

SCSU Faculty Senate President's Report – October 18, 2023, meeting

- 1) The Faculty Senate proudly recognizes the **Student Government Association (SGA)** representative for AY 23-24 Pierce Kozlowski. If Pierce is in attendance on 10/18, an introduction will occur at the beginning of the meeting. Please join me in welcoming Pierce as the SGA representative to Faculty Senate.
- 2) **Fiscal Impacts / State Budget / University Budget** – Events continue to unfold related to the budget and fiscal issues. At our 10/18 Faculty Senate meeting, there will be an opportunity to hear from Interim President Smith regarding these topics. Since our last Faculty Senate meeting, President Smith has acknowledged the [Resolution](#) without approval or disapproval. While the body wished to present the Resolution for a response, the President's "noted" response is permissible under our Faculty Senate by-laws and the CBA given the nature of the Resolution's content (the resolution does not contain actionable items related to SCSU administration or other members of our SCSU community). Additionally, at our previous Faculty Senate meeting, questions were posed about an opportunity to discuss some of the information presented at the University President's Town Hall meeting on 9/26, specifically the goals in the final slides. Furthermore, I attended a meeting alongside our SCSU-AAUP Chapter President on 10/5 hosted by President Smith wherein the President provided some insight for his rationale to acknowledge, rather than approve or disapprove, the Resolution, and presented proposed budget mitigation information. Below are some of my notes from this meeting; President Smith may be able to share further details our 10/18 Faculty Senate meeting.

At the 10/5 meeting, it was shared that Article 5.17 is not an action that administration desires even though enacting this article is a pathway if other plans and efforts are not successful. Emphasis was placed on an intent to focus efforts in other areas and to address the following variables in a potential budget mitigation plan: (a) 5% increase in enrollment, (b) 5% tuition increase, (c) increase housing occupancy to 90%, (d) new conference revenue, (e) control of expenses/OE cuts, (f) retirement incentives, and (g) while it is uncertain if APP will yield any savings, the timeline is November to learn more regarding outcomes related to APP.

Finally, the BOR held its Finance Committee meeting on 10/13. A Resolution titled "Discounted Tuition Rate for Strategic Enrollment Initiatives" was passed "*That the BOR hereby authorizes CSCU institutions to offer the Discounted Tuition Rate equivalent to the then-current New England Board of Higher Education ("NEBHE") regional tuition rate to students from all locations outside of the State of Connecticut for use as a strategic recruitment and enrollment tool at the CSCU institutions' discretion.*" It was also mentioned at the BOR Finance Committee meeting that efforts and meetings had been held by Chief Financial Officer and the Chancellor with the Appropriations Committee to continue funding support advocacy for fiscal year 2025. Professor David Blitz (CCSU) shared comments, again, related to the Academic Planning Process (APP) and subsequent confusion. Faculty and community members can view the recording of the meeting on the BOR's website: <https://www.ct.edu/regents/archives>

A reminder that the Finance Committee continues to gather senators'/faculty perspectives and suggestions regarding budgetary issues. Please reach out to [Cindy Simoneau](#), FS Treasurer/Finance Committee chair.

- 3) Travel Funds Report for FY2024 AAUP Full Time & Part-Time Travel Funds, Creative RG & Travel (as of 10-15-23). 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.

Index	Description	Budget	Expenses (spent as of 10/15)	Encumbered	Balance Remaining
AUP768	AAUP Conf Workshop & Travel FT - 2024	\$ 853,068.10	\$ 21,390.35	\$ 163,610.49	\$ 668,067.26
AUP771	AAUP Conf Workshop & Travel PT - 2024	76,835.70	1,098.65	11,950.00	63,787.05
VPA017	Faculty Creative Activity-RG	85,000.00	69,833.78	1,204.28	13,961.94
VPA018	Faculty Creative Activity-Travel	85,000.00	1,068.81	-	83,931.19
	Totals	\$ 1,099,903.80	\$ 75,875.39	\$ 52,507.74	\$ 829,747.44

- 4) *Senate visits to departments*– A reminder that, continuing with these outreach efforts from last academic year, Luke Eilderts, Faculty Senate Secretary, and I are again offering our availability to meet with faculty via department visits. This is an optional and open opportunity and will remain open for the academic year. I found these visits to be some of the most helpful opportunities to learn from and listen to faculty in preparation for much of the work encountered last year. Please email me and Luke with any questions and to schedule a visit.

5) *Preparation for the 10/18/2023 meeting*–

- Resolution Regarding Faculty Retraining Procedures Document Revision* – This Resolution is being presented by Academic Policy (APC) and includes updates to the document’s wording and the addition of information, for example, in the “Structure of the Committee” section of the document. Please review the packet for details.
- Sabbatical Leave Revisions*– An update to the Sabbatical Leave Procedures Document is being presented by Personnel Policy (PPC) that seeks to provide clarification about the minimum number of members for department sabbatical leave committees. Please review the packet for details.
- Guests*: We will be welcoming Dr. Meredith Sinclair, Faculty Director of Academic Advising, to share information about the work of Academic Advising and the related topic of Midterm Grades. This topic has been assigned to the Student Policy Committee. Included below is the recent 10/12 announcement from Academic Advising to help provide additional information in preparation for the meeting. Additionally, as noted above, if the SGA representative to Faculty Senate is able to join us, we will dedicate a few moments at the beginning of the meeting to welcome Pierce Kozlowski.

