

Minutes of the 2026-2027 Faculty Senate

<https://www.radford.edu/faculty-senate/minutes.html>

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April 23, 2026



Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2026

3:30-4:50 PM

Via Zoom videoconference

☒Pelletier ☒Archer ☒Carhart ☒Castor ☒Chatham ☒Chitwood ☒Choate ☒Close
☒Corey ☒Dunn ☒Farrell ☒Angelini ☒Galeshi ☒Gingrich ☒Glass ☒Huston ☒Haynes
☒Jenks ☒Jeong ☒Joseph ☒Fuhrer ☒Lahn ☒Lane ☒Lenhart ☒Liska ☒Mesmer ☒Mills
☒Mullenbach ☒Page ☒Van Patten ☒Plekhanova ☒Prince ☒Rakes
☒Reed ☒Rice ☒Riddle ☒Robinson ☒Rotert ☒Sallee ☒Santos ☒Sawyer ☒Shao
☒Sherman☒Smith☒Stewart☒Duncan Turner☒Vernon ☒Watson ☒Webb ☒Young

- I. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes (4/16 and 4/21) approved by acclamation.
- II. University President's Report: President Bret Danilowicz
 - a. No report.
- III. University Provost's Report: Provost Bethany Usher
 - a. Lots of end-of-semester excitement and presentations.
 - b. The Provost attended the AAC&U Gen Ed meeting with a group of faculty. She wants to thank everyone participating in the Gen Ed work, and she appreciates the Senate's support for RADF 101.
 - c. The Provost also thanked everyone for their hard work and support of shared governance, and she expressed her commitment to shared governance. The Provost also thanked everyone who worked on updating the UIGRC documents (Dr. Close, Dr. Mullenbach, Dr. Hendrix, Dr. Hendrix, Katie, and Bruce). It was a collaborative and thoughtful process.
 - d. The Provost respectfully asked for Motions 38 and 44 to be tabled "because in the idea of shared governance, they're both things I really support, and both really need updates. But coming at the end of the semester, I haven't had a chance to work closely with those committees to be able to bring forth edits that we can bring forward to the Board of Visitors...I would really appreciate some support so we can work together to be able to bring passable items forward."
 - e. Questions

- i. Dr. Gingrich: “I find it rather unusual that the Provost would specifically ask that we table motions on our agenda. I’d like to know why you’re asking this...What is it about those motions?”
Provost Usher: “For 38 (extra employment), we need to work on a university policy and then make sure we’ve got reflective language in the handbook on that...It’s really important, and I think we need to be able to do some clarification. I want to be able to work collaboratively with that group to make a policy and handbook language that’s appropriate. For 44, I totally agree we need to be able to do that, but I have some edits I’d like to make that doesn’t restrict what a chair or a dean can say.”
- IV. Faculty Senate President’s Report: Dr. Matt Close
 - a. Dr. Close thanked all of the senators and said he appreciated their time and consideration with this year’s Senate business. He also thanked everyone who attended the special meeting.
 - b. Dr. Close ceded the rest of his time for the Faculty Travel Survey report, which was presented by Senator Archer and Senator Liska. (Faculty Travel Report attached.)
- V. Committee Reports
 - a. Curriculum: The committee has motions in Old Business.
 - b. Governance: No report.
 - c. Faculty Issues: The committee has two motions in Old Business today.
 - d. Resource Allocation: No report.
 - e. Campus Environment: The closing date of the Faculty Morale Survey is 5/1. Please encourage your constituents to take the survey.
- VI. Old Business
 - a. 25-26.38: Motion to Revise the T&R Handbook for Extra Employment Request to go into closed session.
39 in favor, zero opposed, seven abstained.
The motion passed.
 - b. 25-26.44: Motion to Revise the T&R Handbook for Recommending Reappointment or Non-Reappointment of Special Purpose Faculty
A request was made for Senate to go into closed session.
43 in favor, zero opposed, one abstained.
The amendment to the motion passed.
42 in favor, zero opposed, two abstained.
The motion passed.
 - c. 25-26.45: Motion to Adopt the Undergraduate Academic Advising Policy
42 in favor, zero opposed, two abstained.
The amendment to the motion passed.
33 in favor, four opposed, five abstained.
The motion passed.

