

Washburn University  
Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
February 23rd, 2026, at 3 pm  
Meeting in Kansas Room Hosted by FS Executive Committee

Present: Abebayo, Bender, Buck, Camarda, Cook, Copeland, Dahl, Francis, Fritch, Graves, Harnowo, Hartman, Holt, Hu, Chris Jones, Lambing, Leisinger, Mosier, Ostrom, Ricklefs, Rivera, Schmidt, Schnoebelen, Smith, Wagner, White, Williams

Absent: Brooks, Burdick, Davies, Dickinson, Gonzalez-Abellas, Tucker Jones, Perret

Guests: Holthaus, O'Neill, Wade, Worsley, Lanning, Landry, McBeth, Hutchinson, Fried, Burdick, Kay, Coulter

I. Call to Order at 3:03 pm

II. Approve minutes of the February 9, 2026 meeting – Moved to approve by Cook, seconded by Adebayo.

- Motion passes unanimously.

III. President's Opening Remarks – Jim Schnoebelen

- The Shared Governance Task Force had a retreat on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Several people who are in Faculty Senate were at the retreat, along with some members of WUBOR and President Mazachek. The President and the members of WUBOR were very much in favor of what we are trying to do with our goals regarding shared governance.
- A couple of dates to keep in mind:
  - The next Senate meeting is on March 9<sup>th</sup>; please get in any agenda items by Tuesday, the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - FYI—the next Gen Fac Meeting on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> will be canceled.
  - This is another reminder that on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, after our Senate meeting a reception will be hosted by President Mazachek for all of us at the Ross House.
- Latest on HB 2428 (anti-DEI/CRT) and HB 2746 (anti-Tenure):
  - Both died in their respective House committees, so far as we know, though that is not official. But vestiges live on in the budget (HB 2434). For example, regarding tenure and the recently-passed KBOR post-tenure review, there is an item in the budget bill with respect to tenure effectively stating that any tenured faculty that is placed on a performance improvement plan can be removed from employment after just one year of a failed attempt to improve on that plan (provided the provost recommends this). For another example, regarding DEI, the 6 KBOR 4-year institutions can get money back that is being cut if they can demonstrate that they do not have DEI content in their curriculum.
  - Note that Governor Kelly has line-item veto power regarding the budget.

- Coordinate with Kim Morse in AAUP or any of the other members of AAUP if you'd like to contact representatives and senators to let them know your views on the budget.
- I want to add that Faculty Senate is not just about approval of action items but also about discussing important matters to the faculty.

#### IV. VPAA Update – Dr. John Fritch

- I had the opportunity to go to Washington DC to witness Washburn Law School alumni being accepted to the Supreme Court bar. This made me think about our alumni in general and all that they have accomplished.
- Please fill out the HERI survey. We are at 16%, and our goal is to get up to 30% participation.
  - Schnoebelen reminded us that the HERI survey takes time, so make sure to set aside about 20 to 30 minutes for taking the survey.
  - Smith said that as long as you keep the tab on your internet browser open that you are doing the survey on, you can come back later to finish the survey.
  - Danny Wade informed us that we received an extension on the HERI survey to March 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### V. WUBOR/KBOR Update – Jim Schnoebelen

##### 1) KBOR/WUBOR Updates

- KBOR meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>—Key takeaways/ideas /movement on policies:
  - Nothing further on 2428 (anti-DEI bill)
  - Nothing regarding 2746 (anti-tenure bill)
  - Nothing on 90-hour baccalaureate
  - The main business from the Academic Affairs meeting was reviewing a rubric for assessing KBOR schools' implementation of new EN and MA pathways. There is nothing that I think applies to WU, other than I believe we will be reporting on our progress here to KBOR for budget purposes.
    - Follow up from O'Neill: I will clarify on our performance agreement that we need to report to KBOR on this annually. They have asked less of us this year than in years past.
  - The Council of Faculty Senate Presidents:
    - Shared concerns about HB 2428—reports that people are asking to join classes in which they're not enrolled or just showing up or asking questions about DEI—concerns about “plants” coming to campuses to stir trouble.
    - Discussed concerns about centralized/holistic academic advising and how it creates problems by cutting faculty out from the equation and further ends up

causing problems for the students missing out on graduation requirements/timelines. This is a cautionary tale for WU, as we do not have centralized academic advising!

- Discussed legislation briefly and compared notes on when to get involved and how. I agree with Morse—based on what was shared, they are behind WU’s AAUP chapter in terms of engagement with legislators on this issue, but they may also feel less emboldened given their status as KBOR schools—not sure.
- WUBOR: No new meeting—next is on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>

VI. Consent Agenda – None.

VII. Old Business – None.

VIII. New Business – None.

IX. Information Items –

- Update on the Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) issued by the Department of Education (Marc Fried)
  - There was a permanent injunction issued against the DCL last April. Then the Trump administration appealed that injunction. But then the Trump administration dropped its appeal this year.
  - The concerns about the DCL were not only about what was explicitly in it, but also about what many people were concerned about in terms of what it would imply in terms of funding institutions of higher education.
  - On July 29, 2025, the DOJ issued its own guidance in a Memorandum (titled Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination). This guidance is still in effect. This guidance does get into many of the same things as the DCL like proxy discrimination (which occurs when a federally funded entity intentionally uses ostensibly neutral criteria that function as substitutes for explicit consideration of race, sex, or other protected characteristics). The DOJ guidance doesn’t have quite the same scary language as the DCL, but we still must abide by the guidance.
  - There are legislative bills that are being considered in the Kansas legislature, so if any of those bills are passed, we will have to abide by them.
  - We really aren’t doing things that much differently anyway because WU has always, for example, provided scholarships for those who need them.
  - Question from Chris Jones: Some changes at WU were made as a result of the DCL, however, such as the change of the name of the Multi-Cultural Center to The Intersection.

