

Faculty Senate President's Report- April 1, 2026 meeting

1) Faculty Senate Announcements

Provost Irwin has asked for 5-6 faculty who would be willing to weigh in/test out Ellucian Experience, which is the "front door" to Banner once we move to the updated version. We will ask for volunteers at Wednesday's meeting. If we have more volunteers than spots, we can hold an election. It is an important request because Experience is the "front door" to Ellucian for students, faculty, and staff to navigate Banner. Please consider volunteering.

2) The Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Faculty Leadership Council (FLC) meetings with administration –

We will be meeting with President Bulmer and Provost Irwin on 4/6/26. Please let a faculty leader know of any issues you would like to be addressed in the meeting.

3) Contract negotiations

This is just a reminder that contract negotiations are ongoing. It is the first time it is an open negotiation with members allowed to watch. Consider joining the watch party on campus or streaming the negotiations. If you do watch, you are under the same restrictions as a member of the negotiating team, which means you may not talk to a member of the press about what is going on. Be sure to register for the link regardless of whether you are going to the watch party or watching on your own. It helps to ensure an accurate count and demonstrates that an open negotiation is what faculty want.

Please keep an eye out for emails from CSU-AAUP. They are coordinating lobbying efforts and are asking for faculty help in convincing the legislature to invest in Southern.

4) Meeting with President Bulmer

I met with President Bulmer on 3/23/26 as part of our scheduled monthly meetings. We discussed the Zero Budget initiative and faculty feelings about it. I mentioned that some of the comments I have heard revolve around the fear that people are worried that they will be doing a lot of work with no change. President Bulmer was very frank. The university is facing a \$20 million deficit. Something needs to be done to close the gap. While some requests might go unfunded this year, the idea behind the Zero-Budget is to promote a more equitable redistribution of resources. It allows administrators to more accurately learn about the needs of various departments and forecast for the next five years, which is what the Board of Regents (BOR) is requesting. If departments/programs could not make the deadline, they can request the flat budget they received last year.

The Budget Office of the BOR is requiring Southern to submit their draft budgets in April and final budgets in May. This is an earlier deadline than years prior. The rationale for this is that it will give the Budget Office more time to scrutinize the submitted budgets more closely. There has been a new auditor for the university and apparently, the report being submitted shows significant errors. Our Chief Financial Officer, Lillian Wanjangi, has been in close contact with the Budget Office and working to make sure we have clear guidelines from the System Office.

If we can increase our revenue in significant ways, we can close the budget gap that way. Currently, enrollment remains steady rather than increasing. Administration is looking at various ways to increase our revenue stream including getting the legislature to fund our tuition waivers and Early College. Another idea is to have a campus-wide discussion about accelerated degrees. It would require some in-depth discussion and some changes to ensure we remain committed to the quality of programs and the well-being of our students. We also discussed the possibility of online programs. Obviously, all of these are just thoughts that would require some planning and coordination.

5). Chancellor's CSCU H.R. 1 Committee

The Chancellor's office has asked for faculty membership on committees looking at the H.R. 1 bill. They would like faculty from each university on the following committees;

1. Financial Aid Subcommittee

Lead: Jason Callico

Co-Lead: Larissa Urquilla

Current System-Wide Members:

- Tamara O'Day Stevens
- Larissa Urquilla
- Jason Callico
- Steven McDowell

Charge Overview:

This subcommittee is charged with reviewing, interpreting, and preparing institutional responses to federal financial aid policy changes, including Pell eligibility, federal loan programs, repayment structures, FAFSA need analysis, borrower protections, and institutional accountability standards. The group will evaluate operational impacts, identify policy and systems adjustments, and develop guidance to ensure regulatory compliance and student-centered implementation.

2. Workforce Pell Subcommittee

Lead: Steven McDowell

Current System-Wide Members:

- Yaseen Hayajneh
- Steven McDowell
- Troy Miller

Charge Overview:

The Workforce Pell Subcommittee is charged with examining the implications, implementation, and strategic opportunities associated with the Workforce Pell provisions included in H.R. 1. The group will ensure that Connecticut public institutions are prepared to operationalize Workforce Pell in a manner that expands access, maintains academic quality, ensures compliance, and aligns workforce education with state and regional labor market needs.

3. Accountability & Compliance Subcommittee

Lead: Cameron Liston

Co-Lead: Jason Callico

Current System-Wide Members:

- Jason Callico
- Cameron Liston
- Stacy Votto

Charge Overview:

This subcommittee is focused on ensuring institutional compliance with the outcomes-based accountability framework enacted in H.R. 1, including earnings premium test requirements for undergraduate programs. The group will guide program-level data review, develop policies and procedures for compliance, and recommend strategic actions for programs identified at risk.

4. Impact Monitoring Subcommittee**Current System-Wide Members:**

- Benjamin Pauley
- Lisa Bucher
- Ebony Cole

Charge Overview:

This subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the impact of H.R. 1 changes on students, institutions, and the State of Connecticut. It will identify key metrics to monitor—including Pell and loan proration effects, private borrowing trends, enrollment, retention, and persistence—and help articulate the broader institutional and workforce implications of these changes.

Meeting Cadence

It is anticipated that each subcommittee will meet approximately once per month, with flexibility to adjust frequency based on emerging developments and workload.

There was an announcement and a call for nominations. Please consider volunteering. This bill could have significant impact on higher education and academic freedom. If interested, please contact Dan Swartz at swartzd1@southernct.edu

5). Preparing for our upcoming meeting

Provost Irwin has asked for the Senate to appoint 3 volunteers to pilot the Ellucian Experience. Experience is the "front door" to Ellucian for students, faculty, and staff to navigate Banner once Banner is updated. I have volunteered and we will be looking for others at the Wednesday meeting. If there is a lot of interest, we will hold an election.

Please review the packet and share with members of your department.

We will be discussing the following resolutions; Resolution for Information: Faculty Senate Suggested List for the DEC and Dept Chairpersons' Letters for Promotion & Tenure (P&T) evaluations