

## **FACULTY SENATE MINUTES**

**March 2, 2026, 3:30 p.m.**

The Faculty Senate of Eastern Kentucky University met for a hybrid meeting Monday, March 2, 2026, in Science Building room 2221. Chair Brent called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.

ABSENT: Senators Bosley, Liddell, Smith, Kazadi, Matheyambath, Bane, Hill, DeLage, Humphrey, Plutt, Dacci, Emanuel, Hammond, Proide, Turner

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Senator Settimi moved to approve the February 9, 2026, minutes as written, seconded by Senator Day. Motion carried. (YES = 32 votes NO = 0 votes ABSTAIN = 2 votes)

### **REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT: David McFaddin**

TO: Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate

FROM: President David T. McFaddin

DATE: March 2, 2026

RE: Faculty Senate March Report

It appears (for this week at least) we replaced snow showers with rain showers and that means only one thing... spring is around the corner. With March here, we are preparing for many things: midterms, Spring Break, and for those basketball fans, March Madness. I'd like to congratulate our Women's Basketball team for earning their place as the ASUN Champions. Our student-athletes, like so many of our students juggling work, school and personal obligations, work hard to represent our institution. But it is thanks to our faculty who support our students every day in the classroom that ensures they have everything they need to be successful.

### **Hummel Planetarium**

At the recent Board of Regents meeting, there was a robust discussion about the options for the future of the Hummel Planetarium. I want to thank Faculty Regent Lynnette Noblitt for working with my office to identify creative and affordable solutions to enable us to bring immersive learning experiences for students and community members through a shared laboratory and entertainment space in the Black Box of the Center for the Arts. We will have a committee of faculty and staff working reviewing the options to enable your disciplines to find creative ways to excite students in this space.

### **Legislative Update**

Today will be the final day for Senate bill submissions and Wednesday for House Bill submissions. All eyes remain on House Bill 500, the state budget bill. I want to thank Amy Scarborough and Jordan Smith for keeping us all informed on what each year

seems to be a faster and more chaotic legislative session. As a reminder, the legislative schedule is as follows:

**Schedule:**

- Last day for new Senate Bills March 2
- Last day for new House Bills March 4
- Veto Recess April 2 -13
- Veto Overrides April 14-15
- Adjournment/Sine Die April 15

**State Budget Likely to Impact ECU Budget**

Most departmental budget proposals have been submitted from across campus. Now begins the analysis of working towards a balanced budget. I want to remind everyone that we are closely monitoring House Bill 500, the state budget bill, to identify potential impacts on our own budget. I plan on joining John Brent for a Spring Faculty Lunch and Learn where I hope to have more information about with Senator John Brent

**Audit Shows Clean Bill of Health**

I am pleased to report that the audit has come back with a clean bill of health. The audit team reported to the board that there were no findings of significance. With the audit complete we have submitted all materials to CPE for review of the proposed ECU-COM project.

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**February in the News**

ECU News Monitoring

- EKU Researcher Explores Natural Alternatives for Cardiovascular Disease Treatment • In the Wake of the Hurricane: ECU Grad Responds in Jamaica
- <https://fox56news.com/news/local/richmond/eku-to-invest-in-immersive-learning-explore-demolition-of-hummel-planetarium/>
- EKU Introduces Skills-Focused Essential Education for Curriculum for Fall 2026
- Spin the wheel, see the world: ECU students head abroad
- EKU Expands Faculty Research Funding
- Matt Evans Honored with ECU's Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award
- Jason Derulo to Perform Live at ECU on April 10!
- Securing the Skies (Chris Hacker)
- A New Chapter: Writer Pursues Grad School After Retirement
- EKU's Spin the Wheel Scholarship Sends 16 Students to Study Abroad
- Juan Carlos Castro Honored with ECU's Hall of Distinguished Alumni Award
- From Creek to Community: ECU Research Tracks Water Quality
- EKU First in Kentucky to Partner With ParkZen on Real-Time Parking App
- EKU Stands out With Risk Management and Insurance Degree

