

MINUTES OF THE UNLV FACULTY SENATE

Date: 03/10/2026

Location: Student Union Room 208 B & C and via Zoom

Senators Present: Cheryl Abbate, Rabea Alhosh, Djeto Assane, Bobbie Barnes, Wolfgang Bein, Amanda Belarmino, Satish Bhatnagar, Tirth Bhatta, Sheila Bock, Monica Brown, Dan Bubb, Tim Bungum, Jaime Carbajal, Donovan Conley, Honghui Deng, Zhonghai Ding, Marni Dow, Nancy Esposito, Jorge Fonseca Cacho, Paul Forster, Kerie Francis, Gina Gamble, Patrick Griffis, Neamat Hassan, Jason Hortin, Yvonne Houy, Jill Humphrey, Alethea Inns, Margarita Jara, Lori Johnson, Tracy Johnson, Barry Kamen, Julian Kilker, Necole Leland, Scott Loe, Gilberto Murillo, Susanna Newbury, Michael Nussbaum, Rafael Oganessian, Neil Opfer, Daniel Proga, Paysha Rhone, Bill Robinson, An-Pyng Sun, Alex Talonov, Nicole Thomas, Craig Topple, Sue Wainscott, Dana Moran Williams, Monica Williams, Minnie Wood, Hassan Ziada

Senator Proxies: Sheila Bock for Kaitlin Clinnin; Marni Dow for Jordan Fischette; Patrick Griffis for Samantha Godbey; Dustin Davis for Keoni Kins; Bill Leavitt for Mahzarine Irani Rohani; Minnie Wood for Jennifer Pfannes; Alethea Inns for Jesse Taylor

Senators Absent: Patience Crowder, Isabel Herrera Pedro, Taro Ito, Tracy Spies

Executive Committee Leadership Present: Michael Kagan

Ex-Officio Present: Lorena Giese, Nic Irwin, Kate Korgan, Devin Lopez, Kelechi Odunze

Meeting called to order by Vice Chair Kagan at 12:05 p.m.

I. Public Comment

- Senator Bubb read the following statement on behalf of Sue Wainscott, Nevada Faculty Alliance (NFA) President: NFA has an update on the February 24th PEBP board meeting. Following an avalanche of online public comments from UNLV, NSHE, and other state employees, and several day-of-meeting comments from unions and other employee representatives, the PEBP Board suspended any decisions on premiums and rates for 2027 until the March 19th meeting, because they "do not have accurate numbers". This means we must wait until the PEBP Board publishes their agenda with any new numbers to know what PEBP is proposing to do to address a perceived fiscal crisis. We got this pause because Kent Ervin, NFA, uncovered and informed PEBP of an accounting discrepancy of \$200+ million or 16.4% of the total budget from the Legislative budget closing and PEBP's own reports in 2025, and your comments and viewership of the live meeting feed got everyone's attention. Many thanks to the Faculty Senate for quickly getting the word out!

At the February 24th PEBP Board meeting, the Chair of PEBP suggested that 4%-6% of that "missing" money had been found to be delinquent or non-payments from state agencies into PEBP for the past 18 months (which is around \$45 - \$60 Million). The Chair also said the other discrepancies are "under investigation." Which means: PEBP did not know or did not share what budget it is using to prepare proposals for their March meeting. NFA's best guess is that state employees can expect an overall premium increase of about 30%, spread across the plans (we do not know specifically how much for each plan option) and a three year catch-up proposal that will allow us all to urge the Governor and Nevada Legislature to increase employer funding to PEBP during the 84th session in spring 2027.

NFA continues to follow this closely. Future actions that we can collectively take to protect the affordability and quality of our healthcare will be based on the proposals we find in the PEBP's posted agenda for the March 19th meeting. NFA will email those to our membership, post them on our website, and share with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

II. Minutes of the February 10, 2026 Meeting

Motion to Approve: Senator Opfer; Second: Senator Rhone

Verbal Approval with no changes

III. Enrollment Data

Provost Korgan and Ms. Barb Roberts, Acting Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs, provided the following information on enrollment numbers.

