

## Faculty Senate

### October 2024 Senate Regular Meeting Minutes

Approved at the 11/12/2024 Regular Senate Meeting

Tuesday, October 1, 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, Stephanie Ford, Chad Gaylord, Eran Guse, Marshall Hayes, Jeff Henry, Ray Horton, Amanda Joyce, Samer Khalil, Jonathan Lyon, Susan Miller, Ted Porter proxy for Shauna Mullins, 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, Sarah Martin proxy for Cintia Segovia Figueroa, Megan Smetana, Ken Sutrick, Carol Terracina-Hartman, Jenilee Williams, and Abdul Yarali.

Guests in attendance: Faculty Regent Melony Shemberger, Student Regent Brendan Hawkins, and Associate Provost Renee Fister.

- I. Call to Order at 3:36 by President Roach with a minor delay due to technical difficulties with the remote video feed.
- II. Welcome and Sign-in
- III. Approval of Minutes.
  - President Roach made a motion to approve the September 2024 minutes and they were approved by a majority show of hands.
- IV. Appointments and Rulings from the Chair.
  - President Roach shared that Senator Jan Super was injured while teaching overseas and he appointed Senator Brenda Reeves as interim chair of the Finance committee via unanimous consent.
- V. Agenda Update --- President of the Faculty Senate, David Roach
  - President Roach noted that when we have a pending resolution, we should be careful not to ask an administrator to make a judgment on the matter prior to their deceleration time-frame, which is approximately 30 days from an item being approved by the Senate.
  - President Roach provided a brief update regarding items of business being worked on by committees as well as senate priorities.
- VI. Distinguished Guests
  - President of the University, Bob Jackson. Unable to attend due to campus guests and a special meeting of the Board of Regents.
  - Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Tim Todd. Unable to attend due to campus guests and a special meeting of the Board of Regents.
  - Faculty Regent, Melony Shemberger
    - Regent Shemberger shared that she will provide an update regarding Dr. Jackson's retirement via email shortly. She offered an overview of the presidential search process including the composition of the search committee and plan for a

## Faculty Senate

transitory period. Regent Shemberger indicated that the board has entered into an agreement with Academic Search Inc. to assist with the search.

- VII. Senator Spotlight- Dr. Ray Horton
- Senator Horton introduced himself to the senate and noted that he will keep his remarks brief to save room for senate business. He introduced his family, including the unofficial mascot of the English and Philosophy department, Pug-Pug the dog. Senator Horton shared his teaching and research interests in contemporary American Literature as well as his involvement with the Commonwealth Honors Academy. He also shared select aspects of his service and advocacy work, including leadership as the former president of the Americana Religion and Literature Society and member of the organizing committee of Murray State's United Campus Worker chapter.
- VIII. Reports --- Faculty Senate Standing Committees
- A. Academic Policies – Chair, Brian Bourke
- a. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: FSR 24-25-1 --- Promotion Path for Instructors
  - b. Senator Bourke discussed the rationale for FSR 24-25-1 and highlighted information contained in the financial impact forecast of the policy provided in the addendum. Senator Reeves asked whether handbook language regarding instructors will also be addressed in this resolution. Senator Bourke replied that the plan is to move forward with this resolution to gauge support and feasibility prior to engaging in more systematic handbook changes.
- B. Finance – Chair, Brenda Reeves
- a. Straw Poll
  - b. Senator Reeves introduced a straw poll to gain feedback from faculty senators regarding potential priorities for the committee to focus on during this academic year. The priorities were sent to senators in advance of the meeting and included:
    - i. Establishing an Ombudsman and an anonymous grievance channel
    - ii. Outsourcing the faculty engagement survey
    - iii. Establishing a Steering Committee of on-campus experts
    - iv. Proposing early retirements and streamlining programs
    - v. Investigating reasons for regrettable turnover
    - vi. Increasing dollar amounts for promotions (Associate & Full)
    - vii. ACHA Healthy Campus – establishing a program to promote healthy activity for faculty.
  - c. Faculty senators provided input via a straw poll. Senator Reeves indicated that her committee will discuss the results and update the Senate at the next regular meeting.
- C. Special Guest. Student Government Associate (SGA) President and Student Regent Brendan Hawkins. With unanimous consent, Regent Shemberger introduced special guest Regent Hawkins. Regent Hawkins introduced himself to the Senate and thanked faculty for their work.
- D. Governmental Affairs – Secretary of Senate, Michael Bordieri
- a. Secretary Bordieri provided an update regarding legislative activity during the interim session, with an emphasis on a recent interim joint education committee meeting focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. Secretary Bordieri reported that the committee plans to continue to monitor and advocate



## Faculty Senate

for faculty legislative priorities, including preserving academic freedom and supporting all students, faculty, and staff. He also noted that the committee was discussing strategies to increase faculty engagement in annual administrator evaluations.

