

April 16, 2025

Faculty Senate President Natalie Starling called the 14th meeting of the Faculty Senate to order at 12:12 p.m. via Zoom.

I. Announcements

- A. T. Lin announced that SCSU students, staff, and faculty are invited to join in the National Day of Action for Higher Education on Thursday, April 17th from 11am-2pm in the academic quad.
- 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 continues April 17 at 5:30 in the Adanti Student Center Theater. More information can be found on the website:
<https://sites.google.com/view/southernct-french/2025-film-series>.
- C. H. Lockwood shared an event on behalf of N. Pickerton: *The Digital Dilemma: Supporting Student Wellbeing in an AI-Driven World* scheduled for Monday, April 21 from 12:00 to 1:00 PM.
- D. President D. Smith shared that link for the recorded townhall meeting on Federal Updates Guidance held on April 14:
<https://apps.southernct.edu/owls/login?redirect=https://apps.southernct.edu/owls/federal-updates-guidance/main>

II. Minutes of the previous meeting held on April 2, 2025, were accepted as distributed.

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

III. Faculty Senate President’s Report

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

- A. Nominations for Faculty Senate President and Treasurer: First call for nominations occurred today; additional calls will happen on April 30 and May 7. The final vote will also occur on May 7, following a third and final call for nominations.
- B. Faculty Retraining Funds:
 - i. A new report detailing faculty retraining funds, similar to the existing faculty travel report, is now included in the president’s report. Thanks were extended to L. Wanjagi for facilitating transparency.
 - ii. Clarification provided that only full-time faculty are eligible for these funds.
 - iii. Important note regarding the possibility of reallocating unused faculty retraining funds to travel funds: Faculty were advised to review Articles 5.18 and 17 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). These articles detail scenarios involving faculty retraining, particularly during financial exigency.
- C. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):
 - i. A question raised by T. Lin regarding the status and future direction of KPIs was addressed. J. Irwin explained that the KPIs and five-year sustainability plans are under review by the Board of Regents (BOR), though specific BOR actions are not yet confirmed.
 - ii. J. Irwin clarified that the KPIs, developed collaboratively through shared governance, will guide internal strategies regardless of BOR actions.
- D. N. Starling asked if there were any objections to changing the order of business to bring forward nominations for Faculty Senate President and Treasurer. No objection was heard.

IV. New Business

- A. D. Swartz, Election Officer, opened the floor to nominations for Faculty Senate President.
 - i. M. Diamantis nominated P. Petrie. Seconded.
 - 1. P. Petrie declined the nomination.
 - ii. D. Swartz closed nominations, indicating that there would be an opportunity to nominate in the future.

- B. D. Swartz opened the floor to nominations for Faculty Senate Treasurer.
 - i. J. Webb self-nominated. Seconded.
 - ii. D. Swartz closed nominations, indicating that there would be an opportunity to nominate in the future.

V. Standing Committees

- A. Standing Committee Reports received.

VI. Special Committees

- A. UCF: M. Barboza drew the body's attention to the due dates for the LEP reclassification. Courses are due by April 22.
- B. Graduate Council: B. Cook shared that the next meeting would take place on April 28. She also shared that GC, like the Faculty Senate, would be seeking new leadership for the following academic year.
- C. Elections Officers: D. Swartz shared that the call for self-nominations to All-University committees would be distributed soon. Special elections for open positions would be added to the all-university election process due to the close timing of both elections.
- D. AAUP Report: M. Diamantis reminded the body of L. Cunningham's retirement party on April 22.

