

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes
April 7th, 2025

Please email corrections to Faculty.Senate@nau.edu.

1. Call to order – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis calls the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

Those Attending: Kate Ellis, Juliana Suby, Donna Simon, KT Thompson, Miriam Espinoza, Alexis Bridges, Blue Brazelton, John Georgas, John Tingerthal, Michael Smith, Karli VanderMeersch, Jill Navran, Debra Floyd, Abraham Kelley, Lisa Bliss, Hillary Stowell, Kerry Thompson.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

The 4/7/25 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 2/3/25 and 3/3/25 FSEC meeting minutes are voted on and approved.

3. Senate President's Report – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President Kate Ellis shares her report.

- The Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) meeting will be on NAU campus April 9th-11th. President Ellis will be sharing a report at this meeting as the chair of the AFC.
- Senate Internal Elections will be occurring at the end of April.
- NAU President, Jose Cruz Rivera, will be presenting at the final Full Senate meeting on April 28th.

4. Undergraduate Student Attendance Task Force Recommendations – Kate Ellis

Senate President, Kate Ellis, shares the recommendations of the Task Force focused on Undergraduate Student Attendance Policies.

- Last Spring, two students attended the NAU Mental Health Coalition and expressed concerns surrounding major differences in Student Attendance Policies around campus. This led to the formation of an Undergraduate Student Attendance Task Force to create recommendations.
- The recommendations from this Task Force are as follows:
 - No student can fail a course solely based off attendance.
 - Faculty can have attendance grades, but it may not exceed 10% of the student's total grade.
 - Faculty can have a participation grade, but they must explicitly define the parameters of what participation means.
- Undergraduate Student, Alexis Bridges, voices her support of the suggestions and shares that it will help improve standardization in undergraduate courses.
- John Tingerthal raises concern surrounding Lab or Clinical courses where attendance is necessary and important to the structure of the class.
- These suggestions would remove “cliff policies,” which are attendance policies that result in automatic failure of a course if a student misses a certain number of classes.

- These suggestions will be further discussed in Fall of 2025.

5. Council and Committee Reports – All FSEC Committee & Council Chairs

The Chairs of the various Senate Committees and councils share their current council & committee reports.

- Senate Parliamentarian, Blue Brazelton, shares that the Bylaws committee will be suggesting a change to the current Bylaws in Fall of 2025. This change addresses the current policy on Proxy voting.
- Senate Treasurer Lisa Bliss shares that the Senate will be able to offer two \$1000 Senate Scholarships this year. She also mentions that the University Budget Advisory Board has been reviewing the 300 proposals focused on revenue generation that were submitted last Fall.
- Chair of the Council on Faculty Rights & Responsibilities, Michael Smith, shares that the Council has been looking at proposed changes to CoFS. These CoFS changes properly reflect the new comprehensive review process. The Council will also be meeting with a representative from the NAU Travel Team.
- Chair of the Council on Career Track Faculty Issues, Jill Navran, shares that the Career Track Open Forum will occur on April 18th. A call for Career Track Faculty Spotlight nominations has been sent out to faculty members.

6. Teaching Portfolio Guide – John Tingerthal

Chair of the Council on Learning, John Tingerthal, leads a discussion about the Teaching Portfolio Guide.

- During the previous Full Senate Meeting, Chair Tingerthal requested any feedback about the portfolio to be shared. Chair Tingerthal states that the feedback received has been generally supportive of the document, with two comments providing suggested changes.
- One of the questions was relate to the support of this document in the FAAR systems, which is the current software where faculty submit their annual review documents and statements. Vice Provost Roger Bounds shares that settings and the layout of FAAR can be updated to better align with the Teaching Portfolio Guide.
- President Ellis suggests that Chair Tingerthal presents this Guide at the ACDC, in order to increase the support from deans and chairs.
- The approval of this document will be voted on in the Full Senate Meeting on 4/21/25.

7. Update: AI Cluster Hires & Website – John Georgas

Vice Provost John Georgas provides an update on NAU's AI Cluster Hire and Website updates.

- NAU has hired two additional faculty members focused on AI. The first hire will be joining the Department of Geography, Planning and Recreation, and will be working on AI infused urban planning. This individual will also support students and faculty

in the Sanghi College of Engineering. The second hire will be working in digital humanities and will be supporting the College of Arts and Letters.

- The provost office will be discussing the potential hire of more AI specialists in AY25-26.
- The Strategic Enrollment team has been working on updating the NAU website to better market NAU to new students. With this update, there will be websites that will be migrated from nau.edu, which is outward facing, to in.nau.edu, which is inward facing. These changes will allow NAU to optimize search engine results to better market NAU to potential students.
- Vice Provost Georgas shares an estimate of 33,000 webpages will be transitioned to inward facing pages. The provost office hopes that this transition is complete by Spring of 2026.
- Chair Smith suggests individual departments have outward-facing pages that can be viewed by prospective students. Vice Provost Georgas shares that we are in Phase one of this transition, and that the web team will be focusing solely on college level webpages. In the future, when we transition to phase two, there is potential for department level pages to be outward facing for prospective students.
- Senate President Ellis suggests that the provost office creates a system where certain entities outside of the university be provided with a short-term login to permit access to inward-facing websites.
- Provost Pugliesi asks the FSEC to share information about these changes, as faculty have shared negative opinions toward this transition, instead of the positive opinions about the impact that these changes would provide for future student enrollment.