- From Clues to Careers: ECU's Forensic Science Program Shapes Tomorrow's Investigators • ECU Invests in Hands-On Healthcare Training
- Eastern Kentucky University and Lockheed Martin: More Than a Decade of Partnership • Family Destination Affordability and Peaceful rankings
- ECU Student Tree Crew - Workforce Training

### **Upcoming Events**

March 9-13-ECU Spring Break

April 16-President's Excellence Awards

April 23-Giving Day

May 7-8-Commencement at Alumni Coliseum

One Eastern,



Dr. David T. McFaddin

President

### **REPORT FROM THE PROVOST: Sara Zeigler**

**Essential Education:** The Board of Regents approved the Essential Education proposal, which I will fully implement in Fall 2026. The Pathways and Essential Skills efforts are underway, with leadership from Dr. Alison Buck, Dr. Matt Winslow, and Dr. Rusty Carpenter. I will share information on further professional development opportunities as well as advisor support in the coming weeks.

**Hummel Planetarium:** The Board of Regents, after reviewing comparative cost information, voted to surplus the Planetarium. This work will begin shortly. I will lead an exploration of other immersive academic opportunities and will seek collaboration from faculty colleagues. Dr. Jessica Crist and Prof. Lynnette Noblitt are working with me on the effort to secure a high-quality system that will be useful for multiple disciplines.

### **Legislative Session:**

The faculty legislative update committee meets weekly with Amy Scarborough and Jordan Smith. Members have received questions regarding how to engage as citizens. If you choose to do so, please abide by the following: • Use only personal emails, phones, and/or social media accounts.

- State that you are acting as a private citizen (as many accounts list your employment)
- Address public officials with relentless civility
- Consider phone calls instead of emails
- Be clear and succinct
- Reach out to your own representatives and identify yourself as a constituent
- Review and comply with the Institutional Viewpoint Neutrality Policy

[https://files.eku.edu/UniversityCounsel/Volume1\\_Governance/Chapter-5-Governance/1.5.7pol\\_institutional\\_viewpoint\\_neutrality\\_policy.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*1l3cq4v\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTc3NzgyNTgyOC4xNzY3ODk3\\_NTM5](https://files.eku.edu/UniversityCounsel/Volume1_Governance/Chapter-5-Governance/1.5.7pol_institutional_viewpoint_neutrality_policy.pdf?_gl=1*1l3cq4v*_gcl_au*MTc3NzgyNTgyOC4xNzY3ODk3_NTM5)

### **EKU Mock Trial (CLASS):**

The ECU Mock Trial Team won first place at the Colonel Classic Invitational held at the Fayette County Courthouses January 17 and 18. There were 31 teams from across the country competing. Lessie Clemmons (Berea, KY) won an outstanding attorney award. Kira Kent (Edgewood, KY) and Abby Daniel (Olive Hill, KY) won outstanding witness awards.

The ECU Mock Trial Team won first place at the Mid-Mo Invitational held at the University of Missouri Law School January 31 and February 1. There were 23 teams from across the Midwest competing. Lessie Clemmons (Berea, KY) won an outstanding attorney award. Sam Montoya (Manchester, KY) and Abby Daniel (Olive Hill, KY) won outstanding witness awards.

For the February 21 tournament, the Mock Trial “A” team finished first out of 28 teams in Knoxville and earned a bid to AMTA Opening Round Championships (first level of nationals)! It’s the third straight tournament win, which is a first for the program.

In addition to Profs. Noblitt and Parker, the mock trial team is coached by ECU alumna Ally Sipes (2012, POL, HON) who led the team to similar feats as a fierce competitor.

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### **Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning:**

*Spring 2026 Competency-Based Education Series*

Session III: Establishing the Frameworks of Competency-Based Education (CBE)

Date: March 25, 2026

Time: 11:30am-12:30pm

Location: Zoom Only

Registration

This session dives into the structural blueprints of Competency-Based Education (CBE), examining the various models that guide program

design. Participants will navigate the complexities of planning and designing CBE courses. Participants will gain the practical tools necessary to build CBE courses.

