

FACULTY SENATE

21 May 2025

To: CWRU University Faculty

From: Janet W. McGrath, Ph.D.
Chair of the Faculty Senate 2024-2025

Re: **Faculty Senate Report Aug 2024-May 2025**

As per the Faculty Handbook, Article V, Section G the Chair of the Faculty Senate shall prepare and make available to all voting University faculty a report of the activities of the Senate. This report covers the 2024-2025 academic year.

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty Senate met monthly from September 2024 through May 2025. Meeting agendas and minutes are available on the Faculty Senate site:

<https://sites.google.com/case.edu/faculty-senate/2024-2025-faculty-senate>.

WELCOME TO THE SENATE!

The Faculty Senate hosted a session in August 2024 for new senators in response to discussions at the “Listening Tour” held in AY 2023-2024 at which some senators expressed interest in learning more their role and responsibilities as senators. This was followed by the full senate retreat at which all senators and standing committee chairs were introduced and plans for the year were discussed.

SPECIAL MEETINGS:

In addition to the regular monthly meetings, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FS ExCom) had additional meetings for specific purposes:

1. FS ExCom met with the Smith Consulting Group regarding the Master Plan “Refresh.” (Nov 2024)
2. In response to widespread faculty concerns about recent federal executive orders, the FS ExCom had a special meeting with President Kaler and Provost Ward to discuss the impact on the university, the university’s response, and strategic options. (Mar 2025)
3. FS ExCom met with the visiting committee of the Higher Learning Commission regarding Faculty Governance. (Apr 2025)
4. In addition, the FS Finance Committee presented its annual report on the university budget to all university faculty. (May 2025)

REPORTS TO EXCOM AND FULL SENATE:

Throughout the AY, the FS ExCom and Senate received reports and updates on important university matters from officials in relevant offices. These reports and updates are highly valued by the Senators and serve to build and maintain collaboration between the Faculty Senate and the University administration. See Table 1 for a list of the special reports for AY 24-25.

Table 1: Special reports to ExCom and/or the full Senate AY 24-25			
Topic	Presenter	Month	Audience
Overview of freedom of expression policy: procedures & operating rules	Peter Poulos, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Risk Management Officer, and Secretary of the Corporation	Sept 2024	ExCom
Update on effectiveness of student affairs office and new advising structure	Travis Apgar, Vice President, Student Affairs	Oct 2024	ExCom
Update on accreditation process	Donald Feke, Senior Vice Provost, Academic and Faculty Affairs	Oct 2024	ExCom
Open access initiatives	Yolanda Cooper, Vice Provost and Lindseth Family University Library	Oct 2024	ExCom/Faculty Senate
Health Care Open Enrollment Update	Maria Smith, Benefits Director, HR	Oct 2024	Faculty Senate
Update on Campus Master Plan Refresh	Dean Tufts, Vice President for Campus Planning and Facilities Management	Nov 2024	ExCom/Faculty Senate
Report on CAMPUS (Campus Accountability and Modernization to Protect University Students) act	Robert Solomon, Vice President for Campus Enrichment and Engagement Travis Apgar, Vice President, Student Affairs	Nov 2024	ExCom
Report from the Conciliation Counselor	Sandra Russ, Conciliation Counselor	Jan 2025	ExCom
Student conduct update - CONFIDENTIAL	Peter Poulos, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Risk Management Officer, and Secretary of the Corporation	Jan 2025	ExCom
Summary of undergraduate enrollment update	Richard Bischoff, Vice President, Enrollment Management	Feb 2025	Faculty Senate
AI Task Force update	Jeffrey Capadona, Vice Provost, Innovation	Mar 2025	Faculty Senate
Enterprise risk management	Boyd Kuhmer, Chief Audit and Risk Officer	Apr 2025	Faculty Senate
Proposed new staff furlough policy Revised staff reorganization policy	Carolyn Gregory, Vice President, Human Resources	Apr 2025	ExCom
Hiring Frameworks for Faculty, Staff, Postdocs, and Students	Carolyn Gregory, Vice President, Human Resources Lee Thompson, Deputy Provost, Academic Strategic Initiatives Joy Ward, Provost and Executive Vice President	May 2025	Faculty Senate

FACULTY CLIMATE SURVEY:

Faculty Senate Standing Committees were asked to review the Faculty Climate Survey, completed in Spring 2024, and request additional analyses from the Office of Institutional Research as appropriate to serve their committee's charge. Committees were then encouraged to employ the survey results to shape their agendas.

HONORARY DEGREES:

Provost Ward presented a slate of nominees for honorary degrees that were approved by FS ExCom in Nov 2024.

