Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 5, 2026 – 3:15 P.M.
Location: College of Law; Zoom

West Virginia University
FACULTY SENATE

Members Present:

Abate, M.	Crichlow, S.	Jones, M.	Mukdadi, O.	Stueckle, J.
Abraham, J.	Dai, F.	Leight, M.	Murphy, E.	Sundararajan, V.
Ameri, S.	Deci, S.	Lessard, D.	Nduaguba, S.	Tanner, E.
Ameri, S.	Fonseca, C.	Li, H.	Nishioka, S.	Tarabishy, A.
Benincosa, M.	Gabbert, K.	Litchfield, C.	Nishioka, S.	Taylor, G.
Bergeron, J.	Giacobbi, P.	Martin, E.	Ostrowski, A.	Udassi, S.
Bonasso, P.	Gorman, C.	Matak, K.	Peluso, A.	Valenti, M.
Brewster, D.	Greenfield, J.	McKelvie, C.	Pena-Yewtukhiw, E.	Wamsley, R.
Burnside, J.	Gross, J.	McKenrick, S.	Pena-Yewtukhiw, E.	Watson, K.
Carder, J.	Hedrick, J.	McNeil, B.	Prinzo, L.	Weatherford, L.
Celikbas, E.	Hefeida, M.	Mersing, D.	Reaser, R.	Weirich, M.
Collignon, S.	Hipes, C.	Metz, C.	Reece, J.	Woloshuk, J.
Cook, L.	Horstick, E.	Miller, C.	Scally, J.	Yacoub, O.
Costas, M.	Houde, A.	Miltenberger, M.	Sexton, P.	Ybarra, J.
Costello, L.	Hutchinson, J.	Minch, M.	Sizemore, J.	Zaynutdinova, G.
Cottrell, L.	Irish, A.	Moser, J.	Song, X.	Zumbrun, E.
Coy, A.	Jones, J.	Moser, J.	Sowards, A.	

Members Excused:

Curtis, R.	DeMarco, F.	Powell, B.	Singh-Corcoran, N.	Wilson, E.
Dadyburjor, D.	Mulligan, I.	Rogers, R.	Spong, B.	Zeni, T.

Members Absent:

Chaudhuri, N.	Liller, B.	McWilliams, S.	Smith, M.	Witsberger, S.
Gritsenko, V.	Lituma, C.	Murray, A.	Thayer, J.	Woodberry, K.
Hardy, S.	Liu, D.	Shannon, B.	Williams, D.	

1. **Faculty Senate Chair Matthew Valenti called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.**

2. **The Minutes of the September 14, 2026, Faculty Senate Meeting were approved as written.**

3. **Report from Faculty Senate Chair Matthew Valenti**
   a. Chair Valenti has been attending as many committee meetings as possible this fall, including Curriculum, General Education Foundations, Teaching and Assessment, Library, Research, Shared Governance, Academic Technology, and Faculty Experience. He has also been invited to a meeting of the Committee of Retired Faculty and is working to connect with the Student Government Association (SGA).
   b. Faculty Senate staffed a table at the Faculty Resource Fair on September 15. Chair Valenti thanked Corey Hunt, Lesley Cottrell, and Catherine Fonseca for helping. The event was a good opportunity to explain the Senate's work and encourage involvement, and several of the university units present may give guest reports later this year.

*You may access program proposals at https://futurecatalog.wvu.edu/programadmin/ by using your login credentials. Search for programs using the 3- or 4-digit key provided above. Course Proposals may be similarly accessed at https://futurecatalog.wvu.edu/courseadmin

c. President Benson's investiture will be held October 15 at 2:00 p.m. Members of the Faculty Senate have been invited but must use the registration link previously distributed.

d. The first two Provost-Faculty gatherings were held: a September 21 meeting with seven recently tenured associate professors, and a September 22 lunch with six assistant professors, most in their second year. The conversations gave Provost Wendland a chance to hear directly from faculty. Additional gatherings are being planned, and Chair Valenti will email to request nominations.

e. The Senate is still seeking volunteers for the University Promotion and Tenure Advisory Panel, which needs about 18 members. Only one nominee has been received to date. Interested faculty, or those who know of a good fit, should contact Chair Valenti or Chris Staples.

f. A survey from the Provost's Office on academic support units, including the Registrar's Office, was distributed by the Faculty Senate Office earlier in the day. Chair Valenti encouraged members to complete the survey by October 21.