- d. Motion 25-26.46: Motion to Limit Credits from a Prefix in Inquiry Areas⁴²
in favor, one opposed, two abstained.
The motion passed.
 - e. Motion 25-26.48: Motion to Limit Inquiry Courses to a Single Designation
Point of order.
Motion to extend time an additional 10 minutes.
34 in favor, six opposed, one abstained.
The motion passed.
16 in favor, 22 opposed, six abstained.
The motion failed.
 - f. 25-26.49: Motion to Limit Competency Courses to a Single Designation
Motion to extend time until we complete our agenda.
30 in favor, nine opposed, three abstained.
18 in favor, 18 opposed, seven abstained.
Referred to Parliamentarian for procedure.
Senate President Close voted no.
The motion failed.
 - g. 25-26.50: Motion to Limit Integration Courses to a Single Designation
18 in favor, 13 opposed, 11 abstained.
The motion passed.
- VII. New Business
- a. No new business.
- VIII. Announcements
- a. Committee chairs, please make sure that you have continuity reports submitted before you leave for the summer.
- IX. Adjournment
- a. Adjourned at 5:10pm.

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August 13, 2026



Faculty Senate Retreat Minutes
August 13, 2026

Provost Updates:

Provost Usher noted that she is starting her fourth year and came to RU to partner with the faculty. Building trust and partnership is a focus through processes, searches, etc. Provost Usher wants to make sure more things are more responsible and reliable and that our systems work. Referenced University Shared Governance Review Committee (USGRC) work and discussed the need for consistency in how we work. Reduced the number of administrative positions on the USGRC while maintaining the same number of faculty. Stated there is a need to update the Academic Affairs Shared Governance to align with newly revised University Shared Governance documents. Sad news: Rich Dunham, retired faculty and previous chair of Theatre has passed away. The Provost requested and a moment of silence for Rich was recognized.

Other updates:

Professional development: Faculty are encouraged to sign up for the ACUE AI modules. Still possible to sign up. Must complete by 10/30/2026 and full time faculty will have access to additional \$500 in professional development monies. Adjunct or part-time faculty will receive a \$500 payment for completing this. In addition, there has been an increase in the amount of money per college by \$500 per faculty. Every college has these funds but may differ in how these are accessed.

Academic Affairs guests introduced themselves and shared priorities and initiatives.

Dr. Mekolichick: Discussed strategic focus on faculty development, mentioned the ACUE AI modules, 8 available now, two more coming, due by 10/30/2026. She also noted the significant push on experiential learning.

Dr. Gomez Beane: Discussed enrollment document shared with senators and noted changes in structure. CBE courses moved from the IMPACT lab to Academic Affairs. The focus now and 40 days from now is for enrollment to be flat plus one. Flat is the new growth. Biggest part of this retention.

Dr. Jessica Stowell: Shared updates on the data front: 1) charter and membership for a data governance committee, collaboration with a lot of offices across campus, 2) slowly starting to release dashboards, coming out and sharing those with deans and chairs. Program reports are moving to dashboard format. SACSCOC has proposed a draft of revisions to the standards, including a reduction in number of standards. Change is coming. Being more responsive and trusting of institutions. Every faculty member's credentials do not need to be sent.

Assessment: Three year assessment cycle, Nick Vaught, new director of Institutional Effectiveness, will be sharing more soon.

Curriculum: Hired new Director of Undergrad Curriculum, Also shared changes to Curriculum cycle dates. New gen ed: Shifting timeline for Curriculog course proposals due by January 15th to the Registrar's office. Program proposals will be a little different, different deadlines, more information to come!

