

Washburn University
Meeting of the Faculty Senate
February 9th, 2026, at 3 pm
Meeting in Kansas Room Hosted by FS Executive Committee

Present: Abebayo, Bender, Brooks, Buck, Burdick, Camarda, Cook, Copeland, Dahl, Davies, Dickinson, Francis, Fritch, Gonzalez-Abellas, Graves, Harnowo, Hartman, Hu, Chris Jones, Tucker Jones, Leisinger, Ostrom, Perret, Ricklefs, Rivera, Schmidt, Schnoebelen, Smith, Wagner, White, Williams

Absent: Holt, Lambing, Mosier

Guests: Hageman, Schmidlein, Wiard, Memmer, Dodge, Shipley, McBeth, Steffen, Broxterman, Holthaus, Lanning, O'Neill, Bailes, Clunch, Landry, Morse, Coulter

I. Call to Order at 3:02 pm

II. Approve minutes of the November 10, 2025 meeting – Moved to approve by Leisinger, seconded by Gonzalez-Abellas.

- Motion passes unanimously.

III. President's Opening Remarks – Jim Schnoebelen

- The Shared Governance Task Force is proceeding nicely. Hopefully, everyone completed the survey Dr. Mazachek sent out which will help focus the work efforts of the committee at upcoming meetings.
- A couple of dates to keep in mind:
 - The next Senate meeting is on February 23rd; please get in any agenda items by Tuesday, the 17th.
 - FYI—the next Gen Fac Meeting is on Wednesday, March 4th from 3:30-5 pm in Washburn A or B. Please plan on attending and encourage your colleagues to do the same!
 - On Monday, March 9th, after our Senate meeting there will be a reception hosted by President Mazachek for all of us at the Ross House.
- I do have other thoughts about HB2428, but I will save them for that discussion. I will say that I am very proud to be a part of a faculty that takes the time and effort to make their voices heard when it matters, so for those of you who spoke at the hearing last week or submitted written testimony in advance, thank you for trying to educate legislative representatives about the implications of such policies—I humbly submit to you that such education is necessary.
- More from the legislature: HB 2746 is designed to end tenure as a property right in the state of Kansas (see handouts for the bill language). Here are some key differences between this version and last year's (HB 2348):

- It doesn't mention KBOR at all (last year mentioned KBOR 3+ times). This provides some semblance that KBOR is not being taken seriously this time around.
- It takes away tenure for new and existing faculty—no grandfathering in of past-conferred tenure.
- It features no rationale even though it should have done so.
- I, and many of you, will be offering testimony about this when the time comes, but since it was new and not on the agenda, I'm mentioning it here.
 - Comment from Kim Morse, President of the Washburn Chapter of the American Association of University Professors: Regarding the fiscal note from last year, 250k was expected to be incurred by the legal fees needed to defend the state by passing HB 2348. I am in the process of developing talking points that will come from the Washburn Chapter of the AAUP; I welcome any help on drafting that. And I welcome more members to the AAUP listserv which is on Gmail.
- Comments from Schnoebelen: please remember that if you share testimony, you need to do so as a private citizen and not as someone from Washburn.
- Question from Chris Jones: what does this bill imply, exactly?
- Answer from Schnoebelen: this bill focuses upon the property rights associated with tenure.
 - Follow up answer from Francis: property rights cannot be taken away without due process. This bill means that there would be no guarantee of due process for those who were conferred tenure in the past or those who would have otherwise been conferred tenure in the future.
 - Follow up from Chris Jones: if a faculty member were fired due to cause, what would happen with the process that institutions would carry out if this bill became law?
 - Answer from Francis: one of the goals of the bill would be to take away due process, so it is not clear what institutions of higher education in Kansas would do.
- Comment from Leisinger: the concept of property rights relates to damages in that if property rights are taken away, then one can claim that damages have been incurred by those rights being taken away.
- Question from Smith: wouldn't due process simply be disallowed, if this bill were passed?
- Answer from Francis: let's think of this in terms of an analogy: let's suppose the state says that they are going to take away homes from all the legal homeowners in the state of Kansas. Can the state just take that right away? I don't think so. So perhaps the state cannot just legally take away tenure this easily.
- Question from Morse: would passing this bill open up the state of Kansas to a class action lawsuit?
- Comment from Riklefs: the people who are motivated to pass this bill believe that the perception is that we tenured faculty are special. But perhaps we shouldn't be considered as such, according to those people.

