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## Faculty Senate Chronicle for September 3, 2015

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a report to the faculty of  
the university of akron



**September 3, 2015**

**14 pages**

## **SENATE ACTIONS**

- **Elections for**

**Chair of the Faculty Senate: Bill Rich (2-year term)**

**Secretary of the Faculty Senate: Pam Schulze (2-year term)**

**Faculty Senate Executive Committee: Daniel Coffey (2-year term)**

**Harvey Sterns (2-year term)**

**Faculty Senate Representative to Graduate Council: Harvey Sterns (1-year term)**

**Representative to Ohio Faculty Council: Leann Schaeffer (2-year term)**

**Alternate Representative to Ohio Faculty Council: Roland Arter (2-year term)**

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Any comments concerning the contents in The University of Akron Chronicle  
May be directed to the Secretary, Pamela A. Schulze (x7725).  
[facultysenate@uakron.edu](mailto:facultysenate@uakron.edu)

September 3, 2015

## Table of Contents

Minutes of Faculty Senate meeting held September 3, 2015 ..... 3

Appendices to Minutes of Faculty Senate meeting of September 3, 2015

    Remarks from Senior Vice President and Provost Michael Sherman..... 13

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of September 3, 2015  
3:00 - 5:15 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, September 3, 2015 in room 201 of the Buckingham Center for Continuing Education. Senate Chair William D. Rich called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

Of the current roster of 54 senators 40 were present for this meeting. Senators Barrett, Cutright, Dejbord-Sawan, Hallett, Holliday, Kidd, Morath and Onita were absent with notice. Senators Braun, Dey, Freely, Lashbrook, and Srivatsan were absent without notice.

**I. Approval of the Agenda**

Senator Schaeffer moved to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Senator Landis.

**The agenda was adopted without dissent.**

**II. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the April and May meetings were not circulated.

**III. Remarks of the Chairman**

Chairman Rich remarked as follows:

Welcome back for a new academic year.

Welcome to the newly elected members of the Senate.

The Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences

Todd Blackledge

Daniel Coffey

Kathryn Feltey

Travis Hreno

College of Health Professions

Marc Haas

United Student Government

Taylor Swift

Congratulations to recently re-elected Senators.

The Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences

Pamela Schulze

College of Business Administration

John Matejkovic

September 3, 2015

Part-time Faculty

Shannon Osorio

School of Law

Sarah Morath

William Rich

For the information of those who are new to the Senate, and as a reminder to those who are returning,

The Faculty Senate is the legislative body of the faculty at the university level; Its meetings are relatively formal and are conducted according to its bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order;

If you wish to address the body, please hold up your name tag to seek the recognition of the chair, and please be sure that your name is facing the chair, not you, and is right-side up so that it can be read by the chair;

Please do not speak until recognized by the chair;

If I should fail to say your name when recognizing you, please state it when you begin to speak so that your remarks may be properly attributed in the record.

This meeting is being transcribed. Please do not make noise that may make it difficult for the transcriber to hear the proceedings.

When you speak, please bear in mind that your remarks will be transcribed for all the world to see.

For the new members of the Senate, we will be conducting an orientation session in the near future.

Today's agenda includes several elections, including:

Faculty Senate Chair;

Faculty Senate Secretary;

Executive Committee – two seats;

Faculty Senate representative to the Graduate Council;

Faculty Senate representative to the Ohio Faculty Council; and

Alternate Faculty Senate representative to the Ohio Faculty Council.

Like the terms of the Faculty Senate Chair and Secretary, the term of the Vice Chair is expiring. The incumbent Vice Chair, Jon Miller, stood for re-election to the Senate this Spring and is a candidate in the run-off election which is to be conducted shortly in the College of Arts and Sciences. Following prior practice, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee decided to defer the election of a vice chair until the Senate's October meeting, by which time the run-off election in the College of Arts and Sciences should have been completed.

September 3, 2015

Similarly, one of the Senate's two incumbent representatives to the Graduate Council is in a run-off election for re-election to the Senate in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Executive Committee has decided to defer the election of one of the Senate's representatives to the Graduate Council until the Senate's October meeting. This has been, to say the least, an eventful summer at the University of Akron. There is much for us to discuss in this and successive meetings of the Senate. For now, I wish to make but a few observations:

First, the expenditure cuts included in the budget for the current fiscal year (2016) were severe, too severe *not* to have a significant adverse impact on the operations of the University.

Second, we grieve the departure of the 161 colleagues and friends whose positions were eliminated as a result of these cuts.

Third, there were no lay-offs of faculty.

But fourth, this does not necessarily mean that there will be no cuts in faculty positions. There were quite a few faculty positions vacated as a result of retirements and other separations. What remains to be seen is how many (and what kind of) faculty positions will be authorized to be filled through searches to be conducted this academic year. The process for making these decisions is under way, and the Administration has promised to conclude this process and announce the results this month, which would allow the searches to begin earlier than in previous years, thereby allowing the University to compete more successfully for the best faculty candidates than it has in previous years.

