

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

August 31th, 2026

NAU University Union

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

- 1. Call to order at 3 pm – Michael Smith presiding, Corey Oshikoya secretary**
Senators Attending In-Person: Brandie Reiner, Christina Baze, Christopher Sthultz, Corey Oshikoya, David Castellano, Diana Stuart, Emily Manone, Eric Breault, Gina Nabours, Igor Steinmacher, Jay Barber, Jane Marks, Jasmine Garani, Jerry Thull, Jill Navran, Juliana Suby, Karen Jarratt Snider, Karl Krotke-Crandall, Kathleen Van Vlack, Kevin Tague, Kyle Winfree, Lisa Bliss, Luis Fernandez, Mary Harmon, Meghan McDowell, Michael Smith, Nick McKay, Okim Kang, Priscilla Sanderson, Samantha Clifford, Sara Maier, Shane Werts, Theresa Bierer
Senators Attending Online: Bettie Coplan, Hayley Root, Miriam Espinoza, Natasha Dmitrieva, Heather Clark, Rachel Starks, Seafha Ramos, Aimee Quinn (alternate for Cristina Castillo).
- 2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes – Michael Smith**
The 8/31/26 Agenda was approved by unanimous consent. The 4/20/26, 4/27/26, 6/8/26 & 7/6/26 Faculty Senate minutes were approved by unanimous consent after no changes were requested.
- 3. Faculty Senate President Report – Michael Smith**
Faculty Senate President, Michael Smith, welcomed new senators and shared a statement outlining NAU's becoming a full University, the importance of the Liberal Arts and the centrality of faculty expertise in academic freedom, the stark challenges we face, and the need for the Faculty Senate to shape our futures.
- 4. Council and Committee Reports**
The chairs of all Senate Committees and Councils gave brief introductory statements.
- 5. NAU President Jose Luis Cruz Rivera took questions about a variety of University matters**
including the negative fallout from budget cuts, frustration with degree program curricular processes, budget-driven loss of CT faculty and the effects on instruction, concern that an all-AI all-the-time approach will ostracize many students and could negatively affect enrollment, declining opportunities for graduate student teaching assistants, and the appropriateness of making changes to curriculum outside normal shared governance channels.
- 6. Provost Karen Pugliesi** discussed the current planning for Academic Affairs, efforts to address budget and enrollment decreases, changes to sabbatical and PPRP parameters, and a push to try to redesign General Studies before the end of the AY to make it less complicated and more transferrable. The Provost took several questions from Senators, primarily focused on the details and process of the proposed General Studies revision.
- 7. Brief recess for College Caucus organizational meeting**
- 8. Open nominations for internal Senate committee and council positions, and liaison to Senate-charged committees**
- 9. Senate Business**

- I) A motion to charge an ad-hoc committee to examine best practices for class absences and their effect on course grades to be chaired by Kate Ellis was approved via unanimous consent.

10. Adjourned at 5:03 pm on 8/31/2026 – Michael Smith