#### Session IV: Models & Examples of Competency-Based Education (CBE)

Date: April 1, 2026

Time: 11:30am-12:30pm

Location: Zoom Only

#### Registration

This session brings Competency-Based Education (CBE) to life by showcasing successful real-world applications and program models from across the higher education landscape. Participants will analyze specific case studies to see how theoretical frameworks translate into functional, high-impact learning environments for students. By examining these tangible examples, participants will gain inspiration and practical insights to help visualize how CBE can be authentically integrated into their own disciplines at ECU.

#### *2026 Faculty Writer's Retreat Applications Open (through April 10)*

The Office of the Provost, the College of Business, ECU Libraries, and the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity have partnered to offer an ECU Faculty Writer's Retreat, May 18, 19, and 20, 2026.

- Think of this retreat as an “academic incarceration”! We provide you with a private space – away from the distractions of your office – to focus only on your writing.
- For three days, this “academic incarceration” will provide private space to focus on your writing project, grant application, or the finishing touches of your latest draft. In return, you agree to write – and leave the grading, email, meetings, and social media at home, or in your office.
- Arriving at the retreat with very specific writing tasks, whether conceptualizing and drafting a new manuscript or completing final revisions to a long-standing work, will allow you to maximize this opportunity.
- All instructional faculty are welcome to apply – preference will be given to faculty preparing for a major review and to new faculty establishing a writing program.
  - Apply for the 2026 Faculty Writer's Retreat

#### *Spring 2026 Student Commencement Speaker Applications Due*

The application for spring 2026 student commencement speakers is now available!

- Please share the link and information with students in your colleges and departments.
- The deadline is March 5, 2026.

- Please encourage excellent candidates to apply [here](#)!

## **REPORT FROM FACULTY REGENT: Lynnette Noblitt**

### Financial Status

After a few months of delay, the university audit is finally complete. The auditor noted no significant deficiency or material weaknesses in our accounting practices and made no material adjustments to the fiscal year report ending June 2025.

Jackie Dudley, Interim CFO who began her service with ECU last month, presented her reflections on second quarter campus financials. She noted a positive trend for unrestricted net assets and cash gain up over the previous fiscal year. The institution has realized 53% of expected revenues and only thus far spent 49% of expected expenditures. Ms. Dudley notes that this is an ideal position to be at the halfway point of the fiscal year, especially considering upcoming health care costs.

Ms. Dudley will be working with the Board Finance and Administration Committee, of which I am a member, to build the budget for the next academic year. She warned the Board that any raise to tuition for the upcoming academic year will be limited to \$210/student and that the next academic budget will be largely dependent upon state appropriations (HB500). She suggests that financial goals for the institution next year include improving cash and liquid assets, as well as increasing unrestricted net assets. I look forward to working with Ms. Dudley, who has decades of experience in higher education finance. I will continue to update campus as new information becomes available.

### Academic Affairs

The provost updated the Board on Competency-Based Education and Credit for Prior Learning initiatives. Details of these initiatives can be found in the Board Agenda materials and were approved under the consent agenda.

Board Chair Mike Eaves asked for the proposal for changes to General/Essential Education be removed from the consent agenda and it was debated separately. I have been quite vocal about my concerns that this proposal did not follow established curriculum processes and represents the administration interfering with faculty shared governance. I shared my concerns with Chair Eaves at length and summarized common faculty concerns to other members of the Board. I am grateful to Chair Eaves for giving the situation significant thought and consideration. The Board passed the proposal with minimal debate, citing the desire to allow students greater flexibility to pursue minors and a belief that ECU will lead higher education with such a program.

Ultimately, I am left concerned that the faculty will face further encroachment on shared governance soon. I urge this body to remain alert and stalwart in protecting the

appropriate role of faculty, particularly related to issues of curriculum and academic quality/rigor in the upcoming years.

