

## **Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes**

February 4, 2026

Meeting Location: Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

Call to Order: 3:02 p.m.

### **Attendance:**

Senators and Alternates: Alex Walker, Amanda Obery, Amy Claridge, Ana Freire, Anne Cubilie, Bernadette Jungblut, Brita Williams, Bruce Palmquist, Carlo Smith, Christopher Schedler, Cristina Bistricean, Donald Davendra, Emilie Hancock, Eric Cheney, Eric Hougan, Eun Young Lee, Gabrielle McNeillie, Gary Bartlett, Jill Clark, Jim Johnson, John Bowen, John Choi, John Durham, Kate Reynolds, Kathryn Stahl, Keith Karns, Keith Lewis, Ke Zhong, Kyung Hee Im (Kate), Lacy Ferrell, Lila Harper, Mary Poulson, Mary Radeke, Nathalie Kasselis, Nicole Lamartine, Nicole Stendell-Hollis, Nikki Jastremski, Richard Marsicano, Ruthi Erdman, Sam Lohse, Tafere Belay, Tennecia Dacass, Timothy Englund, Timothy Melbourne, Todd Weber, Trye Price, Upakar Bhatta.

Guests: Allyson Rogan-Klyve, Amanda LeClair-Diaz, Andrea Eklund, April Binder, Arturo Torres, Cameron Davidson, Chelsea Riddle, Christina Denison, Chris Redfearn, Daniel Lipori, David Vargas, Dia Gary, Dominic Klyve, Eric Foch, Griff Tester, Heidi Perez, J. Hope Amason, Jared Dickinson, Joy Fuqua, Kara Gabriel, Kevin Archer, Kurt Kirstein, Parker Wood, Runa Green, Sara Bender, Sara Toto, Sarah Feeney, Steward Tachaberg, Sydney Thompson, Tishra Beeson, Walter Szelza, Wendie Castillo, William Garnett.

### **I. CHANGES TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Chair called for proposed changes to the agenda. No amendments were brought forward. The agenda was approved as distributed.

### **II. MOTION NO. 25-12: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Chair invited corrections to the January 14, 2026 minutes. Chair Lindsey invited corrections or amendments to the prior meeting's minutes.

Several Senators indicated minor clarifications were needed regarding phrasing and attributions in earlier records. No substantive objections to content were raised. The Chair confirmed that editorial corrections would be incorporated before final posting.

No formal motion to amend beyond editorial corrections was introduced at this time.

### **III. PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Presentation: Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Policy**

Kurt Kirstein presented on the interim Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) policy, an accreditation-driven compliance requirement tied to federal financial aid eligibility. He explained that the Department of Education requires institutions to demonstrate meaningful and ongoing faculty-student engagement in online courses. The presentation clarified that asynchronous courses must include documented substantive interaction beyond automated grading or static content posting. Examples of qualifying interaction include instructor-led discussions, direct feedback on assignments, synchronous sessions, and proactive academic communication.

Discussion included questions about Canvas tracking limitations, how interaction is documented, whether additional reporting burdens would be placed on faculty, and how compliance would be assessed. Kirstein emphasized that the policy formalizes expectations already embedded in effective teaching practice and is intended to protect CWU's accreditation standing.

#### **Presentation: Economics Department Name Change**

Tennecia Dacass presented a proposal to rename the Economics Department to better reflect the growing prominence of the Business Analytics specialization. She outlined enrollment growth trends since AY2021 and explained that a significant portion of majors now identify within Business Analytics. The proposed name change aims to reduce confusion for prospective students and better represent the department's interdisciplinary curriculum.

Dr. Dacass confirmed that the proposal does not alter curriculum, faculty lines, or degree structure. The department has expressed unanimous support. The proposal has been reviewed within the College of Business and by ADCO. Senators asked clarifying questions about external branding, long-term academic positioning, and alignment with institutional strategy.

The Economics Department name change proposal was not met with any objections from faculty.

### **IV. SENATE CHAIR REPORT**

The Chair delivered an extensive report addressing Faculty Code revision discussions, shared governance concerns, Board of Trustees engagement, and faculty feedback. The

Executive Committee reported that over 90% of departments did not support endorsing a full Faculty Code rewrite conducted by a limited committee structure. These results were communicated to both the President and the Board of Trustees.

