FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2026, 3:10-5:00 PM

The Grupe Center, Zoom

Attendance:

Senators and Alternates: Jungblut, Bill Provaznik, Brita Williams, Bruce Palmquist, Carlo Smith, Charles Pringle, Chong Eun Ahn, Christina Torres Garcia, Christopher Schedler, Cristina Bistricean, David Bieloh, Dominic Klyve, Duane Dowd, Eric Cheney, Eric Hougan, Gabrielle McNeillie, Hope Amason, Jill Clark, Jim Johnson, John Bowen, John Choi, Joshua Nelson-Ichido, Julia Stringfellow, Ke Zhong, Keith Lewis, Lila Harper, Mary Radeke, Matthew Altman, Natashia Lindsey, Nicole Larmartine, Ruthi Erdman, Ryan Galindo, Sam Lohse, Shangyue Zhu, Szilard Vajda, Tafere Belay, Timothy Englund, Timothy Hagen, Tonya Buchanan, Trye Price, Upakar Bhatta.

Guests: Alysia Owlsym, Chris Redfearn, Heidi Perez, Jared Dickenson, Jim Wohlpart, Joy Fuqua, Julie Baldwin, Kara Gabriel, Kurt Kirstein, Meg Selbig (ASCWU), Mike Gimlin, Patrick Pease, Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia, Sathy Rajandaram, Tishra Beeson, Wendie Castillo.

Call to Order

Chair Amy Claridge convened the October 7, 2026 Faculty Senate meeting and welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the academic year. The meeting was held in the Grupe Center and via Zoom.

Roll Call

Attendance was recorded through QR code check-in and an in-person sign-in sheet. Chair Claridge confirmed with the Faculty Senate Administrative Assistant, Alysia Owlsym, that quorum had been reached.

I. Adoption of Robert's Rules of Order

Chair Claridge reviewed Robert's Rules of Order, including voting procedures, amendments, and the responsibilities of senators and alternates. She clarified that motions originating from Senate committees are automatically moved and seconded.

II. Changes to and Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was distributed September 23, with a revised version sent October 1. No changes were proposed, and the agenda was approved as presented.

III. Motion No. 26-01: Approval of Minutes from June 3, 2026

The June 3, 2026 Faculty Senate meeting minutes were approved as presented, with no corrections.

IV. Introductions and Orientation

Chair Claridge invited senators, alternates, and other attendees to introduce themselves.

She then provided an overview of Faculty Senate's role in shared governance and reviewed senators' responsibilities, including attending meetings, reviewing materials in advance, consulting with constituents, and communicating Senate activities and decisions back to their departments.

Chair Claridge outlined several changes intended to improve meeting efficiency and faculty engagement:

- Advance presentations: Presentations will be distributed before meetings whenever possible, allowing meeting time to focus on questions and discussion.
- President and Provost reports: Additional time will be reserved for questions and dialogue with university leadership.
- Faculty Senate Information Site: A new SharePoint site will serve as a centralized repository for meeting materials and provide information about faculty issues, their status, and responses.
- Constituent communication: Senators were encouraged to regularly solicit faculty feedback and share Senate updates with their departments.

Chair Claridge invited feedback on these changes as the Senate evaluates their effectiveness throughout the year.

V. Communications

Chair Claridge highlighted informational materials available on the Faculty Senate Information Site and encouraged senators to share relevant resources with their constituents.

The League of Women Voters provided voting resources for faculty to share with students. Multimodal Learning announced upcoming workshops and invited faculty to participate in a

teaching and learning inventory survey. Financial Aid provided information about changes affecting student eligibility and enrollment requirements, emphasizing the importance of accurate advising and referring students to Financial Aid when questions arise. The Office of University Student Research (OUR) provided information about changes to departmental funding disbursement procedures.

All materials are available on the Faculty Senate Information Site.

VI. Presentations

a. Title II Accessibility Requirements – John MacArthur

John MacArthur, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and Title IX, answered questions regarding Title II digital accessibility requirements and faculty responsibilities ahead of the April 2027 compliance deadline.

MacArthur recommended prioritizing current and upcoming courses, frequently used instructional materials, and public-facing content rather than focusing on archived materials that are no longer in use. He confirmed that Canvas accessibility indicators are useful tools for evaluating course materials and that additional training opportunities are being developed.

