



MINUTES
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025
3:05 P.M.

Regular Session

The regular session of the 2024-25 Faculty Senate was held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025. Faculty Senate President Bridgett Birmingham presided.

The following members attended the Senate meeting:

G. Adams, M. Akiba, R. Atkinson, M. Augustyn, S. Ballas, A. Barbu, M. Bosworth, M. Bourassa, J. Broome, D. Broxterman, M. Buchler, M. Bukoski, J. Calhoun, I. Chiorescu, W. Christiansen, B. Coggeshall, J. Cogle, C. Culjat, R. Duarte, M. Duncan, D. Eccles, N. Everhart, A. Fahim, M. Feulner, J. Fiorito, R. Goodman, T. Graban, J. Guan, S. Haiduc, J. Hamilton, K. Hanson, P. Hoeflich, C. Hofacker, R. Hughes, K. Jones, T. Kellison, M. Killian, E. Kim, T. Ledermann, L. Lee, A. Lemmon, T. Liu, S. Metcalfe, S. Miller, C. Moore, K. Ogle, J. Ohlin, C. Parker-Flynn, L. Perez-Felkner, E. Peters, M. Porter, M. Ransdell, T. Rhynard, R. Roberts, L. Rodgers, N. Rogers, E. Ryan, Q. Sang, D. Smith, J. Sobanjo, T. Soldat-Jaffe, T. Somasundaram, G. Springer, G. Stanwood, J. Steiner, M. Therrien, D. Thoms, R. Tomko, G. Tyson, C. Uejio, A. Volya, S. Wasman, Q. Yin, M. Zhang, Y. Zhou.

The following members were absent. Alternates are listed in parenthesis:

T. Adams, D. Armstrong, A. Atwood, D. Bish, W. Butler, E. Chicken (A. F. Barrientos), M. Day, A. DeGriorgi, M. Delp, N. Ennis, M. Fuentes, W. Hanley, P. Hiver, H. Kern, K. Killian, K. Lee, S. Lester, D. March, P. Maurette, A. McKenna, T. Needham, J. Proffitt, I. Quinn, P. Renfro, L. Rinaman, M. Roper, P. Sanyal, S. Singh, M. Swanbrow Becker, R. Sweat, A. Thomas, S. Valisa (M. Goldmark), G. Wang, S. Zane (G. Pesta).

I. Call to order

II. Approval of the agenda, March 19, 2025 meeting

The agenda was approved as distributed.

III. Approval of the minutes, February 19, 2025 meeting

The February minutes were approved as distributed.

IV. Report of the Steering Committee – Roxanne Hughes

- Roxanne Hughes communicated that the committee is aware of the stressful time for many in higher education due to policy changes and uncertainty around federal and state initiatives.
 - The committee affirms their support of their colleagues, students, and disciplines as well as the core university values.
- The Steering Committee discussed issues brought forth by faculty senators, including clarifications on ICE agents in classrooms, recent arrests and threatened deportations of protesters, and FSU website pages being reviewed.
- It was noted that the meeting was conducted via the Zoom platform to allow for more participation.
- The FSU administration wants to include faculty voices and is forming committees for more faculty input on issues like website reviews and general education courses.

V. Announcements of the President of the University

- Provost Clark attended in place of President McCullough.
- Provost Clark acknowledged the faculty input and the idea generation session.
- Provost Clark mentioned he met with the Core FSU committee, and they had a productive discussion about the recent events that universities have been facing.
- Provost Clark reported on the successful Board of Trustees session regarding promotion and tenure, where the Board of Trustees approved the 2025 tenure cohort, an impressive group that attracted more than \$63 million in external research support, taught over 500 courses reaching more than 25,000 students, and garnered one or more national or international honors and awards.
- A new AI website (ai.fsu.edu) has been created to gather resources, guidelines, news, and events.
- Academic integrity and generative AI are being addressed, with less than 10% of academic integrity cases currently involving generative AI.
- Instructors should explicitly state in course syllabi when the use of gen AI is appropriate or not allowed.
- The university admitted an incredible group of students with 85,808 applications for 6,000 freshman positions, an 8.1% increase. The total admit rate was around 33%, with approximately 19,700 admits. The incoming class is drawn from across the country and around the world, including all 67 Florida counties, all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and 50 countries. The admitted student profile reflects the academic excellence of the university, with the middle 50% having a core GPA ranging from 4.2 to 4.6, ACT scores from 30 to 33, and SAT scores from 1340 to 1450; 25% of the incoming freshmen had even higher scores.
- Graduate admission numbers are up over this point in time from last year increasing by 4%, and admissions are up 13%, which can be attributed to improvements in the review process for graduate portfolios.
- **Bridget Birmingham, Faculty Senate President** – asked for an update or a timeline on the VP for Faculty Development and Advancement search.
 - Provost Clark replied that the search for the VP for Faculty Development Advancement is ongoing, with three finalists identified. The president is currently reviewing the findings of the search committee, and a final decision is expected within the next 7 to 10 days, after which an offer will be made to the top candidate.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts and Sciences** – asked if departments will be notified that their websites are being assessed and or changed?
 - Provost Clark replied that the department websites are being assessed for outdated or illegal communications, and departments and deans are being informed. The university is working closely with departments and their IT and communications personnel in this process.
- **Robin Goodman, Arts and Sciences** - asked about university administrations uniting to strategize in response to political problems affecting higher education, referencing the "scary destruction" at universities like Columbia and Johns Hopkins, and if Provost Clark had been involved in conversations with other universities.
 - Provost Clark discussed the need for universities to unite and strategize in response to political problems affecting higher education and mentioned ongoing discussions with other universities and the Board of Governors.
- No more questions or discussion posed.