The Chair detailed prior consultations with Board members, including meetings with the Board Academic Affairs Committee, and contextualized recent administrative communication regarding Faculty Code revision. The Chair expressed concern regarding statements suggesting that agreement had been reached without full faculty consultation. The Executive Committee affirmed its commitment to representing faculty voices and maintaining established revision processes.

The Chair also addressed faculty concerns raised during Open EC meetings regarding administrative communication practices, including emergency dean meetings conducted with scripted messaging. The Chair acknowledged faculty frustration and reaffirmed the Senate's role in promoting transparency, trust, and meaningful consultation.

## **V. ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF FACULTY SUCCESS**

Written report included with the agenda.

## **VI. FACULTY ISSUES**

The Chair opened the floor for Faculty Issues. Discussion centered on concerns regarding shared governance, consultation processes, and the broader relationship between faculty and executive leadership. Multiple Senators articulated that the concerns raised were not rooted in a single isolated decision, but rather in a pattern of perceived inconsistencies in consultation prior to major administrative actions.

Senators described instances in which faculty felt informed after decisions had been substantially shaped rather than consulted during formative stages. Several members emphasized that faculty governance structures exist not merely as advisory bodies but as participatory components of institutional decision-making, particularly in matters affecting academic policy and curricular oversight.

Concerns were also expressed regarding faculty morale and campus climate. Senators noted that many colleagues have conveyed anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty about the direction of institutional leadership. It was emphasized that faculty confidence is closely tied to transparent processes, clear communication, and demonstrable adherence to shared governance principles outlined in Faculty Code.

Questions were raised about the distinction between policy and procedure, and whether certain administrative actions had been categorized in ways that limited formal governance review. While no formal findings of violation were asserted within this discussion period,

Senators emphasized the importance of clarifying consultation expectations moving forward.

Several members underscored that the Faculty Senate's role is to provide structured, deliberative engagement and that raising concerns through formal mechanisms reflects commitment to institutional integrity rather than adversarial intent. The discussion concluded with recognition that the forthcoming action item would allow the Senate to determine whether the broader faculty body should be given the opportunity to express its collective position through a formal vote.

## **VII. STUDENT REPORT**

Hondo Acosta-Vega, ASCWU Senate Speaker, addressed the Faculty Senate on behalf of student leadership. He acknowledged that students are closely observing the current governance discussions and emphasized that stability, transparency, and effective communication are important from the student perspective.

He noted that students value collaborative leadership between faculty and administration and expressed hope that, regardless of the outcome of the motion under consideration, institutional dialogue would remain constructive and focused on maintaining academic quality and campus continuity.

His remarks underscored that governance dynamics affect not only faculty and administration but also students' perception of institutional direction and stability.

## **VIII. REPORTS / ACTION ITEMS**

### **Motion No. 25-13: Authorizes a Faculty-Wide Vote of No Confidence Against President Wohlpert**

The motion was introduced pursuant to a petition signed by 49 faculty members representing 23 departments. The Chair outlined structured discussion parameters, prioritizing Senators before recognizing guests.

Dr. Hope Amason and Dr. Griff Tester addressed the Senate, outlining concerns regarding shared governance, Faculty Code revision processes, perceived centralization of authority, and diminished faculty participation. They referenced AAUP governance principles and NWCCU accreditation standards, asserting that shared governance is foundational to institutional health and student success.

Senators engaged in extended discussion, reflecting diverse perspectives. Themes included: the erosion of trust; questions regarding communication transparency; interpretation of Faculty Code language; timing of mediation requests; and long-term institutional

implications of authorizing a campus-wide vote. Several Senators emphasized the gravity of the decision, noting that votes of no confidence are historically rare at CWU.

Discussion also addressed a letter received from President Wohlpart and Trustee Charbonneau requesting postponement to allow mediation. Senators considered whether conflict resolution avenues had been exhausted and whether mediation would be productive given petitioners' stated positions.

### **Debate on Motion No. 25-13**

#### **Arguments in Support**

Multiple Senators spoke in favor of authorizing the faculty-wide vote.

John Durham – CEPS stated that faculty confidence in executive leadership had been significantly damaged and that faculty deserve the opportunity to express their collective position formally.

Cristina Bistricean – COTS emphasized that authorizing a vote allows faculty voice to be heard through established governance channels rather than informal speculation.

Lila Harper – NTT-At-Large expressed concern about sustained patterns of administrative decision-making that, in her view, minimized faculty consultation.

Ruthi Erdman – CAH stated that the issue was not a single event but a pattern of governance strain.

