



## FACULTY SENATE

### Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024

**Senators Present:** Ann Abraham, Bob Antenucci, Omid Bagheri, Tina Bhargava, Casey Boyd-Swan, Matt Butler, Jennifer Cunningham, Mark Dalman, Ed Dauterich, Omar De La Cruz Cabrera, David Dees, Vanessa Earp, Ambre Emory-Maier, Julie Evey, Michele Ewing, Michael Fisch, Tianyuan Guan, Angela Guercio, David Kaplan, Sean Kennedy, Terri Kent, Edgar Kooijman, Janice Kroeger, Velvet Landingham, Tracy Laux, Richard Mangrum, Mahli Mechenbier, Taraneh Meshkani, Oana Mocioalca, Ashley Nickels, Vic Perera, Amy Petrinec, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Lydia Rose, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, Jim Seelye, Deborah Smith, Jennifer Taber, Eric Taylor, Brett Tippey, Laurie Wagner, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Sue Wamsley, Christopher Was, Kyle Winkler

**Senators Not Present:** Michelle Foster, Karen Mascolo

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** President Todd Diacon; Executive Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley; Senior Vice President Mark Polatajko; Senior Vice President Eboni Pringle\*; Vice Presidents: Sean Broghammer, Doug Delahanty, Amoaba Gooden, James Raber for John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Peggy Shadduck, Valoree Vargo, Crystal Burnett for Willis Walker, Stephen Ward; Deans: Jeffrey Hallam for Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Allan Boike, Ken Burhanna, James Hannon, Versie Johnson-Mallard, Mark Mistur, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk, Diane Petrella, Kelly Cichy for Elizabeth Piatt\*, Shelby Burkhardt for Christa Porter\*, Amy Reynolds, Alison Smith, Deborah Spake  
\*Interim

**Ex-Officio Members Not Present:**

**Observers Present:** Emeritus Professor Thomas Janson,

**Observers Not Present:** Ms. Maddie Kantin, Ms. Ann Winter

**Guests Present:** Brenda Burke, Heather Caldwell, J.R. Campbell, Sue Clement, Amanda Colucci, Frank Congin, Andrew Crawford, Emmanuel Dechenaux, Chris Dorsten, Shannon Driscoll, Aimee Dudas,

Kieran Dunne, Michael Ellis, Christopher Fenk, Patrick Gallagher, Nick Gatozzi, Christopher Groening, Kim Hahn, Tony Hardin, Jennifer Hebebrand, John Jewell, Lynette Johnson, Michael Kavulic, Jennifer Kellogg, Valerie Kelly, Dana Lawless-Andric, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Kristen Marcussen, Wendy Matthews, Emily Metzgar, Jennifer Miller, Eric Mintz, Amy Nuesch, Christa Ord, Collin Palmer, Susan Perry, Amy Quillen, Dirk Remley, Denise Seachrist, Scott Sheridan, Elizabeth Sinclair, Sarah Smiley, Rob Sturr, Therese Tillett, Kristen Traynor-Mytko, Lauren Vachon, Adil Wadia, Deirdre Warren, Kevin West, Sonya Williams, Sharon Wohl

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 3:21 p.m. in the Governance Chambers, Kent Student Center.

**2. Roll Call**

Secretary Dauterich called the roll.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda (Smith/Fisch). The agenda passed unanimously.

**4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2024**

Chair Laux asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2024, Faculty Senate meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Mocioalca/Piccirillo-Smith).

The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

**5. Chair's Remarks**

Chair Laux delivered his remarks [[attached](#)].

**6. President's Remarks**

President Diacon greeted the audience and then summarized budget cuts in units other than Academic Affairs for the fiscal years 2018 through 2025. He said that by eliminating the cell phone stipend, we saved \$500,000 per year. Altering the way we purchase electrical power saved \$1.1 million per year. Combining Human Resources and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the Division of People, Culture, and Belonging helped eliminate one vice presidency and other positions for a savings of \$500,000 per year. The Division of Student Life eliminated an associate vice president position and "right-sized" a series of events, saving them and the university \$314,000. Four separate faculty and staff separation plans resulted in nearly 600 fewer employees for a savings of about \$21 million per year. Intercollegiate athletics spending was cut by \$2 million per year. Additional budget cuts to all divisions over the years added up to an additional \$5.3 million per year. Since Fall 2017, units other than Academic Affairs have reduced expenses by \$20 million

per year. Adding all actions taken in all units to reduce expenditures since 2017, the reduction in costs is around \$183 million.