FACULTY GOVERNANCE:

The Faculty Senate is the body empowered by the Board of Trustees to house faculty governance processes. Items related to faculty rights and responsibilities that were addressed by the Senate in AY 24-25 include:

- Bifurcated process for faculty disciplinary cases: The ExCom renewed the *Ad Hoc Committee to Implement Complaint Process Review Task Force Decisions Adopted by the Faculty Senate*, established in 2023-2024 to develop training for implementation of the bifurcated process for faculty disciplinary cases. The bifurcated process was developed and adopted in 2023-2024 to streamline disciplinary cases that involve both Title IX complaints and complaints falling under the auspices of the Faculty Handbook. (Sept 2024)
- Extraordinary circumstances vs. Financial Exigency: The FS ExCom entertained a discussion regarding the whether there is a need for the Senate to proactively establish a shared governance structure to address extraordinary financial circumstances falling short of exigency so as to define processes for consultation and decision-making during financially precarious periods. The goal would be to protect tenure and shared governance. Given the diverse viewpoints on the matter, it was proposed that an ad hoc committee be formed to study the issue and develop proposals for faculty governance in extraordinary financial circumstances. (Apr 2024)

PROMOTION AND TENURE:

The powers and obligations of the Faculty Senate include making recommendations regarding policies governing promotion and tenure. During AY 24-25 the Senate approved these two motions related to promotion and tenure:

- Inclusion of Deans on Promotion and Tenure Committees: The FS ExCom voted to approve a motion proposed by the FS Personnel Committee that prohibits deans, including non-academic deans, from serving on or participating in Promotion and Tenure (P and T) committees. This aligns with other Senate policies that prohibit deans from specific participation in faculty governance and ensures independent P and T assessments from the deans and the constituent faculty P and T committees. Constituent faculties were requested to review their by-laws to align them with this policy, if applicable. The Case School of Engineering requested an exception to permit an administrative dean to assist in P and T reviews. After further consideration by the Faculty Personnel Committee and FS ExCom, this request was denied. The final language for the Faculty Handbook is pending. (Sept 2024-May 2025)
- Tenure salary guarantee and the meaning of tenure at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center: The Faculty Senate endorsed the recommendations put forth by a small working group to ensure that faculty at the VA who also hold tenure in a basic science dept at CWRU SOM have the same rights and responsibilities and protections as tenured faculty with primary appointments at the SOM. This completes consideration of the FS work to clarify tenure-related salary protections for faculty based at affiliate hospitals. The recommendations were developed in collaboration with the Office of General Council, the Provost, the Dean of the SOM, and faculty from the VA. (Apr 2025)

FACULTY SENATE REVIEW OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION PROCEDURES AND OPERATING RULES:

The FS ExCom established a subcommittee of the FS Personnel Committee charged to review the “*Freedom of Expression Policy: Procedures and Operating Rules*” established in summer 2024. This was undertaken to ensure full Faculty Senate review of the policy as it impacts faculty. The subcommittee consisted of faculty from across the University and reported to the FS Personnel Committee. The subcommittee began its work in Oct 2024. The subcommittee reported its recommendations to FS ExCom at multiple meetings and submitted their report to the Personnel Committee in Jan 2025. The subcommittee report recommends realignment of the procedures with the goal of maintaining safety, academic freedom, and freedom of expression. The recommendations were discussed across multiple meetings and were approved by the Senate in Mar 2025 for transmission to the administration for

consideration.

PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING, MERGING AND SPLITTING DEPARTMENTS:

FS ExCom created a subcommittee of ExCom charged with developing a process for Faculty Senate review of proposals to create, split, merge, or rename departments (Jan 2025). The subcommittee undertook to first focus on developing a process for Faculty Senate review of proposals to create new departments. The subcommittee membership represented all constituent faculties that are currently organized into departments. The subcommittee reviewed existing practices from two units (CAS and SOM) that have documented practices for new departments. The subcommittee presented a proposed process to FS ExCom in March 2025 and following revisions recommended by the FS ExCom, the proposed process was approved by the FS ExCom in Apr 2025 for review by the Senate. Following discussion and further amendment, the procedures for establishing new departments was approved by the Senate in Apr 2025.

The procedures were then relayed to the FS By-laws Committee that incorporated the procedures into Ch. 3 of the Faculty Handbook. Language pointing to these procedures is proposed for Ch. 2. Revisions to Ch 2 require a vote of the University Faculty. Therefore, the Ch. 2 language is pending completion of the voting process at the end of May 2025.