- The information being presented is transparent and publicly available. Please connect with the Provost Office if you need additional information on any data presented today.
- While many peer institutions are currently struggling with declining enrollment numbers, UNLV remains in a strong position. Total enrollment has increased over the last three years (each year increase below):
 - 2023 = 432 students
 - 2024 = 1,812 students
 - 2025 = 797 students
- Concurrent enrollment/dual enrollment (CE/DE) has also increased. By percentage it looks like a much larger increase, but based on total enrollment, it is not. In fact, we are not as CE/DE heavy as other NSHE institutions. From the Chancellor's presentation to the Nevada Legislature, UNLV accounts for nearly 30% of the system's total enrollment (115,797 students across NSHE) and our total CE/DE enrollment makes up less than 12% of the total CE/DE enrollment across the system. In closer examination, the largest increase has been by far and disproportionately by UNR. They have now surpassed College of Southern Nevada in CE/DE enrollment.
- Enrollment by age shows that the largest percentage of our students are in the "traditional" college attending ages. This presents opportunities for us to continue growth in the outlying pockets of students.
- UNLV leads full-time enrollment across NSHE institutions. As our first time full-time cohort grows, we have also been able to maintain and slightly increase retention year over year, which is another important factor in the growth of our undergraduate enrollment. Retention is the new recruitment. By keeping students beyond year one, we are also maintaining our overall undergraduate retention. As full-time enrollment grows, so does our number of degree conferrals and graduation rates. Our four-year graduation rate is not ideal but headed in the right direction. The six-year Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System rounds up so we can officially report a 52% graduation rate. That is a 5% increase since Fall 2016 with 250 more students in the cohort.

Questions/Comments:

- Senator Houy: (1) From the data, it looks like undergraduate numbers are remaining steady at 25,000. Based on your understanding, is that likely to continue? (2) My second question is about dual enrollment. What are the pros and cons of increasing or keeping consistent with dual enrollment?
 - (1) If you look at numbers, we have had a significant jump. We must make sure we have infrastructure that supports our growth. More than 3% is not sustainable, especially if we hold our retention rates. Our support staff from Registrar and Financial Aid to Counseling Services, keep our retention high. We also need to keep up on faculty staffing so that we can offer enough sections to accommodate student demand. We are working with Jake Thompson, Registrar, and others to be more strategic in scheduling.
 - (2) There are institutions that treat dual enrollment as recruitment. While it is good to offer to students so that they gain confidence that they can complete college-level work, the cons are that with the capped charges established by NSHE it is a challenge for the institution to keep up with limited funding. That is why we have been conservative compared to UNR.
- Senator Nussbaum: The percent of full-time versus part-time data includes both graduate and undergraduate students. What are the specific numbers for graduate students?
 - Ms. Roberts: I don't have that data in front of me, but I can get it.
 - Provost Korgan: It is more complicated because Graduate Assistants take less classes.
- Senator Deng: Do you have data on international student enrollment? I believe our four- and six-year graduation rates are too low.
 - Ms. Roberts: I agree with you on the graduation rates. It is up to all of us to support degree completion. Due to Federal level decisions, we have had a lot of roadblocks with international students that have impacted enrollment. I am anticipating continued short-term reductions.
- Senator Robinson: High school students are paying \$75 to \$100, while typical students are paying \$800. On top of that, the Regents have groups of students they have determined don't have to pay tuition. We are getting more students that we need to serve without sufficient funding. There is also an issue that as students take more general education credits in high school, there will be reduced need in some colleges. We know that we have had enrollment challenges in Liberal Arts with students taking English in high school and at the Hospitality College due to international recruitment. What is being done at colleges that have reduced enrollment?
 - Ms. Roberts: It is not just student tuition that we look at. Because our enrollment has grown, we have seen a different dollar amount coming to campus. There needs to be a longer view than semester by semester. No individual high school is offering 60-credits except for Nevada State High School and College of Southern Nevada High School. Our policy states that you can only bring in 24-credits as a non-degree student.

IV. Faculty in Residence

Provost Korgan provided information on possible contract and name change for Faculty in Residence.

