

Faculty Senate

November 2024 Senate Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved at the 12/3/2024 Regular Senate Meeting

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Curris Center Barkley Room

Public Access Zoom link: <https://murraystate.zoom.us/j/83844364068>

Senators in attendance: Oliver Beckers, Michael Bordieri, Brian Bourke, Alison Brown, Erica Brown, Michael Busby, Paul Foote, Eran Guse, Marshall Hayes, Ray Horton, Samer Khalil, Jonathan Lyon, Traci Byrd proxy for Susan Miller, Naveen Musunuru, Braun Oldenkamp, Heidi Ortega, Barbie Papajeski, Jeremy Phillips, Elena Picech, David Pizzo, Jessica Pryor, Thomas Powell, Brenda Reeves, Selise Ridolfi, David Roach, Faris Sahawneh, Ken Sutrick, Carol Terracina-Hartman, Jenilee Williams, and Abdul Yarali.

Special Guests: Faculty Regent Melony Schemberger, Provost Tim Todd, Associate Provost Renee Fister. Assistant Provost Ashley Ireland.

- I. Call to Order at 3:30pm by President Roach
- II. Welcome and Sign-in
- III. Approval of Minutes. A motion to approve the October 2024 minutes was made by Senator Pizzo. Seconded by Senator Terracina-Hartman. Minutes approved by 25 yes votes.
- IV. Distinguished Guests
 - a. Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Tim Todd
 - i. Provost Todd provided an update on summer teaching compensation to the senate. He acknowledged that the provost office moved too quickly in considering a new model, and announced that the current funding model will remain in place for summer 2025. Provost Todd also announced the formation of a taskforce to make recommendations for summer 2026 (and beyond). He announced that Faculty Senate President Roach will be a member of the taskforce. Senator Terracina-Hartman asked about potential alternative models that are being considered. Provost Todd clarified that there are no pre-selected models, and that the job of the taskforce will be to explore potential models as informed by a review of peer institutions. Senator Beckers asked for elaboration regarding what costs are creating a financial problem for summer teaching. Provost Todd explained that summer teaching is modeled into the 12-month budget. Senator Musunuru asked for a timeline for the taskforce, and Provost Todd responded that the primary work of the taskforce will need to be completed by April 1, 2025.
- V. Appointments and Rulings from the Chair
 - a. Chair Election: Senator Brenda Reeves was elected to chair the Faculty Senate Finance Committee
 - b. Faculty Senate President David Roach was appointed to the Provost's Taskforce on Summer Compensation via unanimous consent.
- VI. Agenda Update --- President of the Faculty Senate, David Roach

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- a. President Roach reported that the Finance committee was charged with exploring an Inflationary adjustment for Associate and Full promotion.
 - i. President Roach provided a brief update on summer compensation. He shared that summer proration rates will remain the same as last year for Summer 2025. President Roach thanked the Provost's office and the Deans for covering the budget shortfall. He also shared that new summer compensation models will be considered for 2026 and beyond. President Roach solicited input regarding the taskforce, noting that he believes that the goal should not be simply to cut faculty salaries. President Roach indicated that an ideal solution needs to work for faculty, students, and the overall financial health of the institution.
 - ii. President Roach charged senators to discuss summer compensation with their constituents and bring ideas and concerns to the December 2024 Senate meeting. President Roach then shared several compensation models that have been discussed including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Flat rates based on rank
 - 2. Flat rates based on course-level (100-200, 300-400, graduate)
 - 3. Percentage of base pay with upper and lower salary caps
 - 4. Higher proration rates
 - 5. New courses and/or enrollment increases
 - 6. More access to financial aid and scholarships for students
 - 7. Fully budgeted instructional costs
- VII. Distinguished Guests
- a. Faculty Regent, Melony Shemberger
 - i. Regent Shemberger provided an update on the recently announce partnership with the University of Louisville Medical School. Senator Beckers asked about a timeline for this partnership. Regent Shemberger indicated that the letter of intent offers general guidance with regard to timeline, and that more details are forthcoming.
- VIII. Senator Spotlight, Dr. Oliver Beckers
- a. Dr. Beckers introduced himself and his family to the senate, and shared the story of the remarkable discovery of a new species of insect (*Hebetica sylviae*) by his daughter and wife in their garden. He also shared his hobbies, including cycling and heavy metal music. Dr. Beckers then highlighted his academic journey and research focus on insects and other animals, including parasitic flies. He also shared an overview of undergraduate programs in biology.
- IX. Reports --- Faculty Senate Standing Committees
- i. Academic Policies – Chair, Brian Bourke
 - 1. Vote: FSR 24-25-1 --- Promotion Path for Instructors
 - a. Senator Bourke provided a brief update on minor revisions made to the resolution since the first reading before returning the floor to President Roach for voting. President Roach provided an overview of discussion, voting, and amendment procedures.
 - b. Senator Guse asked for additional details regarding the potential financial impact of the policy. Senator Bourke stated that the maximum possible annual financial impact would be

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approximately \$240,000, but that the actual impact would likely be lower and more gradual. Senator Guse noted that a quarter of a million dollars is a considerable annual expense. Senator Becker asked about where the money will come from, and expressed a concern that the money could come from cuts to the academic budget. Senator Bourke indicated that he has not had any conversations with the administration, and President Roach added that it would be challenging to absorb the full cost. Senator Bourke added that salaries come from the base operating budget, and that he does not anticipate that these proposed promotions would come from college/departments.