Fifth, the outcome of this decision process warrants close scrutiny by the faculty. The recent budget cuts represent an opportunity for the University to do what the faculty has long advocated: to allocate a greater proportion of the University's limited resources to its core academic mission, which is performed largely by the faculty. I expect to be able to report the results in our next meeting, so that we can evaluate how well the University had done at seizing this opportunity.

This concludes my remarks.

#### **IV. Special Announcements**

Chairman Rich reported deaths of members of the University community:

Dr. Eberhard A. Meinecke, Professor Emeritus of Polymer Science and Mechanical Engineering and a founding faculty member of the College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering, died May 23 at the age of 81.

Dr. Lindgren Chyi, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geosciences, died June 11. Professor Chyi earned his Ph.D. in geology in 1972 from McMaster University, joined the University of Akron as an assistant professor in 1979, and retired in 2014.

Robert D. Jorgensen, Professor Emeritus of Music and Director Emeritus of Bands, died July 4th. Professor Jorgenson also served as Assistant Director of the School of Music.

Dr. David E. Kyvig, Professor Emeritus of History, died June 22 at the age of 71.

Nathan F. Cardarelli, Professor Emeritus of General Technology and adjunct fellow in the Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology, died on July 7 at the age of 84.

Dr. Stanley Akers, Assistant Professor Emeritus, University Libraries Collection Management, died on July 9 at the age of 70.

The Senate stood for a moment of silence in memory of our deceased colleagues.

#### **V. Reports**

##### **A. Executive Committee**

Since it last met on May 7th, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met seven times by itself and four times with the President and the Provost.

The Executive Committee first met on May 21st to prepare for the meeting with the Provost. The President was unable to attend. We next met with the Provost. We were updated on College Strategic Planning Process, the review of Deans, the HLC focused site visit report, Vision 2020 Summit, Trustees' consideration of University Council Bylaws, the General Education Core 13 plan, the polytechnic marketing campaign, the College of Education's independent school, the state higher education budget, enrollment projections and admissions. We also discussed graduate assistantship contract deadlines.

The Executive Committee next met on June 4th to discuss regular Senate business. We discussed the budget planning process. We certified the elections of senators from Fine Arts, Natural Sciences and the Humanities Division of the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences.

We were unable to certify the votes of Social Sciences and "At Large" because no one received a majority of the votes, and thus a runoff election is needed. The Executive Committee also made several committee appointments.

The Executive Committee met on June 18th to conduct regular Senate business and to prepare for the meeting with the President and the Provost. The Executive Committee certified the election results for BCAS. The Executive Committee certified the election of Senator Coffey for an "at large" seat. Runoff elections must be conducted for the other three seats. The Executive Committee certified the election of Senator Feltey for the Social Sciences Division. The College of Arts and Sciences will need to conduct runoff elections to fill the other two seats.

Later that afternoon, the Executive Committee met with the President, Provost and Vice-Provost. We also discussed Gen Ed Core 13, the budget, allocation of graduate assistants for fiscal year 2017, process and criteria for allocation of replacement faculty positions for fiscal year 2017, and proposed changes to the academic calendar. We were updated on recent and planned administrative appointments, the implementation of college Strategic Plans, the polytechnic marketing campaign, and admissions and enrollment projections for the Fall semester.

The Executive Committee met on July 16 to prepare for the meeting with the President, Provost and Vice-Provost. Later that afternoon, the executive council met with the President, Provost and Vice-Provost. We were updated on the General Education Core classes, the allocation of graduate assistants for fiscal year 2017. We discussed the appointment of a general education coordinator and the proposed changes to the academic calendar. We also discussed the Corps of Cadets and the Leadership Academy. The Executive Committee was updated on undergraduate admissions and enrollment projections. The Executive Committee met on August 10th for regular Senate business. The Executive Committee made Committee appointments.

We also discussed Trust Navigators, success coaches, the UA press, E.J. Thomas, and the proposal to approve the Center for Data Science, Analytics, and Information Technology. FSEC concluded that in light of the large allocation of resources the Center would require, the proposal needs further development; that faculty from the relevant academic units should be more involved in the development of the proposal than they have been so far; that the proposal should be more specific about what the Center would do; that the proposal should present reasonably concrete evidence of the need for the activities in which the Center would engage; and that a more fully developed proposal should be submitted to APC in the Fall for eventual consideration by the Faculty Senate.



The Executive Committee met on August 25th for regular Senate business and to prepare for the meeting with the President and Provost. The Executive Committee acted on behalf of the Senate to approve the Summer graduation list.

