

SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – April 30, 2025, meeting

1) Faculty Senate Announcements –

- **Nominations for Faculty Senate President and Faculty Senate Treasurer for AY 25-26.** Our 4/16 meeting was the first call for nominations, 4/30 will be the second call, and 5/7 will be the third call and the vote. Our Elections Officers will lead the nomination process. A reminder that the term limit for Faculty Senate President is three consecutive one-year terms. AY 24-25 is my third consecutive one-year term.
- **Federal Directive Experience Follow-Up to CSCU Town Hall – Focus on the faculty experience open forum** to be held by the Interim Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Interim Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, SCSU AAUP, & Faculty Leadership forum to continue dialogue and engagement. The open forum will take place **virtually on Thursday, May 1 from 2:30-3:30pm**. With this follow up experience, we will follow a similar format of beginning with prepared remarks, respond to pre-submitted questions, and provide space for additional engagement as needed. Please complete this registration form to receive the Teams town Hall Link. [Please register and submit questions here!](#)
- Spring 2025 **Elections for All-University Committees** nominations were announced via email last week and the deadline for submitting self-nominations is **Wednesday, April 30th by 11:59 PM** and ballots will be distributed to all full-time faculty shortly after. If you have questions, please contact Faculty Senate Elections Officers: Owen Biesel biesel01@southernct.edu or Dan Swartz swartzd1@southernct.edu

2) Fiscal Impacts / State Budget / University Budget –

- **The 2025 legislative session:** Please continue to closely attend to announcements related to this item. The 2025 legislative session is underway and advocacy for fiscal support for the CSUs remains at the forefront of our efforts. A reminder that the last day of the session is **Wednesday, June 4, 2025.**
- A reminder that the next university budget meeting is **Meeting #2 – Friday, May 2, 11am**. Thank you to those members of the Faculty Senate Finance Committee and our Faculty Senate representatives to the University Budget Committee who were able to attend the first meeting earlier this month and who may be able to attend on Friday.
 - i. Thank you, **Cindy Simoneau, our FS Treasurer**, for continuing to follow up with requests for updates about P-card data for the university.
- **The ACT Framework and related KPIs:** Following feedback from senators at our 2/26 meeting, the Executive Committee and I prepared additional details within the draft of the Goals and shared this with our Provost on 2/28, 3/10, 3/11, and 3/14. My understanding is that the Faculty Senate voted to “provisionally accept” the version shared at the 2/26 meeting, and it has been clarified with me by senators that the intent to “provisionally

accept” is not to be interpreted as support or endorsement for its content and wording at that time. **The final draft of both the external and internal goals and KPIs from Provost Irwin is included in the 4/30 meeting’s packet for senate discussion.**

3) ***The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meetings with administration*** – The Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meets monthly with administration – This group met on 4/17 to discuss and monitor multiple topics. We thank Dr. D. and Dr. Irwin for the important conversations.

- **Federal Impact Concerns** – Faculty leaders expressed continued concerns about future funding threats connected to DEI, and the President shared that administration, along with the System Office, will continue to monitor these topics. Plans are being discussed to account for potential future disruptions of funding. Travel and immigration concerns were also discussed. Faculty are encouraged to stay informed and attend or view recordings of town halls/forums wherein legal issues are discussed. Updates specific to the topic of undocumented students will occur regularly on the [website](#).
- **P-cards** – faculty leaders again expressed concerns about the how the changes to P-card policy have been implemented, for example, approval/disapproval for some departments, along with some specific examples of challenges faculty face with these changes. Concerns specific to the College of Arts & Sciences were emphasized. Faculty leaders thank Provost Irwin for expressing receptivity to the detailed information shared. **Recent updates suggest progress is underway.**
- **UCF & GC “uniting more”**– Faculty inquired about the topic of UCF and GC uniting more that have reached some faculty leaders. Provost Irwin clarified that **the intent is to offer secretarial support to UCF and GC.**
- **Administration’s response to the Resolution for Information re Faculty Senate Statement about Service** – Faculty inquired about the delay of the President’s signing of this resolution. Administration clarified that the time between receiving and signing the resolution was not related to R2 variables, and that service is a respected faculty activity. There was a desire by the President and Provost to clarify one of the statements from the resolution *"This valuation is reflected in the near-equal weighting of creative activity and service on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee’s scoring rubric: while a teaching faculty candidate’s average score for Creative Activity is multiplied by a factor of 5, for Department & University Service, it is a factor of 4. For library and counseling faculty, service is weighted at 4 and creative activity is weighted at 2."*

4) ***Monthly Meetings of the CSU Senate Presidents*** – The other senate presidents and I met on 4/22 and shared several recent and upcoming resolutions from our campuses. Central shared that their senate indicated **interest in learning more about mutual defense compacts**- here is a [Chronicle article](#) that was shared and a document from UMass is attached. I recommend that the Faculty Senate discuss this topic to assess interest, and this topic appears as an agenda item for the 4/30 meeting.