Ms. Katie Piper, Registrar also shared updates. During the summer, the office's biggest focus was on IT implementation for new gen ed. Draft of next year's catalog to reflect changes from REAL to Gen Ed. Scheduling open for Spring 2027 and offering training for that. Also working on publishing information for campus community, including: final exam schedule. 2026-2027 catalog was published in May 2026.

Dr. Tim Fuhrer, Director of Undergraduate Curriculum
Priorities:

- 1) implementation of gen ed, faculty should consider what courses could be considered.
- 2) Teaching RADF 101 opportunities – please consider this opportunity for your department or school.
- 3) If you have more detailed questions about gen ed, please consider attending the virtual Our Turn sessions offered next week.

Dr. Benton and Professor VanKirk shared RADF 101 Update: Senators were updated on the approach being developed for the RADF 101 course, including the plan to recruit faculty for teaching the course. Also noted were the clusters approach to assigning students to the courses, including the request that students provide areas of interest for enrollment in those courses. See shared slides for additional information.

Faculty Senate Meeting

Called to order at 1:15 pm

Attendance (by college):

Artis: Krystina Angelini, Tara Pelletier, Matthew Close, Nathaniel Lahn, Tim Fuhrer, Andrew Foy, Eric Choate, Shawn Huston

CEHD: Jessica Prince, Anna DeVito, Josh Roe
CHBS: Kevin Farrell, Laura Vernon, Michael Meindl, Nicole Hendrix, Kurt Gingrich, Roby Page, Courtney Watson
Nursing: Judy Jenks, Joanna Murray, Kereen Mullenbach
CVPA: Will Sawyer, Stuart Robinson, Bruce Parsons, Rachel Rotert, Wesley Young
Davis: Rich Gruss, Thomas Duncan, Benjamin Biermier Hanson, Luke Liska
Libraries: Alyssa Archer
Waldron: Michelle Lenhart, Tara Riddle

Minutes were reviewed: Two edits were needed to the 4/23/2026 minutes, including noting Dr. Gingrich's attendance and updating spelling of Dr. Fuhrer name.

Minutes were approved by acclimation pending those revisions. Please see updated minutes for 4/23/2026.

Faculty Senate President's Report:

President Watson introduced FSEC and began the update of summer activities. President Watson attended the Board of Visitors Meeting and Retreat this summer. A new rector was elected, Mr. Dale Ardizzone. Board Advocacy Priorities were established including Capital Projects, such as the Roanoke building fund and ongoing lobbying for capital projects (Tyler, Norwood, Dalton, Amphitheatre, Infrastructure. Continuing to build the healthcare workforce and focus on the Center for Rural Health (sustain momentum through multiple legislative budget cycles). Other Board priorities included enrollment, competition, landscape of higher ed. President Watson also noted state priorities, including expanding credentialing pathways for dual enrollment, growing the talent pipeline (via reduced out-of-state tuition), investing in Virginia's healthcare future. President Watson noted the successful selection of the DUC, Dr. Tim Fuhrer. Work on RADF101 and the work being done around experiential learning; SCHEV push for "internships".

Dr. Watson also served on the University Policies Committee this summer and will continue to represent the faculty on that committee in the coming year. It was noted that Senate will have an opportunity to review all policies; most will go to Senate committees, the rest to the Senate SharePoint file (DHRM). Policies originators from UPC can be invited to Senate committee meetings if the committee would like them to listen and take notes.

Dr. Hendrix discussed the Provost initiative to conduct Academic Governance revision considering the significant shared governance revision work from last year. Dr. Katie Hilden Clouse has agreed to join a small working group with Dr. Hendrix and the soon-to-be elected chair of the FS Governance Committee. (That committee elected Dr. Stephen Glass as chair, along with co-chair Dr. Kereen Mullenbach). Dr. Glass will serve on the working group) and help to engage the FS Governance Committee in that revision work. Dr. Watson noted the University AI Initiatives- ACUE Registration Still Open. She also mentioned ideas around holding town halls and proposals to conduct these around AI,

State of the Sector (Landscape of Higher Ed, Challenges and Opportunities), and the Center for Rural Health