- Following a recommendation from the FIR working group and the Faculty Senate, we have been discussing the possibility of three-year contracts. However, because the entire system currently operates on rolling one-year contracts, moving FIRs to a three-year model would create a one-off classification, leading to equity and administrative issues. To address this in the interim, we agreed to issue formal promotion letters instead. The letters state, "Subject to the terms of your existing employment contract, and pending available funding and sustained strong performance reviews, we look forward to your continued engagement as a faculty member over the next three years. We expect that your mid-promotion review will take place at that time. We are hopeful that you will apply for another promotion to {{Future Title}} in the future. For additional information, please reference the promotion guidelines in the UNLV Bylaws, Chapter III, Section 16. Kudos and congratulations on this accomplishment, and please accept my sincere best wishes for your continued success. I very much appreciate all that you have done and will continue to do for UNLV and our students for many years to come."
- The NSHE code does provide for three-year contracts (5.4.2), and we can continue to have these discussions if requested by the Faculty Senate.
- No one likes the name, "Faculty in Residence", so we would be open to a better name for this classification of important employees.

Questions/Comments:

- Senator Fonseca Cacho: We approved a Sense of the Senate for three-year contracts for FIRs in October 2025. What has changed between October and now?
- Dr. Davis: I am in my second year as a FIR, so I don't have the experience on career longevity. Do you believe that the letter language will support long-term retention?
 - Provost Korgan: That is a great question, and we can look at retention rates in three to four years. President Heavey has stated on many occasions that there is no model that we would term the FIR group even during an economic crisis. It matters a lot that FIRs feel valued, included, and secured.
- Senator Robinson: Yes, technically we have one-year contracts, but I would need to get two unsatisfactory evaluations in a row and then I would have a year after that to dispute. This is a right to work state. FIRs can be terminated without cause. If they have a three-year contract, they will have better job security. We have given three-year contracts to FIRs in the past.
 - Provost Korgan: I don't argue it. Individuals with tenure have a special contract. This change will not give FIRs tenure. In terms of notice periods, everyone except tenured faculty, have a variable notice period up to a year dependent on hire date. If we went to a three-year contract, it could still be broken, but the notice period would be three years.
- Senator Opfer: During the 2010 recession, we did not have the large number of FIRs that we have today. If there were cutbacks today, FIRs would lose jobs before tenured.

V. Action Item - Sense of the Senate Recommending change of "Faculty in Residence" Title

Vice Chair Kagan: There is a consensus that no one likes the title, "Faculty in Residence". The Executive Committee endorses a change of the name.

Motion to approve the statement using the following titles: Teaching Assistant Professor, Teaching Associate Professor, and Teaching Professor (please see approved Sense of the Senate below): Senator Opfer; Second: Senator Conley

Sense of the Senate Recommending Change of "Faculty in Residence" Title

Whereas, the title *Faculty in Residence* is currently used for full-time instructional faculty whose principal responsibilities center on teaching and student learning; and

Whereas, this title does not accurately communicate the teaching-centered and continuing nature of these appointments; and

Whereas, the title may generate misunderstanding among students, prospective faculty, and external audiences, particularly by suggesting a temporary or residential appointment rather than an ongoing instructional role;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate recommends that the University review and replace the title *Faculty in Residence* with *Teaching Assistant Professor*, *Teaching Associate Professor*, and *Teaching Professor* (depending on an individual faculty member's role) so that it may more accurately reflect the mission and continuing character of these positions.

Discussion:

- Senator Robinson: This would also require university bylaw changes.
- Senator Wood: We are deleting research and clinical from the Sense of the Senate now, but we are going to discuss it in the future, correct?
 - Vice Chair Kagan: Yes, clinical and research titles will be discussed at a future meeting.

Motion Approved (41-2-2)

VI. Chair's Report

Vice Chair Kagan provided the following updates.

- We need a Faculty Senate representative to serve on the Ombuds Board.
- This is the time to participate in shared governance. Please consider running for the Executive Committee. I want to make a particular pitch to individuals with tenure. To have tenure is a privilege, and it is important to give back to this institution, and this is a way to do that.
- I will discuss one topic from the Board of Regents meeting. There is a proposal from Great Basin College to support a 90-credit bachelor's degree equating to a three-year graduation. We made a public comment at the March Board of Regents meeting urging caution. This is a major fundamental change to what it means to have a college degree. It did not start in Nevada, although the people behind this clearly want Nevada to be an early adopter. It is a major foundational, definitional change of what it means to have a college degree in the United States. I am saying this as an update and flag. We will discuss in-depth at our next meeting.