5) *Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting with the Chancellor*– The Faculty Senate Executive Committee meets once a semester with the Chancellor – This group met on 4/23 to discuss and monitor multiple topics. Karen Buffkin and Cameron Liston, CSU Counsel, were also in attendance alongside multiple members of the System Office team. We thank Chancellor Cheng and the team for the important conversations.

- **Federal Impact Concerns** –Faculty expressed concerns about federal threats, particularly related to DEI and funding. Faculty expressed concerns about what can be expected regarding federal impacts given the university’s status and aspiring mission as a social justice institution. It was shared that the System Office team meets weekly to review federal actions affecting institutions and that system leadership is prioritizing safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. It was further shared that the System follows policy and law while supporting students; executive orders are not law. The institutional response strategy from administration is to analyze all federal actions through a compliance lens with no pre-compliance approach being taken by the System. Clarification was provided that academic programming has not been federally targeted. Administration’s focus is on ensuring non-academic programming is inclusive and on maintaining core institutional values while ensuring policies can't be misconstrued. The University of Maine was cited as an example of a successful response strategy to federal inquiries. Scholarship structures are being reviewed to ensure they are consistent with the law. It was also shared that there is striving for objective compliance response processes to demonstrate unbiased handling of complaints (e.g., student complaints, etc.).
 - **Travel Guidance & Legal Support / International Travel & Student Concerns** – Faculty expressed concerns regarding faculty and student travel in summer study abroad programs. Faculty inquired about contingency plans for international students. It was clarified that the System’s counsel cannot legally represent individuals detained at borders. The recommendation for faculty and students is to have immigration lawyer contact information to use in the event one is allowed one phone call. Finally, faculty and students should follow institutional protocols for travel and contact the applicable campus offices.

Following the meeting, faculty leaders received word that two students at CCSU had their visas revoked and were ordered to leave the country as quickly as possible. In a response to our follow-up email inquiry after this meeting, Dr. D. confirmed **there have not been any visas revoked from SCSU as of Friday, April 25, 2025**, and that his team is on top of this matter. We thank Dr. D. for his quick response.

- **Classroom Spaces / Responses to Warrants** – It was clarified that locked classroom doors provide some measure of protection during class time. It was also clarified that only warrants signed by federal judges (not administrative warrants) require a response. Karen Buffkin shared emergency contact information for immediate assistance and that faculty and students should follow institutional protocols for responding to inquiries and contact the applicable campus personnel/offices.

- **AI Policy Development Process** –Faculty shared that the Faculty Senate passed a recent resolution about AI policy development and thanked the System Office for implementing a new collaborative policy development approach. It is understood that the current AI policy is in early draft stage with multiple review layers planned. The faculty shared that the draft is currently under review by the FS Senate Ad hoc committee and feedback will be shared with the System Office following Faculty Senate review.
 - The System Office explained a three-tiered review process: policy owners, stakeholders, executive review. It was expressed that a commitment is made that no policy will be passed 'in the middle of the night'. Assurance was provided that substantial faculty input will be incorporated into policy development.
- **P-Card Policy** –Faculty expressed concerns about the real-world day-to-day impacts on faculty that the changes to P-Card policy have created along with further new inefficiencies. The System Office acknowledged hearing the faculty’s challenges, the Chancellor expressed taking ownership for his approach to handling the matter and reiterated that P-Card changes represent system-wide reform to reduce liability and exposure and that institutions have flexibility in implementing procedures as long as they are consistent with policy. The recommendation to faculty is to determine if issues are with procedures (can be modified) vs. policy.
- **Presidential Search** –Faculty briefly mentioned questions about the presidential search process particularly the commitment to complete during the teaching faculty contract period. The Chancellor provided assurance that that is the goal, and that search is moving forward 'with real intention'.

6) **Faculty Senate President and Chairperson of Board of Regents Meeting** – Luke and I met with BOR Chair Marty Guay on 4/29 to share that the Faculty Senate passed a recent resolution about AI policy development and to acknowledge the System Office for implementing a new collaborative policy development approach. I emphasized the purpose of the resolution and the value of record-keeping in times of change and transition.

7) **Faculty Retraining Funds Report for AY 24-25** – as of 4/1/25. Each year, there is a budget for AAUP Retraining. Similar to the Travel Funds report, the President’s Report will strive to keep faculty informed about these funds now that the information is known. The relevant articles from the CBA are 9.12 and 9.13. It was clarified with SCSU-AAUP that only full-time faculty members are eligible for these funds.