Discussion also addressed the accuracy of AI-generated captions, accessibility compliance measures, and available support resources. MacArthur indicated that automated captions are technically acceptable, although reviewing and correcting them remains a best practice. He explained that assistance will be coordinated among Multimodal Learning, Central Access, Disability Services, and his office.

MacArthur committed to developing a resource flowchart identifying appropriate contacts for accessibility assistance by the end of October. Additional guidance and support request information will be available through the university's accessibility resources.

b. NWCCU Site Evaluation Visit – Kurt Kirstein

Kurt Kirstein, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, provided an overview of the upcoming Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation site evaluation visit.

Kirstein emphasized the importance of faculty participation, particularly regarding Standard 1.C, which focuses on student learning. Faculty were encouraged to discuss curriculum

development, assessment practices, continuous improvement, and instructional approaches that support student success.

Discussion addressed faculty participation in the accreditation self-study, opportunities to engage with evaluators, and communication of the evaluation team's findings. Kirstein explained that the self-study was developed through teams of faculty, staff, and administrators who contributed information related to accreditation standards.

The open faculty forum is scheduled for October 14 at 2:00 p.m. in Samuelson Hall, Room 104. Kirstein clarified that preliminary commendations and recommendations are expected at the conclusion of the visit, with final approval by the NWCCU Commission anticipated in January. The process for communicating preliminary findings to the campus community had not yet been finalized.

No formal action was taken on either presentation.

VII. Senate Chair Report

Chair Amy Claridge provided updates on Faculty Senate activities over the summer, committee priorities, ongoing shared governance concerns, and university initiatives.

Funding and Executive Committee activities

Provost Pease committed to funding the institutional SPSS software license through Academic Affairs. The Executive Committee (EC) is also working with ADCO to assess faculty needs and potential institutional funding for qualitative research software.

The Provost provided summer workload funding for EC members, allowing the committee to continue its work. Summer activities included two Open EC meetings, three meetings with the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee (BOT AAC), investigations of faculty concerns, and preparations for the academic year.

Senate committee priorities

Claridge summarized the primary charges assigned to Senate committees for 2026–2027.

The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) is reviewing proposed revisions to the attendance policy. The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (FSCC) is reviewing faculty survey results concerning reduced-credit degrees, finalizing a HyFlex course definition, and supporting implementation of new curriculum management software. The General Education Committee

(GEC) will evaluate recommendations for potential General Education revisions and determine next steps.

The Evaluation and Assessment Committee (EAC) will consider revisions to the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI) form based on faculty feedback. The Bylaws and Faculty Code Committee (BFCC) will address areas of the Faculty Code requiring clarification. The relaunched Budget and Planning Committee (BPC) will work with university leadership to strengthen faculty participation in budget development. The Global Literacy Ad Hoc Committee (GLAC) will continue exploring a global literacy requirement and evaluate its long-term role.

Claridge encouraged faculty to consider serving on committees with remaining vacancies.

Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership (SEBL)

The EC met with SEBL leadership, consultants, and faculty representatives to address concerns about transparency, limited faculty involvement, and the reduction of institutional diversity and equity initiatives. Claridge reported that faculty representatives are working to improve communication and expand opportunities for faculty participation and feedback.

Remote and international work policies

The EC continues to seek clarification regarding restrictions on remote and international work following guidance issued over the summer that resulted in confusion and last-minute changes to some faculty contracts. The Provost's Office and Human Resources are developing a policy. The EC continues to advocate for faculty flexibility and opportunities for meaningful input during policy development.

General Education course enrollment caps

The EC has advocated for adherence to established enrollment caps for General Education academic writing and quantitative reasoning courses. Although university leadership agreed to add sections rather than increase academic writing enrollment caps, the College of Business subsequently increased caps for Academic Writing II courses in Fall 2026. Claridge reported that the matter had been referred to the GEC for recommendations on resolving the concern.

NWCCU accreditation and shared governance

The EC submitted a public comment to NWCCU ahead of the accreditation site evaluation. The comment addressed concerns regarding faculty participation in institutional governance, the development of the accreditation self-study, and the administration's supplemental statement concerning the faculty vote of no confidence.