- E. Handbook and Personnel – Chair, Michael Busby
  - a. Senator Busby provided an update on the priorities of the handbook committee, including a focus on finalizing the 2024 update to the faculty handbook. He also noted that his committee is short a member, and invited any interested senators to join.
- F. Rules, Elections, and Bylaws – Faculty Senate Vice President, Heidi Ortega
  - a. Vice President Ortega stated there was no report from the committee but that handbook and personnel still needed an additional member. Senator Oldenkamp volunteered to switch committees.
- G. Executive – Faculty Senate President, David Roach
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: FSR 24-25-2 --- Summer Compensation
    - i. President Roach provided a history of proration of summer salary based on summer enrollment, noting that proration was introduced approximately 15 years ago. He noted that the 10 (undergraduate) and 8 (graduate) enrollment requirements for full compensation have been accepted practice since that time. President Roach also noted that the current summer budget is approximately \$300,000 short and that the proposed increase in proration caps is designed to address this shortfall, among other measures. President Roach indicated that some progress has been made with the Provost’s office regarding other possible strategies to address this budgetary concern.
    - ii. Senator Pizzo expressed that this is a self-created crisis and that he is frustrated that it is being forced on faculty. Senator Guse indicated that he has economic expertise in this area, and that canceling classes that make revenue to try to save money is highly problematic. He also expressed that he is unwilling to teach if increased proration goes into effect. Senator Busby stated that summer classes generate revenue with small enrollments (e.g., 4) and asked where all the additional revenue goes. He also shared that Senator Reeves proposed a good idea regarding improved enrollment management to make summer classes more efficient.
    - iii. President Roach noted that additional revenue from summer teaching goes into the general fund. He also shared that if cuts are not made here, there will be cuts in other aspects of the budget. Senator Reeves shared that she wants more transparency regarding the budget. Senator Pryor shared that canceled summer classes harm students, by pushing back graduation, requiring students to take classes at other institutions, and by creating additional enrollment strains in future semesters. Senator Pizzo shared that he is teaching an uncompensated overload and that doing so is not sustainable. Senator Pizzo also indicated that he believes that the

## Faculty Senate

culture of austerity being imposed on the institution does not match the fiscal reality.

- iv. Senator Bourke noted that asking faculty to find the solution to the crisis is inappropriate, stating that he believes that it is the responsibility of administrators to propose a viable solution. Senator Pizzo asked why there have been no efforts to increase summer enrollments. Senator Hayes asked what active role the Faculty Senate could play in finding a solution. President Roach indicated that faculty senate leadership is actively working to find a more sustainable approach. He shared that one possible solution is to grow out of this problem by offering more high-enrollment summer courses. However, he indicated that it is not possible to fully develop a sustainable solution under intense time pressure and only via a faculty pay cut. He also indicated that negotiations are ongoing and that progress may be made during the 30-day reading period of this resolution. Senator Reeves recommended holding a faculty listening session to obtain broader faculty input. Senator Horton also raised a concern regarding the proposed increase in graduate enrollment caps to 20 students, indicating that large enrollments could harm student learning. President Roach thanked Senator Horton for the concern and noted that current senate efforts are focused on the increased proration aspect of the proposal.
- v. President Roach reported that senate leadership will continue to work on negotiations with an update to the executive committee in the coming weeks. Senator Hayes asked what power faculty have to negotiate. Senator Guse noted that faculty have power here, as they don't have to teach in the summer. Senator Bourke noted that there is also a faculty equity concern, as some faculty cannot afford to not teach in summer, even with the pending proration changes. Senator Reeves also noted that student government has power, as ultimately students are impacted. President Roach shared that he is passionate about this topic and that he plans to continue to work proactively toward a solution. President Roach offered some possible alternative compensation models for long-term consideration, including a flat summer rate. Senator Pizzo noted that he believes that a flat rate should be indexed to inflation with an annual increase. Senator Roach also shared other possible models, including a model offering differential rates based on faculty rank and a model offering incentives for additional enrollment beyond the proration target. Senator Henry proposed exploring the possibility of a compensation model based on a percentage of tuition generated.

### IX. Other University Committees

#### A. Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee

- a. Senator Pizzo reported that employee's share of benefit cost will be going up to meet the target allocation of 80% of costs covered by the employer with 20% covered by employees. Senator Pizzo noted that the new benefits consultant proposed an implementation approach that helps protect lower paid employees. Senator Pizzo indicated that he will share a slide show

## Faculty Senate

regarding the cost increase with President Roach to distribute to senators. Senator Guse asked about specific changes to costs and deductibles. Senator Pizzo indicated that the out-of-pocket maximum is going up on the high deductible plans to conform with IRS regulations, but that otherwise the cost increases are contained to increased employee premiums.

- X. Old Business
  - None
- XI. New Business
  - Secretary Bordieri reported that the next regular Senate meeting falls on a presidential election holiday (11/5/24) during which classes are canceled. President Roach made a motion to reschedule the next regular Senate meeting to Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, which was approved with unanimous consent.
  - FSM 24-25-3 - Recognizing Dr. Bob Jackson on the Occasion of His Retirement
    - A. Secretary Bordieri made a motion from the floor to recognize Dr. Jackson for his accomplishments as president and wish him well in retirement. The motion was seconded by Senator Sahawneh. The motion was presented to senators for reading. President Roach called a vote and the motion passed with 26 yes, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention.
- XII. Adjourn
  - The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at approximately 4:57pm.