

**MINUTES**  
**KSU Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 3:30 pm**  
**K-State Student Union, Big 12 room**  
**Zoom ID: 149 712 846; <https://ksu.zoom.us/j/149712846>**

**Present:** Aakeroy, Adams (Roger), Alford, Bahadori, Baker, Bennett, Berumen, Bilgili, Bishop, Blake, Blevins, Brusk, Caldas, Clews, Craghead, Crawford, Cuesta, Cunningham, Curnutt, DeRouchey, Disberger, Douthit, Durtschi, Erickson, Falcone, Ferraro, Finkeldei, Genereux, Glymour, Gott, Hay McCammant, Higgins, Hohenbary, Jackson, Johnson, Jones (Cassie), Keen, Kiss, Kohl, Korten, Kouba, Krysko, Launius, Luly, Martinez (Yelland), Maseberg-Tomlinson, Mason, Moody, Moorberg, Nasser, Noll, Nutsch, Oetken, Olds, Olson, Paulk, Prakash, Raine, Rubin, Rundus, Saucier, Scott-Hall, Shappee, Smith Caldas, Stroot, Sullivan (Bowen), Thompson, Van Nest, Vardiman, Vipham, Vulgamore, Von Bergen, Wanklyn, Wefald, Wigfall, Wilken, and Young

**Absent:** Adams (Rebecca), Blair, Cassel, Crowell, Gates, Gabbard, Higginbotham, Hiller, Jones (Chris), Kastner, Leimkuehler, Liang, Lyon, Perez, Rys, Schermerhorn, Scott, Smith, Tatonetti, Warren, and Zecha

**Proxies:** Adams (Paige), Anderson, Baird, Berney, Kempton, Kliewer, Kohn, Kramer, McCulloch, and Sexton-Bowser

**Guests/Visitors:** Anna Coke, Tara Fronce, Tanya Gonzalez, Janice Nikkel, Marci Ritter, Gwen Sibley, Kristin Waller, and Zane Whitney

**Parliamentarian:** Daniel Ireton

1. President Don Von Bergen called the meeting to order, and the Land Acknowledgement was played.
2. Visit from Interim Provost Debbie Mercer  
Shared two topics with the Senate, one being the Wildcat Pause Day request from the SGA. She shared that after much consideration the date selected was due in part to the least number of classes being offered on that day. She suggested a robust assessment plan to address the need and any necessary improvements of this initiative.

Interim Provost Mercer also shared the new restructure of the provost's office. Online academic and military advising will be added to Dr. Thomas Lane as well as adding graduate school recruitment to Enrollment Management (EM). Making EM a center of excellence for recruiting. Establishment of a new unit will also occur: Academic Affairs and Innovation. The Vice Provost for that unit is a new position that needs to be filled. There will be other positions created for a full-time faculty affairs, academic affairs, and Teaching and Learning Center director. She noted there are no new resources being used for these as they are positions that have existed but have not been filled for years. Affected employees will be notified of any changes in their reporting lines. NIST Assessment will be involved in the creation of focus groups to identify any gaps in our IT infrastructure.

Discussion: There were questions about the effectiveness of a Pause Day and if it would make more sense to make a resource assessment before its implementation. Spring/Fall courses will have a different amount meeting days and times, especially lab classes.

Was not a concrete answer at this time for that; however, she did share that Friday was selected as a day that would have less of an impact on contact hours.

Related to mental health, many have shared they need more counselors available. Senators were reminded about the very underutilized service of telehealth that is available to students.

An update was requested on K-State core accepted classes. Interim Provost Mercer will disseminate that information as soon as it is available. Dr. Tanya González shared that the General Education Council met and wanted to make sure that everyone uses the transfer equivalencies and transfer assistance that are typically used. Standard processes for equivalency can continue to be used to determine if courses can be approved.

President Von Bergen shared that it was suggested that the Pause Day happen the same week as KSUNITE so that disruption is less impactful. More information is desired about how the effectiveness of the Pause Day would be assessed. Interim Provost Mercer suggested the doctoral students in the College of Education as possible resources to assess this initiative.

It was shared that Vet Med has a Cats Paws Day every month. As some may know, Veterinary Medicine students are among those with the highest suicide rates. They have different events on those days and have a survey to follow up and get feedback to assess how it's going.

Interim Provost Mercer was thanked for her visit to Senate.

3. Approval of March 19<sup>th</sup> minutes

President Von Bergen inquired if there were any edits or corrections to the minutes. Seeing none, and with no objection, the minutes stood as approved.

4. New Business

A. University Calendar Committee proposal, Wildcat Pause Day – first reading (**Attachment 1**)

President Von Bergen directed senators to the proposal. Additionally, there are a few guests here today from the University Calendar committee to address questions or concerns as best as they can.

