

**Washburn University
General Faculty Minutes
November 13, 2024**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Mazachek called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM in Room 100 of the Henderson Learning Resources Center. 101 faculty members were in attendance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2024 General Faculty meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

III. OPENING REMARKS

A. From the President

President Mazachek discussed upcoming town halls about campus changes. A website will be established containing updates and timelines related to the various movements of units as construction proceeds and buildings are taken offline.

B. From the Provost

Dr. Fritch thanked faculty for their service to our students.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of AY25 General Faculty Secretary

Matt Arterburn was nominated for the position of secretary and approved unanimously.

---REQUIRING GENERAL FACULTY APPROVAL---

B. Faculty Senate Action Item 24-14: Corrections of typographical error in the Faculty Senate Constitution

The item was moved and seconded for approval. There was no discussion. The item was approved unanimously.

C. Faculty Senate Action Item 25-2: Master of Science in Medical Dosimetry

The item was brought forward by Faculty Senate. There was no discussion. The item was approved unanimously.

D. Faculty Senate Action Item 25-3: Faculty Termination Procedures

The item was brought forward by Faculty Senate. Dr. Mazachek provided background on the policy and proposed changes. This is part of a larger effort for the WU Board of Regents to update their bylaws, many of which are decades old. Policy and procedure elements will be removed from the bylaws and moved to WUPRPRM. Additionally, some WUBOR committees will be formed, including an Academic Affairs committee. Specifically moving to WUPRPRM are policies on granting of tenure, termination of tenure, governance of academic affairs and academic freedom.

The termination procedures need updating to clarify timeline, procedure and individuals involved. The major difference between the old process and the new process is that the old process began with termination, which was then followed by a series of appeals. The new process involves a series of reviews and evaluations, which ends with a decision on whether to terminate. The existing process has been followed all the way to a conclusion only one time in the last four decades. This occurred in 2020 and experience with that process illuminated issues that could use improvement.

The proposed policy is the product of several years' work by the Faculty Handbook committee and discussion with other groups (e.g. Faculty Affairs, Faculty Senate) in accordance with shared governance. The policy has been produced in collaboration with consulting attorneys specialized in faculty termination.

If approved, the portion of the policy related to revocation of tenure will be approved by WUBOR, because the regents are responsible for the granting, and therefore revocation, of tenure. The policies relating to termination of non-tenured faculty does not require WUBOR approval.

Dr. Fritch guided the assembled faculty through the proposed process (figure found on pg 47 of the agenda) and opened the floor for discussion. A question was posed about why the Faculty Advisory Committee is an optional step. The response from committee members is that the committee might not be needed by the provost. Depending on the circumstances, faculty input might be helpful, while in others the rationale for termination might be very clear. A question was asked about when the informal part of the process transitions to the formal review. The answer: meetings with the department chair and dean prior to the recommendation of termination is informal. No formal written document is generated until the provost makes the recommendation to terminate. This is so that if a resolution is possible, no formal written record is generated that might have ramifications for the faculty member.

A question was asked about whether a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) can be initiated at the department chair level instead of the dean level. The answer is yes. Dr. Fritch further clarified that the issuance of a PIP stops any further movement along the termination review process.

Dr. Schmidt proposed a motion, which was seconded, to integrate the process flowchart (found on pg 47) into the termination policy for both tenured and non-tenured faculty. This amendment passed unanimously.

Dr. Prasch proposed a friendly amendment to implement various editorial changes (mostly commas), which have been transmitted separately to leadership. This motion was seconded. There was concern stated that commas and semicolons can alter policy from a legal perspective, and so the amendment was altered to require a review by legal first. The motion was passed, with a single abstention.

Dr. Lambing made a motion, which was seconded, to amend the non-tenured termination policy to include the Faculty Advisory Committee in that process. Associated language describing this proposed amendment was sent by e-mail to all faculty by e-mail prior to this meeting. An alternative was discussed in which the non-tenured termination policy portion of the policy be sent back to Faculty Handbook for further review. A separate concern was brought up that the proposed review committee will consist of tenured faculty, and it was suggested that the committee be composed of a mixture of tenured and non-tenured faculty. A response was offered that asking non-tenured faculty to serve on such a committee may put them in an awkward position, particularly those non-tenured faculty who are on the tenure-track but not yet tenured.

Confusion was expressed about whether this will move forward as a single policy, when there has been a suggestion that a section of this policy be moved back to Faculty Handbook for revision. The policy will move forward, regardless of the status of the amendment: the distinction will be whether the amending language is included or we decide alternatively to have that portion reviewed again by Faculty Handbook. WUBOR has the capacity to approve the policy related to tenured faculty termination, regardless of General Faculty approval. WUBOR has agreed to wait on revision of this portion of the bylaws until sufficient review by faculty could be accomplished.

Additional discussion occurred, with various arguments made either in favor of passing the amendment now or sending the proposed amendment back to the Faculty Handbook committee, while passing all other elements of the new policy.

Dr. Lambing altered her motion, allowing the current process as written to be approved, while requiring that the policy language passed then be returned to the Faculty Handbook committee to consider addition of the proposed amendment. A motion was made to call to question: this was seconded and passed unanimously. This revised motion was approved, with one abstention.

A motion was made and seconded to call to original question of the termination policy. The question was called, with one vote of no and two abstentions. The policy, with the two amendments (including the flow chart and making the grammatical revisions) was passed unanimously.

E. Faculty Senate Action Item 25-4: Amendment of Faculty Senate and General Faculty Relationship

Motion was made and seconded. Item was passed unanimously. This item will go on to WUBOR because this is a modification of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

---INFORMATION ITEMS---

F. Faculty Senate Action Item 25-1: BEd in Middle School Math (NEW PROGRAM)

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Faculty announced various upcoming events.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 PM (I forgot to originally write this time down, so this is a guesstimate based on my memory – sorry. If any participant has a better recollection of the end time, we can amend this document).