President Diacon followed the summary of cuts by mentioning three other areas that affect finances at Kent State. The first is the demographic decline in Northeast Ohio in the number of high school graduates and the decline in the percentage of high school graduates who attend college. While enrollment on the Kent campus is the same right now as it was in the fall of 2009, we occupy 25% more space than we did then, and on the regionals, degree seeking enrollment has declined 50% since 2015.

The second area of concern is that the state-mandated tuition and room and board cohort model. Kent State is no longer allowed to increase room and board rates or tuition for any group other than entering freshmen. Once they enter, rates cannot increase for them for four more years. Recently, the state voted to cap any increases to 3%.

The third area is the State Share of Instruction (SSI), which is performance-based funding (meaning you earn the State Share of Instruction based on the number of your students that pass a course). Recently, Ohio State and the University of Cincinnati have graduated far more students than we have, and Kent State's SSI has been reduced by \$1-2 million per year. 42% of state support granted in the state of Ohio goes to Cincinnati and Ohio State, and then, the remaining 4-year public universities divide the rest. In 1980, Kent State University received \$2.54 in state support for every \$1.00 of tuition we took in. Today, we receive 36 cents of state support for every tuition dollar.

He then invited comments or questions.

Senator Mocioalca suggested that one way to increase revenue would be to get more money from the state, and she asked what we could do to increase SSI.

President Diacon said that he is working (with the help of Nick Gatozzi) with elected officials to explain the numbers to them. The current budget put forth by the governor proposes a 0% increase.

Chair Laux asked whether we could double our enrollment and admission to get more SSI.

President Diacon said we could budget based on assumptions, but he added that we have a different mission than Cincinnati and Ohio State, and our enrollment is doing well at this time.

Senator Dalman asked whether the travel and hiring freeze would last until the end of 2027.

President Diacon said that it is entirely possible that those freezes would last through FY 26, but hopefully with help from the state, we may be able to relax the restrictions by FY 28.

Senator Kaplan asked whether the environment would improve with lower inflation.

President Diacon agreed that it would help.

Senator Tippey asked what plans were in place to help faculty with professional development in regard to travel.

President Diacon suggested that they may end the travel freeze first if they have more room to maneuver with the budget.

Chair Laux added that no contractually bargained funds have been removed.

Emeritus Professor Janson expressed concern about the future of small doctoral programs in music, and he asked that they not be cut in the future.

President Diacon said that the answer may come from the Transformation 28 (T28) update, and he added that we remain in the education business rather than the “not education” business.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley clarified that T28 will not have anything to do with program decisions. She did say that if we continue to offer underenrolled programs, we must look at other places to cut in order to fund them. She said that this is a constant concern rather than just a current one associated with T28.

President Diacon added that if they had not been making significant cuts since 2017, programs may have already been cut.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **7. Transformation 28 Updates from Associate Provosts Kevin West and Scott Sheridan**

Associate Provosts West and Sheridan provided the update to Faculty Senate. Associate Provost West said that they have heard from FACs and CACs. Deans and a working group are looking at the information, and the deans will meet again this week to help the provost present new structures for the faculty to think about in the future. They continue to look at whether there are too few or too many colleges. Associate Provost Sheridan spoke about non-degree granting colleges and the Office of Global Education to look at possible restructuring there. He said that those groups are all working with him and the provost to present possible structures. Those units will present three different configuration models to the university community soon. There will also be a survey soliciting feedback in the coming weeks. The models will probably be released by Thanksgiving at the latest. He added that there have been weekly meetings with shared-service units to find efficiencies and collaborations to help reduce costs.

The presenters then invited comments or questions.