- 6) 2023-2024 – [Resolutions approved by Faculty Senate](#) – Updates on the resolutions and their status may be found on the FS website.

From: announce-faculty <announce-faculty-bounces@lists.southernct.edu> **On Behalf Of** SCSU Announcements
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:59 AM
To: announce-faculty@lists.southernct.edu
Subject: Important Information about Midterm Grades from Academic Advising

Hi All –

I'm reaching out as your Faculty Director of Academic Advising with the reminder that **submitting midterm grades in Banner is an important tool for supporting our students' academic success and improving student retention and persistence.**

If you have questions about any of the information below, need strategies for generating midterm grades, or technical assistance with entering grades in Banner, please reach out (sinclairm4@southernct.edu).

Midterm grades are due on Monday, October 23 for all undergraduate classes. Per [Southern's Academic Catalog](#), all instructors are required to provide undergraduate students with a midterm grade.

Submitting grades **via Banner** is easy! The Registrar's Office has an [Grade Reporting Guide](#) available in OneStop (under Helpful Links -> Faculty/Staff in the left-hand side bar).

Please read on for additional information about how midterm grades contribute to student success and why **reporting midterm grades in Banner** makes a difference.

Fall 2022 Midterm Grade Data

Last fall, 81% of individual midterm grades were reported via Banner – that's great, but it also means we've still got work to do, particularly with our 100 and 200-level courses, which are heavily populated by first-year students.

- Of the 29,247 individual student midterm grades last fall, 5,470 were not reported via Banner.
 - 1,533 of these were from 100-level courses.
 - 1,711 of these were from 200-level courses.
 - 1,260 of these were from 300-level courses.
 - 962 of these were from 400-level courses.

DFW rates – a metric of the number of students who received a grade of D or F or who withdrew from a course – are a helpful measure of student success and indicator for retention rates.

- DFW rates for students who did not receive a midterm grade via Banner were higher – 21% - than those who did – 16%.

When these numbers are broken down by course level, we see an even more worrisome trend.

	DFW rate when no midterm grade reported in Banner	DFW rate when midterm grade was reported in Banner
100 level courses	33%	22%
200 level courses	19%	15%
300 level courses	19%	9%
400 level courses	12%	7%

Some additional data from Fall 2022:

- 526 students are missing 100% of their midterm grades in Banner.
- 672 students are missing 67% or more of their midterm grades in Banner.
- 1971 students are missing 33% or more of their midterm grades in Banner.

Midterm Grades Reported via Banner Make a Difference

The above numbers indicate there's a difference in student outcomes when midterm grades are reported in Banner. And while correlation doesn't equal causation, there are some probable explanations for the notable differences in DFW rates.

When a student has clarity about their midterm grade, they are better able to change academic behaviors, seek the support they need, and improve their performance.

Student Confusion:

- Students, especially our first-year students, need to have a consistent place to look for their midterm grades. We shouldn't ask our students to have to look in multiple different places to see how they are doing in every class. And we absolutely shouldn't expect students to have to ask us for a midterm grade.
- While many of us do use Blackboard to record grades, we all have very different ways of doing so. Grades in Banner are consistent – all letter grades – and all in one place. This leaves no room for a student to have a lack of clarity around how they are doing in the course.
- Students have shared that their peers often don't believe they have received midterm grades when they don't see the grade in Banner (even if the grade was reported another way).

CASAS Support:

- CASAS uses Banner reported midterm grades to target academic support outreach to all students with a "D" or "F" at midterm. If there is no midterm grade in Banner, CASAS can't reach out to a student who might really need that academic support.

Midterm Grades as "Temperature Check"

Midterm grades are meant to be a "temperature check" or estimate of student progress – they do not appear on transcripts, are not subject to the grade appeal process, and are in no way permanent. Rather they are meant to provide the student with an indication of their progress as a way to help them understand if they are on the right path or need to change their approach to the course.

Like many of you, I used to struggle with how to report a midterm grade as I was worried that it meant little given that the bulk of a student's course grade would be determined by their work after midterms. But the reality is that a student who is struggling with attendance, not completing assignments, or doing poorly on work submitted, is likely to continue to do so – unless there is intervention. So while, yes, a midterm grade may not be mathematically related to a student's overall course grade, it is a pretty reliable indicator of the grade a student is heading for (if they don't change their behavior towards the course).

No matter how you determine the midterm grade you report in Banner, do make sure to communicate to your students what that grade means (ideally in your syllabus). Midterm grades should not be reported as "incomplete"; rather determine the grade based on work completed to date.

If you've read this far – thank you!! If you'd like to discuss strategies for determining midterm grades or have questions about any of the other information above, I am always happy to help.

Thanks so much for taking this step to support our students' academic success!!

Meredith Sinclair
Faculty Director of Academic Advising