

Winthrop University – Faculty Conference
Friday, April 24, 2026
2:00pm
Whitton Auditorium

Agenda

1. Welcome and Call to Order (Adam Glover)
2. Approval of Minutes from the February 27, 2026 Meeting (Appendix A)
3. Report from the Provost (Sebastian van Delden)
4. Update from Registrar (Gina Jones)
5. Update from IT (Patrice Bruneau)
6. Update from Student Affairs (Shelia Higgs Burkhalter)
7. Reports from Faculty Conference Standing Committees
 - a. Academic Council (Cody Walters)
 - b. FCUP (Eric Birgbauer)
 - c. Rules (Martha Smith)
8. Old Business
9. New Business
 - a. Committee Proposal (Greg Bell)
10. Announcements
11. Adjournment

Note: Quorum (35% of Faculty Conference membership faculty) is 107 faculty members.
The minimum attendance required to do business (20% of Faculty Conference membership) is 61 faculty members. In the absence of a quorum, a vote of 75% of those present is required to conduct business.

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Minutes Prepared by Kelly Ozust
Associate Professor, Theatre and Dance
We have quorum

Agenda

12. Welcome and Call to Order (Adam Glover)
 - a. 2:02pm
13. Approval of Minutes from the February 27, 2026 Meeting (Appendix A)
 - a. Minutes approved
14. Report from the Provost (Sebastian van Delden)
 - a. Academic Affairs Update
 - i. Thank you to those that participated in Winthrop Day and First Look Friday
 - ii. ADA regulations date extended: be in compliance by this time next year.
 1. There are resources online to help with compliance.
 - b. Campus Space Plans
 - i. Board would like the library in a new home 10 years from now for the 150-year university
 1. The planning hasn't started, so stay tuned.
 - ii. New Industrial Arts building
 1. This move would make the new HVAC system less complicated for Rutledge.
 - iii. First residence hall will break ground hopefully next year. The next one will be right next to it and that will come in the future.
 - iv. Other spaces on map have been identified for potential future partnerships.
 - c. South Carolina Research Authority: Winthrop is invited to be a co-principal investigator on grant
 - i. It would be an accelerator program.
 - d. Two strategic programs: Health Sciences and Engineering
 - i. Two more steps to go in Columbia, so hopefully soon we will get final approval
 - ii. Probably going to be an announcement in June to make all of this public – we will be talking about a manufacturing company coming to the former Panthers facility
 - iii. Winthrop intends to launch a program in manufacturing engineering
 1. We are in a good position to get financial backing
 - e. Shared Advising Model
 - i. Moving forward: we have folks coming on board next month
 - ii. Fall 2027 will be the first time of transition between the first cohort of students in this model
 - f. First Faculty Fellow: Dr. Jennifer Wetzel
15. Update from Registrar (Gina Jones)
 - a. Commencement is two weeks away
 - b. Grading reminders will come Monday

- c. Gina is retiring in June after serving 16 years in this role
 - d. The Wednesday after commencement there will be a celebration for Gina.
16. Update from IT (Patrice Bruneau)
- a. Phishing campaigns – December: almost 20% clicked on the link, 13% supplied credentials
 - i. Remember to forward to helpdesk@winthrop.edu or delete the email
 - b. SCCIC
 - i. Hackers are going after targets that don't have monetary value, but they want to create havoc
 - ii. Malicious actors created a web site to compromise the city of Rock Hill
 - 1. The site is designed to grab credentials through "not a robot" verification, and then has you paste malicious content into your computer
 - 2. Please be careful and don't follow instructions on webpages like this
 - c. Scanning email attachments
 - i. Used to not scan internal attachments, but now all attachments are going to be scanned
 - d. New Phones
 - i. About 670 phones deployed
 - ii. Audio issues have been fixed
 - iii. New webpage for phone resources
 - iv. 6nnn extensions were internal numbers, but the new system is a cloud-based system so nothing that was built to be internal will work. If you have a 6nnn extension then you will be assigned a new one.
 - e. Zoom ending
 - i. This is really happening this time.
 - ii. Move to Teams
 - iii. Save recordings now

Q: When will they cut us off from Zoom?

A: In August.

Q: Will there be training for Teams?

A: I believe we have training materials already on the website, however we can start working on that.

Q: Will there be training for students for Teams?

A: I don't think I can organize that training, no.

Q: One avenue is saving recording to One Drive, but do we have a space limit?

A: We start at 1gig and then we can extend. If you run out of space, let me know.

Q: Would you be able to speak to why our system shut down automatically without warning whenever there is a Windows update?

A: Updates are mandatory, so they give you a grace period, but after 3 days if you haven't done the update then the machine will reboot. There is also a Dell update that will reboot the system.