Senator Smith said she appreciated the role the deans have in helping the provost look at feedback, but she wondered whether relying on deans heavily would make it seem as if each dean has one vote. She pointed out that some colleges represent far more units than others.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said that the discussions are not based on a voting system. There are discussions and feedback about what will work best together based on feedback from FACs.

Associate Provost West added that they are working hard to get new models out, and he added that he did not want anyone to be discouraged. He asked that everyone continue to provide detailed feedback.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley put a finer point on the topic by saying she asked for a lot of work from the faculty with a very short time to do it, and she said that senators should thank everyone in their units for all the work FACs and CACs did to help the discussion move forward. She thanked the community for taking the challenge on in a thoughtful manner.

Senator Salaba asked whether participation in the structuring of the models was representative of the concerns of the faculty as a whole.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said only two FACs refused to endorse any model and rejected the process, and they had lengthy discussions according to their minutes. Other units accepted the process and provided comprehensive, thoughtful responses. A survey to students is out currently to get their responses, and she is meeting with student groups to increase their opportunities to provide feedback.

Senator Roxburgh said that she understands the logic behind the idea of academies, but she is worried about administrative layers being created.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said she tried to explain why the word academy was used. She reaffirmed that each unit would continue to have handbooks even if they share a single chair in the academy structure.

Senator Smith expressed concern about the academy structures and suggested that nothing should be added to governance structure.

Associate Provost West agreed with Senator Smith about not increasing administrative levels, but he said that there are collective bargaining terms that still must be navigated.

Senator Mocioalca said that the administration needs to give faculty a reason to participate in the process, and she asked for clearer numbers about how much would be saved by reorganizing.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said that current models would save about \$1 million per year until 2028 at the level of chairs, deans, and directors (administrative salaries). She added that workloads and class offerings will need to be examined carefully as well, so we can be more efficient. She said that she hopes people will be engaged.

Senator Fisch pointed out the bullet points in the letter the provost had sent to students and stressed that consolidation is what is happening rather than a merging of departments. The moves are about efficiency, and he supported the work that is being done.

Senator Mocioalca said that she is hearing that faculty are fatigued about giving feedback when they have no idea how much money will be saved by the models.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley repeated that each model would save about \$1 million every year for four years, and she added that individual departments need to think about

what other departments and programs it would make sense for them to be aligned with. Once the models are in place, more details could be added, which is where faculty feedback is important.

Senator Tippey said that it is impossible for faculty to give feedback without more specific numbers about how much is being saved.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley restated that each model would save about \$1 million every year for four years.

Senator Wagner said that there is no conspiracy; the changes are happening, and we must act or choose not to use our voice to give feedback.

Senator Kaplan added that \$1 million in savings might not be enough.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley agreed that it will not be enough, but it will help take four million dollars out of the equation. She said she will have to increase teaching workload, increase class size, and sunset programs that students are not choosing in order to make room for new ones that are in demand. Even these cuts may not be enough, and faculty may have to be cut in the future. This is one step, but it will not be the only step or the most difficult one. She acknowledged that she is asking for a lot in a hurry, but she maintained that there is no other way to accomplish if faculty want input.

Chair Laux said workload is contractually written, but he added that the provost meant that workload will be examined to make sure faculty are honoring it. He said that the university is looking at reducing administrative bloat first, rather than reducing faculty, and he expressed approval that they started where they did.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said that we are doing things in an unusual way compared to other national universities. Most universities are starting with eliminating programs, faculty, and staff.

Senator Mangrum said we need to get out in front of things or get left behind, and he said that faculty fatigue about providing survey feedback could lead to peril.

Senator Ewing appreciated the candor of the discussion and asked for clarification on the timing of the release of the new models. She asked when we should share more ideas about collaboration and other ways to help with the changes.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley said that anything can be sent through the available channels for consideration now, and the conversations should be continued and reviewed every five years or so. She also said that the final model would be provided for consultation in February.

Senator Ewing thanked the provost and applauded her approach.

Senator Roxburgh said that she has had to tell people in her department that this is a real crisis, rather than a less serious problem from the past; we may not be used to the model being used, which is where some of the misunderstandings come from.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley agreed.