- Comment from Chris Jones: be very thoughtful about how you are being an activist about this. Emails can be subpoenaed, so be careful. Do this activism on your Gmail. Consider having formally recognized time off to give testimony, for example.
- Comment from Buck: there is a law firm in Topeka that is defending tenured professors from being fired from Emporia State. The property right understanding of tenure came out of that lawsuit.
- Question from Hartman: what happened in Oklahoma with respect to the removal of tenure there?
- Answer from Schmidt: the governor signed an executive order to remove tenure at regional universities and community colleges, but those with tenure were grandfathered in, meaning that they didn't lose their tenure.
- Comment from Schnoebelen: By the way, please fill out the HERI survey. Please keep in mind the consent page for the survey is tricky with the "opt out" button directly under the "I agree to the terms" checkbox, so it can be very easy to hit opt out and be locked out from completing it.
- Comment from Schmidt: the email with the survey link went to his spam filter. So that needs to be addressed.

IV. VPAA Update – Dr. John Fritch

- Welcome to the spring semester! We are 25% done with the semester. These are tough times for higher education, but let's remember all of the great things that are going on. Let's remember our great faculty: I went to Chris Jones's presentation at the Gender Brown Bag forum, let's remember Women in Science Day, Math Day, Eric McHenry's book that is under contract with Oxford University Press, etc. What a wonderful thing it was to see these events and know about these things that are going on. Thank you for all that you do as faculty!
- A couple of things to keep in mind: there are two searches this year. We want to consider what is going on with the Nursing Dean Search in terms of how we want to proceed. The other search is for the VP of Student Life.
- There are three major bills being considered in the Kansas House that impact higher education: HB 2428, HB 2746, and the FORUM Bill.
- Need based scholarships are on the chopping block with respect to state budgets—how does this align with higher education goals in the state? We are anticipating a more difficult year next year in terms of funds that will be available. We will need to find a way to support these students.
- KBOR has some significant things that are happening: the person who is in charge of Academic Affairs (Rusty Mulholland) has resigned, and Blake Flanders, the CEO and President, is retiring.

- Specialized 90-credit hour bachelor’s degrees are being considered by KBOR. Any KBOR program can offer a 90-hour program, including the community colleges. This has implications for our state—currently, 7 schools can offer bachelor’s degrees, but this proposal would imply that 28 schools could do so. Has KBOR really thought through the implications of this proposal? I hope that they have done so.
- I am very thankful for all the work that you all do.
 - Question from Cook: are there restrictions on the 90-hour degrees?
 - Answer from Fritch: yes, based on workforce development. There will be requirements as to which programs could offer a 90-hour degree versus a 120-hour degree, but we are not sure what those will be.
- Kate Coulter, the President of WSGA, gave an update: she wants to follow up on student-based aid. Last week, students went to the capital to talk about the importance of this aid. Students are paying attention to what is going on in the legislature.
- Fritch: last year, some students testified about that tenure bill (HB 2348), showing how involved our students are with respect to proposals from the state legislature.

V. WUBOR/KBOR Update – Jim Schnoebelen

- KBOR: There have been KBOR committee or full KBOR meetings on several dates since we last met (November 19th, December 17th, and January 14th + a BAASC (Board Academic Affairs Sub-Committee) meeting on 1/27); Key takeaways/ideas /movement on policies:
 - Discussion of OER texts (on the rise)
 - Discussed “Apply Free Days”—applications increase on these days, encouraging students to apply (especially older students).
 - More discussion of the Faculty Workload and Post Tenure Review policy. It moved forward to the full KBOR on 12/17 for first reading and second reading on 1/14.
 - Key issues I’ve seen discussed in the SCOCAO (Sub-Committee of Chief Academic Officers) meetings and later in Academic Affairs (AA) meetings: 90-hour baccalaureate programs.
 - Most schools/ reps are not in favor of such programs.
 - The discussion went from we are considering a pilot study for the 90-hour degree to that we are doing it.
 - Discussants said in December that they want to see a clear workforce connection that drives such a program.
 - Someone noted that such programs have been approved by HLC before (9 of them), but 8 were at private schools and 1 was at a community college.