VI. Reports of standing committees

a. CoreFSU Policy Committee – Jim Fadool (addendum 1)

- Jim Fadool presented a proposal to move the ethics requirement from the general education requirement to the university-wide requirements.
- The committee contends that this relocation would better serve the educational needs of students. Currently, students can fulfill this requirement with a 2000-level course, often taken during their freshman or sophomore year.

- The committee proposes making it a 3000-level course, typically taken in the junior or senior year, ensuring students possess the maturity and experience necessary for a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts and Sciences** – asked for clarification about a specific point in the proposal: "I wonder if you could explain the penultimate bullet point under rationale and benefits in the document that was circulated to us. It starts with 'if includes a writing designation...'"
 - J. Fadool explained that the proposal addresses a rule about writing requirements: a course with a writing designation can only fulfill one writing requirement, preventing "double dipping." However, courses meeting university-wide requirements can combine a writing requirement with another competency, like oral communication.
 - T. Graban requested that the proposal be amended to include a clearer explanation of this bullet point.
 - J. Fadool agreed to the friendly amendment to include a clearer explanation of the bullet point in the proposal.
- **Robin Goodman, Arts and Sciences** - asked if the committee considered the potential impact on transfer students, particularly those coming from community colleges?
 - J. Fadool stated that the committee had discussed the potential impact of the proposal on transfer students, believing the transition would be smooth since most transfer students have already met their general education requirements. He added that the university is prepared to support any transfer students who may need to take the 3000-level ethics course.
- **Gary Tyson, Arts and Sciences** - is concerned about the potential impact of the proposal on departments like engineering and computer science, which have limited to three-credit-hour courses. He worries about increased student loads and potential delays in graduation. He asks if the committee has considered this impact and collaborated with these departments.
 - J. Fadool acknowledged the concerns, stating that Biology also faces challenges with student course loads. He recognized the need to move forward with changes but emphasized the importance of informing departments to avoid surprising them. While believing a workaround is possible, he expressed concern for departments like engineering, which are heavily constrained. He noted that Michelle Barrett from engineering is on the committee and believes engineering can manage the changes.
- No more questions or discussion posed.
- President Birmingham moved to vote.
 - 69 approved, 2 did not approve, and 3 abstained
 - The motion passes.

VII. Unfinished business

- No announcements.

VIII. New Business

a. Open Forum discussion

- President Birmingham opened the floor for open forum discussion. This item was added to the agenda in response to campus feedback requesting a space for senators to share comments, perspectives, and concerns.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts & Sciences** - raised concerns about uncertainty in the current political climate and expressed the ongoing apprehension among faculty, particularly in the humanities, regarding their teaching and research. Graban emphasized that while faculty have not been explicitly told to alter their work, the lack of clear guidance has contributed to unease across disciplines.
 - Provost Clark responded by outlining the distinction between Florida universities and institutions currently under federal scrutiny. He noted that the federal government has primarily focused on issues such as race-based admissions practices, DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) infrastructures, and identity-based hiring policies.

He explained these practices have already been addressed in Florida through legislation and BOG regulations. He stated that Florida universities, including FSU, have undergone rigorous financial and content audits and that there have been no directives to halt or alter any academic programs or research areas at FSU. He also addressed the recent federal focus on institutions with significant student debt and large endowments. He clarified that FSU maintains low debt rates for students and does not fall within that category of concern.