Index	FY 2025 Budget	FY2025 Expenses	Prior year carryover	FY 2025 Balance
AUP790	\$10,154.00	\$ 0.00	\$86,212.04	\$96,366.04

8) ***Travel Funds Report for AY 24-25*** – as of 2/10/25. Budget information below includes prior year carryover. “Encumbered” reflects those TA's processed and funds committed but does not include TA's that are in transit or pending in the Provost Office. FY 24 Carryover estimated still has encumbrances (FT - \$150,708.76, PT - \$15,592.86. Depending on what still needs to be paid, carryover amount could change.

Index	Description	FY 2025 Budget	FY2025 Expenses	FY2025 Encumbrances	FY 2025 Balance	Index	Estimated FY24 Carryover
AUP769	AAUP Conf Wrkshp & Travel FT - 2025	365,530.00	76,926.75	91,373.02	197,2230.23	AUP768	171,304.30
AUP772	AAUP Conf Wrkshp & Travel PT - 2025	40,614.00	14,369.91	6,203.10	20,040.99	AUP771	10,076.66
VPA017	Faculty CrActivity- RG	85,000.00	71,235.00	-	13,765.00	VPA017	-
VPA018	Faculty CrActivity- Travel	85,000.00	85,000.00	-		VPA018	-
Totals		576,144.00	247,531.66	97,576.12	\$231,036.22		181,380.96

9) ***Preparation for the 4/30/2025 meeting*** –

- a) *Resolution Regarding Undergraduate Pass/Fail Policy* (unfinished business)– The Academic Policy (APC) will again introduce this resolution which proposes updates to the Undergraduate Pass/Fail Policy that are similar to the updates to the Graduate Pass/Fail Policy approved earlier this academic year. This resolution was sent back to committee at our previous meeting for further revisions. Alicia Carroll, Office of the Registrar, has accepted our invitation to join the 4/30 meeting to assist with Q & A from senators about this topic.
- b) *Resolution Regarding Withdrawal Policy* (new business)– The Academic Policy (APC) will introduce this resolution which proposes updates to the policy. Alicia Carroll, Office of the Registrar, has accepted our invitation to join the 4/30 meeting to assist with Q & A from senators about this topic.
- c) *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF)* (new business)– On behalf of UCF, the FS Executive Committee will introduce this resolution which specifies the request from UCF that was shared with the Provost by the UCF Chair on 4/7. Load credit quantities are listed by position title.
- d) *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Graduate Council* (new business)– On behalf of GC, the FS Executive Committee will introduce this resolution which specifies the request from GC that was shared with the Provost by the GC Chair on 4/1. Load credit quantities are listed by position title.
- e) *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Faculty Senate* (new business)– The FS Executive Committee will introduce this resolution which specifies the request from the EC that was shared with the Provost on 4/24. Load credit quantities are listed by position title.
- f) *Resolution For Information Motion to Endorse Scaling Taskforce Response From Eastern Connecticut State University* (new business)– The FS Executive Committee will introduce

this resolution which endorses ECSU's objections to the Scaling Taskforce report from the 1/23 BOR meeting.

- g) *Resolution Regarding Revisions to Renewal Procedures for Faculty* (new business)– The FS Executive Committee and PPC will introduce this resolution which addresses a correction to the procedures (recommendations for Renewal do not go to the BOR—this is an error in the original doc), along with other clerical corrections and updated dates of documents, as well as the addition of clarifying language for observation of load credit as agreed to by the PPC, the FS President, Chief Human Resource Officer, and SCSU-AAUP Chapter President.
 - h) *Resolution Regarding Revisions to Promotion and Tenure Procedures for Faculty, Procedures for Observation of Load Credit Performance* (new business)– The FS Executive Committee and PPC will introduce this resolution which adds clarifying language for observation of load credit, to mirror the update to the Renewal document, as agreed to by the PPC, the FS President, Chief Human Resource Officer, and SCSU-AAUP Chapter President.
 - i) *Faculty Senate Discussion and Vote Regarding IT Data Security Policy Feedback* (new business)– The Technology Committee will introduce this document as a compilation of feedback as requested by our SCSU-CIO and the System Office-CIO; the technology committee will bring forth its recommendations and the senate will discuss and hold a vote of support/non-support, after which time the feedback will be shared with the internal and external stakeholders.
 - j) *Faculty Senate Discussion Regarding Mutual Defense Compacts* (new business)– The CSU senate presidents have been in discussion about this topic. Central's senate discussed and faculty expressed interest. We are following through with our intent for SCSU Faculty Senate to also discuss and gather faculty interest in exploring this matter.
 - k) *Resolution Regarding Revisions to Promotion and Tenure Procedures for Faculty Evaluators and Procedural Non-adherence* (new business)– The FS Executive Committee and PPC will introduce this resolution which adds clarifying language for evaluators and procedural non-adherence in the faculty evaluation process. The value of faculty discussion of this topic, as well as the potential generation of further conversation, perhaps at many levels, all for the official record, is a planned emphasis.
 - l) *SCSU Response to the CSCU Draft Policy on Generative AI* (new business)– The Ad Hoc Committee for Artificial Intelligence Use by Faculty is sharing some outcomes of its work with Faculty Senate ahead of the 5/7 meeting wherein a more in-depth discussion and vote can occur. Thank you to the committee members and co-chairs Heidi Lockwood and Nick Pinkerton.
- 10) 2024-2025 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.
- a) **Resolution Regarding “W” Course Caps** – in addition to the updates described in the previous reports, this resolution was “Disapproved” by the University President. **The FS Executive Committee is continuing in conversation with Provost Irwin about next steps.**