Later that afternoon, the Executive Committee met with the President, Provost and Vice-Provost. The Executive Committee was updated on the Gen Ed core. We discussed the need for a general education coordinator to be appointed this year. We discussed when allocations for graduate assistants might be expected. The Executive Committee was updated on the allocation of replacement faculty positions for fiscal year 2017; announcement is expected mid-September. We discussed the academic calendar. A draft of a proposed revised academic calendar will go out soon including rationale. We discussed the UA press, the Trust Navigator success coaches and the Honors College.

The Executive Committee met August 27th to prepare the Agenda for the upcoming Faculty Senate meeting.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the senate during the summer months, contingent on reporting those items to the senate for ratification. The Executive Committee puts before you the question of the ratification of the Executive Committee's approval on behalf of the Faculty Senate of the summer graduation list.

Chair Rich called for a vote.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

## **B. Remarks of the President**

The President began his remarks by welcoming the senators to the beginning of a new academic year. He provided context for discussion: When he assumed the presidency, it was clear that there were two key challenges: financial challenges and enrollment declines. Enrollment declines over the last five years represents the greatest challenge. When the university rebuilt the campus, it incurred about \$500 million of bonded indebtedness with the expectation that enrollment would increase. Declining enrollment and outstanding bonded indebtedness represents a challenge due to the university's many fixed costs. We have an annual operating budget of roughly \$500 million. Our annual debt service is \$36 million a year, which means 7% of our budget goes to pay debt service.

Financial challenges and enrollment declines were critical problems that needed to be addressed with swift and directive action. The first step was to make sure everyone was aware of the challenges that needed to be addressed. For almost a year, the president attempted to explain these challenges to various constituencies.

For about six months, the administration's financial team worked with key stakeholders to determine how best to address the challenges. The administration tried to make the process as transparent as possible and practical. Representatives of key stakeholders participated in regular meetings with the administration to discuss what we would do to address these key challenges.

On June 10th, The University of Akron Board of Trustees approved a proposed budget which required us to implement a reduction in force to eliminate or significantly change several non-active programs to improve the University's overall financial condition. Over 200 positions were eliminated, of which approximately 160 were filled. About one third of the positions were professional, managerial, or higher posts.

All reductions were painful but necessary. We are now in a position to make needed investments so that we can grow. The budget was designed to address the two key challenges: financial shortcomings and enrollment declines.

Financial declines can be addressed through costs reductions. But reversing enrollment declines requires investment. The new budget has funds to invest in opportunities that will attract students. A top priority is to invest funds in ways that advance college strategic plans, including the hiring of new faculty.

The president believes that we're already seeing positive results of the strategic planning process, and cited the enrollment increases in the School of Law as an example. The University has also expanded recruitment efforts. Freshman class enrollment is up 5.3%. Freshman honor college student enrollment has increased 10%.

The University implemented several initiatives to attract new students and grow enrollment such as the National Center for Choreography with Dance Cleveland; the proposed new Center for Data Science and Information Technology; the new Center for Experiential Learning, Entrepreneurship, and Civic Engagement; the low-cost general education courses offered through Wayne; the new Corps of Cadets and Leadership Academy; the partnership with the LeBron James Family Foundations; and the new branding initiative.

In addition to those initiatives, on May 15th the administration announced its intent to strengthen the University's brand and expand its recruitment reach. The president showed a video that will be a part of the new branding campaign which is scheduled to launch over the Labor Day weekend.

The president reiterated that the administration attempted to consult with and involve a wide spectrum of the community in determining how to address the University's key challenges (finances and enrollment). The administration initiated plans for financial re-engineering that

were difficult. Along the way, the administration made mistakes. The President said that this is perhaps unavoidable when trying to tackle big, complex problems under time constraints. The administration tried to identify missteps, fix them immediately, learn from them, and then move on. The President expressed the belief that the progress we have made in the last several months exceeds the downside of the mistakes.

The president discussed diversity issues: we have grown diversity in the Honors College and graduation rates among minority students are rising. The University has increased diversity in key leadership positions with new Deans of the College of Health Professions and the Honors College and Director of the proposed Center for Data Science and IT.

The administration will soon announce new faculty positions and a new strategy for the Honors College. The administration will announce new partnerships that will improve the University by enabling us to enhance teaching and research. The President sees the University growing larger and more impactful, emerging as a national and international leader in the evolving world of higher education.

The President concluded his remarks by stating his belief that we are stronger today than we were one year ago because of the difficult decisions the administration has made. This time next year, he believes we will be even stronger.

## **VI. Senate Elections**

Chair Rich announced that there are two offices to fill (Chair and Secretary) and two members of the Executive Committee to elect, each with a two-year term. The Senate also needs to elect a representative of the Faculty Senate to the Graduate Council for a one-year term, as well as a representative and an alternate representative to the Ohio Faculty Council for a two-year term.

