the timeline was for upcoming elections to fill those positions. O. Biesel shared that he would investigate and respond to the question offline.
- B. Graduate Council (B. Cook)
 - i. Graduate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities Document
 - 1. B. Cook provided an update on the School of Graduate and Professional Studies' ongoing effort to develop a formal description of graduate coordinators' roles and responsibilities to provide consistent guidance across the university.
 - a. Status of the Document:
 - i. The draft document has been reviewed by two-day administration and approximately 20 graduate coordinators.
 - ii. Feedback has been incorporated, with initial consensus forming around the proposed framework.
 - iii. Further outreach to graduate coordinators is planned to gather additional input.
 - 2. Next Steps:
 - a. The document will be included in the next Graduate Council packet for review.
 - b. February 24th: The document will be an agenda item at the Graduate Council meeting for discussion and a formal vote.
 - c. The vote will not approve the document directly but rather acknowledge it and authorize its submission to the Faculty Senate for final review and approval.
 - d. N. Starling confirmed this process, noting that the Faculty Senate must deliberate and approve the document before implementation, as it pertains to personnel procedures.
- C. Graduate Policy Updates and Upcoming Motions
 - i. Graduate Council will present three policy motions for discussion and approval at its February meeting:
 - 1. Independent Study Policy:
 - a. Minor language revision to clarify existing policy.
 - ii. Dual Degree Policy:
 - 1. Proposed wording adjustment to ensure alignment with current academic standards.
 - iii. Credit for Prior Learning Policy:
 - 1. New policy proposal to allow graduate students to receive credit for prior professional learning experiences.
 - iv. These motions will be deliberated and voted on at the February Graduate Council meeting before being submitted to the Faculty Senate for final approval.
- D. Elections Officers (D. Swartz)
 - i. The Deadline to nominate for the Presidential Advisory Committee has been extended until February 13 at noon. If there are more than three nominations, an election will be held.
 - ii. Elections for part-time faculty Senate representatives are underway. Nominations end February 13th at 11:59 p.m.

- E. Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Advising
 - i. J. Webb reported that the Faculty Advising Ad Hoc Committee has officially begun meeting.
 - ii. The committee is still in the early stages of its work, reviewing existing advising structures and formalizing its approach.
 - iii. M. Shea provided an additional update: the committee has elected two co-chairs: M. Boudreaux (Graduate Advising Representative) and M. Sinclair (Undergraduate Advising Representative)
 - iv. The committee meets weekly, except during holidays, and aims to present a report to the Senate in April.
- F. ACT Committee Updates and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - i. N. Starling and Interim-Provost J. Irwin provided updates on the ACT (Access, Completion, Talent) Committee's progress.
 - ii. The committee has been working rapidly with multiple meetings to draft key performance indicators (KPIs) and present them to institutional leadership for preliminary feedback.
 - iii. Draft Process & Stakeholder Engagement:
 - 1. Feedback was collected from faculty, staff, and students over two semesters.
 - 2. The initial draft has been shared with:
 - a. Faculty Leadership Council (FLC)
 - b. Student Government Association (SGA)
 - c. Provost Leadership Team (PLT)
 - d. Provost Council
 - 3. A Form will be made available for further feedback on the KPIs before finalization.
 - iv. Timeline for ACT Submission
 - 1. Final deadline: February 28 (submission to the Board of Regents)
 - 2. Senate Meeting on February 26:
 - a. Faculty Senate will review the draft before the final submission.
 - 3. The tight turnaround for feedback (Feb 26–28) means faculty leadership urges broad faculty review before then.
- G. Faculty Discussion on KPIs and Institutional Identity
 - i. T. Lin inquired whether the ACT KPIs would be integrated into system-wide strategic planning or replace any existing plans.
 - 1. Interim Provost J. Irwin clarified that the KPIs will not override an existing strategic plan.
 - 2. The ACT framework is an opportunity for SCSU to define its own priorities, goals, and initiatives.
 - 3. The KPIs can also serve as a marketing tool—highlighting the university's strengths, innovative programs, and long-term vision.
 - ii. Protecting Social Justice and Institutional Identity
 - 1. H. Lockwood raised concerns about whether the KPI process allows for reaffirming SCSU's mission as a social justice institution, especially in light of recent federal executive orders targeting DEI initiatives.
 - 2. J. Irwin responded that the "A" in ACT (Access) explicitly includes:
 - 3. Low-income students, veterans, and non-traditional students, reinforcing the university's commitment to accessibility and social equity.
 - 4. Programs such as summer bridge initiatives for underrepresented students are incorporated into the KPI framework.
 - 5. H. Lockwood further emphasized that with attacks on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (which protects disability rights), SCSU should explicitly affirm its stance on accessibility and inclusion.
 - 6. J. Irwin encouraged faculty to review the KPI draft once released and provide feedback to ensure these values remain prominent.