### Construction & Master Plan Updates

Facilities and infrastructure dominated the agenda this quarter. Bryan Makonnen, Chief Campus Operations Officer, summarized a variety of construction updates. Detailed timelines for are found in the meeting materials. Colleen Chaney, Chief of Staff, presented options for the Planetarium. The structure has not been open to the public for five years and the external brick structure of the building is in critical condition. Empty buildings do not age well, and the planetarium is no exception. In addition to critical brick damage, the building also has significant water and mold damage. I concur with Regent Long that the decision on this structure should have been made much earlier.

I will be quite candid. I am a great supporter of learning spaces such as the planetarium. It serves a vital role in inspiring K-12 students, supporting college pedagogy, and educating the general public. It represents the Academy at its best. I attended shows at the Hummel Planetarium throughout my childhood and it doubtless inspired me to study science in college and engage in a lifelong wonder of the universe. I grieve its loss. I am, however, very excited about the Board and President's intent to pursue an immersive learning lab that will be in the Blackbox Theater. This technology can fulfill many, admittedly not all, functions of a planetarium and can provide immersive and interactive learning opportunities for a variety of disciplines and audiences. I will continue to work closely with the provost and other offices to make sure that faculty and student interests are represented during the RFP process. I encourage anyone interested in this technology to reach out and join our efforts.

The Board also reviewed the Campus Master Plan. I want to emphasize that there is no funding yet identified for any of the proposals on this plan. The plan is meant to guide future planning for the next five to ten years. There are several buildings that are recommended for destruction. This is not surprising. State buildings are designed to last approximately fifty years and then either must be heavily renovated or razed. Some of the buildings proposed for destruction have been replaced (i.e., Moore Science with the Science Building, multiple dorms). Furthermore, as our infrastructure ages and more of our enrollment moves online, it is reasonable to take down buildings and place greater resources into other infrastructure. The critical aspect of this plan will be to preserve and improve quality learning spaces for faculty and students. For instance, the preliminary (yet unfunded) proposals for renovation of the Combs and Wallace Buildings are excellent examples of this principle in practice.

### **FACULTY QUESTIONS:**

- None to report

### **GUEST SPEAKERS:**

- N/A

## NEW BUSINESS:

### 1. Policy Updates

- i. Office of University Counsel:
  - Summarized Update
- ii. For University Policy and Regulation Updates
  - Visit: <https://www.EKU.edu/In/University-Policies>

### 2. Nominations/Elections for Vacant Positions

- i. Budget Committee Member (1 vacancy)
  - Senator Settimi nominated and elected by acclamation.
- ii. Rules Committee Member (1 vacancy)
  - Senator Hill nominated and elected by acclamation.
- iii. Academic Quality Committee Member (1 vacancy)
  - Senator Fairchild nominated and elected by acclamation.

### 3. Faculty Senate Meeting Format for AY 2026-2027

- i. Vote: Move to early Friday meetings
  - Motion made by Senator Settimi
  - Seconded by Senator Stevenson
  - Outcome reported below.
- ii. Vote: Move to in-person meetings
- iii. Key Concerns Raised:
  - Scheduling Conflicts
    - a. **Model Laboratory School faculty:**
      - i. Teach on Fridays and cannot attend earlier meetings.
      - ii. Lack access to substitutes in some roles (e.g., speech-language services)
    - b. **STEM faculty:**
      - i. Labs often scheduled on Fridays due to block scheduling.
    - c. **Part-time faculty:**
      - i. External employment may prevent Friday attendance.

- Representation Concerns
  - a. Senators Diekmann and McGuffin emphasized:
    - i. Risk of disenfranchising specific faculty groups
    - ii. Need to preserve diverse representation.
- Support for Change
  - a. Senator Howell noted:
    - i. Earlier meetings may improve administrative participation.
- Data Consideration
  - a. Preliminary scheduling data suggested:
    - i. Fewer courses scheduled on Fridays overall.
    - ii. However, conflicts remain significant for specific groups.
- Outcome:
  - a. Motion to table the vote pending further data collection and analysis.
    - i. Motion: Senator McGuffin
    - ii. Second: Segro

#### 4. Comments & Questions from Faculty Senate and Faculty Body

##### i. Academic Impressions Survey/Evaluation

- Results have not yet been fully released.
- Administration is exploring ways to share summarized findings.
- Discussion revealed:
  - a. A recorded discussion (podcast-style) of results may exist.
  - b. It has not yet been publicly released.