CURRICULUM, TEACHING, AND ADVISING:

A core function of the Faculty Senate is to review and approve changes in curriculum, policies that impact on faculty teaching, and faculty roles in advising students.

- Curricular actions include reviewing proposals for new programs/degrees, termination of programs/degrees, and changes to current programs. Program/degree changes are brought to the Senate from the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) or the Faculty Senate Graduate Committee. The proposals acted on in AY 24-25 are summarized in Table 2.
- Change in policy on transfer credit during transition to new GER: FSCUE presented a motion to increase flexibility for transfer students in meeting the UGER breadth requirements. The proposal eliminates the requirement that students may take a maximum of 15 credit hours of breadth from outside CWRU. FSCUE's recommendation waives this requirement for transfer students, allowing them to fulfill the breadth requirements with courses taken at their previous institutions, provided these courses are approved for transfer. This waiver does not apply to AP credits or courses taken after matriculation at CWRU. (Oct 2024)
- Class grid: FSCUE proposed a change in course and lab scheduling, designed to better accommodate both laboratory time slots and improve room utilization. The new course grid was approved in Feb 2025.
- Written Course Requirements FSCUE presented a motion to require faculty to provide written course requirements to students by the end of the first week of class each academic term. This proposal emerged from FSCUE discussions regarding expectations of Higher Learning Commission and was also reviewed and approved by the FS Graduate Committee. The nature of the requirement was discussed extensively by the FS ExCom and the Senate across several months (Nov 2024 – Feb 2025). The new policy allows individual schools or departments to have additional requirements if appropriate, but preserves academic freedom, faculty autonomy and independence, and disciplinary flexibility. The motion was approved in Feb 2025.
- Advising: Two items related to faculty advising were addressed.
 - FSCUE presented a motion to eliminate the practice of retaining pre-major advisers as "designated advisers" after a student declares a major. This change is in response to faculty concerns with ballooning advising lists which includes many students that are no longer primary advisees. Students may retain their pre-major advisor as a designated adviser by submitting a simple request form. This change was approved in March 2025.
 - The FS Personnel Committee presented concerns related to the recently established undergraduate advising structure, specifically related to clarity regarding responsibilities and roles for different advisers and broader concerns regarding expectations for advisers. The Personnel

Committee urged that there be initial evaluation of non-statistical data relevant to the new advising program and requested that the FSCUE take this into consideration under the auspices of their newly established subcommittee on advising. FS ExCom supported this request and referred the matter to FSCUE. (Apr 2025)

- Graduate advising: The FS Graduate Committee and the School of Graduate Studies presented a motion to revise how dissertation committees are structured and operate. Concern were raised over the impact of the proposal on graduate programs. FS ExCom rejected. (May 2025)
- Academic Calendar: The five-year academic calendar was approved in Jan 2025.

Table 2: Curricular actions AY 24-25			
Program/degree name	Action	Month	Vote
ESN-MIN : Sustainable Engineering Minor	New degree	Sept 2024	Unanimously approved
D-CRM-MCRM/PAT-MA: Compliance and Risk Management and MCRM/Patent Practice, MA (dual degree)	New degree	Sept 2024	Unanimously approved
Health Care Management Minor	New degree	Oct 2024	34 votes in favor, 2 opposed
Business Information Technology Minor	New degree	Oct 2024	Unanimously approved
MS-Social Work Curriculum Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name change “Weekend Intensive Program” to “Weekend Program” • Name change: “Direct Practice” plan to “Integrated Health and Wellness” plan. • Addition of one credit “Integrative Seminar to the Integrated Health and Wellness curriculum. 	Changes to current program	Nov 2024	34 votes in favor, 1 opposed
Art Education MA and BS programs in the College of Arts and Sciences	Inactivation of program	Nov 2024	31 members voted in favor, 1 opposed
Law School Grading Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update grading system for its Foreign Graduate Studies (FGS) programs, specifically the Master of Laws (LLM) and Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD) degrees 	Changes to current program	Nov 2024	29 votes in favor, 8 opposed
BA in Humanity and Technology	New program	Jan 2025	39 votes in favor, 6 opposed
MS in Computational Genomic Medicine	New program	Jan 2025	43 votes in favor, 2 opposed
FIN-MFIN-C: Master of Finance (China)	Inactivation of program	Feb 2025	Unanimously approved
Name Change From MS Pathology To MS Molecular And Cellular Biology Of Disease	Changes to current program	Feb 2025	Unanimously approved
DTS-MIN: Data Science Minor	New program	Apr 2025	33 members voted in favor, 1 opposed
EVB-BA: Evolutionary Biology BA EVB-MIN: Evolutionary Biology Minor	Inactivation of program	Apr 2025	33 members voted in favor, 1 opposed
WLT-MA: World Literature MA	Inactivation of program	Apr 2025	33 members voted in favor, 1 opposed
Name change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Humanities and Civic Engagement to Publicly Engaged Humanities, Graduate Certificate 	Changes to current program	May 2025	Unanimously approved
Name change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Organization Development and Change, MS to Leadership and Organizational Change, MS” 	Changes to current program	May 2025	Unanimously approved