X. Unfinished Business

A. Resolution for Information: Faculty Senate Statement on Service

- i. Personnel Policy Committee Co-Chair M. Shea provided background on the resolution:
 1. Concerns were raised in previous years about service not being adequately recognized or rewarded in tenure and promotion decisions.
 2. Faculty have reported feeling discouraged from engaging in service due to a lack of formalized acknowledgment in evaluation processes.
 3. The resolution seeks to reaffirm that service is one of the three pillars of tenure and promotion, alongside teaching and scholarly/creative activity.
 4. The Personnel Committee consulted with Provost Julia Irwin, who expressed no objections to the resolution.
- ii. Key Discussion Points and Faculty Feedback
 1. Recommendation to Strengthen Service Documentation in P&T Files:
 - a. Senator Maria Diamantis suggested that the resolution include language encouraging faculty to fully document their service contributions in their Promotion and Tenure (P&T) files.
 - b. She recommended specifying how service should be recorded, including:
 - c. Committee participation details (meeting frequency, responsibilities).
 - d. Leadership roles held within committees.
 - e. Impact of service activities at the departmental, university, or community level.
- iii. S. M. Tomczak **moved to postpone** further discussion on the resolution until the next full Senate meeting. **Seconded**. Hearing no objection, the motion was **postponed**.

XI. New Business

A. On behalf of the Executive Committee, N. Starling **moved to approve** the Resolution Regarding the Grade Appeal Procedure Revisions.

- i. Primary concern: The current electronic PDF-based form has created significant barriers for students, leading to cases being dismissed or delayed due to clerical and technical issues.
- ii. Proposed revisions aim to improve fairness by allowing:
- iii. Handwritten submissions (removing the requirement that all forms be typed).
- iv. Clarifications and procedural updates to ensure students can submit appeals even if technical issues prevent form completion.
- v. Recusal of the Faculty Senate President if they are directly involved in an appeal case.
- vi. A designated UASC committee member to assist students with clerical or technical issues, ensuring all necessary information is submitted.
- vii. Flexibility for the committee to extend deadlines in cases impacted by clerical or technical problems.
- viii. Faculty Discussion and Questions
 1. P. Kahlbaugh questioned whether a long-term digital solution (e.g., DocuSign) could resolve these issues permanently.
 2. D. Macur (Technology Committee) responded: DocuSign is not a viable solution due to the complexity of the Grade Appeal process and the workflow requirements. Alternative digital platforms are being explored, specifically Highland OnBase, but any transition would require IT Governance approval and would not be in place before next academic year.
 3. The resolution serves as an immediate stopgap measure to ensure fairness for students while a digital solution is developed.
 4. M. Diamantis voiced strong support, emphasizing that students should not be penalized due to technological failures. She also recommended revisiting the policy after one semester of implementation to evaluate its effectiveness.

5. H. Lockwood raised concerns about other student forms experiencing similar issues (e.g., Incomplete Grade Forms).
6. N. Starling acknowledged the concern and stated that Technology Committee representatives would address this broader issue separately.
7. C. Simoneau **moved to call the previous question. Seconded.**
 - a. Hearing no objections, the body moved to a vote.
 - i. Vote tally
 1. Yes41
 2. No0
 - a. The motion to approve the resolution **passed unanimously.**

XII. Adjournment

- A. J. Webb **moved to adjourn. Seconded.**
- B. The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

L. Eilderts
Secretary

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Resolution for Revisions to Grade Appeal Procedures

Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

Whereas, The Faculty Senate is the official governing body for shared governance;

Whereas, The Faculty Senate recognizes that, to further academic excellence, procedures for grade appeals need periodic review;

Whereas, The Grade Appeal Procedure's Preliminary Information specifies "This Grade Appeal Procedure is intended to be fair, equitable and transparent.";

Whereas, The Grade Appeal Procedure's Section II specifies under Part C. "All parties work in good faith to arrive at a resolution during all stages of the process."; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That beginning immediately the attached update to the Grade Appeal Procedure in Section III which designates the removal of Part E and additions to Part F, and in Section V. which designates the addition to Part D to match III.F.:

~~*E. All Grade Appeal forms and documents must be typed; no handwritten forms shall be accepted.*~~

F. For purposes of record-keeping and administrative accounting to governmental regulatory authorities, a copy of the grade appeal form and related documentation must be filed with the Dean of the Instructor's school or college at each stage of the appeal process. The Chairperson is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office for Level 1 appeals; the President of the Faculty Senate is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office simultaneously with forwarding a Level 2 appeal to UASC; and UASC is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office for Level 2 appeals.