- Though from the AA meeting on 1/14 and 1/27, it seems it is going ahead with a pilot program. Unclear why and how the significant questions about it were addressed between meetings—it was not made public.
- “Freedom from Indoctrination Act”(HB 2428). This proposed bill says that we cannot require DEI-CRT courses as part of graduation except in cases where it is mandated by the DEI-CRT credential, and also mandates that we take specific steps to educate students on foundational documents like the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Papers. KBOR isn’t talking about this at all (outside of the Council of Faculty Senate Presidents). But we will later in this meeting!
- There are problems with the relationships with Provosts at KS schools, as many are upset with lapses in communication. Be assured that WU communicates well, and I am thankful to the Provost and his team and the President for the open lines of communication!
- WUBOR: WUBOR on December 4th:
 - KC Campaign update: the number of applications is up! Merchandise is becoming more available.
 - Toni Lewis and Kerri Bacon were awarded Eminentes Universitatis.
 - Sabbaticals were approved.
 - Key Voting Items:
 - Campus mechanical systems upgrade (approx. \$22.5m)
 - Issuance of bonds to pay for ESCO upgrades... (initial in January; final amount approved in February)
 - Turf replacement at Yeager
 - Mulvane lighting replacement (from current budget and private money)
- WUBOR on February 5th:
 - The next meeting is moving up in the calendar by a few days to Monday, March 23rd.
 - We had a couple of other Eminentes Universitatis honorees, including Mary Gruber from Accounting and Gayle Davis from Leadership.
 - Honorary Degree Candidates were also discussed.
 - New plans for the Healthcare Center were presented (as in, actual project slides).

VI. Special Order Item – Introduction of Stephen Terry, Vice President of Strategic Enrollment Management:

- Thank you for giving me the time to meet with you. I am from the University of Central Missouri. I have been here at Washburn for 90 days. I am going to talk to you about strategic enrollment efforts. There are nine. Here are the three that I want to focus upon:

First-Time Freshmen “Winning at Home”

Strong focus on Shawnee County schools

Multiple weekly high school visits

Washburn Signing Events and Future Ichabod Days

Northeast Kansas & Kansas City

Dedicated regional recruiting teams

Increased regional presence and outreach

Focus on freshmen, transfer, adult, and graduate students

Adult Stop Outs “Operation Comeback”

Outreach to students with some college and no degree

Simplified re-enrollment process

Degree completion focus

- Let’s discuss Washburn student headcount goals for fall of 2026: 6.5% increase to direct HS matriculants is one goal. 5.5% increase is the goal for first time freshmen—those who have taken a year off. 5% increase is the goal for transfer students. 6% increase is the goal for returning students. For law school, we are at capacity, so we don’t expect much increase there. Washburn Tech is also close to capacity—there are waitlists there indicating the high number of students already enrolled in courses there. In total, we project an increase in 386 students for Washburn, mostly coming from the WU undergraduate population.
- Recruitment and retention do not just happen in our office; rather, we are all involved in this process. If you have an idea for recruitment and retention, let us know!

Final Thoughts:

Demographic Environment

Growth will come from market share and diversification rather than demographic lift.

First-time Freshmen

Yield remains sensitive to affordability, proximity, and perceived value.

Retention and Continuing Students

Retention remains the largest driver of total enrollment stability.

Pricing and Financial Aid Leveraging

Enrollment growth depends on clarity and timing of financial aid rather than discount expansion alone.

Operational Capacity

Concentrating resources on priority markets will produce better return on investment than expanding into new geographies.

My final motto: keep calm and recruit like crazy!

VII. Consent Agenda – Moved to approve by Chris Jones, seconded by Schmidt.

- University Committee Reports –
 - Faculty Handbook Committee Minutes (October 23, 2025)
 - Faculty Handbook Committee Minutes (November 20, 2025)
 - General Education Committee Minutes (November 18, 2025)
 - Interdisciplinary Studies Committee Minutes (November 24, 2025)
- Faculty Senate Committee Reports-
 - Graduate Council Committee Minutes (November 3, 2025)
- Motion passes unanimously.