##### ii. Automated advising emails

- Concerns raised regarding:
  - a. Lack of faculty awareness when emails are sent.
- Proposed improvements:
  - a. Advance notification to faculty/advisors

- b. Increased transparency in communication

5. Lunch and Learn

- i. Topics section and semester timing

- Planned following spring break.
- Focus: budget updates and institutional planning

6. Notes from February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Board of Regents Meeting

- i. Refer to Regent and Provost reports above.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Ongoing Elections

- a. Roster is currently being verified by the Elections and Nominations Committee

2. Policy Work

- a. University Policy: 1.1.1 still has an ongoing discussion in senate.

3. Discussion of HB 500 and HB 490

- a. AAUP: Implications for faculty governance and financial exigency

4. Student Progress Reports

- a. Possible resolution for the summer/fall term

5. Update to the Faculty Senate Bylaws

- a. Compiling all Bylaw changes for faculty review/approval by mid-April

6. Faculty Senate Roster and Composition

- a. Elections and Nominations:
  - Verify Roster & Identify Vacancies for April 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting.
  - Solicit Nominations for Elections for May 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

**REPORTS & QUESTIONS:**

- None to report

**STANDING COMMITTEES:**

- Executive Committee: Senator Brent

- Ongoing coordination with University Counsel regarding policy updates and revisions
- Planning for upcoming Faculty Senate meetings and agendas
- Continued work with administration on communication strategies (e.g., automated advising emails, survey results)
- Noted the importance of gathering faculty feedback prior to bringing items forward for action.
  
- Academic Quality: Co-Chairs, Senators Campbell & Yoder
  - Committee continues work on several ongoing initiatives, including:
    - Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic settings
    - Faculty workload considerations
    - Tuition policy impacts
    - Student progress reports and their effectiveness
  
- Budget: Chair, Senator Lauk & Vice Chair, Senator Liddell
  - Ongoing awareness of:
    - State budget developments (HB 500)
    - Potential institutional budget impacts
  - Committee expected to become more active as budget clarity improves.
  
- Elections and University Nominations: Co-Chairs, Senators MacDonald & Sizemore
  - Ongoing work includes:
    - Preparing for upcoming elections for AY 2026–2027
    - Identifying vacancies and alternates
  
- Information Technology: Chair, Senator Ginn
  - No formal report provided.
  - Committee continues to monitor:
    - Technology-related initiatives impacting faculty and instruction.
  
- Faculty Rights & Responsibilities: Chair, Senators Ginn & Nachtwey
  - Presented earlier in the meeting under policy work:
    - Focus on Policy 1.1.1 (Faculty Rights and Responsibilities)
  - Committee has:
    - Conducted extensive review of policy history and revisions.

- Developed proposed motions and recommendations for Senate consideration.
- Next steps include:
  - Gathering feedback from faculty units
  - Preparing for further discussion and potential action in upcoming meetings
- Rules: Co-Chairs, Senators Bishop-Ross & Stevenson
  - Majority of major work on bylaws revisions has been completed.
  - Remaining work includes:
    - Finalizing summaries of changes
    - Preparing materials for Senate review and approval
  - Two remaining meetings scheduled:
    - Mid-March and mid-April
- Faculty Welfare: Co-Chairs, Nachtwey & Bane
  - Ongoing discussions include:
    - Academic Impressions Survey results
    - Faculty concerns related to communication and transparency.
  - Noted that:
    - Additional information regarding survey results may be forthcoming.
  - Committee continues to gather and elevate faculty concerns to Senate leadership.

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

Senator Day moved to adjourn, seconded by Senator Settimi, at approximately 6:00 pm.