Dr. Watson mentioned the work needed by the Campus Environment Committee needed in response to the Faculty Morale Survey, including the report of the findings, analysis, Senate/campus presentations. The theme for the year for Faculty Senate is Communication, Clarity, Visibility, and Shared Governance. She asked senators to be visible to your constituents and shared new avenues for consistent communication, including new highlight document that will be shared with Senators for distribution to constituents, the What's On Your Mind? Via an open, anonymous Qualtrics survey. She also reminded everyone that outreach to our constituents can be conducted via email, phone, in-person and noted potential challenges with privacy related to FOIA.

Dr. Watson updated the senate on the new schedule of engagement with Provost Usher, including new monthly FSEC meetings with the Provost. The meeting was moved to the stairwell due to heat issues in Artis 310.

Dr. Kurt Gingrich shared a briefing on Robert's Rules of Order related to how Faculty Senate conducts business.

A special election was held to fill the FSEC At-Large position vacated by Dr. Fuhrer due to his selection as the DUC. Dr. Eric Choate and Dr. Laura Vernon were nominated via email for FSEC at large position. No further nominations from the floor. Dr. Eric Choate was elected to FSEC.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm for Faculty Senate Committee meetings.

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August 27, 2026



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Faculty Senate Minutes

August 27, 2026

DRAFT

Attendance:

Angelini, Krystina

Archer, Alyssa

Biermeier-Hanson,

Benjamin

Bryson, Julian

Carhart, Elliot

Castor, Tom

Choate, Eric

Close, Matthew

Devito, Anna

Duncan, Thomas

Farrell, Kevin

Fox, Jake

Fuhrer, Timothy

Gainer, Kim

Galeshi, Roofia

Gingrich, Kurt

Glass, Stephen

Gruss, Richard

Haynes, Jayme

Hendrix, Nicole

Huston, Shawn

Jenks, Judy

Krueger, Hannah

Lahn, Nathaniel

Lawrence, Nate

Lenhart, Michelle

Li, Yiwen

Liska, Luke

Meindl, Michael

Mesmer, Eric

Mills, Garth

Mullenbach, Kereen

Murray, Andrew

Murray, Joanna

Naleppa, Matthias

Page, Roby

Parsons, Bruce

Pelletier, Tara

Plekhanova, Inessa

Prince, Jessica

Riddle, Tara

Robinson, Stuart

Roe, Joshua

Sawyer, Will

Sherman, Gregory

Smith, Judy

Turner, Carter

Vernon, Laura

Watson, Courtney

Young, Wesley

Zuckerman, Sarah

Meeting called to order at 3:31 pm

University President Report: President Danilowicz could not attend.

Provost Report: Provost Usher shared that we have a current total headcount of 7,929 students, which is the highest it's been on this day in four years. She also shared that we're slightly up in grad students and slightly down in undergrads, but just by marginal amounts: retention and persistence are high, and that's due to your efforts. She also mentioned the review of our learning management system. The committee worked all summer and are currently narrowing it down to finalists. Active conversation is occurring to make sure that their presentations are available to and to have CITL be a place where people can come

and play with dummy classes and get a feel for the systems. Look for more details in the Threads newsletter.

Work has also continued in the Roanoke building planning with an intention for making sure that first and second year students are going to be able to be supported, with the new gen ed, we can offer a better undergraduate experience for first and second year students and be able to pull in two different populations to Radford University moving forward. Provost Usher also discussed the focus on gen ed implementation this year. Information was also shared about the Artis College of Science and Technology dean search and she noted Senate's passing of handbook language for committee composition (*note: referring to [24-25.02](#)*). The meeting with the college faculty has been scheduled. Faculty Senate and all of the other collaborators to be able to make nominations for the committee for the search committee itself. The expectation is that this is a national search for a dean for the college, welcoming internal candidates as well as external candidates. The kickoff for the search ad will occur in October. That probably means there are a couple months of collecting applications and reviews with candidates in early spring semester. Provost reminded everyone that committees do not rank the candidates. For any finalists, the committee recommends these people and indicates strengths and weaknesses of the candidates. Then we go into the silent phase where the Provost can conduct additional meetings to select the candidate and negotiations begin. Search committee is notified first, then the college, and then public

Q/A: Provost Usher was asked if the university's long-term intention is to have a permanent population of first-year and second-year students in Roanoke. Provost Usher stated that RU has had a steady decrease in the total number of first and second year students, and the retention in Roanoke has been poor. She shared that the new gen ed offered opportunities to be able to support a small population of freshmen and sophomores in Roanoke.

