



YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Academic Senate Meeting

Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2026

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on March 11, 2026, in 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 Martha Pallante, Chair. Dr Martha Pallante certified that quorum was present (Excused absences: Loren Lease, Annie Tapp, Amy Copeland, Robert Gilliland, Robert Caven).

The meeting began with a revision to the agenda proposed by Dr Dawna Cerney. An agenda item was offered for addition at the end of the agenda: “Business Online Completion Degree Program Residency Requirement”. The addition was approved by senate majority. A revised agenda was used for the senate meeting that included the added item. The recording of minutes from the February 4th meeting was brought before the senate for approval. The minutes were approved by the senate majority.

Senate Executive Committee Report

Dr. Martha Pallante presented the report from the Executive Committee. Dr. Pallante brought forward 2 information items after discussion with the provost. The first was a request by the Ohio 250 committee. The local committee is creating a time capsule to be stored to be opening in 25 years. They have asked for donations to include in the time capsule that symbolizes YSU. If interested, contact Amy Fluker if wanting to make a donation (<https://ysu250.org/time-capsule>). Second item is an update from IT regarding a survey that was conducted. Over 1,00 respondents with 75% in favor of retaining blackboard. Decision made to continue with use of Blackboard. The third item is a move to full digital access in the fall. Dr Pallante sought feedback on a presentation on the resources available to faculty to help them achieve full digital access. Reaction was mixed from the senate regarding this presentation idea. Dr Pallante decided to move forward with the presentation in April. The final item was discussion of current senate committees with vacancies. The list was shared with the senate and included the following:

Elected Chartered Committees

- Senate Executive Committee—Vacancy, CCCA
- Election and Balloting Committee—Vacancy WCBA
- Charter and Bylaws Committee-Vacancies WCBA, CCCA, SGA

Appointed and elected/appointed committees

- Governance Committee—BCHHS, WCBA, BCLASSE

Chartered committees

- Events Committee—Vacancies WCBA, BCLASSE, SGA
- Academic Grievances Committee—Discussion Needed
- Academic Programs Committee—No Vacancy
- Academic Research Committee—Discussion Needed

- Standards Committee—Vacancies STEM, CCCA, WCBA (2)
- First Year Experience Committee-No Vacancy
- General Education Committee—No Vacancy
- Honors Committee—Vacancies CCCA, STEM
- Technologies Committee—No Vacancy
- Library Committee—Discussion Needed
- Teaching and Learning Committee—Vacancies STEM, CCCA
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee—No Vacancy

In addition, notices will go out to college deans to call for nominations for senators at-large and department senators. Recommendations to be taken to fulfill future senator roles for the next academic year. Dr Kramer, Chair of the Elections and Balloting Committee, offered to contact individual departments for senator department representatives. At-large senators serve for 1 year and department senators serve for 2-year terms. The governance committee will be sending out a message to the university about vacancies on committees in the individual colleges. If there are any mistakes, please inform Dr Martha Pallante.

Senate Committee Reports

- Dr Thomas Wakefield submitted a report from the undergraduate curriculum committee. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Dr David Asch submitted a report from the Academic Programs Committee. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Dr Jackie Mercer submitted a report from the General Education Committee. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Jackie LeViseur presented the Events Committee report to the Senate, along with a list of commencement speaker candidates. The list incorporates candidates from a 2-month call from candidates. Looking for senate endorsement prior to the Board of Trustee meeting next week. Dr. Christina Saenger recommended an addition to the list (Ted Schmidt). Motion to approve the addition was accepted by senate majority. The new candidate was added to the list, and the report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.

Old Business

No old business was presented.

New Business

Proposed Guidelines for the Associate of Technical Studies

Dr. Dawna Cerney presented proposed guidelines for the Associate of Technical Studies (ATS) degree on behalf of the Academic Standards Committee. This is a revision of the old ODHE Technical Studies. Dr. Cerney noted that the ATS designation was formerly known as the one-year option at the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) level.

The proposed guidelines specify that ATS degrees are awarded for the successful completion of a planned program of study designed to address the need for specialized technical education. To qualify, the program must include an area of concentration equivalent to at least 30 semester credit hours in technical studies

and must have a clearly identifiable career objective. The area of concentration may be formed in one of two ways:

- Type A: A coherent combination of technical courses drawn from two or more existing technical programs at the institution, serving a career objective not adequately addressed by a single existing program.
- Type B: Courses or training completed at other institutions of higher education, career centers, or other educational enterprises that are judged by the institution to be of college level and for which degree credit is awarded.