17. Update from Student Affairs (Shelia Higgs Burkhalter)
- a. Dr. Hannah Clayborne named Associate Vice President and Dean of Students
 - i. Begins May 18, 2026
 - b. Remind students that the Wellness Center is still operational through the end of the semester.

c. Miranda Knight is still the point of contact for now.

18. Reports from Faculty Conference Standing Committees

a. Academic Council (Cody Walters)

- i. Approved 10 degree action items, 4 minor action items, 3 GNED inclusion
- ii. The only thing we need to vote on is to inactivate the BA in Mathematics
 1. An effort to consolidate everything into the BS in Math with separate pathways. It's cleaning up the curriculum.
 2. Motion carries
- iii. Approve courses for GNED inclusion: HSCI 223, HSCI 428, PESH 190
 1. Motion carries
- iv. Approve revision to the Quantitative Skills/Natural Science component of the catalogue
 1. Motion carries
- v. AC voted to not revise the current Humanities and Arts component of the GNED program.
- vi. Increase the cap for Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Credit from 15 hours to 30 hours and extending portfolio process to all undergraduate majors
 1. Motion carries
- vii. Retaking courses after receiving an S on the S/U scale
 1. Issues with financial aid and retaking classes that were passed.
 2. Will look into this again in the Fall.
 3. We don't want students to retake classes that they won't get financial aid for.

Q: Who will be evaluating how these credits are counted?

A: The chair of each department.

Statement: What we've done in CAS is to invite departments to determine whether they have courses may well be such that a student coming in might have prior training that would be equivalent to the learning outcomes in that course, so we encouraged departments that have courses like that to draw up plan for students coming in that would have that experience and how they might evaluate that compared with the learning outcomes in the course. That streamlines the evaluation of prior learning.

b. FCUP (Eric Birgbauer)

- i. Online Classes Accountability
 1. There is a pilot program in CBT for one course to be made hybrid in which the course material is online but the students need to take exams in a proctored exam room.
- ii. New University Business Office being piloted before final report from consultants
 1. The idea was initiated 18 months ago and bring implemented now so that positions can be filled. Campus Works is onboard with the implementation.
- iii. ADA Compliance
 1. DOJ delayed the deadline to April 26, 2027
- iv. Other concerns in progress:
 1. Expansion of Administration positions while faculty is stagnant
 2. Concern about allocation of conference funding
 3. Extensive student liability waivers required: can we streamline?
 4. Faculty required to teach overloads without compensation for small classes.

Q: I heard from multiple staff about the new University Business Offices that there is a lot of pushback that they're worried about their jobs. It doesn't feel that there are many assurances about job stability.

A: I think there are a lot of questions about it so I will make the recommendation that the President or CFO will address Faculty Conference and Staff Conference.

v. Information about Business Center provided by Jenny Lewis, AVP for finance

1. Business Center is a pilot that will be covering certain types of transitions
2. Starting with Arts (CVPA), Administration, Athletics
3. Group of specialists that will support system where you communicate your need and the business center will take care of it for you.
4. Travel for example: There are Travel Authorization form, Travel Reimbursement, Travel Advance form, receipts for reimbursement, etc. The business center is the place to go for help with all travel forms, bookings, etc.
5. This work has become stressful for the admins to take on. At the business center the goal is to get more efficient and compliant, the intention is not for layoffs. As people retire, the university has been holding some positions vacant to fund and staff the business center. There is not net new money to fund new staff. We're trying to create a solution, and perhaps the business center is not what people envisioned, but the solution is to create the capacity somewhere. We need to be more efficient in our transaction processing, so that's what this is.
6. We have admins across the college who are experts at what is going on with the colleges. They are very well positioned to support in a more meaningful way rather than transaction and procurement policy. They can better support events, students, and so on.

c. Rules (Martha Smith)

- i. Vote to approve the changes that were distributed last Friday.
 1. Motion carries

19. Old Business

20. New Business

a. Committee Proposal (Greg Bell)

- i. Chair's committee comprising all the chairs across campus.
 1. Confronts the issue of silos and reduces redundancies in new programs
 2. Since chairs know the faculty and departments well, this committee would give the campus a collective voice that's not currently there.
 3. It would meet twice a year
 4. Perhaps have representation from the Library, Honor's College, potentially others
 5. Motion to put this on the Fall agenda
 - a. Motion carries

Nick Grossoehme: Anything that increases communication and collaboration is a good thing.

Q: Maybe if said committee existed, that there would be a way for a faculty member to go to another chair, if they didn't feel comfortable going to their own chair.

A: One of the things that I feel strongly about is a collective voice. This would allow us to give substantial feedback to administration. Quickly identify issues and reduce redundancies. Help shape policy and maintains a collective voice.

Jo Koster: I'm Speaking up in support of this idea. There are a lot of places in faculty governance where chairs are excluded from participating. Enabling this kind of conversation would improve the communication flow.