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Resolution Regarding Abstentions in the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee
 - i. Co-chair M. Shea presented the resolution, explaining its purpose to eliminate abstentions in P&T votes. This resolution responds to the change in required yes votes from nine to eight, noting that abstentions currently function as no votes.
 - ii. N. Starling added clarification about vote ratios being affected by abstentions, emphasizing fairness and consistency in evaluating candidates.
 - iii. Discussion included concerns about the implications of abstentions versus clear yes/no votes, recusal for conflict of interest cases, and voting procedures if a member cannot participate.
 - iv. After discussion, **the resolution passed unanimously** (40 votes in favor, none opposed).
- B. Resolution Regarding Automatic Reconsideration in the Promotion & Tenure (P&T) Process
 - i. Presented by Co-chair M. Shea, this resolution aims to extend automatic reconsideration, currently limited to tenure candidates in their penultimate year, to all candidates receiving negative recommendations.
 - ii. Concerns about increased workload for the P&T committee were discussed, noting the reconsideration would primarily involve borderline cases.
 - iii. Clarification was provided regarding procedural adjustments for unforeseen circumstances affecting evaluations.
 - iv. M. Diamantis **moved to amend** the resolution, substituting "recommendation" for "evaluation" and specifying the "P&T committee." **Seconded.**
 - 1. The motion to amend was approved by unanimous consent.
 - v. After discussion, the resolution **passed** (36 votes in favor and two opposed).
- C. Resolution Regarding CBA Travel Funds for 2025-2026
 - i. introduced by R. Mugno on behalf of the Finance Committee, this resolution maintains the previous year's travel allowance structure: \$2,000 for full-time faculty, \$850 for part-time faculty, with additional funds available for international travel, session chairs, and keynote speakers.
 - ii. Passage of this resolution requires negotiation and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the AAUP and administration.
 - iii. After discussion, the resolution **passed** (35 votes in favor and one opposed).
- D. Resolution Regarding Resolution Supporting the Administrative Faculty Senate and for the Calling for Standardized Inclusive Search Procedures for Senior Campus Leadership Positions

- i. N. Starling introduced on behalf of the Executive Committee a resolution in support of the Administrative Faculty Senate's call for standardized, inclusive search procedures for senior campus leadership positions.
- ii. The resolution reaffirms shared governance and the importance of Faculty Senate and Administrative Faculty Senate representation in leadership searches.
- iii. Credit was given to the Administrative Faculty Senate for the content and construction of the resolution.
- iv. The resolution outlines past inconsistencies in Faculty Senate representation in searches and expresses appreciation for current administrative efforts to include the Senate.
- v. D. Robinson, representing the Administrative Faculty Senate, expressed gratitude for the Faculty Senate's support.
- vi. After discussion, the resolution **passed unanimously** (40 votes in favor).
 1. B. Achhpal and J. Weir raised concerns about poor communication during the recent Dean of Education search, including unclear interview times and faulty links that limited faculty participation.
 2. J. Weir noted that faculty members did not receive surveys in time to participate in the feedback process.
 3. N. Starling acknowledged the concerns and emphasized that Faculty Senate representatives are encouraged to report such issues throughout the year. She also noted efforts to maintain accurate records of official Senate representatives to ensure transparency and proper representation in university-wide searches.

VIII. New Business (cont'd)

A. Resolution Regarding Undergraduate Pass/Fail Policy

- i. Introduced by the APC and presented by O. Biesel, the resolution proposed expanded flexibility for undergraduate students to opt for pass/fail grading.
- ii. Key proposed changes included removing the 45-credit minimum to declare a course pass/fail, extending eligibility to include certain LEP courses, and shifting the deadline to opt for pass/fail from the fourth week to the twelfth week of the semester.
- iii. The resolution also proposed replacing the recording of an "F" in pass/fail courses with a new non-punitive grade of "NC" (no credit), which would not impact GPA. Discussion raised concerns about the implications of allowing NC in general education and cognate courses, system coding issues, and alignment with transfer and graduate admissions expectations.
- iv. M. Rothbard moved to strike the inclusion of cognate courses from the resolution.

Seconded.

1. The amendment was **approved** by unanimous consent.
- v. N. Edgington proposed an amendment to change "NC" to "NS" (not satisfactory), though concerns about transcript coding and terminology led to a broader discussion about naming conventions and the potential impact on student understanding.
- vi. After discussion, L. Eilderts **moved** to **recommit** the resolution to committee for further consultation with the Registrar and to address outstanding concerns.

1. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** without objection.

B. Resolution Regarding Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines

- i. O. Biesel presented a resolution requiring departmental Promotion and Tenure guidelines to be formally approved via secret ballot vote by the department and approved by the dean of the school or college.
- ii. The resolution also requires that guidelines be reviewed by the Faculty Senate and the SCSU-AAUP to ensure they do not conflict with existing policy.
- iii. Discussion clarified that departments with existing guidelines would be required to resubmit them through the new approval process.
- iv. Questions were raised about potential dean rejections and what role Senate and AAUP play; O. Biesel explained that the dean's approval is required, while Senate and AAUP review is for confirmation of policy alignment rather than content approval.

v. After discussion, the resolution **passed** (30 votes in favor and 5 opposed).