- c. Senator Foote expressed his support for the resolution. Senator Horton spoke in favor of the resolution, sharing that his department's recent analysis of compensation revealed that instructors are in need of a meaningful promotion pathway. Senator Guse asked about the turnover rate on instructors. President Roach noted that the overall turnover rate is approximately 20-30 faculty per year. Senator Alison Brown spoke in favor of the resolution and noted that their department has significant difficulty recruiting and retaining instructors due to salary concerns. Senator Papajeski spoke in favor of the resolution, stating that she was part of a taskforce that worked on this issue and she appreciated that it was being brought forward by the senate.
 - d. Final vote: 23 Yes, 1 no, 1 abstention. The resolution passed.
- ii. Finance – Chair, Brenda Reeves
 1. Senator Reeves presented an update on several priorities of the finance committee, including increased promotion amounts for associate/full ranks, an ombudsperson position, faculty turnover rates, and the tuition discount rate. Senator Pizzo and Foote provided comments and feedback on the presented preliminary data.
 - iii. Governmental Affairs – Secretary of Senate, Michael Bordieri
 1. Secretary Bordieri provided an overview of recent legislative activity, including ongoing interim joint committee on education meetings regarding DEI in higher education. He shared that the subcommittee will be meeting soon to discuss legislative priorities for the upcoming 2025 session, and that they are planning for an active session. Senator Horton asked about any state-level discussion regarding alternative institutional accreditation, consistent with recent national political developments. President Roach, Secretary Bordieri, and Regent Schemberger all stated that they were not aware of any discussions.
 - iv. Handbook and Personnel – Chair, Michael Busby
 1. Information Item: Faculty Handbook 2024 Update
 2. Senator Busby reported that the 2024 version of the handbook has been updated and posted online. He requested that any errors or revision

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request be brought to the Senate's attention at msu.faculty senate@murraystate.edu.

3. Senator Busby noted that the handbook committee is continuing to explore remote instruction guidelines, and that their focus is shifting from inclement weather to a broader consideration of remote instruction.
 - v. Rules, Elections, and Bylaws – Faculty Senate Vice President, Heidi Ortega
 1. Vice President Ortega shared that the committee is preparing for nominations for the regent's teaching award as well as the 2025 faculty regent election.
 - vi. Executive – Faculty Senate President, David Roach
 1. Vote: FSM 24-25-2 --- Summer Compensation
 - a. Senator Terracina-Hartman made a friendly amendment to remove the hyphen between timely-manner. Adopted with unanimous consent. Senator Bourke made a friendly amendment to correct a grammar concern with an apostrophe (members' instead of member's). Adopted with unanimous consent. Senator Horton introduced an amendment to replace “long-term” with “for all stakeholders.” Seconded by President Roach. Vote for amendment: 23 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain.
 - b. Senator Guse commented that he did not realize that without summer teaching there is a significant overall budget gap. He expressed that we need to work on this gap, as he does not believe it is healthy to rely on voluntary off-contract summer instruction to balance the budget. Senator Pizzo expressed agreement and indicated that faculty has significant leverage with this issue. Senator Reeves expressed that she believes we need to find more effective ways of running the university and that the current budget mode is not sustainable.
 - c. Final vote: 26 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. The resolution passed.
- X. Other University Committees
- i. Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee
 1. No report.
 - ii. Presidential Search Update
 1. President Roach reported that while he is not on the search committee the search consultant firm reached out to him to gain the Senate's perspective. He discussed priorities that he shared with the consultants and requested that senators share additional feedback with him. President Roach reported that the search consultants appear confident that the search process will yield high quality candidates. Regent Shemberger indicated that nominations/applications are open, and that the consultants expect a large pool of candidates. She shared that the search committee will have access to the entire pool of candidates, but the consultants will also offer a recommended list of candidates. Regent Shemberger indicated that the leadership qualities she highlighted

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included working with state and federal policymakers and respect for faculty's core role in the institution .

- XI. Old Business
 - a. Senator Reeves reminded senators that a faculty engagement survey will not be conducted by the finance committee this year.
- XII. New Business
 - a. Senator Williams reminded faculty that application for the [Giving Back Endowment: Faculty Innovation Grants](#) are now open.
 - b. President Roach reminded faculty that an informal faculty coffee will occur tomorrow (11/13/24) beginning at 8:30 at the Waterfield Library Porch.
- XIII. Adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:04pm.