Gary Bartlett – Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion noted that authorizing the vote is procedural and democratic, allowing faculty to determine their stance collectively.

#### **Arguments Expressing Concern or Opposition**

Some Senators raised concerns about timing and potential consequences.

Todd Weber – Department of Management asked whether authorizing the vote could negatively impact accreditation perception or institutional stability.

Chair Lindsey clarified that faculty governance processes are recognized components of higher education systems and that procedural votes of this nature are not uncommon nationally.

Christopher Schedler – Chair of the English Department asked whether sufficient attempts at reconciliation had occurred prior to escalating to a no-confidence ballot.

Supporters responded that faculty had raised concerns repeatedly through existing governance structures.

#### **Clarifying Questions**

Tennecia Dacass – Department of Economics asked about ballot structure and whether faculty would receive explanatory materials.

Chair Lindsey confirmed that procedural documentation would accompany any authorized ballot.

Ke Zhong – Accounting Department asked about voting eligibility definitions.

Chair Lindsey clarified that eligibility would follow Faculty Code definitions of voting faculty.

After extensive debate, Chair Lindsey called the question.

Paper ballots were distributed and collected.

Vote Tally: 36 Yes, 2 No, 1 Abstain. The motion passed.

Chair Lindsey announced that Motion No. 25-13 passed.

She stated that the Faculty Senate has therefore authorized a faculty-wide vote of no confidence against President Wohlpart and that next procedural steps would be communicated to faculty.

#### **Motion No. 25-14: Authorizes the Proposed Process for a Faculty-Wide Vote of No Confidence**

The Senate reviewed the proposed voting procedures developed in consultation with the Bylaws and Faculty Code Committee. The proposal included use of secure electronic ballots via Qualtrics and optional paper ballots to ensure accessibility and ADA compliance. Procedures were described for preventing duplicate voting, maintaining ballot confidentiality, and establishing submission deadlines.

Discussion addressed ballot integrity safeguards, timeline logistics, and reporting transparency. The motion was brought to a vote and passed.

#### **Closing Discussion**

Following the vote, several Senators emphasized the need for continued professionalism and respect as the process moves forward.

Chair Lindsey reiterated that Senate's role is procedural and that the broader faculty body will determine the final outcome.

### **IX. PROVOST REPORT**

Provost Pease provided a substantive report addressing administrative actions, campus climate, and faculty concerns.

The Provost acknowledged the seriousness of the discussion scheduled for the meeting and stated that administration recognizes faculty frustration and anxiety regarding recent institutional decisions.

The Provost addressed:

- Administrative restructuring and decision-making processes.
- Communication gaps that had occurred between administration and faculty governance.
- Budgetary pressures affecting institutional planning.
- Ongoing accreditation and compliance obligations.
- Efforts to stabilize institutional operations.

Several Senators raised concerns regarding transparency and consultation.

### **Discussion Following Provost Report**

Keith Lewis – Department of Art and Design asked for clarification regarding consultation processes and whether faculty governance bodies were being engaged prior to major decisions being finalized.

The Provost responded that consultation structures exist but may not always operate as smoothly as intended. The Provost indicated willingness to revisit communication channels to improve advance engagement.

Gary Bartlett – Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion questioned whether administrative decisions were being framed as operational rather than policy changes to avoid governance review.

The Provost stated that no intentional bypassing of governance had occurred but acknowledged that lines between procedure and policy can sometimes be interpreted differently.

Christopher Schedler – Chair of the English Department asked whether faculty concerns about administrative leadership were being formally documented and considered at the executive level.

The Provost stated that feedback is being received and reviewed and emphasized that administrative leadership remains committed to shared governance principles.

Kyung Hee Im (Kate) – Department of Art and Design inquired about how trust between faculty and administration could be rebuilt if faculty perceive that consultation is inconsistent.

The Provost responded that rebuilding trust requires ongoing dialogue, improved communication, and structured engagement moving forward.

Several additional Senators spoke, raising concerns about:

- Faculty morale.
- Perceived erosion of shared governance.
- Clarity in policy revision processes.
- Institutional transparency in executive-level decisions.

The Provost reiterated a commitment to communication improvements but did not concede that formal policy violations had occurred.

## **X. CHAIR-ELECT REPORT**

The Chair-Elect reminded Senators of the upcoming Open EC meeting scheduled for February 11, 2026.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

The Chair invited the body to bring forward any new business. No additional items were introduced.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

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