FACULTY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

- Faculty Vacation Policy: The FS ExCom requested that the Faculty Personnel Committee review apparent inconsistencies and lack of clarity in faculty vacation policies, specifically as regards faculty with 12-month contracts. It has been observed that there are inconsistencies in appointment letters and hiring practices across units. In Feb 2025, the FS ExCom referred the issue, along with the information gathered by the FPC, to the Faculty Compensation Committee for further review. The Faculty Compensation Committee reviewed the matter and recommended that each Dean be required to establish a clear vacation policy and communicate it explicitly to faculty. (May 2025)
- Women Faculty Proposal on Paid Parental Leave: The FS Women Faculty Committee proposed revisions to the university's faculty parental leave policy to:
 - Address concerns arising from situations where faculty pairs both are entitled to parental leave by eliminating the current distinction between primary/secondary caregivers and permit faculty pairs to divide 19 weeks of paid parental leave however they choose, provided no individual takes more than 16 weeks. This mirrors existing staff policy, which allows flexible sharing for new parents.
 - Remove the requirement for dean approval to take parental leave taken across semesters. Currently, faculty may take leave any time within a year of the child's arrival, but leave spanning semesters requires special approval, making the policy less accessible for faculty whose children arrive outside standard academic term start dates.FS ExCom voted to send the proposal to the FS Compensation and Personnel Committees after receiving input from the Senate. (May 2025)
- 2011 School of Medicine Salary Item
Professor Maureen McEnery (SOM) brought forward unfinished business regarding the School of Medicine Compensation Plan, which was discussed by the Senate in 2011 and 2012 but never resolved. The FS Compensation Committee did not make recommendations at the time, pending further development of the plan. FS ExCom voted to formally refer this item back to the Compensation Committee to complete FS review of the plan. (Apr 2025)
- Compensation Committee annual report:
The FS Compensation Committee (FSCC) reports directly to the Board of Trustees, as per the Faculty Senate Bylaws. The FSCC reported to the Senate three times during the AY 24-25 (Dec 2024, Feb 2025, May 2025).

In May, Committee Chair Stacy McGaugh presented an updated analysis of faculty salaries compared to Association of American Universities (AAU) medians, expanding on data previously shared in December. The data compared salaries by school and rank—assistant, associate, and full professors—and tracked progress from 2022 to 2024. Only tenure track/tenured faculty are included.

The data show positive progress, with approximately 40% of faculty now within 10% of the AAU median, especially at junior ranks. Historical data over the past decade shows that assistant professors are now close to or at cost-of-living-adjusted AAU medians in most schools, demonstrating important support for new and younger faculty. However, another 40% of faculty remain 10–20% below AAU medians, primarily at the senior ranks. The most underpaid group is full professors in the College of Arts and Sciences, who are about 25% below AAU medians—representing the largest single data group at 20% of the total faculty included in the analysis. The report notes that the gap in aggregate faculty compensation is approximately \$16 million annually. In recognition of current budget challenges, the Committee urges development of a long-term plan to resolve the disparity. For example, the Committee recommends considering moving from across-the-board increases to targeted salary increases focused on areas with the largest disparities. The Senate approved the motion to send this report to the President and the Board of Trustees. (May 2025)

BY-LAWS REVISION:

The Faculty Senate plays a key role in ensuring that the Faculty Senate by-laws are up to date. The Faculty Senate By-laws Committee also reviews proposed changes to the by-laws for each constituent faculty for alignment with the FS By-laws. By-laws actions in AY 24-25 include:

- Revisions to school by-laws from:
 - MSASS
 - SON
 - SOM
- Updates to Faculty Handbook language related to the University libraries.
the FS Committee on University Libraries (FSCUL) proposed numerous changes to update the Faculty Handbook as relates to the University Libraries. Due to concern with potential overlap with the FS Committee on Information and Communication Technology (FSCICT) with regards to some components of the proposed language, the FS ExCom voted to send the proposed changes to FSCUL and FSCICT for joint review and coordination. (Apr 2025)
- Amendment Requiring Faculty Senate Vote for Chapter 3 Changes
Following extensive review and discussion regarding the structures of Chapters 2 and 3 of the Faculty Handbook, the By-laws Committee proposed a change in the process for approving changes/additions to Ch. 3. The current process requires that Ch. 3 can be amended “following review by the Faculty Senate, recommendation by the president, and approval by the Board of Trustees.” The proposal changes this to “following a majority vote by the Faculty Senate, recommendation by the president, and approval by the Board of Trustees.” This brings Ch. 3 into alignment with both Ch. 2 and current practice and ensures a higher level of FS input. The motion was approved and forwarded to the President’s office. Currently pending review by the Office of General Counsel. (Jan 2025- Apr 2025)
- Amendment to Faculty Handbook on Dean’s Participation in P&T Committee
Language to incorporate the new policy disallowing deans on P and T committees was returned to the By-laws Committee to clarify that no one with the title of dean (regardless of the level or scope of their appointment) should be in attendance in the P and T meetings. This is pending. (May 2025)
- Revised charge of the Faculty Senate Research Committee
The change involves a minor clarification: expanding the definition of "research" within the committee’s charge to explicitly include "scholarship and scholarly activity." (Apr 2025)

POSTDOCTORAL MATTERS:

Postdoctoral fellows/scholars are currently included in the charge of the FS Committee on Graduate Studies. With the reorganization of the postdoctoral affairs office, now placed in the provost’s office, the Committee on Graduate Studies undertook to consider their charge as regards their role in oversight of postdoctoral matters.

The Committee on Graduate Studies voted to recommend the deletion of the sentence in their charge granting them oversight of postdoctoral scholars and fellows. FS ExCom members decided to keep the matter under review and revisit the Senate’s committee structure to ensure proper representation and support for postdocs going forward. No motion was made. (Apr 2025)

Postdoctoral Health Insurance Policy: The FS adopted a policy in April 2024 requiring payment of health insurance coverage for families of postdoctoral fellows/scholars. Faculty senators from the School of Medicine requested that the Senate reconsider the policy due to concerns regarding the cost of this practice. The FS ExCom voted to send the issue back to the Graduate Studies Committee for review. (Feb 2025)

After their reconsideration, the Committee on Graduate Studies did not to recommend any changes to the current health insurance policy. (Apr 2025)

FACULTY RESEARCH SURVEY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Professor Valerie Boebel Toly, Chair of the Faculty Senate Research Committee, presented the preliminary findings from the 2024–2025 Faculty Senate Research Survey, which was open from Feb 7 to Mar 4, 2025. The survey received 640 responses (completed or partially completed), representing faculty across all schools and appointment types. Approximately 50% of respondents were non-tenure track faculty. The committee will conduct deeper analysis—especially of qualitative data and trends across schools and plan to present a more comprehensive report during AY 25-26.

Based on their preliminary analyses the Committee had these early recommendations:

- Improve advance communication and visibility of the survey (e.g., Case Daily).
- Investigate the near-equal demand for seed funding and release time.
- Address concerns around data storage infrastructure and related compliance needs.
- Explore reasons behind faculty perceptions of their research being undervalued and assess what forms of recognition or support may be missing.

RESOLUTION RE: ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

The Senate endorsed a resolution “*Resolution on Attacks on Democracy and American Universities*” introduced as new business at the May 2025 meeting. The resolution endorses a letter signed by more than 250 members of the University Faculty and reaffirms the Faculty Senate’s commitment to defending the principles of academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and due process. These principles are foundational to the mission of Case Western Reserve University and essential to the continued pursuit of research, teaching, and inclusive community engagement. This action reflects the Senate’s concern regarding recent national rhetoric and actions that threaten the core values of higher education and democratic governance and pledges to work with the President, Provost, and Board of Trustees to “energetically defend the principles of freedom of expression, freedom of association, due process of law, and academic freedom, all to advance the missions of research and education of Case Western Reserve University.” The resolution was approved 31 in favor, 0 opposed.

FINAL REPORT FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROTECTION POLICY:

Professor Ben Helton, Chair of the ad hoc Committee on University Media and Social Media Protection Policy, delivered the committee’s final report. The Ad Hoc Committee was established in AY 22-23 and completed its work in AY 24-25. Prof. Helton noted the complexity of the committee’s charge, made more difficult by constantly evolving technologies, terminology, and political dynamics. The committee’s report focused on two main charges: developing faculty and student perspectives on university social media policies and considering how universities can respond to incidents involving harassment or reputational harm while upholding free expression. The ExCom accepted the report and thanked the committee for its work. (Apr 2025)