Background

A group of faculty requested that the Rules Committee or the Research Council submit this resolution for consideration by the Faculty Senate. In the last several weeks, governmental bodies have defunded multiple institutions, including Columbia University, Harvard University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania while providing neither evidence nor due process. Restoration of funding has been held out in exchange for government overreach into universities in ways that violate academic freedom and institutional self-governance. Executive Orders and Dear Colleague letters seek to censor speech and mandate programming at publicly funded universities. The government has deployed its Homeland Security Department ICE agents to baselessly revoke student visas in order to arrest and detain international students as punishment for exercising their First Amendment rights. So far, these events have happened in relative isolation, with little communication and coordinated response across affected or soon-to-be-affected institutions. This resolution seeks common ground across institutions uniting in a common defense to collectively safeguard their shared values of academic freedom, free expression, democratic governance, civic responsibility, scientific discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Resolution to Establish Mutual Academic Defense Compacts in Defense of Academic Freedom, Free Expression, Institutional Integrity, and the Research Enterprise

Whereas, escalating actions by governmental bodies threaten foundational principles of American higher education, including the autonomy of university governance, the integrity of scientific research, and the protection of the freedoms of inquiry, speech, and association;

Whereas, political actors have targeted individual institutions with legal, financial, and political incursions designed to undermine their public mission, silence dissenting voices, and exert unlawful control over academic inquiry;

Whereas, governmental actors have signaled a willingness to censor curricula, restrict inquiry, target scholars and students, and carry out politically motivated detentions;

Whereas, America's Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) represent a longstanding tradition of academic collaboration, research excellence, and commitment to democratic values and shared governance;

Whereas, these nearly 250 APLU institutions represent more than one million faculty and staff members and 6.6 million undergraduate and graduate students;

Whereas, institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—public and private, large and small—share a longstanding commitment to academic freedom, democratic governance, civic responsibility, and the pursuit of knowledge for the public good;

Whereas, Massachusetts is home to a diverse and nationally respected higher education ecosystem that serves hundreds of thousands of students and employs tens of thousands of educators, researchers, and staff whose work supports innovation, critical inquiry, social mobility, and community engagement;

Whereas, the preservation of one institution's integrity is the concern of all, and an infringement against one institution shall be considered an infringement against all;

Be it resolved that, the University of Massachusetts Amherst Faculty Senate urges the President of the University of Massachusetts system and the Chancellor of the University to formally propose and help establish a Public and Land-Grant University Mutual Academic Defense Compact (PLUMADC) among all public and land grant universities that would like to participate;

Be it further resolved that, the Faculty Senate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst urges the President of the University of Massachusetts system and the Chancellor of the University to formally propose and help establish a Massachusetts Higher Education Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MHEMADC) among public and private colleges and universities across the Commonwealth that would like to participate;

Be it further resolved that, under these compacts, participating institutions shall commit meaningful support—financial, legal, organizational, and/or strategic—to a shared or distributed defense infrastructure designed to respond immediately and collectively to attacks by the governmental actors on any member institution;

Be it further resolved that, these compacts shall facilitate the mobilization of institutional resources—including legal counsel, governance experts, public affairs professionals, faculty governance leaders, research capacity, and media relations—to coordinate a unified and robust response, including but not limited to:

- Legal representation and, where appropriate, countersuit actions;
- Public communication strategies to counter misinformation and defend academic principles;
- Filing of amicus briefs, publication of expert testimony, and other legal interventions;
- Legislative advocacy and coordinated policy engagement at the state and federal levels;
- The development of collaborative strategies and frameworks to diversify funding streams beyond the federal government; and
- Rapid-response research and public-education initiatives;

Be it further resolved that, this resolution be transmitted to the leadership of all Public and Land-Grant Universities across the nation and all institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as well as their shared governance bodies;

Be it finally resolved that, the President of the University of Massachusetts system and Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst take leading roles in convening summits of faculty and administration leaders to initiate the implementation of these Compacts and affirm the collective commitment to defend academic freedom, free expression, institutional autonomy, and the public mission of higher education in the Commonwealth.