IX. Adjournment

- A. M. Diamantis **moved to adjourn. Seconded.**
- B. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

L. Eilderts
Secretary



Southern Connecticut State University

FACULTY SENATE

Resolution Regarding Abstentions in the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee

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

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty; and

Whereas, The current procedures of the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee allow for abstentions in voting; and

Whereas, The current procedures require 8 “yes” votes for a successful promotion or tenure decision; and

Whereas, Concerns have been raised regarding the interpretation and impact of abstentions within the P&T process; and

Whereas, Abstentions, in effect, function as “no” votes under the current procedural framework due to the 8 “yes” vote requirement; and

Whereas, Ambivalence or lack of strong conviction regarding a candidate’s file should not be a sufficient justification for abstention; and

Whereas, It is in the best interest of the faculty and the integrity of the promotion and tenure process to ensure that voting procedures are clear, equitable, and accurately reflect the committee’s evaluation of candidates; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate recommends the Promotion and Tenure procedures document be amended to eliminate the option for abstentions and instead require members to cast their final vote either to “recommend” or “not recommend.”



FACULTY SENATE

Resolution Regarding Automatic Reconsideration in the Promotion & Tenure (P&T) Process

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

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty; and

Whereas, Individuals involved in the university evaluation processes of renewal, promotion, and/or tenure assume that fairness and transparency shall be present in all phases of evaluation; and

Whereas, Reconsideration of a candidate who has received a negative P&T committee recommendation is now made based on the advocacy of a member serving on P&T committee and present at that deliberation; and

Whereas, It is possible that an individual who has received a negative P&T committee recommendation may not have an advocate serving on the P&T committee and present at that deliberation; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That a process of automatic reconsideration shall be instituted as part of the P&T committee process for all candidates who have received a negative P&T committee recommendation.

FACULTY SENATE

Resolution Regarding CBA Travel Funds for 2025-2026

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

Whereas, The SCSU Faculty Senate is the official representative body of the Academic Faculty;

Whereas, The CSU-AAUP CBA Travel Fund ["Travel Fund"] supports faculty attendance at professional seminars, workshops, conferences or educational exchanges (CSU-AAUP Contract Article 9.5.1);

Whereas, Participation in such conferences and academic gatherings enhances the ability of SCSU Faculty members to achieve excellence as scholars in their particular disciplines;

Whereas, The Collective Bargaining Agreement (9.5.1) specifies that the President or designee shall consult with the cabinet and the Senate President in assigning travel funds, and each full-time member normally shall not be allowed more than \$1,500 reimbursement per contract year toward the cost of fees, and each part-time member not more than \$750 from the Travel Fund;

Whereas, Reduced frequency of travel during the coronavirus pandemic resulted in a significant amount of residual monies in the Travel Fund at the end of 2019-2020;

Whereas, Residual monies will remain in the Travel Fund and be added to the 2025-2026 CBA-determined Travel Fund allocation, leading to an unusually large pool of funds for travel;

Whereas, The Faculty Senate and the Provost have identified a mutual desire to use available travel funds to support faculty attendance at professional seminars, workshops, conferences or educational exchanges and also to promote active participation;

Whereas, Cost increases for travel and conference fees have significantly affected faculty members' opportunities to participate in national and international professional seminars, workshops, conferences and educational exchanges;

Whereas, The SCSU Administration and the SCSU AAUP have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) allowing an exemption from the \$1,500 (FT) & \$750 (PT) limits for 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 & 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 travel funds for full-time and part-time faculty, respectively; and

Whereas, Through this resolution the Faculty Senate is acting to fulfill its responsibility in conferring with the President on the establishment of a maximum annual SCSU funding limit on travel funds provided by the CBA for 2025-2026; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate recommends that the travel fund reimbursement caps for 2025-2026 be set as \$2,000 for tenured full-time faculty members and non-tenured faculty members on special appointment (non-tenure track), \$2,250 for non-tenured full-time faculty members on tenure track; and be it further

Resolved, That for full-time members of the faculty traveling to a professional seminar, workshop, conference or educational exchange shall have the travel cap raised by \$250 for one of two circumstances:

- a) for travel that requires trans-ocean travel, OR
- b) if the member is faculty traveling to attend a professional seminar, workshop, conference or educational exchange as an invited keynote speaker¹, and whose expenses are not covered in full by the sponsoring organization;

and be it further

Resolved, That the Faculty Senate recommends that the travel fund reimbursement caps for 2025-2026 be set at \$850 for part-time faculty members; and be it further

Resolved, That part-time members of the faculty traveling to a professional seminar, workshop, conference or educational exchange shall have the travel cap raised by \$125 for one of two circumstances:

- a) for travel that requires trans-ocean travel, OR
- b) if the member is traveling to attend a professional seminar, workshop, conference or educational exchange as an invited keynote speaker and whose expenses are not covered in full by the sponsoring organization;

and be it further

Resolved, That according to the foregoing, the maximum total travel reimbursement cap shall be \$2,250 for tenured full-time faculty members and for non-tenured faculty members on special appointment (non-tenure track); \$2,500 for non-tenured full-time faculty members on tenure track; and \$975 for part-time Faculty members².

¹ For the purposes of this document, an invited keynote speaker is the person "headlining" or serving as the main speaker during an opening meeting or other plenary session at an event covered by CBA-provided travel funds. A faculty member applying for an increased travel fund cap based on having been invited to give a keynote address, must provide a copy of a formal, written invitation, which states the amount of expenses paid by the sponsoring organization and the stipend awarded by the sponsoring organization to cover expenses. A faculty member who attends a professional seminar, workshop, conference or educational exchange as a participant in any other capacity (e.g., to present a paper, poster session, experiential learning activity, professional development workshop, attend committee or governing group activities) is not an invited keynote speaker.

² This provision is not intended to change any other terms and conditions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement

FACULTY SENATE

Resolution Supporting the Administrative Faculty Senate and for the Calling for Standardized Inclusive Search Procedures for Senior Campus Leadership Positions

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

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

Whereas, The Faculty Senate recognizes its role within the university in representing SCSU faculty as one of multiple groups that constitute the many stakeholders at Southern Connecticut State University;

Whereas, The Faculty Senate recognizes such a role includes a shared responsibility to strive toward collective awareness of and support for the efforts of the other groups to further academic excellence and engage in shared governance;

Whereas, The recent Resolution Calling For Standardized Inclusive Search Procedures

For Senior Campus Leadership Positions (AFS-2425-02, dated 3/17/2025; attached) was passed by the Administrative Faculty Senate and was signed as “APPROVED” by the University President on March 26, 2025;

Whereas, The College of Education Dean Search Committee in AY 23-24 did include representation from the Faculty Senate and the representative was elected by the Faculty Senate following electronic polling for self-nominations led by the chair of the Elections Committee with the election concluding at the regularly scheduled full senate meeting on January 24, 2024 (see [minutes](#));

Whereas, The College of Education Dean Search Committee in AY 24-25 did not initially include representation from the Faculty Senate until the Faculty Senate President requested such representation, and the representative was elected by the Faculty Senate and announced at the regularly scheduled full senate meeting on December 4, 2024; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That, the Faculty Senate endorses the Resolution For Standardized Inclusive Search Procedures For Senior Campus Leadership Positions (attached below).



Southern Connecticut
State University

ADMINISTRATIVE FACULTY SENATE

Administrative Faculty Senate Resolution Number: AFS-2425-02

DATE: March 17, 2025

TO: D. Smith, Interim President, Southern Connecticut State University

FROM: J. Jones, President, Administrative Faculty Senate

Dear President Smith,

The Administrative Faculty Senate has adopted the attached resolution, requiring your review and approval or acknowledgment.

- ☒ This resolution is presented for APPROVAL
☐ This resolution is presented for INFORMATION

In accordance with the mutually agreed upon Administrative Faculty Senate By-Laws (Article VI, Section 6.04), "All resolutions presented to the University President in writing shall receive a written response within fifteen (15) business days."

After considering the attached resolution, please indicate your action on this form and return it to the President of the Administrative Faculty Senate.