The guidelines further specify that ATS degrees must include at least 30 semester hours of non-technical coursework, comprising both general education and applied general education courses. The general education portion must include at least 15 semester credit hours, with a minimum of six hours drawn from English composition/oral communication and mathematics/statistics/logic. An additional six hours must come from at least two of three categories: arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences. The remaining 15 hours of non-technical coursework should consist of courses that directly support the student's career goal.

Discussion was held. Questions were taken from the senate body. Dr Brian Vuksanovich brought forth a suggestion. Brian to send the suggestion via email to Dawna for review by the Standards Committee. Mr. Mike Costarell asked which parts were created by YSU and which were OT36. Dr Kevin Ball stated that the guidelines were literally taken from ODHE guidelines with the only difference being 15 total hours instead of 16 hours. A suggestion was made to vote on the program as it stands and then create a new document for a policy change for the suggestion made earlier. Following discussion, a motion to approve the proposed guidelines was made and seconded. The guidelines were recommended for approval by senate majority.

YSU Academic Reinstatement Policy (Revised Proposal)

Associate Provost Dr. David Graham presented a revised proposal for the YSU Academic Reinstatement Policy. The revisions were developed to clarify procedures, ensure equity in application, and strengthen support for academically struggling students.

Key elements of the revised policy include:

- Students on Academic Suspension who have continued to earn a cumulative GPA below 2.00 must be dismissed from the university for at least one semester before petitioning for reinstatement.
- Students on Academic Suspension who have registered for a future semester will be administratively withdrawn from all classes by the Office of the Registrar and notified via email and U.S. postal mail.
- Students may petition the Academic Reinstatement Committee for readmission. All petitions must be submitted by the designated deadline and include documented evidence of circumstances beyond the student's control, as well as a personal statement outlining: (1) the steps the student will take to achieve academic success if reinstated, and (2) the individuals in their personal and on-campus support network.

- Students granted reinstatement may enroll at the start of either the full-term or first seven-week session but may not enroll in the second seven-week term unless already enrolled in first seven-week courses.
- Reinstated students will receive a continuation plan from the Reinstatement Committee requiring discussion with their academic advisor. Plans may include a recommended change of major, academic reassessment, summer enrollment, repeated coursework, tutoring, coaching, and/or mental health counseling.
- Upon reinstatement, the student's academic standing is reset to Probation. A second suspension will require at least one full calendar year before reinstatement can again be granted. Additional suspensions will require at least two years. Students should not expect reinstatement after two suspensions absent extraordinary circumstances.

Questions were taken from the senate body. Dr Bob Kramer voiced that if a student is suspended then their grade point average would be fixed. How would they get re-instated? Per the policy, they would have served their suspension and then would re-apply coming onto academic probation. Dr David Frank inquired about why they can't come back two semesters later. This ensures time to connect with the Academic Advisor to ensure they have an academic support plan in place to support re-enrollment. Dr Pallante questioned the wording of "minimum grade point average". It was pointed out that previously they were required to sit out for suspension and can't immediately re-apply. After discussion, a motion to recommend for approval the revised policy was made and seconded. The revised Academic Reinstatement Policy was recommended for approval by senate majority.

Addressing Student Non-Responsiveness in Faculty Performance Metrics

Associate Provost Dr. David Graham and Dr. Dawna Cerney jointly presented a proposal titled "Closing the Accountability Gap: Addressing Student Non-Responsiveness in Faculty Performance Metrics." The presentation addressed a systemic challenge identified by faculty and the Academic Standards Committee related to how student non-engagement intersects with faculty performance evaluation.

Dr. Graham and Dr. Cerney noted that while the university has made significant progress in improving Early Alert and advising response times, with most follow-ups occurring within 24–48 hours, a structural dead end has emerged. A high volume of faculty notifications conclude with statuses indicating that multiple contact attempts have been made with no response from the student. As a result, the underlying academic risk often goes unresolved despite documented faculty and advisor outreach efforts.

The presenters described three primary ways in which student non-responsiveness creates an inequitable burden on faculty:

- **DFW Rate Accountability:** Faculty are evaluated in part on DFW (D, F, and Withdrawal) rates. When students ignore or disregard both faculty and advisor outreach, the faculty member remains the sole party accountable in institutional data for that student's outcome.
- **Senate Bill 1 and Student Evaluations:** Under SB1, student evaluations carry significant weight in faculty reviews. Students who disengage or lack accountability may correlate disengagement with negative evaluations focused on course difficulty, placing faculty in a position where compromising academic standards may feel like a method of self-protection.