### **Chair (2-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Bouchard nominated Senator Rich. Seconded by Senator Gatzia. Senator Rich accepted the nomination. Senator Franks moved to close nominations and elect Senator Rich by acclamation. Seconded by Senator Lashbrook.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

### **Secretary (2-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Bouchard nominated Senator Schulze. Senator Schulze accepted the nomination. Senator Schwartz moved that the nominations be closed and that Senator Schulze be elected by acclamation. Senator Saliga seconded the motion.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

**Executive Committee (first seat - 2 year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Saliga nominated Senator Sterns. Senator Franks seconded the nomination. Senator Sterns accepted the nomination. Senator Shaeffer moved

that the nominations be closed and that Senator Sterns be elected by acclamation. Senator Matajkovic seconded the motion.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

**Executive Committee (second seat – 2-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Franks nominated Senator Lillie. Senator Lillie declined. Senator Huss nominated Senator Coffey. Senator Coffey accepted the nomination. Senator Matejkovic nominated Senator Hausknecht. Senator Hausknecht accepted.

The election was conducted by secret ballot. Senator Coffey was elected by a vote of 25 in his favor to 8 in Senator Hausknecht's favor.

**Representative to Graduate Council (1-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Huss nominated Senator Sterns. Senator Sterns accepted the nomination. Senator Saliga moved that the nominations be closed and that Senator Sterns be elected by acclamation. Senator Kemp seconded the motion.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

**Representative to Ohio Faculty Council (1 seat – 2-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Schaeffer nominated herself. Senator Schulze nominated Senator Howley. Senator Howley declined. Senator Sastry moved that the nominations be closed and that Senator Schaeffer be elected by acclamation. Senator Matejkovic seconded the motion.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

**Alternate Representative to Ohio Faculty Council (1 seat – 2-year term)**

Chair Rich called for nominations. Senator Arter nominated himself. Senator Sterns moved that the nominations be closed and that Senator Arter be elected by acclamation. Senator Kemp seconded the motion.

**The motion was adopted without dissent.**

**VII. Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business.

**VIII. Report of the Faculty Representatives to the University Council**

Senators Lillie and Erickson reported as faculty representatives to the University Council that there was no July meeting because the Steering Committee of the University Council decided there was no business to be brought to the body. The June meeting did not have a quorum.

Senator Sterns added that the upcoming meetings are important. He has requested a presentation on the budget.

**IX. New Business**

There was no new business.

**X. Adjournment**

Chair Rich adjourned the meeting at 5:10.

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May be directed to the Secretary, Pamela A. Schulze (x7725).  
[facultysenate@uakron.edu](mailto:facultysenate@uakron.edu)

Appendix A

Faculty Senate

The University of Akron September 3, 2015

Comments from Provost Mike Sherman.....

Good afternoon. I apologize for being away from campus today. I am attending a Bill & Melinda Gates conference that is the culmination of our planning---grant activities. I will report to you at the next meeting what was learned.

As I have said before, it is thrilling and amazing that 25,000 or more students arrive on campus in the fall and classes are filled, instructors are ready to teach, traffic is flowing and food is being served. Clearly there is the understanding that we are in this together and that our success requires our collective actions and responses.

NewRoo Weekend was a great way for our new students to become acclimated to UA. Thanks to you and to anyone who helped make it such a success. I heard many positive comments from students about their experiences and should acknowledge the Division of Student Success and others for their outstanding work making it happen. This is a great way for our students to understand how to get off to a great start to their Akron Experience.

Speaking of new students, on the first day of classes, there were 5.3% more entering freshmen compared to last year and we welcomed that largest Honors College class ever--636. Importantly, in a time of declining Law School enrollment, our enrollment was up 27%, and Graduate School entering enrollment was up 4.6%. An important component of this overall enrollment picture is that we graduated our largest number of students during the past academic year, some 5,200. We will look forward to the 14<sup>th</sup> day (census) information; in the meantime, we are off to a great start.

I look forward to working with the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee as we work to assure we have the very best academic programs. We must gain momentum on our General Education reform efforts and I look forward to that outcome. It is essential that we continue to make progress on learning outcomes assessment so as to continuously improve teaching to enhance learning.

As you know a faculty hiring plan will be announced very soon that will have new faculty colleagues joining us on campus for the 2016---17 school year. Thanks to the deans and their colleagues for their good work in the faculty position proposal process. We are also working to assure that in the very near future graduate assistant funds are released for the 2016---17 school year so academic programs can recruit the very best graduate

September 3, 2015

students. In addition, college strategic action plans have for the most part been endorsed and I anticipate we will see the results of implementation steps over the coming months.

Again, best wishes for an outstanding academic year! I look forward to greeting you on campus in the coming weeks.

September 3, 2015