Discussion:

There was a request that senate consider creating an excused absence policy so that students could use whatever day they needed if it wasn't on a day of a test or other project. Some professors have been treating requests for mental health days as an illness day for students; however, it's understood all may not treat that the same way. Another senator reminded ones that during COVID faculty could provide a day off for their class to create less of a university wide disruption.

The SGA representative who crafted the legislation was present as a guest and shared that the one-day approach was suggested in order to minimize the number of emails that faculty would receive from students that need a day off during the Fall.

A senator from Architecture, Planning, and Design shared that their college freshmen students are allowed to have a day off in the fall, this way they know ahead of a scheduled break. It has been of assistance to these freshmen. A university wide break day for faculty was also suggested.

It was also noted graduate students, who do not have set classes, should have the opportunity to have this day off. It was also suggested that an individual request for a full day off would include online students since their courses are asynchronous and solve the issue of students with different schedules being able to take advantage of the day that fits their schedule the best.

A concern was raised that giving students the possibility to go home before midterms may create more strain upon their return and may change the way faculty proceed as well.

It was noted by Student Support and Accountability offices that there is a consistent spike seen in student mental health issues in October because the Thanksgiving break comes after the deadlines. In the Spring, however, there's more room for students to breathe during Spring Break. Their office is in favor of the Pause Day and believe students could take advantage of the eight free sessions per semester of telehealth, etc. However, students need to be able to decide how to spend that day; it shouldn't be decided for them.

Again, it was asked to have a thoughtful process to deciding what day would work best.

Kathleen Hatch was also in attendance and will share the data surrounding the pressure college students face and the benefit that a Pause Day may bring to alleviate these pressures.

All were thanked for the thoughtful conversation during today's meeting. This will be on next month's agenda for discussion and action.

5. Report from Standing Committees, Graduate Student Council, and Senates

A. Academic Affairs – Andy Bennett/Brandon Kliewer

Senator Bennett shared that the committee met and cared for a multitude of proposals in March that were acted on as well be Faculty Senate, as needed. They also discussed the Wildcat Pause Day proposal and will discuss it again at their next meeting. They have not met this month, due to the open forum. They will hold off on handbook language for microcredentials until fall; as there is some work being done on defining what a "learner" is and they will want to incorporate that as well.

B. Faculty Affairs – Brad Cunningham/Tareque Nasser

- Proposed revision to University Handbook: Policy Development Process (*tabled at Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> FS meeting*) (**Attachment 2** - [current development process](#))

Senator Cunningham moved to approve the updated Policy Development Process as approved by the University Handbook and Policy committee as well as Faculty Affairs. Motion carried.

Senator Cunningham shared that their committee discussed and were mostly in favor of the KBOR Faculty of the Year Award. However, there were certain things they couldn't amend in the proposal due to the way it was submitted, that either an up or down vote was requested by KBOR with no changes allowable currently. Therefore, Faculty Affairs was unable to support the proposal for the initiative and it was not moved out of committee.

C. Graduate Student Council – Kortnee Van Nest

Senator Van Nest introduced Senator Zane Whitney as the incoming Graduate Student Council President. This is Graduate Student Appreciation Month, and they have their graduate school appreciation reception on April 28<sup>th</sup>. President Linton will be there.

D. Justice, Equity, Diversity, Access, Inclusion, and Identify – Graciela Berumen/Pamela Erickson  
Nothing to report.

E. Professional Staff Affairs – Monica Curnutt/Renee Gates  
Nothing to Report.

F. Student Senate – Carson Cuesta

Senator Cuesta shared that the new term has started. They have been swearing in and appointing the cabinet directors. He also introduced the new SGA president and student leaders.

G. Technology – Michael Raine/Phil Vardiman

Senator Vardiman reminded the senate to complete their cyber security training this month and encouraged them to remind their constituents. We continue to be under constant attacks, so it is vital to remain alert. It was asked why the questions in the training do not always pertain to the information shared in the videos. It was noted that we are switching vendors for next year.

There was a question about the one-to-one match for replacement of devices and how these are being paid for. Senator Raine shared that the expectation is that the department would pay half and central admin would provide half.

It was commented by a senator that during COVID, the departments were asked for their opinion about the technology they needed, and they were not provided the devices they needed to be successful. It was noted there will need to be some work arounds made for some departments to be successful.

H. University Planning – Cassie Jones/Marianne Korten

The Faculty Senate Committee on University Planning met on April 4. Each FSCOUP member present reported on the status and structure of the College or Unit Committee on Planning (CCOP), on which the caucus representative serves as an ex-officio member. Responses ranged widely. For example, some CCOPs meet monthly with the college dean where faculty and staff review the college budget and provide input on strategic initiatives and planning. Other CCOPs have not met since COVID-related furlough discussions and do not have current membership or selection methods approved to update membership. Future discussions will include if more explicit language is necessary to meet the intent of the University Handbook B95, which states: *“The CCOPs meet on a **regular** basis to provide faculty input relative to university and college planning directives which require faculty and staff involvement. The college dean or unit administrator shall consult with CCOP on issues related to, but not limited to: college planning, college reorganization, strategic planning, program discontinuance, and financial exigency.”*

The committee also discussed the upcoming meeting with Smith Group regarding the Campus Master Plan. If any faculty or professional staff have questions or concerns that you would like FSCOUP to share with the consulting firm, please be in touch with your Caucus’s FSCOUP representative prior to May 2. Finally, they discussed the goals associated with the University Campus Physical Security Plan as well as the transition and succession of FSCOUP membership and leadership for the 2024-2025 academic year.