VIII. Old Business –

- Schnoebelen made it clear that if a motion to approve is made and the intention is for it to go to the General Faculty, then that needs to be made explicit. Otherwise, the new programs would not continue to Gen Fac except as Information Items.
- Beth O’Neil did clarify that new programs would still go on to WUBOR for their approval.
- 26-6 Approval of New Program: Graduate Certificate in Health Science, presented by Becky Dodge.
 - Motion to approve: Riklefs, seconded by Adebayo.
 - **Motion to pass 26-6 passes unanimously.**
- 26-7 Approval of New Program: Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning, presented by Amy Memmer.
 - Motion to approve: Gonzalez-Abellas, Dahl seconded.
 - Question from Chris Jones: is this program only for Criminal Justice Master’s students who want to teach?
 - Answer from Memmer: yes, that is the intention now. But we would encourage any other programs that want to adopt this kind of program to reach out to us.
 - **Motion to pass 26-7 passes unanimously.**
- 26-8 Approval of New Program: Graduate Certificate in the Science of Literacy, presented by Cherry Steffen.
 - Motion to approve: Cook, Riklefs seconded.
 - **Motion to pass 26-8 passes unanimously.**
- 26-9 Approval of New Program: M.Ed. in the Science of Literacy, presented by Cherry Steffen.
 - Motion to approve: Wagner, Adebayo seconded.
 - **Motion to pass 26-9 passes unanimously.**
- 26-10 Approval of Program Change: Master of Health Science in Health Care Education, presented by Becky Dodge.
 - Motion to approve: Cook, Adebayo seconded.

- **Motion to pass 26-10 passes unanimously.**
- 26-11 Approval of Program Change: Graduate Certificate in Health Care Education, presented by Becky Dodge
 - Motion to approve: Hartman, Cook seconded.
 - **Motion to pass 26-11 passes unanimously.**

IX. New Business – None.

X. Information Items – None.

XI. Discussion Items – Kansas House Bill 2428 (now being considered in the House Committee on Education): Requiring the state board of regents to establish curricula and designate courses at postsecondary educational institutions relating to DEI-CRT-related courses and content and requiring the study of American institutions and certain programs at freshman orientations concerning free speech.

- Comment from Chris Jones: a group of us went to the legislature last week to the hearing. Everyone who testified received questions. We discovered that some of the legislators don't quite understand the implications that bills like this have.
- Comment from Schnoebelen: On the requirement of the study of American institutions, I think that a particular version of this is being required. This would require major curricular changes in terms of offering this course. I don't think that too many degrees would be impacted by the DEI-CRT piece, but of course the Inclusion and Belonging Gen Ed "bucket" would be under threat.
- Comment and question from White: thank you to the people who were there. Can you tell us more about the accreditation piece of the bill?
 - Answer from Riklefs: I do not think that people are aware of accreditation standards. I also think that there is a movement in the legislature to separate accrediting bodies from the programs that are accredited. Many programs like social work have DEI requirements for accreditation.
- Comment from Morse: there are people on the Committee who have agendas, that is very clear. There is no convincing them, but there are some on the committee who would listen, as Chris Jones pointed out. There is still time to email those on the committee and other representatives. This Freedom from Indoctrination Act legislates which ideas are good and which are bad, which goes against the very point of the bill. There is still an opportunity to do good work.
- Answer from Schnoebelen: I bring up DEI issues when I discuss communication. I would be reluctant to change this even if this bill were passed, but if the anti-tenure bill were passed, then I would change my mind. Also, there is a budget consideration in the House that if Wichita State, K State and KU can prove that they eliminate DEI content from their curriculum, then they can get some money back

from funds that were taken away from them. My point is that these bills and budget measures are all related.

