Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 8th, 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 3:03pm.
   Those Attending: Kate Ellis, Blue Brazelton, Claudia Rodas, Miriam Espinoza, Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, Gioia Woods, Luis Fernandez, Juliana Suby, Karen Jarratt Snider, Jill Navran, John Tingerthal, KT Thompson, Alisse Ali Joseph, Michael Smith.

2. **Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis**
   The 9/8 Agenda is voted on and **approved.** The 8/18 FSEC Minutes will be voted on in October.

3. **Faculty Senate President Report – Kate Ellis**
   Faculty Senate President, Kate Ellis, shares her report.
   - Senate President Ellis thanks all FSEC members who were able to attend the VP/Senate Breakfast last Friday.
   - The AFC will be meeting next Wednesday to discuss the report that will be shared to the Board of Regents.
   - NAU will be hosting an ABOR & Faculty Breakfast on September 26th. The topic of this breakfast discussion will be NAU's 100% Career Ready Initiative.

4. **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 Vice President, Blue Brazelton, shares that a survey will be going out to the Senate with nominees for each open Senate Council & Committee positions.
   - Senate President Ellis shares that there currently are more senators than open council and committee positions, and to consider a discussion about increasing the size of these councils and committees.

5. **Student Opinion Survey Task Force – Michael Smith**
   Co-Chair of the Student Opinion Survey Task Force, Michael Smith, facilitates discussion of the proposed changes to student opinion surveys.
   - To provide context, Michael Smith shares that the Task Force met in Spring of AY24-25, to discuss current problems with the use of Student Opinion Surveys in the Comprehensive Review process.
   - Chair Smith shares that the open feedback portion of student opinion surveys can and have been used to share extremely negative and harmful comments unrelated to the

faculty member's curriculum or teaching. These comments could contain biases against faculty in minority groups.

- The Task Force sent out a survey to identify the weight that student opinion surveys have in the comprehensive review process across departments. The data they received showed that weights varied greatly, but with an average weight of 50%. The deans and chairs also shared that abusive comments are very often disregarded in the comprehensive review process.
- Dynamic dating of these surveys was mentioned because students in courses with an earlier end date receive the surveys after the class concludes. This is recommended to change to ensure that students do not take the surveys after they receive their final course grade.
- Chair Smith mentions that the Task Force discussed the removal of open-ended questions, but there were individuals who opposed this as the open questions can also provide rich feedback to faculty.
- Ex-Officio Gioia Woods shares that with her experience as a chair, she recommends that faculty address problematic student opinion survey comments in their comprehensive review. Addressing these comments helps the review committee understand the context of the comments, and whether they should be considered in the review process.
- Co-Chair of the Committee, John Tingerthal, shares that Student Opinion Surveys are required by ABOR, but we can choose as a university to discuss them in a review. FSEC member Jill Navran shares that specific departments require discussion of these surveys and how this could conflict with a university wide recommendation.
- The FSEC shares anecdotes about the importance of open feedback, but also the impact of negative comments that they have received. Provost Pugliesi shares that statistically individuals who teach more difficult courses, or sections in the morning, are more susceptible to receiving harmful comments.
- Provost Pugliesi suggests that these surveys should be contextualized, but the main focus of the comprehensive review should be focused on the Teaching Portfolio Guide.
- The FSEC suggests that faculty have the ability to appeal an abusive comment they receive from Student Opinion Surveys, and have it redacted from their record.
- Co-Chair John Tingerthal suggests a cover sheet that chairs and deans see before the results of Student Opinion Surveys that address potential biases and negative comments.
- This discussion will be continued next Monday, 9/15, at a Special FSEC meeting.

6. **<u>Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy Task Force – Kate Ellis</u>**

Co-Chair of the Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy Task Force, Kate Ellis, facilitates a discussion about the work of the Task Force.

- The Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy Task Force worked throughout AY24-25 and propose to eliminate Attendance Cliff Policies. These are policies that state if a student were to miss a set number of classes, then they would automatically fail the course.

- Concerns were raised regarding this suggestion, as there are different labs and group-based courses that require attendance to ensure the learning outcomes are met.
- Vice President Blue Brazelton raises concerns about ABOR policies and how they play into the hours required by students to complete per class. He also stresses the importance of attendance and how greatly it relates to student learning outcomes.
- Senate President Ellis restates that the problem is that every course at NAU could have a different attendance policy, making it difficult for students to understand and keep track.
- The FSEC discusses the importance of preparing students for a career, and how they need to develop responsibility to succeed in post-graduation.
- The FSEC states that in-class participation assignments can still be used by faculty to support student attendance and participation.
- This discussion will continue next Monday, 9/15, at a Special FSEC Meeting.

7. **Faculty Athletic Representative Work – Alisse Ali Joseph**

Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR), Alisse Ali Joseph, provides information on her role and duties.

- In a previous FSEC meeting, there was discussion about the charge and bylaws of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC), which is a senate-charged committee.
- To help support athletes academically and in other ways, the NCAA called for each university to appoint a Faculty Athletic Representative. Alisse shares that in this role, she has had the opportunity to sit on multiple NCAA committees.
- Alisse shares about her duties as the FAR, giving examples of how she works directly with athletes and faculty members to help support student athlete success and wellbeing inside and outside of the classroom.
- The IAC was charged by the University President to serve in an advisory role to the Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics. This group directly supports Faculty & the University FAR.
- Alisse shares that due to recent turnover in the committee and university-wide for athletics, the IAC has become less active than previous years and she is unsure if it is necessary.
- Individuals from the IAC are pulled as necessary in to sit on student athlete scholarship appeals and student athlete misconduct meetings.
- Provost Pugliesi suggests that the FAR position engages with the faculty senate to disseminate information to faculty across the university.
- Alisse raises concern about sports gambling and how it impacts student athletes.

8. **Provost Report – Karen Pugliesi**

Provost Karen Pugliesi gives the provost report.

- Provost Karen Pugliesi shares the Chair of ABOR, Regent Goodyear, is interested in looking at ABOR & NAU Policies and suggesting revisions that better streamline or match current practices.

- NAU is still waiting to hear from the Higher Learning Commission about their site visit. The results of this site visit will heavily impact NAU's pursuit of a new type of degree program called the Bachelor of Professional Studies.
- The results of the FESI & NESI Surveys have been received and organized into a report. This report will be shared with the FSEC & Senate in October.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that the administration is aware of the concerns about the NAU Website changes, and how they are impacting faculty, staff, and students. A summary of the meetings surrounding this topic has been shared with college deans.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that the administration has discussed the important topic of departmental school webpages, and how they are used to recruit new students to graduate level programs. Appointments will be set up with chairs and directors around campus to help support departmental website development.
- Provost Pugliesi shares updates to the Degree Search functions, including the introduction of data from ONET, a database that provides useful information on career paths and occupations.
- A new group will be convened that will discuss the distinctive characteristics and themes that the NAU brand has to offer. One of these outstanding characteristics is NAU's teaching excellence and how much NAU faculty cares for students.
- The FSEC discusses personal issues they have experienced with the website, and how it has impacted their work and student recruitment.
- Provost Pugliesi restates the importance of improving the NAU's website to recruit prospective students.
- Senate President Ellis shares that feedback on the travel teams will be collected and shared with Provost Pugliesi.

9. **<u>New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis</u>**
   The meeting is adjourned at 5:19pm.