Senator Kroeger said that one of the things that frustrates her about the T28 model is that it is the first time she has seen a structural, visual interpretation of what Kent State looks like, both as a college and as an institution. She suggested that there are many creative things that could have been happening long before this moment, and she saw many potentials in many of those models for creating new courses and new kinds of interdisciplinarity that would change the workforces for so many of our programs. She said that there is creativity in the change and that she was hopeful for that.

Executive Vice President and Provost Tankersley thanked her for her remarks.

There were no further comments or questions.

**8. Discussion Item: Writing Intensive Course (WIC) Report from University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) (presented by Dean Alison Smith and Professor Dirk Remley)**

Dean Smith delivered a PowerPoint explaining the report from the URCC [\[attached\]](#). Dean Smith added that recommendations about the WIC are being made now and have been made in the past by the URCC. She went through the recommendations during the PowerPoint as well. The report was submitted last May; the academic recommendations still hold, but class size and budgetary issues are now a consideration. She also listed other options from around the state and suggested a possible survey of the faculty in response to the report.

The presenters then invited comments or questions.

Senator Cunningham thanked the committee for their work, and she read the following statement:

I want to speak up as the Writing Program Coordinator in the English Department and thank this committee for their work and thank Renee and Dirk for including me in conversations last year. As I've mentioned during discussions about the Kent Core, written communication continues to be listed by both faculty and employers as one of the most important outcomes and skills that students need. As the report suggests, an emphasis on writing is an excellent way to make Kent State distinct.

The Writing Program supports the conclusions and recommendations in this report. And, while we realize that the Writing Program can't address every need a department might have related to WICs, we do maintain the College Writing and Research Writing Materials site that includes information about and best practices for incorporating peer review and providing instructor feedback in writing courses, which I'm happy to share with any instructor. I'm also happy to work with the CTL, if wanted, to develop workshops or materials related to writing instruction and assessment mentioned in the first recommendation. Nicole Willey, the Associate Director of the CTL, is also a Professor in English who has taught many writing courses and who also has expertise in writing pedagogy. We would be happy to work together to help enact this committee's

recommendations to support instructors with writing intensive courses as a third writing course requirement.

Senator Mangrum asked whether there is an accreditation requirement or other outside factor driving the existence of a third writing course.

Dean Smith said there was not.

Senator Mangrum asked why we are pushing for three writing classes if no other college in the state does; he also asked whether the decision about having a WIC would be best decided at the college unit level.

Professor Remley said that writing skills are in the top five skills desired by employers and that the distinction brought by the WIC could matter to students and employers if they are publicly aware of it. It could give us a strong way of distinguishing ourselves from other institutions. He added that a survey could go out to see whether or not different colleges want or need to change the requirement in some way.

Senator Mangrum said he still does not know why we are continuing with the WIC.

Senator Smith said that the WIC gives students the chance for better feedback on a paper that they might not get otherwise.

Senator Winkler said it is not extra work; it is a chance for deeper reading and reflective writing practices. He said this would be a benefit for students, and we should continue to keep it.

Senator Kroeger asked whether all three writing courses are required at Kent and whether there is a relationship to the Kent Core.

Dean Smith said that for students, they will select a WIC from their roadmap; they are usually a required course in the major. She said that instructors in the majors mostly found that they needed the course.

Senator Piccirillo-Smith said that she believes the opportunity is beneficial for students; engaging the students at a deeper level with writing according to what their major requires could be very helpful.

Professor Remley said that the colleges and departments have a lot of latitude for how the requirement is fulfilled. He said they want the conversation to continue.

Senator Mangrum said that two classes are a full academic year and said that the necessary writing goals should be able to be accomplished in that time.

Senator Cunningham responded that the existence of the WIC and other required writing courses has nothing to do with doing a job in an academic year.



She added that the requirement of College Writing and Research Writing is a requirement for two very different classes that employ different strategies to prepare students for the kinds of writing that they will do in the WICs that are taken in their majors.

Senator Dees asked whether we knew why other universities dropped the requirement.

