

CFR Meeting Minutes
16 January 2026
Zoom & VDEN 129
9:15 – 10:45AM

Members attending: Bonamy, Dimitrov, Drapela, Grigar (Chair), He, LoSavio, Olson, Reisz, Schimelpfenig, Spradlin, Van Sol

Senators in attendance: Phelps (TT), Solovitz (TT), Thrush (CT)

Recording Secretary: Paul Bonamy

The meeting began with a series of brief announcements:

- This week we *welcome Nanette Thrush as our new Faculty Senate Representative*, representing Career-Track faculty along with Gungan Gakhar. Thrush was elected at the end of November to serve for 2025-28.
- Tracy Klein, who sits on the Board of Regents, will attend the January 30th meeting.
- The next *Faculty Assembly meeting is scheduled for February 13th*.
- We hope to have an *informal meeting between faculty and the Interim Chancellor on the 20th of February*.
- *Zoom links for CFR meetings have changed* because the original links were set up by Diane Laya, who retired in December. Agendas carry the new links.

In discussion of the recent Administrative Services Review Town Hall, it was noted that *the regular 3-4pm time block used for campus-level assemblies routinely conflicts with afternoon classes*. It has been suggested that admin pick a morning time slot that can alternate with the afternoon one, to allow greater participation.

The meeting then progressed to reports.

Laurie Drapela serves as the faculty representative to the [Chancellor's Advisory Council](#) and reported on the January 7th meeting of same. The CAC is an advisory board for the campus, composed of local entrepreneurs, legislators, and others in (higher) education, along with some non-profit groups.

President Cantwell attended the CAC meeting, and made a presentation to the Council, opening with “we are never going back to the way it was in higher education”. Per the President, *we’re not in a budget crisis but we can see it from here*, so stakeholders need to be clear with the legislature that there can be no more cuts to WSU in the next session. It’s important that stakeholders individually and collectively push the state to fund the university more appropriately.

Formatted: Right: 0.25"

As part of the discussion around the CAC, it was noted that members rotate off and on, and they are appointed by the Chancellor of WSU Vancouver. For example, the Firstenburgs were on the CAC at one point. This led to a general query as to *how the CAC is populated*. It is not clear how the current membership was selected, when they were selected, or when/how the membership might be updated. Given the current legislative climate, are there other individuals who might be brought in as stakeholders to further represent and support community partnerships?

Grigar then followed up with a report on her regular meeting with the Interim Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Research, and Graduate Education.

The budget number field is going to be removed from the room reservation form soon. That should make room scheduling easier for internal stuff that doesn't require separate budgeting / payment. As was announced at the Administrative Services Review Town Hall, fees that were imposed for internal events have been removed.

The new Gen Ed committee has been formed. *It contains five faculty members, including our own Caitlin Bletscher of Human Development.* Forty-six faculty members, system wide, were nominated.

There is an ongoing issue with confusing and contradictory information about how to handle improper student conduct. The websites for WSUV Public Safety and the Student Affairs office do not agree on procedures, and at least some things are handled through Pullman. *A new portal is being assembled with unified messaging and facilities for reporting and information sharing.*

As of Monday, January 12th, *there will be a flat 12% surcharge on all accruals going forward.* This was initiated by the system, and the funds return to the system. The surtax is surprisingly low at only 12%. Initial discussions indicated it could be as much as 50%.

The Administrative Services Review held its Town Hall on the 14th. The final report contains recommendations for the administrative side, but not academics. The full report for the Academic Portfolio and Resources Review will be available after the Town Hall on February 3rd.

The Governor's proposed budget adjustments reduce WSU funding by \$18 million. There was no real idea how such a cut of that size would work. It was also noted that cuts may not happen, or they may happen but be a different amount. There has been some commentary that this is a new governor, so some 'on the job training' is likely occurring as we move through this budget process.

Spradlin brings news of goings-on at the Ad-Hoc Food Service Committee.

Formatted: Right: 0.25"

He met with Eric Scott (Senior Director for Engagement and Well-being) on December 1st. Scott is figuring out costs to get the kitchen(s) up to code. It looks like it may be possible to use the food pantry budget to help fund that effort. They've been receiving lots of donations, so the funds are there. Scott is also looking into getting data from the current grab-and-go so we can get an idea of what's selling. He's also planning some pop-ups in the spring, and an indoor event with Bluum Coffee, to be held in the Firstenburg Student Commons.

Spradlin is also working on a survey to assess student interests and preferences, and he is working with Scott to put together a brown bag with recipes and shopping lists for bringing food to campus. The plan is to distribute the survey with the recipes.

There has been some insistence that food service on campus needs to at least break even if not make money. *It's important to remember that some things do not break even and they're still necessary.* CFR believes that having food is a direct component of being a student-centered campus.

Commencement remains scheduled for Tuesday May 12th, in the evening. Tuesday May 12th is also the day spring grades are due and the day after summer courses begin. The date/time have been decided by President Cantwell, who plans to attend all of the commencements this year. This is a notably un-student-centered scheduling decision, in addition to the logistical issues of being a 'school night' for students and their families, as well as for faculty and staff. There's interest in tracking participation in commencement so we can compare Tuesday night to our traditional Saturday. It was also suggested that WSU Vancouver schedule some kind of celebration for students on campus prior to or on Saturday, May 9th.

Moving on to more general discussion:

The proposed 90-credit bachelor degrees were discussed at the last Faculty Senate meeting. The overall proposal is still very new and not fully fleshed out yet. The general idea is that is that these degrees would include all of the general education and core courses of a normal degree, with none of the electives. Not every degree is going to be 90 credits, and programs will not be allowed to have both 90 and 120 credit versions of their degrees.

There are a lot of open questions about how these programs will actually work in practice. Senators were told that a program with a 120-credit degree with optional focus cannot offer the same program a 90-credit degree in that focus. However, how is the 90-credit plan going to work with changes in the works for UCORE? The purpose of these degrees is also unclear: are they meant to compete with 2-year degrees from the community colleges? There are examples of similar programs elsewhere, but the cited schools are not ones we'd typically consider peer institutions. There is also a question of how this will affect university finances, and how that will affect units that offer a lot of the elective courses.

Formatted: Right: 0.25"

An important consideration is that *students are not always equipped to make good choices when picking programs*. Students might not be aware that ‘the same’ degree at different universities can be very, very different. The difference between an R1 and an R3 is not just cost, for example. This has the potential to be even more confusing when comparing a 90-credit degree and a 120-credit model. How do we communicate the differences beyond just ‘one takes a year longer and costs a third more’? As a land grant institution, we owe students an education which is both practical and liberal and have a responsibility to ensure they understand the decisions we ask them to make based upon degree offerings.

There was time at the end for a brief discussion of the rpk Group’s data that went out about the academic programs. There are some questions and concerns about the color coding in the data, and it’s unclear what we’re actually supposed to do with the data as presented. It’s not clear that we learned anything new from the data. There are also apparently some messaging problems about what the data is comparing programs against. The impression from CAS seems to be that the data is relative to the campus as a whole, while ENCS was told our numbers are relative to the college only.

The meeting closed with an announcement that we are working with ASWSUV to put on a mixer later in the semester. There was also a very brief note that the existence of a workload policy has been presented to, and cleared, the Senate, but that individual college policies are still in flux.