Claridge explained that the EC believed the administration's statement contained factual inaccuracies and did not adequately represent faculty perspectives. The EC's submission was intended to provide additional context to evaluators and support institutional improvement.

Board of Trustees consultants

Claridge provided updates on two consulting initiatives commissioned by the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Steve Bahls, working with the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), conducted a survey to inform an October 16 shared governance workshop involving faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees. Faculty Senate worked with UFC and ADCO to recommend 15 faculty participants.

Consultant Cat Crosslin is conducting work related to leadership coaching and rebuilding trust. The EC raised concerns regarding limited faculty participation, representative sampling, and insufficient information about the scope and timeline of the work. Additional discussions with the consultant and Board representatives are being pursued.

Board of Trustees activities and Faculty Code amendments

Claridge reported on the July Board of Trustees meeting and the EC's continued engagement with the BOT AAC.

The Board approved Faculty Code changes previously granted interim approval but postponed consideration of amendments approved by Faculty Senate during the 2025–2026 academic year. Trustees cited questions about the amendment review process, administrative consultation, and ongoing shared governance discussions.

Claridge expressed concern that the review and consultation process had already been explained to the BOT AAC in previous meetings and accompanying documentation. The Board indicated that it would reconsider the outstanding amendments at its February meeting.

The EC will continue advocating for adherence to the Faculty Code and meaningful faculty participation in shared governance.

Attendance verification

Claridge acknowledged the additional faculty workload associated with the new federally required attendance verification process, particularly for faculty with heavy teaching assignments. She reported that concerns about the system had been shared with Academic Affairs and Financial Aid, and improvements were being developed for winter quarter. Faculty were encouraged to continue reporting difficulties and suggesting improvements.

International student requirements

Claridge highlighted changes to federal requirements affecting international students, particularly restrictions and complications involving changes of major, graduate programs, and employment authorization. Faculty were encouraged to refer students to International Studies for guidance to avoid advising errors that could affect visa status.

Potential transition to semesters

A university pre-planning group is evaluating the potential scope, staffing, timeline, and costs of transitioning from quarters to semesters. Claridge serves as the Faculty Senate representative.

No decision has been made to pursue the transition. Department chairs will be asked to solicit faculty feedback on the preliminary list of tasks and resource estimates needed to evaluate the proposal.

Strategic planning and budget initiatives

The university is establishing steering committees to review the strategic plan and evaluate financial investment and reallocation strategies in response to enrollment trends and anticipated budget challenges.

Faculty governance groups were invited to nominate two representatives to each steering committee. Representatives will be responsible for communicating with faculty and soliciting feedback throughout the process.

University policies and additional initiatives

Claridge reviewed the university's policy development process, which includes a 20-day public comment period. Policies currently available for review address emergency closures and suspension of operations, policy management procedures, and enterprise risk management. Faculty were encouraged to review proposed policies and submit comments.

The EC is also monitoring institutional discussions concerning online education strategy, promotion and tenure standards, academic scheduling procedures, and potential changes to conflict-of-interest policies.

Claridge concluded by reaffirming the EC's commitment to transparency, shared governance, and faculty advocacy. She encouraged faculty to communicate concerns directly to the EC and participate in Open EC meetings.

VIII. Faculty Issues

a. Updates on Previously Raised Issues

Chair Claridge provided updates on faculty concerns raised at the June Senate meeting and throughout the summer. She noted that approximately 20 issues and their current statuses are documented on the Faculty Senate Information Site.

Wildcat Shop Textbook Policy: Claridge reported that the Wildcat Shop's digital-first approach reflects student preferences, accessibility considerations, and state and federal requirements. Following discussions with Wildcat Shop Director Angela Johnson, she confirmed that faculty retain the option to request printed course materials when appropriate for their courses.

Travel Reimbursements: Claridge clarified that documentation verifying the purchaser's identity is required under audit procedures. However, faculty may provide a redacted credit card image, redacted bank statement, or other documentation establishing proof of purchase. The Travel Office can also assist with reimbursements that cross fiscal years.

Office of University Student Research (OUR) Funding: OUR has modified internal processes to provide departments earlier access to awarded funds, reducing the need for reimbursement-based purchases. Challenges remain regarding certain travel expenses and participant incentives, and OUR continues working toward solutions.

b. New Faculty Issues

Administrative Communication and CAPS Program – Keith Lewis

Senator Keith Lewis expressed concern about an administration email emphasizing civility, questioning its appropriateness in the context of ongoing faculty concerns about university leadership.