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4. Guest Reports

a. Report from Provost Beverly Wendland
Provost Wendland noted that President Benson was unable to attend, so her report covered some items he might otherwise have addressed.

i. Wendland offered appreciation for those that participated in the Faculty Resource Fair in September, noting the positive feedback received from faculty across career stages.

ii. Potomac State College celebrated homecoming October 1-4, which coincided with its 125th anniversary. The Provost attended with President Benson for the dedication of a field at Golden Park in honor of Doug Little, who has coached Potomac State baseball for 29 years.

iii. On October 28, WVU will host the 2026 Mountain State Cyber Summit at the Morgantown Marriott and launch the inaugural West Virginia Cyber Cup, a student competition. Faculty were encouraged to share the opportunity with interested students.

iv. The final candidate in the Vice President for Research search is visiting campus on Friday, October 9. Faculty were encouraged to attend the candidate open forum and, for those that will attend or have attended the forums for other candidates, to give feedback through surveys or directly to the search committee.

v. The final candidate in the search for the next College of Law dean visited campus on October 6.

vi. Regarding faculty hiring, the Provost stated that WVU is not in a hiring freeze but will not assume every vacancy should be refilled automatically. Requests are being reviewed against a consistent set of questions: whether the college can support the position within its budget; what enrollment and student demand indicate; whether there is a compelling instructional or research need; and whether the position advances a strategic priority or an area of opportunity for WVU. Some positions will move forward quickly, others may require additional analysis or a conversation with the dean, and in some cases a vacancy may be reinvested in differently. The Provost's Office is working with Finance and the deans to make the process systematic and transparent.

vii. Compact 2.0 – WVU intends to respond by the end of the calendar year and to post the response publicly on a WVU webpage. Leads have been identified for each of the seven

topics and are developing early drafts. The Provost emphasized that the process will be collaborative: for sections bearing on faculty and academic matters, draft responses will be shared with faculty representatives for awareness and input before finalization. She expects to clarify the timeline and process within one to two weeks and will work closely with Faculty Senate leadership.

viii. The General Education Revision Committee, chaired by Lindsay Morris-Neuberger, has developed a straw man model for a revised general education curriculum. The model will go first to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and then to the full Senate, beginning with next month's meetings.

1. The Provost also called for a broader university conversation about AI, covering policy and appropriate use, as well as opportunities, challenges, and needed resources for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship, and framed it as related to the general education discussion.

ix. Over 130 proposals were received in the WVU-Johns Hopkins Research Collaborative. The initiative aims to help faculty teams develop new research programs, generate preliminary data, and position themselves for competitive external funding.

x. WVU recently joined the Pittsburgh–Carnegie Mellon Federal Statistical Research Data Center (FSRDC) network, giving WVU researchers access to restricted federal data for research on health, economic, workforce, and social issues, including questions relevant to West Virginia and Appalachia.

xi. WVU received two Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grants focused on education: a $1.6 million, three-year award for recruiting, preparing, placing, and retaining teachers in West Virginia communities, and a $2.6 million award to launch the STEAM Innovation Alliance.

xii. WVU was named one of six finalists for the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) 2026 Innovation and Economic Prosperity Awards. Winners will be announced at the APLU annual meeting in November.

b. Report from Miriam Leary, Associate Professor and Provost Fellow for Student Success – Student Retention Initiatives; National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Presentation Slides – PDF

i. Retention Risk model

1. Miriam Leary, Matt Matyasovsky, and Joy Carr built a model to identify students at risk of leaving before they begin classes. The model is built on three years of first-time, full-time freshmen data. Registration timing is measured by when a student first registers for new student orientation, which occurs when the deposit is paid and triggers block scheduling. Other predictors include Pell eligibility, first-generation status, underrepresented minority status, financial indicators, and an academic index based on high school GPA and test scores.