Questions/Comments:

- Senator Newbury: I would like an update on how 90-credit degrees would impact accreditation.
 - Provost Korgan: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities is our standard and we are committed to aligning with their requirements.
 - Senator Newbury: We have a specialty accreditation for our art program. Would that apply as well?
 - Provost Korgan: Yes.

VII. New Business

- Senator Newbury: Discuss impact on 90-credit degrees and alignment/impact on accreditation standards.

VIII. Closed Meeting Vote

Vice Chair Kagan: I believe we should move to a closed meeting for our next agenda item on Faculty Essential Functions, so that we can have an open discussion. I am going to ask for unanimous consent. If anyone objects, we will go for a vote on whether or not to close the meeting. Are there any objections?

Objections expressed by Senator Nussbaum and Senator Opfer.

Call for vote on closed meetings.

Closed Meeting Approved (30-13-1)

IX. Faculty Essential Functions

At long last, we are addressing the Faculty Essential Functions document that was established by the Academic Council in May 2025 and currently in effect. We are opening the floor for discussion to determine if formal action is required.

Upon initial review, the document resembles a job description, raising significant concerns regarding both procedure and substance. Procedurally, despite its impact on faculty expectations, the document was not discussed with the Faculty Senate. Substantively, it appears to be a post-COVID framework designed to define on campus presence. While it underscores the importance of a physical presence on campus, it could potentially be used punitively against faculty. The most contentious points involve the division of teaching, scholarship, and research, specifically where research can be conducted. While maintaining an active campus presence is important for the university's culture, we must carefully weigh the role of existing waivers against the tangible and intangible impacts of faculty absence.

Discussion Summary:

- Procedural and Shared Governance Concerns
 - There was unanimous frustration that the policy was developed and enforced without formal discussion with the Faculty Senate or the Workload Committee.
 - Senators noted that the policy was released in May as faculty were going off contract for the summer, which was perceived as a move to bypass pushback.
 - Consensus that "shared governance" is undermined when administration unilaterally changes policies (including ECC and RSI policies) that fundamentally alter faculty work-life.

- Substantive Concerns: On-Campus Presence
 - Many argued that Zoom meetings for service committees and student advising are often more efficient, allowing for document sharing, recording, and the elimination of commute times, which preserves time for research.
 - Several faculty members reported that campus offices are not conducive to "deep work" due to thin walls, lack of privacy, and outdated technology compared to home offices.
 - There is a strong sentiment that mandating where research and scholarship occur (often late at night or in specific off-campus environments) is an infringement on academic freedom.
 - A one-size-fits-all approach fails to account for diverse roles, such as professors managing massive lecture sections (600+ students) or those in disciplines that require different modes of collaboration.
- Arguments in Favor of On Campus Presence
 - Senators argued that as a "bricks and mortar" institution, physical presence is essential for campus culture and student expectations.
 - Concerns were raised regarding "absentee" senior faculty, which places an unfair burden on junior faculty and hinders mentorship and departmental health.
 - The need to demonstrate productivity to the Board of Regents and federal stakeholders was noted, though many argued this can be done without strict on-site mandates.
- Proposed Solutions & Alternatives
 - Suggestion to allow individual departments or units to determine their own presence requirements based on their specific roles and responsibilities.
 - Allow professors to use online tools when they determine there is a clear pedagogical or collaborative benefit for the students.
 - A proposal to survey students to see if their preferences align with the administration's mandate for in-person office hours and meetings.

There was a consensus to formally request that the administration revisit the "Faculty Essential Functions" document and engage in a transparent, collaborative discussion with the Faculty Senate before further enforcement.

X. Open Senators Comments

- NSHE passed an increase of student fees. I humbly ask that we look at future enrollment. Clark County School District (CCSD) will be losing 30,000 (9%) of their student enrollment. How will that impact us? We don't want to ask students to once again increase fees or have faculty/staff layoffs.
 - NSHE received this data. CCSD is losing enrollment to charter schools. We will continue to have increases in student graduation numbers until 2030 before a decline is expected to occur.
 - The Executive Committee has asked for an annual presentation to the Faculty Senate on enrollment and budget. We will ask senators prior what they would like addressed in the presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Bobbie Barnes, Secretary