- Answer from Fried: There are still statewide issues and the DOJ guidance that we do have to consider, though, so changing the name back may not make sense with respect to that.
  - Follow-up from Fritch: the state is coming with its own guidance in the form of these new bills that are being considered. However, our approach is, of course, to wait until the legislature has actually acted.
  - Question from Smith: regarding anti-DEI language that the Kansas legislature is considering, when will the budget (HB 2434) be passed by the Kansas state government?
  - Answer from Holthaus: two to six weeks.
- Framework for Washburn University Faculty Development in AI Literacy (Melanie Worsley).
    - The goal of the framework is to offer AI training that is accessible to faculty. We are looking at a bootcamp of sorts this summer for this AI training. The course for the summer will be a pilot for AI literacy. I'll have more specifics later.
    - The draft of the framework includes various levels of proficiency (included in the agenda for this meeting). We want faculty to develop discipline-specific skills in AI literacy. We are here to ask for your help. If you could provide input and feedback on our proposed process of educating faculty to become AI literate, that would be great. We are going to be rolling out an AI grant for promoting this literacy.
    - Comment from Schnoebelen: Melanie has been very helpful, transparent, and has provided a meaningful process for developing AI fluency.
    - Follow-up from Worsley: I am very thankful for this campus initiative. And I am thankful to the entirety of the AI Working Group for all of their hard work on this initiative.
    - Question from Adebayo: When would you like this feedback?
    - Answer: I would like feedback within the next two weeks, as in, before spring break. Please just email me with that feedback.
    - Question from Ricklefs: Did you track any of the AI bills that the Kansas Senate was considering?
    - Answer from Worsley: No, but I have kept up with what has been going on at the federal level. Please let me know what is going on at the state level!
    - Question from Schmidt: What's the role of CTEL in this faculty education?
    - Answer from Worsley: In the next few weeks, this role will become more crystallized.

- Question from Wagner: For those going up for tenure, will some sort of AI certificate be required?
- Answer from Worsley: I haven't heard about any kind of mandate here. But faculty having this AI literacy is in the best interest of the students anyway.
- Question from Adebayo: When it comes to content for the AI literacy framework, do you want feedback specifically on that?
- Answer from Worsley: The committee's conversation has yet to get to that stage, especially with the proposed summer initiative. But we will get to processing any content on the feedback content itself soon.
- Worsley: I will be back to the Faculty Senate on March 9<sup>th</sup> so that we can discuss more questions that you may have at that time.
- Holt: When will we bring experts from outside?
- Answer from Worsley: I have been considering this, but any visit has to be tailored for our campus. Whatever expertise is brought in has to take our campus needs seriously. What best serves our own faculty is very important.
- Question from Chris Jones: Do you want us to send you individualized feedback or feedback as a representative from some unit?
- Answer from Worsley: Both would be great. Please check with your constituencies. This framework is a living document, a document that can evolve. But we do need a stable document at some point soon.
- Question from Adebayo: But what about folks who are not pro-AI? How do we get feedback from those types of folks?
- Answer from Worsley: I have not set up anonymous feedback. Let me ask: what is your read on what types of concerns these folks have?
  - Follow up from Adebayo: Some people are not there yet in terms of not wanting to jump on the AI bandwagon.
  - Follow up from Worsley: I'll have to give some thought to anonymous feedback. At any rate, the framework is just designed to provide AI literacy, not AI advocacy. Maybe you can just provide anonymous feedback to me.
  - Comment from Fritch: We would like people to know about AI, even if they don't want to use it in their classroom or allow it in their courses.
  - Comment from Jones: I am AI-hesitant. Please come to me to provide feedback if you are also AI-hesitant.
  - Question from Camarda: Is the document provided just part of the framework or the full framework?

◦ Answer from Worsley: Yes, it is the full framework (for now). I have circulated this framework to the Dean's council, WSGA, and now the Senate, etc. The students have been very curious about AI literacy, by the way.

X. Discussion Items – None.

XI. Announcements –

- Chris Jones: Tomorrow the King Lecture on when prophets fail will be at 7 pm at the BTAC.
- Ricklefs: March 11<sup>th</sup> is Social Work Advocacy Day. If you have students who are interested in policy making that is social work-focused, we have 150 students coming to Washburn to talk about social advocacy work. Anyone is welcome to attend.
- Ricklefs: Washburn has a play entitled *Gloria* starting on February 27<sup>th</sup>. On March 6<sup>th</sup>, Dusty Nichols and I will be giving a presentation about how to process this play.
- Buck: We have several events that are going on in Garvey. For example, this Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, we are doing a Mozart concert. Next week, we have an internationally renowned violinist on our own faculty who will be sharing their music.
- Hartman: it is time for us to start thinking about upcoming elections for the Faculty Senate. The Provost's office is currently reviewing the faculty census as a start to this electoral process.

XII. Adjournment of Meeting at 3:58 pm.