- **Kay Jones, Arts & Sciences** - spoke to the recent wave of cancellations of NIH fellowships and student training grants occurring at other institutions. She expressed concern about the implications for FSU graduate students and asked whether similar cancellations had occurred at FSU.
 - Provost Clark responded that the university is aware of the cancellations at other institutions and is monitoring the situation closely. He added that, to date, FSU has not received any notifications or indications that its training or fellowship programs are at risk.
 - Vice President Stacey Patterson confirmed that her office continues to track all developments regarding federal grant policy changes and stop-work orders. She encouraged faculty to reach out to the Office of Research with questions or to report concerns, particularly if they receive any unusual communication from federal agencies.
- **Carli Culjat, Nursing** - raised a concern regarding the emotional impact that recent policy developments are having on minority faculty. She noted that for many faculty, their teaching and research are deeply personal, and this moment carries a unique burden and emotional toll. She asked whether FSU is doing enough to acknowledge and address these concerns.
 - Provost Clark responded by affirming that the administration is aware of these issues and is actively engaged in conversations with affected faculty groups, including those led by Hispanic faculty. He emphasized that the university is committed to supporting all faculty members, especially those who may be disproportionately affected by recent changes.
- **Robert Atkinson, Law** - shared reflections on the national discourse around higher education and its effect on faculty. He noted growing public skepticism toward academic institutions and expertise. Atkinson described how this environment may make it harder for faculty, especially junior faculty, to teach and speak freely. He shared that he felt hesitant to raise his concerns even in the Senate meeting and emphasized that it is a serious problem when faculty feel this way. He referenced his own experience teaching jurisprudence, including topics such as critical race theory, and underscored the importance of continuing to engage students in these subjects as part of a comprehensive legal education.
- **Tarez Graban, Arts & Sciences** – shared that faculty have experienced concerns that the Faculty Senate isn't doing enough or that they would like us to say something.
- **Kay Jones, Arts & Sciences** – added that the current concerns should not be viewed as limited to the humanities or law. She shared that in her department (Biology), faculty are also experiencing uncertainty, especially in areas related to vaccination and research climate. Jones emphasized that these topics, while grounded in science, have become targets of scrutiny, and that her colleagues are feeling the effects of the broader academic and political environment.
- **Lara Pérez-Felkner, Education, Health, and Human Sciences** – spoke as a representative of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences and her affiliated programs in sociology and higher education. She shared her perspective as a Latina faculty member and noted that many support networks that once served faculty—such as the Latinx Faculty Network and the President's Council for Inclusive Excellence—have not been meeting regularly. She emphasized the importance of community and small-group connections, especially for new faculty who joined during or after COVID and may not have established strong campus ties. She expressed appreciation for the work being done by university leadership, including both visible efforts and those that prevent issues from escalating, but acknowledged that some departments are feeling increasing pressure and stress.

- **Vice Chair Roxanne Hughes, Natl High Magnetic Field Lab** – affirmed the comments shared by her colleagues and emphasized the particular concern she has heard from graduate students. She noted that students are unsure whether they should pivot their research and expressed anxiety about the implications for presenting their work and securing funding. Hughes explained that these concerns also impact faculty who mentor graduate students, as questions arise about whether students can continue pursuing their current topics, apply for conference travel, and access professional opportunities. She acknowledged the weight of these concerns and described them as one of the biggest challenges she has heard consistently from faculty and students during this period.
- **Rob Duarte, Fine Arts** – echoed concerns raised by other senators and noted that some faculty in his department feel the Senate has not been visible or vocal enough in addressing the current political environment. He emphasized that expectations vary across departments, but that some faculty are looking to the Senate to take clearer positions or actions. Duarte also shared concerns for faculty and students facing international challenges, citing a recent experience at CERN where scientists were treating the situation as a full emergency. He mentioned an FSU trans student and a faculty colleague from Iran who felt particularly vulnerable. Duarte noted that communications among affected scholars had “gone underground,” with encrypted messaging apps like Signal becoming the norm. He expressed that he does not feel safe asking certain questions via FSU email and feels hesitant to advise others—especially international scholars—to communicate through official university channels. He asked whether the university had any guidance or plans for secure, inclusive communication strategies in this climate.
 - Provost Clark responded by stating that he is open to having further discussions and encouraged faculty to contact him directly. He noted that he has already had individual conversations with some faculty and welcomes others who would like to talk.
- **President Birmingham** – shared that she had spoken with an international graduate student who was afraid to return home out of concern they might not be allowed back into the U.S. to complete their studies. She acknowledged that she didn’t feel well-informed on how best to support students experiencing that level of uncertainty or fear. She asked whether there had been discussion about providing faculty with more information or guidance on how to assist students who feel unsafe or need support
 - Vice President Janet Kistner responded by recommending that international students who are experiencing uncertainty or fear about travel and reentry should connect with FSU’s Center for Global Engagement.
 - VP Patterson followed up by stating that, like the senator mentioned, CERN was treating the situation as an emergency. She assured the Senate that FSU leadership is also approaching the broader challenges facing academia as an emergency. Patterson emphasized that they are focused on controlling what they can control and are committed to doing everything within their power to support faculty and students during this time.
- **Arash Fahim, Arts and Sciences** - offered encouragement to colleagues who may be struggling during this uncertain time. He acknowledged that the mathematics department has so far been less directly affected, but many others have faced far more significant challenges. Fahim shared that, as someone originally from Iran, he sees parallels between the current difficulties in U.S. higher education and what scholars in Iran experience daily. He expressed hope that the situation in the U.S. will not follow that same path and closed by wishing everyone well.
- **President Birmingham** – acknowledged that the open forum may have been an uncomfortable space for some to share publicly and reminded senators that they represent colleagues who may prefer to give feedback through other channels. She encouraged faculty to reach out directly to President McCullough, Provost Clark, and VP Patterson to share concerns or ask questions. She also gently recommended in-person conversations over email when discussing sensitive matters.
- **Stacey Patterson, VP Office of Research** - announced that an in-person open forum would be held on Friday morning at the College of Medicine for faculty who may prefer to speak in that setting. She added that while there may not be new information to share, the university leadership values hearing directly from faculty to better understand and address their needs.

