

Faculty Senate President's Report- May 6, 2026 meeting

1) Faculty Senate Announcements

Commencement: This year's undergraduate commencement will take place at the Total Mortgage Arena 600 Main Street Bridgeport on May 22 at 10:15. Graduate commencements will be on campus at the Lyman Center. The College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Business will be from 2-4 May 18th, the College of Health and Human Services will be from 7-9 on the 18th, and the College of Education will be on May 19th from 7-9.

Please come out and support our students and let them know how proud we are of them

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

We met with President Bulmer, Provost Irwin, and CFO Wanjagi today at our FLC meeting. We talked about the budget with CFO Wanjagi and she explained how it is impacted by enrollment. A large part of our discussion centered around the discounted tuition being offered at our sister universities. We aren't creating new students in the system but poaching from ourselves. Southern is not in the position to offer the giant scholarships that Central is currently offering. Central will eventually run through their surplus as well if they keep this up. There are currently no guardrails to stop this and it is hurting the university. This is a topic I will bring up when Chair Guay meets with us. We also talked about the unrest given the newest resignation of the chancellor. President Bulmer does not have any more information than we do at this point. Provost Irwin is looking for feedback the draft policy statement on AI that she sent out last week. Please check your email and provide your insight.

Both CFO Wanjagi and President Bulmer stated that the printer proposal is only a proposal and faculty input will be sought before any decisions are made. Additionally, I received a response to my email from CIO Tom Armstrong. He wrote, *"Yes, my plan is to work with the faculty to create a proposal that works for everyone. I heard there were more questions at the last senate meeting. If you could give me a few days to sync up with my team, I'll get back in touch with next steps and where I could use your help. I very much appreciate the offer!"*

3) Senate Presidents meeting

Prior to meeting with Chair Guay, I was able to meet for a few minutes with the other senate presidents. I asked them all how printing was handled on their campuses. All stated that their

department have copiers and printers and many people have printers in their offices. All also have a printing center for special requests.

President Adair of Central spoke about Central's President, Zulma Toro push to turn Central into a Polytechnic Institution. He said about 2/3 of the faculty are opposed to the idea, but President Toro is determined to get a proposal to the BOR. The senate presidents spoke further after meeting with Guay, but I had to leave for the town hall. I was forwarded an email written by Jeff Schlicht, president of the senate at Western. I am sharing it because of the financial impact it could have on our university.

In the current draft plan, Central will be asking the State for a permanent, special allocation of money to support their status as a Polytechnic school. The exact sum, and where that money will come from, is unclear. Two options may be:

- *A special allocation of funds that is independent of how CSCU is currently funded*
- *A carve out of funds from the current state allocation process to CSCU (reducing the amount to be distributed to other campuses)*

However this special funding comes about, if it does happen, it will mean that Central will have access to a unique pot of money, which will inherently change the fiscal relationship between the CSCU Schools.

Let me underscore that Central's plan is still being developed. It is unclear what the final plan will look like.

Given the fact that Central is offering our potential students more lucrative aid packages and is in a significantly better position financially than the other institutions, the idea of them getting more money seems unreasonable and problematic.

4) Meeting with Chair Guay

I met with Chair Marty Guay Friday along with the other senate presidents. He told us that on April 18th, the BOR got notice of an allegation against Chancellor Maduko and subsequently, they informed Maduko. The board hired a lawyer and by Thursday morning, there was enough evidence to put Maduko on administrative leave. I expressed that this is a blow to our reputation, especially after what happened with the presidential search and asked how this was going to be avoided in the future. Guay responded that they were going to bring in an outside agency to look at the whole system from everything from whistleblowing to money issues to harassment claims. I also said that Channel 3 has reported that there were allegations against Maduko made by a

student at Manchester Community College back in 2024. I asked if this was known by the board. Guay said he had no knowledge of such a complaint and no knowledge of any allegations made prior to this one. It is a title 9 violation. Once it is closed, both parties will be notified, and they will have ten days to respond before it becomes public knowledge through the Freedom of Information Act.

Chair Guay was directly asked by Stephen Adair of Central if that after 15 years of many failed leaders, should we consider this experiment over and consider a new support system? Guay admitted that there will be discussions and that some are probably already occurring. It was pointed out that for years, the Board of Regents has acted as though they have a monopoly on information. Guay agreed that this is true and that they are attempting to flip the pyramid with the brand being the institutions and the BOR acting as an advocacy tool rather than a decision-maker. He claims that no chancellor who does not agree with this sentiment will be hired. He mentioned that when Cheng was asked to leave, they honored his contract because according to their lawyer, Cheng did not engage in a fireable offense. Apparently as of July 1st, Cheng will be taking a job as a professor at Western.

I asked about how this impacts our presidential search. Guay stated that all options are on the table including talking to President Bulmer about extending her interim status. As of now, no decisions have been made.

While the search has not yet begun for a permanent chancellor, they are hoping to fast track it and have someone in place by July 1, 2027. It is a national search and if they find the right person, they hope to get the position filled more quickly. They are currently looking for an interim who will not be eligible to apply for the permanent position.

Chair Guay stated many times that he is here to serve us and that the university presidents should be the out-facing symbol of the institutions. His vision for the system is to create a feedback framework in which all opinions can be heard. He has requested regular meetings with the senate presidents. He wants to meet with us again in a few weeks and next semester, he would like to attend the monthly meetings of the senate presidents. In addition, he is going to arrange several open forums each year in which several board members will be available on each campus to discuss issues relevant to the faculty.

5) Town Hall

President Bulmer held her second town hall of the year. The main focus was on the budget and explaining where we stand. She presented the budget in the worst-case scenario. With that in mind, FY 25-26 ended with a \$19,126,659 deficit with \$10,907,586 was paid with Southern's reserves and \$8,219,076 was covered by the System's reserves. They are estimating that for next year (FY 2027) we will have \$250,800,00 in expenses and \$224,500,000 in revenue leaving a \$26,300,000 deficit. While our reserves are great enough to cover the balance, it is not a

sustainable position. We need to keep a thirty-day supply of money in reserves to satisfy NECHE requirements. We currently receive 26% of our funding from state appropriations. President Bulmer stated that in the past, state funding was closer to 70%. Currently, tuition and fees cover 56% of our revenue, and our incoming class is smaller than previously anticipated. We are unable to raise the tuition because that is decided by the BOR. While historically private universities have discounted their tuition, public colleges are doing so as well now. President Bulmer stated, "It's the Hunger Games out there." Competition for students is fierce. Various options for building revenue are being discussed.

We need to present to the legislature and BOR that Southern has been frugal with its spending and justify our expenses. There needs to be a credible explanation for why our faculty has grown while our student population has shrunk. President Bulmer asked that rather than spending any extra money available at the end of the year that departments instead send it back to the reserves to help put us in a better position. It is a small gesture, but everything helps. Colleen Bielitz gave an impassioned plea that faculty participate in fund raising to raise money for scholarships so we can better support our students. She stated that unrestricted funds are the best way to support rather than having money designated for a special sort of student. If anyone is interested, Dr. Wanjagi said the slides with budget breakdowns would be available. An email will go out with a link.

President Bulmer also discussed the various vacancies and plans moving forward. Karen Bufkin is currently filling in while the BOR finds a replacement interim chancellor. The provost search is advancing to a national search.

6) Preparing for our upcoming meeting

We have another full agenda for this week's meeting. Please review the two resolutions in the packet and the Graduate Council bylaw revisions that have been submitted. We will have Chair Guay meeting with us at the beginning of the meeting. Please remember that this is final meeting of the year so to keep our meeting with Guay brief.

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