Dean Smith said that some of the universities looked at general education requirements and expanded the second college writing class to add work in the major that was similar to the WIC. Other colleges could not afford the WIC.

The discussion ended with a suggestion that the EPC should look further into how to handle the report and into what to do with the WIC before returning the discussion to Faculty Senate.

There were no further comments or questions.

## 9. Old Business

There was no old business.

## 10. New Business

There was no new business.

## 11. Additional Items

There were no additional items.

## 12. Announcements/ Statements for the Record

Four senators read portions of the following statement:

[Senator Boyd-Swan]

Thank you, members of the Faculty Senate, for this opportunity to speak on today's Day of Radical Hope. A coalition of nearly 50 faculty, staff, and students have convened to put together a [Day of Radical Hope](#) that is taking place throughout today, November 4.

In response to the increasing instances of hateful acts and rhetoric on campus, regionally and across the country, this day-long event is designed to cultivate and center the concept of "radical hope" on campus. The program includes spaces for storytelling, processing and reflection, and action through a range of activities, from public art to academic engagement. It provides an opportunity for the campus community to respond to hate, fear, and anger with collective resilience, rooted in principles of justice, equity, and hope for a better future.

We acknowledge that many of us are feeling a mix of emotions—fear, anger, frustration, and even burnout. These feelings resonate powerfully in today’s political climate, both nationally and on our own campus. Right here on our own campus, we’ve faced incidents of homophobic graffiti, ongoing legacies of racism, antisemitic and anti-Muslim rhetoric, and anti-immigrant discourse, all of which sow division and fear among us. However, today’s event is about envisioning something larger, something more resilient. It is about how we move toward hope—not as a vague aspiration but as a radical, active choice to believe in the possibility of transformative change.

[Senator Taber]

In the face of challenges that may feel insurmountable, radical hope calls on us to respond with intention and resolve. It’s easy to feel that once we cast our votes, our influence as individuals is diminished. But real, lasting community power extends well beyond the ballot box. Community power grows through how we continue to support each other, how we commit to resolving conflicts with compassion, and how we choose to engage within our campus and broader communities, long after Election Day.

This day is a reminder that hope is not a passive belief in positive outcomes; it is an intentional choice to keep moving forward together, to keep advocating for justice, and to keep resisting forces that seek to divide us. Here at Kent State, we’ve witnessed both the harmful effects of division and the unifying power of solidarity. We’ve seen students, faculty, and staff unity against racism and bigotry, organize for justice, and raise their voices to demand change. This is where hope lives—not in the idea that everything will magically improve, but in our shared commitment to keep fighting for justice, to keep showing up, and to build a future where we can thrive together.

[Senator Piccirillo-Smith]

Today, we are invited to reflect on how we, as members of the Kent State community, can continue to build power together. How do we confront fear, apathy, and burnout? How do we build relationships that last beyond a single election cycle? And most importantly, how do we claim hope as a tool for transformative action, as we work toward a future that reflects our values of respect, inclusion, and justice?

Radical hope is a practice—an everyday tool that we wield not only to protect ourselves from division but also to build a shared vision rooted in respect, inclusion, and justice. Through radical hope, we affirm our commitment to a campus that celebrates diversity and upholds its commitment to equity and inclusion, where every individual feels valued and supported.

[Senator Nickels]

The Day of Radical Hope is not only an opportunity to reflect; it is also a call to action. It challenges us to ask: How can we, as members of the Kent State community, truly embody this hope? How can we show up for one another in ways that make a meaningful impact? How can we work together to ensure that our campus, and indeed our society, reflects the values of justice and equity we hold dear?

We call on each of you to take this day as a chance to consider your role in fostering radical hope and resilience on our campus. We urge all of us to think about how we can contribute to an environment where everyone feels that they belong, where our collective strength is acknowledged, and where we are all committed to building a community founded on respect and inclusion. This day is a testament to our shared power—not only to withstand the challenges that confront us but to work collectively toward a campus climate that uplifts us all.

Thank you for listening, and we hope that you reflect and act based on these words.

There were no further statements or announcements.

### 13. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich  
Secretary, Faculty Senate