



## YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

### Academic Senate Meeting

#### Meeting Minutes – September 3, 2025

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on September 3, 2025, Debartolo Hall Rm 132. Attendance at the meeting has been logged separately from these recorded minutes. This meeting was video recorded and will be made available, along with supporting documentation for presentations made during the senate meeting separately.

The meeting was called to order by Dr Chet Cooper, Chair. Dr Chet Cooper certified that quorum was present (Excused absences: Dr Bob Kramer, Dr Kyle Starkey, Mr. John Rossi, Dr Robert Gilliland). The meeting began with a majority approval of today's agenda. The recording of minutes from the April 23rd meeting recording and minutes were approved by the senate majority.

The meeting began with President Bill Johnson addressing the senate. President Johnson welcomed faculty back for the upcoming academic year. President Johnson alluded to additional information being shared at a future state of the university address later this month. President Bill Johnson highlighted a thriving campus atmosphere. Additional updates that were shared:

- The ignite program welcomed new freshman a few weeks ago.
- Greek life is on the rise.
- This is the 4<sup>th</sup> term in a role where there is an uptick in enrollment (FTE and head counts are up compared to where they were last year). Awaiting the 14 day number counts.
- Expressed gratitude to faculty for the work they do in helping to educate the students.

President Johnson opened the floor to questions. A question was brought up regarding ways to improve the marketing of the university. Highlighted that YSU tuition is far less than others across the state. The end state tuition is only a hundred dollars more than out of state which is why there are students coming in from Pennsylvania. Also noted an increase in students from West Virginia and thousands of students from the former Easter Gateway Community College. President Johnson highlighted that there is a shift in students opting to pursue Bachelor's degrees instead of certificates or associates degrees because of options and pricing. No further questions were raised. President Johnson concluded his opening remarks.

The meeting then shifted to a report from the Executive Committee by the chair, Dr Chet Cooper. Dr Cooper introduced two new people from the Office of Academic Affairs, Dr David Graham and Dr Kristine Still. Dr Cooper reminded senate members to sign-in for attendance logging at all sessions. Dr Cooper also highlighted the Senate Attendance Policy and encouraged members to review the senate attendance policy on the senate website ([Senate Attendance Policy](#)). The former DEI BEE Senate committee has officially disbanded at this time. Dr Cooper briefly highlighted Senate Bill 1 and the restrictions put forth by the bill across multiple campus departments. Dr Cooper wants to continue the very positive collaborative relationship with the Board of Trustees. Details on how this will look in the future will be shared at a later time. Dr Cooper reminded everyone to check their emails on dates for entering items into the catalog for next year. This concluded the Executive Committee Report.

Dr Cooper presented the Election and Balloting Committee report on behalf of Dr Bob Kramer. Dr Cooper announced that elections would take place for Chair/Vice Chair positions which would be effective January 1, 2026. Dr Cooper reminded the senate of how the election process works. The individual who wins becomes chair and the runner-up is designated as vice chair. Dr Cooper opened the floor to nominations.

Nominations received:

- Dr Mike Costarell (nominated by: Dr Brian Vuksanovich)
- Dr Chet Cooper (nominated by: Carter Cook)
- Dr Martha Pallante (self-nominated)

Additional nominations will be taken until 5:00 pm on 9/12/25 (Friday) via email. If interested, send nominations to the senate secretary, Dr Edmund Ickert ([ecickert@ysu.edu](mailto:ecickert@ysu.edu)) before the deadline.

Charter and Bylaws and Election and Balloting Committees are still looking for members. Please email Dr Edmund Ickert ([ecickert@ysu.edu](mailto:ecickert@ysu.edu)) before 9/12/25 (Friday) at 5:00 pm if interested. Dr Cooper highlighted the important need for Charter and Bylaws to be filled to allow for modifications to the Charter and Bylaws. You do not have to be a current senator to join, just eligible to be a senator.

Dr Cooper also noted a vacancy for the WCBA executive committee position that needs filled following the loss of Dr Peter Reday. This is an elected position from current WCBA senators. Please contact Dr Edmund Ickert ([ecickert@ysu.edu](mailto:ecickert@ysu.edu)) if interested.

### **Senate Committee Reports**

- Senate Ad-Hoc AI Committee report was delivered by Ms. Hillary Fuhrman. The university applied and was accepted to the American Association of Colleges and universities (Institute on AI pedagogy). This acceptance will allow the team to work with other AI experts across the field nationally and internationally. Ms. Fuhrman highlighted Dr Joe Palardy's report to the senate in spring and underlined the difficulty with keeping up with the changing developments. Ms. Fuhrman introduced the AI team to the senate Ms. Hillary Fuhrman (lead), Dr Mark Volpat (BCLASSE), Dr Sebastian Heraldo (CCCA), Dr Rick Rogers (BCHHS), and Dr Christina Saengar (WCBA). Conversations have been started about what's pedagogically appropriate in the classroom, how we can help students and when, when and how. Ms. Fuhrman opened the floor to questions. No questions from the floor.

### **Old Business**

No old business was presented.

### **New Business**

Provost Jennifer Pinter provided an update from the Office of Academic Affairs regarding the impact of Senate Bill 1 and university compliance (see video recording and PowerPoint presentation for specific details). Provost Pinter highlighted potential new processes for course and program change workflows to comply with Senate Bill 1. Provost Pinter also highlighted programs set for deactivation due to low number of graduates over the past 3 years (< 5). These include: BA Chemistry, BA Physics, BA Geology, BS Geology, BA Theatre Studies. Programs receiving a waiver include: BS Chemistry, BS Physics, BS Physics Astronomy, and BFA Audio and Music Production.

Some other items highlighted by the presentation include:

- Retention and enrollment statistics are critical for program viability and state compliance.
- Programs with low enrollment or graduation rates require faculty engagement to improve marketing and student retention.
- Continuous quality improvement processes depend on accurate data verification and faculty collaboration.
- Institutions must adhere to new affirmation statements regarding intellectual diversity and controversial topics in education.
- Faculty to proactively assess programs that may be declining in enrollment and consider potential changes before decisions are made at an administrative level.
- Faculty should review and ensure the accuracy of data submitted for program evaluations and waivers.
- Departments must revise program goals and action steps to align with new affirmation statements.

The floor was open for questions following Provost Pintar's presentation. Dr Brian Vuksanovich highlighted the difficulty with getting marketing help to market changes in his department. Dr Vuksanovich provided an example of how his department won a national competition last year and it never got publicized as much as the YSU Bowling team national championship. Dr Vuksanovich questioned how to better get the word out and utilize resources efficiently to help improve marketing. Provost Pintar suggested working with Ross Morrone and Kristine Still in the Office of Academic Affairs to help get the money for marketing. Provost Pintar re-emphasized that a team is now in place to handle the marketing process and to make it smoother going forward.

SGA president Sofia Myers and SGA vice president Carter Cook presented an update on SGA. President Myers introduced the student senators to the senate body. The goal is to get student senators assigned to senate committees to ensure adequate representation and communication. President Myers noted that if there are any concerns feel free to reach out to her. President Myers ended with advice on keeping a positive approach with students to improve the student experience.

Dr Chet Cooper allowed Dr Martha Pallante to address the senate. Dr Pallante relayed concerns from Muslim students about loss of a dedicated prayer space from Kilcawley. This concern was discussed with SGA president Sofia Myers. Dr Pallante offered the Office of Academic Affairs a possible solution which involved the use of rooms in Debartolo Hall.

Dr Chet Cooper thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Dr Cooper called for the meeting to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was seconded.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert

Secretary, Academic Senate