Lewis also raised concerns regarding the Wildcat Shop's CAPS course materials program, which charges students $249 per quarter unless they opt out or select another option. He questioned the program's affordability, transparency, and accessibility of opt-out information, particularly for students whose required materials cost less than the quarterly fee.

Lewis reported student concerns about difficulty determining individual course material costs and understanding opt-out procedures. He also relayed reports that student employees had been discouraged from explaining opt-out options and that students selecting CAPS Select had

experienced difficulties purchasing assembled supply kits. He requested greater transparency and consideration of the program's financial impact on students.

North Academic Commons Relocation and Shared Spaces – Trye Price

Senator Trye Price raised concerns on behalf of the Law and Justice Department regarding communication and scheduling during the department's relocation from Farrell Hall to the North Academic Commons. Faculty experienced last-minute changes to the moving schedule that interfered with finals preparation, childcare arrangements, and other end-of-quarter responsibilities.

Price also questioned the designation of the second-floor conference room as a university-wide reservable space rather than a shared departmental resource for Law and Justice, Sociology, and Political Science. He requested that the EC investigate whether the departments could have greater scheduling control and consider the broader implications of shared-space policies for faculty and student activities.

Price indicated that additional information would be provided at an upcoming Open EC meeting and expressed appreciation for Joe's assistance during the relocation.

Attendance Verification Process – David Bieloh and Other Senators

Alternate Senator David Bieloh raised concerns about the usability and implementation of the new attendance verification system, particularly its potential consequences for students receiving financial aid.

Bieloh described inconsistent interface functionality, difficulty locating the save function, and the absence of clear confirmation that attendance information had been successfully submitted. He emphasized that these design issues increased the likelihood of faculty errors affecting students' financial aid eligibility.

Other senators reported similar experiences, including previously entered information not being saved, students receiving incorrect nonattendance notifications, and late-enrolling students appearing after faculty had completed their initial verification. Senators recommended improvements to the interface, clearer confirmation messages, and automatic notifications when additional verification is required.

Claridge acknowledged the concerns and indicated that she would follow up with university administration regarding the feedback.

Closure of Breeze Through Café – David Bieloh

Bieloh expressed concern about the closure of the Breeze Through Café in Randall Hall, describing its former role as an informal gathering space supporting student collaboration, faculty-student interaction, and community engagement. He noted that the loss of the café had affected the social environment in Randall Hall and raised broader questions about the importance of maintaining accessible gathering spaces across campus.

Chair Claridge encouraged senators to submit additional faculty concerns by email or discuss them at Open EC meetings.

IX. Student Report

Megan Selbig, ASCWU Senate Speaker, provided updates on student government activities and concerns.

Selbig reported that ASCWU is recruiting a Vice President and working to fill student representative positions on university committees. She encouraged faculty and committee chairs needing student representatives to contact her directly.

She noted that ASCWU has received student concerns regarding academic advising, which she has addressed when possible or referred to the Provost's Office.

Selbig also expressed concern about the attendance verification process, reporting that at least two students had lost financial aid due to verification-related issues. She shared that concerns about financial aid eligibility had also prompted students to attend classes while ill.

Regarding the CAPS course materials program, Selbig questioned its financial value for students, noting that she had not personally encountered students whose quarterly course materials exceeded the $249 program charge.

Selbig concluded by inviting faculty to attend ASCWU Board of Directors and Senate meetings, held Mondays at 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., respectively, and welcomed faculty participation as guest speakers.

X. Reports and Action Items

a. Executive Committee

Motion No. 26-02: Ratify Committee Memberships

The Executive Committee presented Motion No. 26-02 to ratify committee memberships as outlined in Exhibit A of the meeting agenda.

No discussion or amendments were offered.

Motion No. 26-02 passed by voice vote.

b. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee

Motion No. 26-03: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Graduate Certificate

The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee presented Motion No. 26-03 to approve the new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Graduate Certificate as outlined in Exhibit B of the meeting agenda.

The proposed 23-credit graduate certificate consists of 15 required credits and eight elective credits. A representative from the Geography Department was available to answer questions; however, no questions or discussion were raised.

