

SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – May 7, 2025, meeting

1) Notes of Gratitude from the outgoing FS President –

- A special thank you to **Luke Eilderts, our FS Secretary**, for the endless support and collaboration through many unpredictable circumstances. Words cannot express my gratitude for Luke both for myself in this role and for his service to the faculty. His tireless efforts, both past and present, are truly remarkable. It has been an honor to serve alongside Luke as a fellow officer of the Faculty Senate.
- A special thank you to **Cindy Simoneau, our FS Treasurer**, for unwavering leadership and faculty advocacy, especially during rapidly developing and challenging financial times. Cindy's observant leadership and quick responding spans not only Faculty Senate, but also UCF and Chairs' Council which keeps us all connected and informed in ways we would otherwise not be. It has been an honor to serve alongside Cindy as a fellow officer of the Faculty Senate.
- A special thank you to **all past and present members of the FS Executive Committee** during my presidency. A reminder that these faculty volunteer their time to serve the faculty in some of the highest levels of discussion and advocacy. They are the "glue" that holds everything together and we could not have made progress without all their expertise and efforts. These faculty ensure shared governance, accountability, and faculty representation are upheld by the FS President and by the Faculty Senate.

The Executive Committee of AY 24-25

- **Owen Biesel**
- **Maria Diamantis**
- **Luke Eilderts**
- **Deron Grabel**
- **Doug Macur**
- **Paul Petrie**
- **Michael Shea**
- **Cindy Simoneau**
- **Dan Swartz**
- **Stephen Monroe Tomczak "Zak"**
- **Jeffrey Webb**
- **Joan Weir**

The Executive Committee of AY 23-24

- **Maria Diamantis**
- **Luke Eilderts**
- **Klay Kruczek**
- **Elliott Horch**

- **Doug Macur**
- **Paul Petrie**
- **Michael Shea**
- **Cindy Simoneau**
- **Amanda Strong**
- **Stephen Monroe Tomczak “Zak”**
- **Melanie Uribe**
- **Jeffrey Webb**

The Executive Committee of AY 22-23

- **Maria Diamantis**
- **Luke Eilderts**
- **Rex Gilliland**
- **Klay Kruczek**
- **Doug Macur**
- **Helen Marx**
- **Michael Shea**
- **Cindy Simoneau**
- **Stephen Monroe Tomczak “Zak”**
- **Melanie Uribe**
- **Jeffrey Webb**

- Thank you to **all past and present members of the Faculty Senate** during my presidency. Shared governance only works when faculty are engaged and participating, thank you for volunteering and dedicating your time and energy to this body. Your efforts are seen, valued and are evidenced not just in the outcomes you have produced but also in the positive shift in climate and tone across campus that I’ve observed since starting my career at Southern. Each and every member has a place here and has played a role in the progress we have made for the faculty, for administration, staff, and, above all, for our students.

2) *Faculty Senate Announcements* –

- **Thank you, Dr. D., for supporting and signing [A Call for Constructive Engagement](#)** - This statement was developed in collaboration with university and college presidents and other educational leaders across the country, after national meetings convened by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the American Academy of Arts & Science.
- **Nominations for Faculty Senate President and Faculty Senate Treasurer for AY 25-26.** Our 5/7 meeting is the third/final call and the vote. Our Elections Officers will lead the nomination process.
- Your faculty leadership—**the FLC, remains active and available throughout the summer**, though at times the group’s availability may vary. Our understanding is that one of the original reasons the FLC was created was to ensure on-going communication over the summer between faculty leadership and administration, as well as with other stakeholders. Faculty are welcome to reach out to FLC members and the FS President, please allow us additional time to respond. For more urgent matters, you may reach out to me directly at starlingn1@southernct.edu and other contacts, such as SCSU-AAUP, as appropriate. I encourage all messaging me to CC the FS President-Elect until the start of the fall semester,

at which time, the next FS President's term is active, and they become the contact.

3) *Fiscal Impacts / State Budget / University Budget* –

- **The 2025 legislative session:** A reminder that the last day of the session is **Wednesday, June 4, 2025.**
- The latest university budget meeting was **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. Materials shared with us at the budget meeting are included in this week's packet.