8. Student Opinion Survey Task Force Recommendations – Michael Smith

Chair of the Council of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, Michael Smith, shares the recommendations made by the Task Force on Student Opinion Surveys.

- Last year, Senate President Ellis received an email from a faculty member detailing the problems about Student Opinion Surveys. In response to this email, a task force was convened with a goal of providing recommendations that would improve the current process.
- Chair Smith shares the two main problems with Student Opinions Surveys. First, the surveys are biased toward individuals of color and women. Second, the current surveys have three open-response questions. In response to these questions, some faculty have received extremely harmful and negative comments, some of which can border on harassment.
- The task force recommends the following:
 - Faculty can choose how much they want to discuss the student opinion surveys in their self-evaluation narrative.
 - Surveys only be open for the last two weeks of the session and must be closed prior to the end of the session.
 - Administration limits the weight that student opinion surveys carry in the comprehensive review process to 20% or less.
 - Removal of the feature where student opinion surveys are automatically placed in the course's Canvas shell.

- Potentially provide faculty and students will be training on how to provide constructive feedback in surveys.
- These suggestions will be discussed further in future senate meetings.

9. NAU Giving Day – Abraham Kelley & Debra Floyd

Abraham Kelley & Debra Floyd provide an update on NAU Giving Day.

- Debra shares that the purpose of this presentation is to learn more about what the faculty do to support Giving Day and to collaborate and align fundraising efforts. They also hope to collect any feedback that faculty may have.
- To provide some information, NAU has hosted Giving Day for the last eight years. The total amount of money raised from Giving Day is just over two million dollars. These funds directly support different colleges, departments, and student groups around campus. For Giving Day, donors can select specific departments or funds they are donating to.
- Senate President Ellis suggests that the Giving Day team highlights scholarships that are not fully endowed. In doing this, it can help raise awareness and increase the support of these scholarships. Providing more information on these scholarships and who is eligible to receive the scholarship would also be beneficial to communicate.

10. Proposed Changes to Policy 10020: Definitions of Undergraduate Academic Plans – Kerry Thompson

Kerry Thompson shares the proposed changes to Policy 10020, focusing on undergraduate academic plans.

- Kerry Thompson and Yvonne Luna shares that they have been working on proposed changes to the definition of undergraduate academic plans.
- Currently, the Office of Academic Operations receives many questions about creating a new certificate, minor, or emphasis. The current policy is not clear in describing how to create or define these different academic plans. The proposed changes would help clarify the differences of the aforementioned academic pathways and allow faculty to better understand how to create them. The proposed changes also allow for the creation of new micro credentials, which create opportunities for students to pursue credentials that are more workforce and skill orientated. This policy would also allow students to stack credentials.
- Chair Smith shares that there is concern that micro credentials may undercut full degrees. Kerry Thompson responds to this by emphasizing the importance of thoughtful design in micro credentials and that they should serve as entryways to full degrees instead of undercutting them.
- Senate President Ellis raises concern regarding the change of minors in the new policy. The policy states that minors can now be 13 to 23 units, instead of the previous 18 to 24 units. She shares that 13 units are not enough courses to properly teach students in the respective field. This could potentially reduce the value of minors at NAU.

- Member at Large, Juliana Suby, shares the importance of transparency alongside this policy change, as many minors or certificates require courses that need prerequisites, which would in turn increase the number of classes that students must take.
- Senate President Ellis clarifies that the senate will not be voting on this proposed change, and the University Undergraduate Committee (UUC) will have the final vote.

11. Provost Report – Karen Pugliesi

Provost Karen Pugliesi gives the provost report.

- Provost Karen Pugliesi shares that in the upcoming ABOR meeting, the board will be working to modernize their current policies. They have also begun to implement a new anti-doxxing policy that was initially suggested by the AFC.
- On Thursday, NAU will be presenting their operational and financial review.
- Dr. Janelle Chiasera will start as the new dean of the College of Health and Human Services in July.
- The College of Education search committee will convene in order to refine the leadership profile of the college.
- NAU has submitted their application to the Higher Learning Commission for approval of their Bachelor of Professional Studies degrees. A site visit will occur on June 9th and 10th for the degree programs of Hospitality Management and Engineering Technology.
- Chair Smith and Vice Provost Roger Bounds will be hosting a Town Hall at NAU Yuma to help answer questions from faculty.
- Proposals for the 1st Year Together Program have been submitted to the provost office and Provost Pugliesi has endorsed their recommendations.
- NAU will continue to adapt to the changes in resources for AY25-26. Limited and strategic hiring will be one of the strategies that the provost office will be exercising in the following year.
- Vice Provost for Academic Programming and Graduate Studies, Maribeth Watwood, will be retiring at the end of the academic year. Laura Bounds will lead this office next year, and other responsibilities will be distributed amongst other administrators. Deans will also take on responsibilities to support graduate programs as they are vital to the university's success.
- Vice Provost Yimin Wang restates the support offered to NAU's international students and programs.
- The Annual Regents Cup will be on Friday, April 11th at NAU's High Country Conference Center.

12. New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis

Meeting is adjourned at 5:08pm.