2. Students are tagged in Navigate based on likelihood of returning: low priority (80% or higher predicted likelihood), moderate priority (70–79%), or high priority (below 70%). The model was shared with all undergraduate-serving colleges, each of which also received a college-specific model. Units were asked to use it

as appropriate, with an offered example of advising higher-priority students earlier.

ii. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

1. Administered to students in spring 2026, the survey included the core module plus the high-impact practices and advising modules and was distributed to first-year students and seniors in partnership with SGA. There were over 500 freshman and nearly 500 senior respondents, with Honors students somewhat overrepresented. Results were compared to a 12-institution NSSE peer group, the AAU, and all institutions that participated in 2025 and 2026. Dr. Leary noted that WVU respondents included a higher proportion of first-generation and white students and a lower proportion of international students than comparison groups.
2. Overall satisfaction: 82% of freshmen and 86% of seniors rated their experience as good or excellent, up from 76% when the NSSE was last administered four years ago.
3. WVU was generally comparable to peers. First-year students scored slightly lower on academic challenge, while seniors scored slightly higher on learning with peers and experiences with faculty. Areas for improvement included the addition of diverse perspectives in course discussions, identifying key information from reading assignments, and encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds. WVU scored higher than peers on discussions with people holding different political views, on discussing career plans with faculty, and on student-faculty interaction.

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5. The Consent Agenda was approved as presented by unanimous consent.

a. Curriculum Committee
   i. New Course Report – Annex I
   ii. Course Changes Report – Annex II
   iii. Program Report – Annex III
b. General Education Foundations Committee
   i. GEF Course Report – Annex IV

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6. Committee and Officer Reports

a. Curriculum Committee Report (Ron Reaser)
   i. Of three program proposals, one was approved this cycle (Neuroimmunology, School of Medicine). The committee is still consulting with the initiators of two others: Sustainable Timber Construction (Davis College) and Cyber Operations (Chambers College).
   ii. The committee approved 100% of the course proposals received, with an estimated 52% requiring consultation with the initiator. Dr. Reaser noted an intent to report similar figures going forward.
   iii. The Provost's Office is requiring all courses in CIM to have syllabi and learning outcomes. Courses that only modify the syllabus and learning outcomes sections in CIM will have an accelerated workflow for approval. Courses that lack this information by the end of the process and are older than a set age, are expected to be deactivated automatically. Questions on this initiative may be directed to Lou Slimak.

b. General Education Foundations Committee Report (Nathalie Singh-Corcoran)
    i. Nathalie was not present, and the committee had no updates to report beyond the course approved on the consent agenda.

c. Teaching and Assessment Committee Report (Jennifer Bergeron)
    i. The committee met for the first time on September 21 and plans to address SPoT and early-semester course feedback. Members identified barriers to using these tools, including a perception that both skew negative and that promotion and tenure committees use the results in faculty assessment. The committee plans to meet with P&T committees to explore decoupling course feedback from promotion decisions.
    ii. Divisions wishing to add questions to SPoT may send proposed questions to Dr. Bergeron for committee review.
    iii. The next committee meeting is October 19.

d. Sustainability Committee Report (Brenden McNeil)
    i. Dr. McNeil noted that October is Sustainability Month. The Sustainability Committee works to support the efforts of WVU's Sustainability Office, which is holding a variety of sustainability-focused events this month.
    ii. A new Student Office of Sustainability, an offshoot of an SGA committee, has space in Brooks Hall near the PRT station, with Dr. McNeil serving as faculty advisor. The office held its first event the prior week, a workshop for student organizations touching on sustainability. Faculty advisors of student organizations were asked to help spread word of the new student office.
    iii. The WVU Office of Sustainability produces an annual peer-comparison report card and sustainability certification, part of which depends on curricular and academic activity. Dr. McNeil is working to help gather this information, noting that sustainability-related work is spread across many colleges.

e. Board of Governors Report (Lesley Cottrell, Scott Crichlow)
    i. Dr. Crichlow had no updates to report, as the Board's most recent meeting was reported on at the September 14 Senate meeting. The next Board meeting is November 13.

f. Report from Faculty Representative to State Government (Jason Gross)
    i. The West Virginia Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) will hold its in-person meeting October 16–17. The ACF chair, a faculty member at WVU Parkersburg, has issued a call for agenda items; faculty with ideas should contact Dr. Gross.
    ii. Delegate Joe Statler, chair of the House Education Committee, and Dan Kimble, WVU Director of State Government Relations, will meet with the ACF.
    iii. Because it is an election year, there are no October or November legislative interim meetings.
    iv. Travis Mollahan, WVU Vice President for Government Relations, will give a legislative preview and discuss WVU priorities for the upcoming session at an upcoming Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting.

7. **Senate Business and Announcements**
    a. No new business was introduced.

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8. **Chair Valenti adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.**

Corey Hunt
Faculty Senate Office Administrator