Jordan D. Jones
Jordan D. Jones, President, AFS

ACTION OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

President's Response:

- ☒ Resolution **APPROVED**
☐ Resolution **DISAPPROVED** (Required Response Attached)
☐ Resolution **NOTED** (Applies to Information Resolutions Only)

Dwayne Smith
Dwayne Smith, Interim President, SCSU

3/26/25
Date

www.SouthernCT.edu/afs

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR STANDARDIZED INCLUSIVE SEARCH PROCEDURES
FOR SENIOR CAMPUS LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Resolution Number: **AFS-2425-02**

WHEREAS, the recent College of Education Dean Search Committee did not include representation from the Administrative Faculty Senate (AFS), the State University Organization of Administrative Faculty (SUOAF), nor academic departments within the College of Education, which represents a departure from established inclusive practices;

WHEREAS, the Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) community deeply values transparency, fairness, and equity in all administrative processes, including the selection of search committees for senior-level positions;

WHEREAS, past successful search practices at SCSU have consistently engaged with campus shared governance bodies, allowing senates and unions to designate their own representatives through their established internal mechanisms;

WHEREAS, the exclusion of key stakeholders from the search committee is a serious breach of the principles of shared governance and inclusivity that are fundamental to the university's mission;

WHEREAS, ensuring consistency and transparency in search committee selection processes is essential for maintaining trust and equity across the university;

WHEREAS, inclusive search committees lead to stronger leadership appointments by incorporating diverse perspectives, ensuring broader community buy-in, and identifying candidates who will effectively collaborate with all university constituencies;

WHEREAS, the AFS is the sole legislative body representing the administrative faculty on these and related matters, and feels it is an obligation to speak out against such oversight and the lack of clear and consistent policies;



THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Administrative Faculty Senate (AFS) expresses profound concern regarding the lack of AFS representation in the College of Education Dean Search Committee, while also noting the exclusion of SUOAF and academic department representatives;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFS strongly emphasizes the critical importance of transparency and inclusivity in the shared governance process, as these principles are vital to Southern's mission and values: "Pursuing Excellence, Fostering Leadership, Empowering Communities";

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFS calls for the immediate review of current search committee selection practices and the development and implementation of a formalized search procedure for senior-level positions (specifically those leaders of divisions, schools/colleges, and other strategic leadership positions with campus-wide impact), which includes clear guidelines on the inclusion of key stakeholders such as AFS representatives, SUOAF representatives, and members of relevant academic departments; this process should be completed no later than the end of the Spring 2025 semester;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFS urges the administration to develop consistent, transparent guidelines for the search committee selection process to prevent recurring issues while ensuring appropriate representation from all relevant stakeholders;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that for any senior leadership searches currently underway or initiated before the new procedures are finalized, an interim process should be immediately implemented that requires consultation with AFS, Faculty Senate, and appropriate union leadership to secure appropriate representatives within two weeks of a search committee's formation;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, once new search procedures are established, the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee shall provide written confirmation to the AFS Executive Committee that each newly formed senior leadership search committee has been constituted in accordance with these procedures, including specific information about stakeholder representation.

Submitted by: Steering Committee

Approved by Senate: March 17, 2025

Certified by:

Jordan D. Jones

Jordan D. Jones, Administrative Faculty Senate President

(Revised)

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

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

Whereas, The Faculty Senate recognizes that departments have distinct varieties of needs in the areas of Teaching Load, Creative Activity, Service, and Professional Attendance and Participation; and

Whereas, The Faculty Senate is responsible for Faculty Evaluations; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Departments **may choose** to create and publish Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines as supplementary document to the Faculty Senate's approved P&T Procedures document; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, the Supplemental P&T Department Guidelines shall not replace, either in full or in part, the P&T Procedures document;

Resolved That the departments have a unanimous department vote, **via secret ballot**, of approval/support for their Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines;

Resolved, that the Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines **shall be approved by the Dean of the School/College**;

Resolved, That the Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines document is presented to the Faculty Senate and SCSU-AAUP for review and confirmation that contents of the Guidelines do not conflict with or contradict the **Faculty Senate** documents or CBA;

Resolved, that **the Faculty Senate's** confirmation will be documented in the form of a vote of approval shall not signify endorsement of the guidelines;

Resolved, that each department adopting Supplemental Department P&T guidelines shall implement them at the beginning of the first academic year beginning at least one year after the Faculty Senate approval date; and

Resolved, that the department DEC will communicate the Supplemental Department P&T Guidelines and its effective date to any candidate upon the approval by the Faculty Senate.