Motion No. 26-03 passed by voice vote.

XI. President's Report

President Jim Wohlpart provided updates on university initiatives, enrollment, fundraising, and shared governance.

North Academic Commons and Fundraising

Wohlpart celebrated the opening of the North Academic Commons, emphasizing the university's investment in the humanities and social sciences. He also highlighted the dedication of the tribal knowledge and gathering space, which included participation from representatives of several tribes.

The university's public fundraising campaign will launch October 9. Wohlpart reported that approximately $56 million had already been raised and that annual fundraising reached a record of more than $13 million during the previous year.

Strategic Planning and Budget

The Board of Trustees has requested a review of the university's strategic plan. Wohlpart indicated that additional guidance regarding the scope of the review is being requested from the Board and that opportunities for campus feedback will be incorporated into the process.

He also discussed the Budget Investment and Reallocation Committee, noting that the university is projecting a balanced budget for the upcoming fiscal year without relying on salary

savings. He emphasized that the committee's work is intended to examine investment and resource allocation rather than initiate additional budget cuts, while acknowledging continuing uncertainty regarding state funding.

Enrollment

Wohlpart reported Fall 2026 census enrollment of 8,297 students, compared with 8,334 the previous year. Enrollment included 1,521 first-time college students, 831 transfer students, 577 graduate students, and 261 international students representing 54 countries. He noted growth in graduate and international enrollment despite broader enrollment challenges.

Shared Governance and Institutional Trust

Wohlpart discussed the Board's consulting initiatives involving Dr. Steve Bahls and the consultant addressing institutional trust and leadership culture. He expressed confidence in the transparency of the consulting processes and noted that additional opportunities for participation and discussion are anticipated.

He emphasized the importance of rebuilding relationships and trust across the university, including monthly meetings with faculty leadership and visits to academic departments.

Wohlpart also addressed a recent U.S. Department of Education call to action, indicating that the university is seeking guidance from the Attorney General's Office regarding an appropriate response. He acknowledged potential implications for academic freedom and emphasized the importance of faculty involvement.

Attendance Verification

In response to faculty concerns, Wohlpart acknowledged problems with the implementation of the attendance verification process, including insufficient communication and usability challenges. He apologized for the difficulties and additional faculty workload, emphasizing the need for clearer explanations and more user-friendly processes, particularly when student financial aid is affected.

XII. Provost's Report

Provost Patrick Pease welcomed faculty to the academic year and emphasized CWU's role in expanding educational access and opportunities for students.

Department Visits

Pease announced plans to resume visits to academic departments, accompanied by President Wohlpart when available. These meetings are intended to strengthen communication, identify challenges, and gather faculty feedback to inform university improvements.

Attendance Verification

Pease provided additional context regarding the federally required attendance verification process, explaining that its purpose is to ensure appropriate financial aid disbursement and prevent payments to individuals who do not attend or are not legitimate students.

He reported that most faculty completed the verification process successfully and that only 159 students remained unresolved as of the previous day. University staff were conducting individual follow-up to address those cases.

Pease acknowledged weaknesses in the initial implementation, including limitations in the interface, communication, and verification workflow. He explained that the accelerated summer implementation limited opportunities for testing and that improvements are being developed for winter quarter.

He encouraged faculty to submit additional feedback through Kurt Kirstein, particularly recommendations regarding interface design and usability. Pease also clarified that students who are ill should not feel compelled to attend class solely to establish attendance, as alternative methods of verification are available.

Student First Center

Pease announced the opening of the Student First Center in Bouillon Hall, which consolidates student support services into a centralized location to improve accessibility and reduce the need for students to navigate multiple offices.

Services include Admissions, Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, first-year and exploratory advising, Wildcat Mentoring, academic success coaches, and student success advocates.

In response to a faculty request, Pease agreed to provide a list of the offices and services housed in the center to assist faculty in directing students to appropriate resources.

XIII. Chair-Elect Report

Chair-Elect Hope Amason reminded senators of two upcoming events on October 14:

The NWCCU Faculty Forum will take place at 2:00 p.m. in Samuelson Hall, Room 104.

The Open Executive Committee meeting will follow at 3:00 p.m. in the Grupe Center, with a Zoom attendance option.

XIV. New Business

No new business was brought forward.

XV. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 PM.

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2026.