

Academic Senate
September 8, 2026
Cowan Hall #310
Meeting Minutes

Membership: Valerie Guyant, Grant Olson, Laura Gomez, Karyn Billmayer, Randy Bachmeier, Anna Bowker, Aaron Riggin, Joseph Todd, Kyra Kaercher, Chad Spangler

Members Present: Valerie Guyant, Grant Olson, Anna Bowker, Randy Bachmeier, Laura Gomez, Karyn Billmayer, Kyra Kaercher, Chad Spangler

Guests: Jennifer Brown, Scott Guyant, Adam Parrish, Lindsey Brandt-Bennett, Burke Wallace

Recorder: Jodi Kueffler

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order by Valerie Guyant at 4:01 p.m.

Minutes:

- Motion was made by Karyn Billmayer to approve the minutes from April 13, 2026.
- The second was made by Laura Gomez.
- Question.
- Approved.

Chancellor/Provost Updates:

- Dr. Valerie Martin Conley began her role remotely today as our new Interim Provost and will be joining us on campus Monday.
- Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will be on campus in October for and accreditation visit.
- Our enrollment is about even with last year.

- All faculty searches conducted during the spring and summer have successfully resulted in filled positions.

External Committee Reports:

- NWCCU
 - There will be a mid-cycle visit in early October.
 - The Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report was submitted a couple weeks ago.
- UAC
 - Committee met last month and two safety policies were approved after minor editorial changes were made.
 - The Safety and Disaster Committee policy was tabled for further review.
- MUSFAR
 - The next Board of Regents meeting will focus on dual enrollment. Please contact Grant Olson with any thoughts you want shared at that meeting.
 - Later this year the group will look at statewide artificial intelligence (AI) policies.
- Core Leadership
 - Discussed text communication from safety event this summer. Working on making sure everyone receives these communications.
 - Faculty are asked to report any students who have not been attending class as they should.
 - NorthNav has updates coming and MSU is looking at changes to Duo.
 - Aurora Complex designing is moving forward.
 - Cowan Hall roof project will begin in the next week or so.

Senate Committee Reports:

- Admissions and Standards
 - There are no new updates at this time.
- Curriculum
 - The committee met last week and approved four new proposals.

- Casey Donovan stepped down as Chair. Valerie Guyant and Laura Gomez agreed to act as Co-Chairs.
- Financial Aid
 - Committee has met a couple times to review appeals.
 - Many of the appeals are from students who exceeded credit limit after transferring programs.
- General Education
 - The committee plans to meet next week.
- Graduate Council
 - The committee met last week and looked at the program that is in moratorium and updates for the website.
- Instruction, Research, Faculty Development & Cultural Programming
 - The committee plans to meet next week.
 - They still need another representative from COTS.
- Library & Instructional Technology
 - The committee has not met but they have been requested to set one soon.

Proposals:

- 26-1; New Program Proposal – Career Certificate in Workforce Foundations.
 - Motion was made by Laura Gomez to table proposal until additional Board of Regent paperwork is completed.
 - The second was made by Kyra Kaercher.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
- 26-3; Major Program Revision – Changes to Welding Technology CAS
 - Motion was made by Laura Gomez to table proposal until it reflects changes approved in Curriculum Committee meeting and the submitter has signed the proposal.
 - The second was made by Karyn Billmayer.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
- 26-4; Major Program Revision – Changes Secondary Education: General Science

- Every Praxis topic is covered in one the required science courses.
- Motion was made by Laura Gomez to approve.
- The second was made by Karyn Billmayer.
- Question.
- Approved.

Old Business:

- Academic Calendar
 - Creation of Sub-Committee
 - Last year Senate began looking at different academic calendar options.
 - Creating sub-committee to look at different options to bring back to Senate before taking to faculty.
 - Motion was made to create a sub-committee by Grant Olson.
 - The second was made by Laura Gomez.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
 - The committee volunteers consist of Grant Olson, Randy Bachmeier, and Laura Gomez.
- Study Abroad Sub-Committee.
 - Would like to open up for any faculty to be part of.
 - Currently no staff position to assist with these trips.
 - Sub-committee should look at creating policies and procedures.
 - Motion was made to create a sub-committee by Laura Gomez.
 - The second was made by Kyra Kaercher.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
 - The committee volunteers consist of Kyra Kaercher, Valerie Guyant, and Joseph Todd.
- Dual Enrollment.
 - MUSFAR will be discussing this topic at the September Board of Regents meeting.
 - Questions and concerns have come up about dual enrollment from faculty.

- Who is approving high school teachers for concurrent enrollment classes?
- Students have the opportunity to obtain an associate degree while still in high school, but is this communicated to them?
- There is not a clear process to implement learning outcomes.
- Program supported by legislators who provide incentives to the high schools to utilize.
- Classes may include high school students who are underage alongside traditional college-age students, yet instructors and other students may not be aware that minors are enrolled in the course.
- Parents of high school students may attempt to contact faculty regarding their student's coursework or academic performance, which could create potential FERPA concerns, particularly when faculty are not aware a student is in high school and underage.
- Some high schools do not allow cellphones in class which causes issues for those students to log in to college platforms.
- Are college courses just supplementing rural schools that do not have enough instructors?
- Class 8 licensing may no longer be required for professors to teach to high school students. Are background checks still needing to be done?
- Are students being advised what courses will benefit them in the future?
- Teach Evaluation Form
 - Meeting was held at the end of last semester to discuss what should be included.
 - Form will continue to be completed through Canvas.
 - Specific questions related to individual programs will not be included on the form but may be distributed separately as a survey by the professor.

New Business:

- Impact of College Merger on Academic Senate Bylaws
 - CASE and COHS colleges have recently merged.

- Academic Senate Bylaws should be rewritten, voted on, and signed to accurately reflect this change.
- Laura Gomez volunteered to rewrite current Bylaws.
- Student Appeal Concerns
 - Financial Aid Committee and Admissions and Standards have student appeals that may need to be reviewed outside the academic year.
 - Forms require an advisor to sign.
 - Exploring ways to expand the number of individuals who can sign on behalf of an advisor in their absence.
 - Financial Aid does meet before classes begin; however, the timing may not be early enough to ensure students can enroll in the courses they need.
 - There is language in the Collective Bargaining Unit (CBA) for Admissions and Standards forms to be signed by the Chair outside of the academic year.
 - Would like to continue this conversation and explore ways to expediate process for students.
- Academic Senate Leadership
 - The President usually serves a 3-year term with the Vice President to then take over.
 - Valerie Guyant has served as President for two years, but with retirement changes she has now become the President of the faculty union.
 - Valerie Guyant will step down from Academic Senate to alleviate any concerns having the same person in two positions.
 - Grant Olson will move into President position.
 - Will need to elect a new Vice President.
 - Laura Gomez was nominated and elected by acclamation to be Vice President.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Laura Gomez.
- The second was made by Karen Billmayer.
- Question.
- Approved.