- Question from Smith: could HB 2428 survive a first amendment legal challenge?
 - Answer from Riklefs: a suit could be counterproductive.
 - Follow up from Smith: I am not referring to a suit that Washburn University would file, but a suit in the abstract or from a national body like the ACLU.
 - Comment from Leisinger responding to Smith: for us, our accreditation body is the American Bar Association. ABA accreditation was taken away in Texas, meaning that the ABA is no longer the accreditation body for law programs in Texas. There are a lot of constitutional questions about bills like this. There aren't clear precedents for the issues that bills like this engender. It is going to take time to figure out how all of this will shake out, legally speaking.
- Comment from White: One of the complications of passing HB 2428 has to do with accreditation of programs (like Nursing) which require curriculum related to diversity, equity and inclusion topics. In the future, accreditation bodies could remove or adjust the requirement instead of refusing accreditation to multiple institutions within a state. Thus, this argument in opposition to the bill may not be as strong as one might think.
- Comment and question from Williams: we go through the process of accreditation in order to license our professionals. We pay for our programs to be accredited. In order to remain competitive, we have to be accredited. If we take out requirements from our programs, then how is the accreditation going to happen? Accreditation is a formal process with lots of moving parts: how are we going to remain licensed without accreditation?
 - Answer from Riklefs: the state statutes could be changed to eliminate the DEI accreditation requirements altogether, that is, for state approval. This is what some people in the legislature are considering.
- Comment from Morse: the legislators seem to think that DEI is some discrete unit that can somehow be removed from a course without consequences. In order for a social worker to be an effective social worker, they have to meet people where they are at in terms of people's diverse backgrounds, for example. As we think about how we speak to legislators, how do we as higher education educators help our students achieve their goals? That is what we want to focus upon.
- Question from Gonzalez-Abellas: regarding the American civics/institutions requirement, how is it different from what we do already?
 - Answer from Dickinson: we already have most of what is in the bill already in what we are teaching in PO and HI. By the way, there are serious

implementation issues with bills like this because a major question is how they are going to be enforced at all. States that have bills like this have been subject to many successful lawsuits and that is an economic consideration that we need to discuss with legislators.

- Comment from Amy Memmer: we require a course that would be impacted by this bill. On the one hand, we require all of our CJ grads to take CJ 303 Diversity in America. It focuses on the challenges and importance of serving diverse populations in various criminal justice systems (law enforcement, corrections, courts), as well as some disparate impacts experienced by different populations. On the other side of this legislation, we require all of our majors in CJ and Legal Studies to take LG 240 Constitutional Law. It covers the history of the Constitution and then focuses on the individual rights protected by the Bill of Rights, including their limitations, the tests applied by the courts in reviewing constitutional challenges, and application in real world scenarios.
- Comment from Chris Jones: there is a definition of DEI-CRT in the bill. We need to be aware of the curricular activities that are relevant to this definition.
- Comment from Cynthia Holthaus: In terms of statutory construction, the House Higher Education Budget Committee is considering a budget proviso about DEI that needs to be thought about in conjunction with HB 2428.
- Comment from Riklefs: there is a part in the bill that faculty cannot be compelled to attend DEI-CRT training. That is a part that we haven't mentioned.
- Question from Williams: Can we change the name of programs to avoid the consequences of this bill?
 - Answer from Schnoebelen and Smith: no, check section C (3) of the bill.
- Comment from Fritch: these are big challenges, but I also think that the things that we wish to teach, we will find ways to teach. We are concerned, however, about students with phones that may be recording us and spinning what we are saying out of context. But I cannot imagine, as your Provost, that if one were a nurse or a social worker, one could get away with not knowing the backgrounds of people that these professionals are serving. I believe that we will find ways to continue to teach the substantive lessons of DEI without necessarily using language that would be legally forbidden.

XII. Announcements

- Adebayo: Apeiron registration opens today and closes March 9th.
- Chris Jones: February 24th at 7 pm is the Thomas L. King Lecture. Topic: what do we do when biblical prophecies are incorrect?

- Morse: this Thursday February 12th, Dmitri Nizovtsev, Lindsey Moddelmog, Craig Martin, and I will be discussing what is going in Venezuela.
- Adebayo: This is your final call for gender brown bag! Please reach out to me if you want to present.

XIII. Adjournment of Meeting at 4:56 pm. Chris Jones made a motion, Adebayo seconded.