4) *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 5/5 to discuss and monitor multiple topics. We thank Dr. D. and Dr. Irwin for the important conversations. **There are summer meetings scheduled for 6/2 and 7/7 at 1:00pm.**

- **Grant Cancellations** – Dr. D. and Dr. Irwin are engaged in conversation about advocacy to our senators (Blumental, Murphy) and legislators to request help addressing funding loss and other needs at least for the next academic year to support those who were already engaged in this work.
- **Assessment (StAR process) and follow up from the administration. How has administration addressed items covered in the StAR reports? For example, if a department's report suggested resources for the department?** – Dr. Irwin shared a perspective that accreditation meetings include discussion between accreditors and administration about needed resources. There is recognition among administration and faculty leaders of the benefit of accounting of resource requests and formal follow-up. This topic will remain on the FLC agenda for future discussion.
- **General Education Transfer Alignment Policy -What is the administration's response to the transfer agreement(s) that the BOR/CT State have with private institutions?** – Dr. D. shared the perspective that these are seen as potential opportunities for access, and support is contingent upon financial aspects impacting students.
- **Transfer Council Developments and related credits allotted to faculty representative(s)** – Dr. Irwin shared a perspective that the BOR may be under the impression that this work is completed; TAP/FIRC will sunset. Faculty leaders and Dr. Irwin recognized that curriculum changes over time and this is one of the reasons administration is requesting continuation of this work. The Transfer Council addresses some of the issues.

Additionally, there is recognition that there may be perceptions regarding CT State and the CSUs about curriculum and transfer credits. **Faculty leadership emphasized that there is not intention among SCSU faculty to dictate CT State curriculum and that this message is important to share widely. The main concern is that CT State courses being deemed acceptable in a blanket fashion without on-going review compared to a typical approach to on-going review of other institutions' transfer alignments.** Dr. Irwin shared she will follow up and share information learned.

- **R2 Expectations and Faculty Support – How is the current 4:4 load being considered by administration in light of the new R2 designation?** – Dr. Irwin shared a perspective

that R2 is not impacting administration’s approach to the faculty evaluation process this year (or next year if under current administration) and that the current expectations outlined contractually by the CBA and the Faculty Senate Procedures documents remain. Faculty leaders, Dr. D., and Dr. Irwin recognized that challenges impact all categories of faculty activity-- teaching, creative activity, service, and professional participation, and that all categories need resources. Administration shared with faculty leaders a perspective that our institution has the ability to continue work that supports continuation of the R2 designation, which is connected to both grant production and doctorates produced, with a reminder that consideration of other funding sources is on-going and important considering the recent grant cancellations.

- **Interfolio Progress and Future Planning – Will there be continuation of the faculty coordinator role and, separately, but simultaneously, administrative support?** – Dr. Irwin shared a perspective that there is administrative support for continuation of a faculty representative to be involved in monitoring the clerical aspects of the faculty evaluation process. We look forward to hearing perspectives from SCSU-AAUP and our current Interfolio Coordinator, Klay Kruczek, as planning for next year unfolds.
- **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 (e.g., credit limit challenges, shared secretaries allowed only one card, flow of operations, redundant requests for faculty action, inconsistent messaging, need for more training opportunities). Faculty leaders thank Provost Irwin for expressing receptivity to the information shared.

P-Cards currently issued at Southern as reported by Academic Affairs **as of 4/30/25** – Deans are listed under Academic Affairs.

Division/College	# of P-cards
Academic Affairs	29
Arts and Sciences	11
College of Education	7
DEI	2
Enrollment Management	9
Finance and Administration	18
Graduate School	2
Health and Human Services	22
Institutional Advancement	12
IT	1
Library Services	4
School of Business	9
Student Affairs	55
President Office	2
Grand Total	183

5) **Faculty Retraining Funds Report for AY 24-25** – as of 4/1/25. Each year, there is a budget for AAUP Retraining. 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

6) **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

7) **Preparation for the 5/7/2025 meeting** – The FS Executive Committee has endeavored to plan an agenda that prioritizes and groups topics into general categories to help with meeting progress:

Addressing Previously Disapproved Resolution

1. **Resolution Regarding “W” Course Caps**– The FS Executive Committee will present a new iteration of the resolution disapproved earlier this semester following conversations with Dr Irwin and Dr. D. The resolution will call again for the pilot and now includes the specification that all “W” course caps shall be reduced to 20 beginning in the Fall 2026 semester.