Provost Usher was also asked if it would be acceptable for the University Policy Committee to write or revise, not including something that comes from Richmond, a policy that contravenes the T&R Faculty Handbook. Provost Usher indicated that yes, that are situations where the handbooks are in conflict with one another and we need a university policy so we don't have versions that contradict each other across the handbooks. She went onto to say that we will then need to align the handbooks to be able to make sure that they're not conflicting with one another. The questioner went on to clarify that only when we're talking handbook alignment can that committee contravene the T&R handbook. Provost Usher indicated that won't necessarily be true but that would be the best case. Our goal is not to have the policies committee override in general. The goal is that in the policies committee, we write policies that are for the university and that are appropriate for what we do. She stated the goal isn't to override the handbook to be able to do things. Provost Usher was then asked a question about the timeline for elements like strategic budgeting for the vision for Roanoke. Provost Usher stated the goal for next semester and next year is that we're teaching the same number of credits that we always have, but we're shifting more resources to teaching them in person. So that shouldn't require more people, but it may require some strategic alignment of people in placement to be able to teach the same number of credits. She noted the increased retention of in-person classes which

would require additional faculty resources. The questioner went on to acknowledge the need to support the relationships with Virginia Western.

Faculty Senate President Report: President Watson introduced Staff Senate President Fallon Kreye, AVP for RU Online Adam Barger, AVP for Health Sciences, Ashley Wells, and AP Faculty Senate President Malinda Tasler.

Faculty Senate President Report included a discussion of the outcomes of the retreat activity and survey identifying shared perspectives on Faculty Senate priorities for the year.

Dr. Nicole Hendrix shared an update (see shared slide) on the planning for Academic Governance Review. Dr. Stephen Glass, chair of the Faculty Senate Governance Committee, and Dr. Katie Hilden are part of the small working group that will be gathering input, revising the governance document and pathways, and working with the Governance and Curriculum committees to address needed changes. The group plans to solicit input from Faculty Senate, academic deans, the Council of Chairs, and Academic Affairs senior staff.

President Watson then turned to discussion of the University Policy Committee drafts and process. Dr. Matt Close shared a history of the committee and shared governance revision work from last year. Much discussion was had about the role of the committee, process for review and comment on policies, and concerns about the issue of the committee creating conflicts with the existing T&R Handbook.

Committee Reports:

Faculty Issues: Kevin Farrell was elected to serve another term as chair, with Michelle Lenhart serves as secretary. That committee will be closely examining faculty feedback on the outside employment policy, including meeting with Rob Hoover next week to talk through some of that feedback.

Governance: Dr. Stephen Glass was elected to serve as chair with Krystina Angelini serving as secretary. The committee is currently reviewing charges, hoping to finalize those at the coming committee meeting. These will likely include reviewing the handbook, governance documents, and the academic governance documents. The committee will also examine the Senate Constitution for any necessary updates. The dean's evaluation is a standing charge for the governance committee.

Campus Environment: Luke Liska was elected chair of the committee with Laura Vernon elected as secretary. The main charge for that committee is the faculty morale survey.

Resource Allocation: Alyssa Archer was elected chair, with Rich Gruss serving as secretary. We'll be finalizing our charges next week.

Curriculum: Eric Choate has been elected chair, while the committee may have a rotating secretary. The committee is working to finalize charges next week, though they will play a

role in the academic governance review and focus on the general education implementation.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm

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