

Faculty Senate Committee Meeting Minutes February 16th, 2026

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: McKay, Michael Smith, Christina Baze, Juliana Suby, Catherine Harpst, Jennifer Duis, Luis Fernandez, Emily Manone, Jerry Thull, Marco Cabrera Geserick, Shelly Thomas, Corey Oshikoya, Kevin Tague, Lisa Bliss, Karen Jarratt Snider, Gina Nabours, Andrea Trujillo Lerner, Aimee Quinn, Jill Navran, Jasmine Garani, Igor Steinmacher, Jessie Finch, Blue Brazelton, Okim Kang, Miriam Espinoza, Claudia Rodas, Ashley Vaughan, Kristin Greenwalt, Samantha Clifford, Brandie Reiner, Seafha Ramos, John Tingerthal, Natasha Dmitrieva, Jennifer Holzappel, Rachel Starks, Melissa Lawton, David Folch, Jeff Strain, Meghan McDowell, Kyle Winfree, Chris Sthultz, David Castellano, Sara Maier, Maiah Jaskoski, Karl Krotke Crandall, Karen Pugliesi, Roger Bounds, John Georgas, Anna Sosa, Veena Prakriya, Eesha Syeda, Melinda Tremel, Rachel Forte, Laura Bounds, Hillary Stowell, Andrew Stevens.

2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Kate Ellis

The 2/16/26 Agenda is voted on and **approved**. The 1/12/2026 Faculty Senate Meeting minutes are voted on and **approved**.

3. Faculty Senate President Report – Kate Ellis

Faculty Senate President, Kate Ellis, shares her report.

- Senate President Ellis shares that the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), will be meeting in Tempe, this week. The AFC will be providing a report to the board regarding external pressures on higher education.
- The Undergraduate Attendance Policy's proposal has stalled out due to proposed policy interfering with academic freedom. To follow up, the undergraduate attendance policy task force will develop a set of guidelines and best practices for faculty to follow.
- This will be Kate Ellis's last year as Faculty Senate President. A new president will be elected at the end of this academic year.
- This semester will be Andrew Stevens's last year as Faculty Senate Admin. This position will be filled before next Fall.

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 college elections have been sent out and will be completed by early March. Internal senate elections for the FSEC will occur in April. More information regarding internal elections will be sent out to all active and elected senators.

- The call for nominations for the Annual Career Track Faculty Spotlight has been sent out to the Faculty Senate.
- Faculty Senate Treasurer, Lisa Bliss, shares that a letter was sent out to faculty regarding senate dues. The payroll deduction for senate dues will occur on March 20th. The Faculty Senate will be able to offer two Faculty Senate Scholarships this year, information regarding this scholarship will be sent to all faculty members.
- Chair of the Council on Learning, John Tingerthal, shares that the members of the council are available to meet with units to provide information regarding the Teaching Portfolio Guide.

5. Student Applications, Admit, and Acceptance Tableau & Funnel – John Georgas

Vice Provost, John Georgas, shares data regarding the current application, acceptance, and admission numbers for Fall of 2026.

- John Georgas presents the current numbers of applications for the Fall of 2026 and compares the numbers with previous years.
- John Georgas shares that there is a large dip in application due to partnerships, refinement in advertising, and other factors. In previous years, there were more applications, but less individuals who were admitted and accepted the offer.
- Vice Provost Georgas shares that he doesn't believe that the numbers presented are a result of changes made to the website.
- Vice Provost John Georgas shares data regarding international student enrollment, and how it impacts graduate and undergraduate admissions data.
- Disciplinary variability persists, which is evidenced by increases in CHHS and Nursing, while declining in other colleges.
- Arizona Resident applications and admissions are rising from previous years, while out of state has declined due to increased competition. Transfer student enrollment has also declined compared to previous years.
- In reviewing admissions data, the provost office can continue to refine program portfolios to create the best suited opportunities for prospective students.
- With declines in admissions, NAU will have to continue to adapt to budget changes.
- The Faculty Senate recommends that the provost office utilizes the wide variety of different skills that faculty members have, to collaborate across departments and colleges as we address the shift to a smaller student population.
- The provost office will continue to review NAU's utilization of buildings located across their various campuses.

6. Student Opinion Surveys – Michael Smith

Chair of the Student Opinion Survey task force, Michael Smith, discusses recommendations for the Faculty Senate.

- For context, there was a letter signed by 60+ faculty regarding student opinion surveys and how they can be biased toward specific populations. A task force

was convened to look at these surveys and create recommendations for the Faculty Senate to review.

- The committee suggested the creation of a “best practices” document that can help faculty to solicit and students to provide the best feedback. The committee also recommends potentially creating a process where faculty can expunge abusive language in reviews from their record.
- Chair Smith shares that the committee also recommended a header viewable by students at the top of the survey that would guide students how to provide useful feedback.
- Chair Smith shares that mentioning bias in the header could potentially lead to more biased answers in the survey.
- Chair Smith also shares a document that would be shared to chairs, deans, and directors that gives more information on the Student Opinion Survey’s strengths and weaknesses. FSEC member Juliana Suby also recommends that this document be sent to the Comprehensive Review Committees in each department and the P&T Committees in each college.
- The Committee will continue to work with Vice Provost Bounds to find a way for faculty to request the removal of an abusive language from open ended questions in student opinion surveys from their record.
- Senator Maiah Jaskoski asked about a university wide policy that determines the weight of student opinion surveys in the faculty review process. Chair Smith shares that this policy was scrapped, as there are large differences between departments across campus, making it extremely difficult to find a weight that would work for everyone.
- Provost Pugliesi recommends that these documents contain information that relates the student opinion survey responses to the Inclusive Excellence in Teaching framework.
- The conversation regarding this document will continue in March, with a goal of voting in April.

8. Provost Report – Karen Pugliesi

Provost Karen Pugliesi gives the provost report.

- The President’s and Provost office will continue to work on research strategy as NAU is designated as a R1 university.
- The provost office finished reviewing 97 promotion and tenure cases last week. She shares that these applications were very impressive.
- NAU administration will continue to develop partnerships in Singapore and India with a goal of recruiting more international students.
- Provost Pugliesi shares that NAU will continue to adapt to future changes with a goal of becoming anti-fragile. This can be done by updating and strengthening program portfolios and continuing to review the effectiveness of statewide partnerships.
- Deans & Chairs have been asked to review course schedules with a goal of making appropriate adjustments based on the new admission numbers.

- The provost office will continue to review space utilization and sustainability on campus. Administration has recognized that the university is not utilizing space as effectively as they could have and will be consolidating building infrastructure in the upcoming years. SBS West is one of the buildings that will be going out of service and relocation options are being explored for faculty and staff located in this building. The provost office will be in contact with faculty and staff impacted by this change.
- Research space for faculty will also be examined in the upcoming academic year.

9. **New Business/ Old Business/ Adjourn – Kate Ellis**

The meeting is adjourned at 5:06pm.