I. University Support Staff Senate – Regina Crowell

Nothing to report.

6. Announcements

A. [KBOR meeting report](#)

President deferred members to the report found in K-State Today.

B. Faculty Senate 2024 elections (**Attachment 3**) / Faculty Senate Officer positions

President Von Bergen reported that elections are completed, and caucuses are now working on standing committee assignments for the upcoming year. A K-State Today announcement will go out

after the May meeting to campus announcing new senators along with the newly elected president elect and secretary.

C. Ombudsperson and Grievance Chair positions – availability for Fall 2024

An advertisement will go out to K-State Today next week announcing the faculty ombudsperson vacancy for the upcoming term. If you have an interest in serving, feel free to reach out to President Von Bergen for further details. The Executive Committee will vote on this at their May meeting. Additionally, President Von Bergen shared that Senator Roger Adams has requested the chance to serve as Grievance Chair for the 2024-2027 term. If there are no others that come forward, the Executive Committee will vote on this appointment during their April meeting.

D. Faculty and Professional Staff Retiree Ceremony, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm, Alumni Center

The annual ceremony and reception will occur later this month. The announcement with the list of those persons went out to K-State Today at the end of March.

7. Open discussion period for senators | New Initiatives | For the Good of the University

- President Elect Douthit asked the senate to please encourage people to apply for the Faculty Senate Office Specialist position as it has been advertised.
- President Saucier wanted to remind the senate to focus on promoting students well being, he called for support from the senate, the proposal of a Pause Day. He understands that this proposal is not perfect, but it is the only solution that has been presented at this time. Supporting this with the assessment plan would make a tangible declaration that Faculty Senate supports student well-being. Another senator believes that a lot of the discussion surrounding Pause Day is based on opinion and feels that it would be more impactful if there was greater effort put towards having a better understanding about the importance of mental health. Another senator wanted to remind ones that the Pause Day should include the well being of faculty and staff. It was reported that the University will not close on Pause Day so it is still unclear if that Pause Day would include faculty and Staff well being as well. There were many questions and comments, but it was also noted that “perfection is the enemy of progress” and based on the fact that this proposal went through the proper channels several noted their support.

It was shared one office involved with student well-being has seen a 36% increase in the last five years of students needing their mental health services in fall, a significant number of them for anxiety. Data was again requested surrounding how critical the loss of one lab would be in order to account how big of an impact the Pause Day would have to courses with labs. President Von Bergen shared that we do not have that data available at this time.

Senators were reminded that this is a first reading. Senator Bennett shared that after the first reading the vote would be to make an endorsement on the recommendation. The calendar committee makes a recommendation to academic affairs committee, then faculty senate makes an endorsement or non-endorsement, which is a recommendation to the provost. Then, the provost and president make a recommendation to KBOR who will make the final decision of this proposal. If implemented, the Pause Day will start in Fall 2024 and go forward every Friday on the seventh week of class of the fall semester. Senator Bennett reminded the senate that calendars are revised every 3 years, SGA included an awareness and assessment campaign in order to assess the effectiveness of implementing this Pause Day.

Senator Moorberg suggested that a possible solution for the need of a mental health day earlier in the fall could be to revert to the old way of having fall break and providing a two day fall break and only

three days off for Thanksgiving break. Senator Bennett reminded the senate that the reasons the extended Thanksgiving break was implemented, due to the fact students did not greatly attend the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving break, remain valid. Another senator indicated his support of a discretionary fall break day given his own experience with a \$500 doctors bill that his daughter needed to obtain in order to provide documentation for missing class.

- Senator Hay McCammant shared that as a graduation officer for the College of Agriculture she finds it alarming that it's been a year since KBOR dropped a policy that stated that half the credits could be transfer credits from a two year institution, the new policy states that institutions have an opportunity to define how many hours can be applied towards a degree, now it could be up to 75 hours vs. 60 based on the previous policy. Currently only 30 hours must be from K-State, this is a topic that will be discussed with the new Provost.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Graciela Berumen,  
Faculty Senate Secretary

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2024; 3:30 pm, K-State Student Union, Big 12 room

- *Recognition of outgoing senators/leadership: 3:15 pm*
- *First 2024-2025 Faculty Senate meeting: immediately following the 2023-2024 adjournment.*