A: Chairs could help shape the process if restructuring is happening. I'm meeting some people for the first time as I speak to the other chairs. It makes a big difference.

Greg Oates: It's not clear if this committee is intending to have a role in faculty governance.

A: It seems like if this is an advisory committee, then we wouldn't really need to talk about this in terms of faculty governance. If it's a standing committee, then we would have to have Bylaw changes. In one way, I like the idea of an advisory committee. I would like feedback from others. I also don't want to put time and effort into a committee like this and then have no teeth in our recommendations.

Ginger Williams: For that reason, I think it should be a standing committee.

Q: Would you see the opportunity for joint programming?

A: That's one of the things that I had in the back of my mind. In CAS there are different programs that are put forward and we would already have been sitting down and know one another. We'd know exactly who to go to and it would make a lot of sense. The different colleges come up with programs that are very similar at the same time, and it would reduce those redundancies and increase synergy. You have a broader respect for other disciplines and know what's possible

Julie Orum: I think it would be useful to add to interdisciplinary projects and conferences.

Eric Birgbauer: If we add it as a standing committee, what would be the role or charge of this committee?

A: That's something that I would like to work out. That's one of the reasons I spoke with the chair of the Rules Committee in advance. Where would it fit in? I don't want to have overlap with FCUP and FCUL. We have to figure out who we report to. If the Deans or Provost have things that they want to do, they could bring it to us so we could discuss it as a body. It would give us a chance to talk about the different issues that coming out across campus. A lot of this is work we already do, so I already work with people in other colleges, it would make it more seamless.

Provost: I want to add my support. My previous institution had something like this.

Adam Glover: Someone on the chat suggested that you get people together and bring language to the August meeting, which we could then vote on at the October meeting.

Marth Smith: Maybe people could email you, Greg Bell, if they have ideas about how to frame the Bylaws or language in the Bylaws.

b. Faculty Statement Proposal (Ginger Williams)

- i. When I read about an allegation about someone in the President's Office using derogatory language to refer to minorities, I thought it was just an allegation. As I read in the Johnsonian and the Rock Hill Herald and other publications, these weren't allegations. On 2 separate occasions, someone in the president's office, in a public facing role, used derogatory language. I'm in disbelief. I've talked to

the Provost about this one-on-one, I've written FCUP questions and statements that haven't been answered. I don't know what else to do, so I've written this statement. It is incumbent on the faculty to state what we believe in, and state that we do not believe in racism in the workplace. I would ask that you approve this:

We, the faculty at Winthrop University, wish to be on record stating that we believe in the values of equality, inclusivity, and diversity. We are proud that our university is one of the most public universities in the state of South Carolina. In order to uphold these values, it is important that all employees be held accountable for their words and action in the workplace. We believe that those employees that use derogatory language with regard to racial minorities and other protected classes, should face consequences commensurate with the severity of their actions. At Winthrop University, it's everyone's responsibility to ensure that the place we work is an affirming and inclusive environment.

Greg Bell: This is an issue that I've heard about from people outside of Winthrop who have read about it in the paper. I know that Winthrop is going through legal processes, but I'd like to say in support of Ginger that I agree that this is something we should be saying firmly. I've just had to do the trainings where I'm being told these same things, so it's not a surprising statement. You're supposed to speak out when you hear other people using derogatory language.

Jennifer Disney: I echo my support. I like this statement because it's about what the faculty value. It doesn't have anything to do with what is going on in litigation, it's about what we value. Thank you coming forward and for your courage.

Q: What happens next?

A: We will close discussion and I'll ask you to vote. What happens after that, I don't know.

Ginger: I think we need to have discussions about this. Not a lot of people want to talk about this for a lot of reasons. There are changes on the horizon, departments are worried about budgets being cut. I would like to spend some time thinking about what we do next, and it would be great if the President could be here with us because he needs to be in on this discussion with us?

Q: Once we adopt it, where will it be archived?

A: It will be archived in the minutes and the FC archive.

Jo Koster: If faculty conference adopt this, would you consider including it in your next report to the Board?

A: Yes.

- i. Motion to adopt this statement as a faculty
- 1. Motion carries

21. Announcements

- a. Julie Orum: Team of people working on Interdisciplinary Conference on Migration: Feb 25-27, 2027. Invite oral, posters, and artistic abstracts. Have secured a keynote speaker.
- b. Commencement: 2 ceremonies, both on Saturday
 - i. Recognizing distinguished faculty at the afternoon graduation
 - ii. Alum will be speaking at both ceremonies.

- c. Kristin Wunderlich: Gina, we're going to fall apart without you. Someone who has been instrumental to our institution is retiring this year, Dr. Jo Koster. You have made all of our lives better. Thank you.
- d. Next faculty conference is sometime in August.

22. Adjournment, 3:43pm

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