Faculty Evaluation

2. **Resolution Regarding Revisions to Renewal Procedures for Faculty**– The FS Executive Committee and PPC will introduce this resolution which addresses a correction to the procedures, 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.

3. *Resolution Regarding Revisions to Promotion and Tenure Procedures for Faculty, Procedures for Observation of Load Credit Performance*– 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.
4. *Resolution Regarding Revisions to Promotion and Tenure Procedures for Faculty Evaluators and Procedural Non-adherence*– 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.
5. *Report from Tech Committee & Faculty Interfolio Coordinator*– The Technology Committee and our current Interfolio Coordinator, Klay Kruczek, will share a report of this year’s faculty evaluation cycle with particular attention to the first stage of implementation of Interfolio to ensure faculty are informed about anticipated changes and updates as the plan to shift away from Blackboard and to Interfolio for ALL faculty evaluation begins in AY 25-26.

Shared Governance & Shared Concerns with Our Sibling Institutions

6. *Resolution Calling Upon Stakeholders to Establish a Plan for Mutual Defense Compacts*– The FS Executive Committee will present this Resolution for Information based on the attached Resolution from UMass calling for action to establish a plan for a mutual defense compact. The CSU senate presidents have been in discussion about this topic and the other presidents were informed that SCSU Faculty Senate will be deliberating this resolution. Central’s senate discussed this topic last month and faculty expressed interest. Here are the [Chronicle article](#) and [NY Times article](#) that were also shared.
7. *Resolution For Information Motion to Endorse Scaling Taskforce Response From Eastern Connecticut State University*– The FS Executive Committee will introduce this resolution which endorses ECSU’s objections to the Scaling Taskforce report from the 1/23 BOR meeting.

Support for Faculty Leadership Across our SCSU Governing Bodies

8. *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF)*– 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.
9. *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Graduate Council*– 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.
10. *Resolution for Load Credit for Faculty Leadership in the Faculty Senate*– 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.

Technology Reports & Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committees

- 11. Faculty Senate Discussion and Vote Regarding IT Data Security Policy Feedback*– 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.
- 12. Faculty Senate Discussion and Vote Regarding Generative AI Draft Policy Feedback (new business)*– Faculty Senate representatives from the Ad Hoc Committee for Artificial Intelligence Use by Faculty will bring forth the committee’s recommendations for feedback about the draft policy 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.
- 13. Faculty Senate Discussion and Vote Regarding Report & Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committee for AI Use by Faculty*– Faculty Senate representatives from the Ad Hoc Committee for Artificial Intelligence Use by Faculty will bring forth the committee’s recommendations for next steps for the committee itself and the senate will discuss and hold a vote of support/non-support. Updates to the original one-page summary of the committee and its charges based on the recommendations of the committee are included in the packet.
- 14. Faculty Senate Discussion and Vote Regarding Report & Recommendations from Ad Hoc Committee for Formalizing Faculty Advising*– Faculty Senate representatives from the Ad Hoc Committee will bring forth the committee’s recommendations for next steps for a potential fall pilot and for the committee itself, and the senate will discuss and hold a vote of support/non-support. Updates to the original one-page summary of the committee and its charges based on the recommendations of the committee are included in the packet.

Remaining Uncategorized Topics

- 15. Resolution Regarding Withdrawal Policy*– The Academic Policy (APC) will introduce this resolution which proposes updates to the policy.
- 16. Best Practices for Increasing Student Participation in Student Opinion Surveys (new business)*– The Student Policy (SPC) will introduce this report which proposes faculty strategies to support student completion of surveys. Please note that any recommendations related to faculty evaluation (P & T, Renewal, Professional Assessment) can only be included in the senate procedures documents for each of the respective evaluation types—inclusion in other senate documents, reports, etc. has the potential to generate confusion/inconsistency regarding senate’s formal position and what is required of faculty. For this reason, and given that the guidebooks are now eliminated, item #7 in this report may need reconsideration by the body, including the possibility of debate for inclusion in the procedures document(s).
- 17. 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 5/7 meeting’s packet for senate discussion.

- 8) 2024-2025 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.

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.