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D. For purposes of record-keeping and administrative accounting to governmental regulatory authorities, a copy of the grade appeal form and related documentation must be filed with the Dean of the Instructor's school or college at each stage of the appeal process. The Chairperson is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office for a level 1 appeal; the President of the Faculty Senate is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office simultaneously with forwarding a Level 2 appeal to UASC; and UASC is responsible for forwarding copies to the Dean's office after a Level 2 appeal has been completed.

Resolved, That beginning immediately the attached update to the Grade Appeal Procedure in Section V.B.E. designates the following additions and changes:

(new section) E: If the Faculty Senate President is the Student, Instructor, or Chairperson for the case, the Faculty Senate President shall recuse themselves from the Faculty Senate President's role in the Grade Appeal Procedure and shall provide a designee for these duties.

(new section) F. The UASC shall accept all cases forwarded to the UASC Chair(s) that include supporting evidence that all procedural steps for Level 1 were attempted by the student. In no case shall the UASC

reject full consideration of a case that includes the aforementioned supporting evidence on the grounds of clerical or technical issues encountered by the parties to the procedures (i.e., Student, Instructor, Chairperson, Faculty Senate President).

Examples of clerical or technical issues shall include (but shall not be restricted to) the following:

- 1. Incomplete electronic forms, provided there is supporting evidence that all relevant parties undertook the actions represented by items reflected in the forms*
- 2. Forms lacking concatenation or chronological arrangement*
- 3. Information presented in multiple files or formats (e.g., not compiled into a single file or “packet”)*
- 4. Scanned forms or forms which include handwritten information*
- 5. All other such issues that are clerical/technical (as reasonably determined by the Faculty Senate President or designee)*

~~E~~ G. Upon receipt of a ~~written~~ complete grade appeal form or grade appeal documentation that includes supporting evidence presented by the student that all procedural steps for Level 1 were attempted by the student the Faculty Senate President will ~~notify~~ forward the information to the UASC Chair(s). The UASC shall designate a grade appeal committee ~~made up~~ comprised of two UASC committee members and a UASC Chair. The members of the appeals committee select a Chair from the committee’s membership. The appeal committee Chair notifies all interested parties (Dean, Student, ~~Faculty Member~~ Instructor, Committee members) of possible dates and times to conduct the appeal. Once all committee members respond, the date of the appeal is set, the appeal is heard, and a determination is made in writing to all interested parties.

In instances wherein the UASC receives a case that reflects clerical or technical issues with the grade appeal form or documentation, the UASC shall designate a UASC committee member to act as a neutral person who shall assist the student with clerical or technical issues, or the gathering of additional information requested by the UASC. These duties shall not be advisory in nature and are limited to administrative/clerical/technical assistance. The designated UASC committee member’s duty to assist the student shall conclude upon the UASC’s conclusion of the case. The member shall provide upon request of the UASC confirmation of any outcomes resulting from their assistance to the student.

The designated committee member shall not be a member of the department to which the Instructor for the case belongs. The designated committee member shall not be a member of the appeals committee designated for the case by the UASC. The member shall not participate in any deliberations or determination of the UASC about the case, nor shall the member provide judgement or advice about the case to any party. The UASC Chair(s) shall inform the student of the designated committee member’s role, duties, and limitations.

In instances wherein the UASC receives a case that reflects clerical or technical issues, the UASC shall be allowed to establish an extension of any Level 2 deadline and the UASC Chair(s) shall notify all interested parties (Dean, Student, Instructor, Committee members) of such an extension.

Palestine Solidarity and Movements for Gender, Racial, and Intersectional Justice

Wednesday,
mar 5
2025
5:30-7pm

An Online Forum
speakers:

Laila Farah (DePaul University)

Ahlam Muhtaseb (Cal State, San Bernardino)

Isis Nusair (Denison University)

Penny Rosenwasser (City College of San Francisco)



Register Here:

Zoom Link



(203)392-6872

wgs@southernct.edu

Mal À l'aise UNCOMFORTABLE

French Film Series

Opening Soirée : Belle de Jour

March 13

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Adanti Student Center Theater



For more information, please write to FRENCH@SouthernCT.edu or scan the QR code

March 27

La Bête

April 3

Le Règne
Animal

April 10

Disco Boy

April 17

Les cinq
diabes

April 26

Linda veut
du poulet



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