- **Grade Inflation Incentives:** An indirect but real pressure exists to inflate grades or lower standards to mitigate DFW outcomes and hostile student evaluations, which undermines institutional academic integrity.

To address these concerns, the presenters moved that the Academic Senate form an ad-hoc committee including representatives from the Academic Standards Committee, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and interested faculty members to study the “Student Response Gap.” The working group would be tasked with:

- Investigating the correlation between advisor engagement/communication comments post-alert and students’ final grades, to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between student non-responsiveness and DFW rates.
- If a correlation is established: defining a clear institutional protocol for when a student remains non-responsive to advisor outreach, including potential mandatory holds or required success seminars, and establishing timely follow-up mechanisms.
- Developing a mechanism to contextualize or “weight” DFW rates against documented outreach attempts so that faculty are not penalized for outcomes where student non-responsiveness is on record.
- Creating a system where student evaluations are cross-referenced with engagement data (e.g., participation in Early Alert interventions) to provide appropriate context during annual faculty reviews.

This was informational and no vote was taken.

Proposed Student Feedback Items

Assistant Provost Hillary Fuhrman and Dr. Cary Wecht presented proposed revisions to the student course feedback survey. The presentation, developed in response to feedback received from faculty and administration, outlined a refined set of survey questions intended to provide more meaningful and actionable information while aligning with the requirements of the Advance Ohio Higher Education Act (SB1).

The proposed revised student course feedback survey includes the following items:

Likert Scale Questions (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree – 5-Point Scale):

- [Instructor Name] shared how to succeed in the course (e.g., criteria, rubrics, directions, examples).
- The class provided me with opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, or application of material.
- This class helped me see how to apply course content to practical problems or real-life situations.
- It was clear how and when to communicate with [Instructor Name].

- [Instructor Name] created an inclusive class environment that communicated value for all individuals.
- [Instructor Name] provided feedback that helped me learn and progress in the course.

Advance Ohio Higher Education Act Required Questions:

- Does the faculty member create a classroom atmosphere free of political, racial, gender, and religious bias? (Yes/No)
- Are students encouraged to discuss varying opinions and viewpoints in class? (Yes/No/N/A)
- On a scale of 1–10, how effective are the teaching methods of this faculty member? (1 = Not effective at all to 10 = Extremely effective)

Open-Ended Question:

- Please explain any of your above answers or offer additional feedback. Your answers will be reviewed by your instructor and department chair after the term has ended.

Dr. Fuhrman and Dr. Wecht noted that the proposed items are intended to replace the current evaluation instrument and reflect commitment to constructive, evidence-based faculty feedback. This was an informational session and no vote was taken.

Business Online Completion Degree Program Residency Requirement

Dr. Dawna Cerney introduced an additional agenda item on behalf of Patrick Batman, Chair of the WCBA Curriculum Committee, following approval of its addition by senate majority. The item addressed a proposed Business Credit Residency Requirement for WCBA undergraduate business majors.

Dr. Cerney explained that the Williamson College of Business Administration recently launched accelerated online completion degree programs largely targeted to transfer students and degree completers. With these new program formats in place, it became necessary to formally codify in the catalog a residency requirement consistent with AACSB accreditation standards. AACSB standards require that more than 50% of business-discipline coursework, including major courses, required business courses, and business electives be completed at the degree-granting institution.

The proposed policy language for the catalog is as follows: Students in WCBA undergraduate business majors must complete at least 50% of the business credit hours required for the degree in residence at Youngstown State University. Business credit hours include required business tool, business core, major requirements, and business electives; general education and non-business courses are excluded from this calculation. This WCBA requirement is in addition to the university-wide residency requirements, including the requirement that the final 30 semester hours of the baccalaureate degree be completed at YSU.

Dr. Cerney noted that existing 2+2 transfer pathways remain compatible with this requirement, as analysis of current curricula confirms that standard transfer students would still need to earn well over the 50% minimum business credit hours at YSU. The committee further noted that no formal Academic Standards

Committee action is required, as the policy is consistent with both AACSB and ODHE requirements, and that this item may signal a future approach for “senate reporting” on similar policy alignments.

No questions posed from senators. A motion to approve the Business Credit Residency Requirement was made and seconded. The motion was recommended for approval by senate majority.

Dr Pallante asked the body if there were any other business that needed to be attended to. None was present. A motion to adjourn was received with a 2nd. Dr Pallante officially adjourned the meeting following a majority consent.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert

Secretary, Academic Senate