- **President Birmingham** – closed the Open Forum by asking whether any Fulbright scholarships at FSU had been canceled. She shared colleagues at the University of Florida had informed her that 15 out of 58 Fulbright awards had recently been rescinded and wondered if similar cancellations had occurred at FSU. In response, it was clarified that no cancellations had been reported at FSU for faculty Fulbright's, and there had been no specific updates regarding student awards.
 - Vice President Janet Kistner responded that she was not aware of any Fulbright cancellations at FSU as of that date. She clarified that several faculties had been awarded Fulbright's recently and that, to her knowledge, none had been rescinded. She was unable to speak about the status of student Fulbright awards, as that information falls outside her area.
- No more questions or discussion posed.

IX. Special orders

- No special orders.

X. University welfare

a. Faculty Union – Robin Goodman, United Faculty of Florida

- **Robin Goodman, Arts and Sciences** - reported that union membership had reached 56% as of that day and expressed concern about the risks of falling below the required threshold for certification. Goodman emphasized that the union's collective bargaining agreement protects essential faculty rights such as academic freedom and anti-discrimination provisions. She encouraged senators to join the union and to speak with colleagues about the importance of membership.
- She noted that bargaining had recently begun and summarized several key areas of negotiation. These included expanding parental leave to broader family leave, addressing sudden increases in class sizes without proper recognition of workload, and revising the performance evaluation article to address third-party analytics in tenure and promotion. The union is also working to ensure consistent procedures for post-tenure review across colleges.
- She shared that the union is involved in active litigation, including a case in partnership with the ACLU with a first hearing scheduled for March 31st. The case challenges the state's arbitration ban, and a federal hearing is expected in October. Lastly, she addressed the viewpoint and intellectual diversity survey being distributed statewide, stating that the state office of the union has advised faculty not to engage with the survey due to concerns about its design, lack of approval, and past data suppression.
- **Kathryn Jones, Arts & Sciences** - asked why the union was advising faculty not to participate in the state's viewpoint and intellectual diversity survey. The senator referenced past survey results that showed faculty reported a greater fear of feeling "muzzled" than students and questioned whether disengaging from the survey was the appropriate approach.
 - R. Goodman responded that the survey included politically charged and leading questions—such as whether a respondent could be friends with someone who supported Donald Trump—which she stated were inappropriate for a state-administered instrument. She noted that the survey had not gone through typical research review protocols, and that past results had not been publicly released due to low response rates and potentially unfavorable outcomes. She reiterated the union's position, shared by its state leadership, that the survey lacks validity and should not be endorsed through participation.
- **Robert Atkinson, Law** - commented on the importance of national coordination among higher education unions and asked if the state-level efforts were aligned with broader movements.
 - R. Goodman confirmed that UFF-FSU regularly meets with affiliates across the state and nation. She also mentioned a developing effort called the Higher Education Labor Union (HELU), aimed at organizing a national union focused exclusively on higher education. HELU has been building partnerships with the AAUP and major national education unions such as the NEA and AFT. She noted that these movements have

gained traction in response to ongoing attacks on institutions of higher learning and stressed the importance of shared interests across universities.

- No more questions or discussion posed.

XI. Announcements of deans and other administrative officers

- VP Kistner echoed Provost Clark's earlier remarks regarding the strength of this year's cohort of promotion and tenure candidates. It was also noted that specialist faculty promotions were progressing, though at a slightly slower pace due to recent events. Final decisions were expected before the end of the month.
- No more announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:45 P.M.

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**NEXT FACULTY SENATE MEETING
APRIL 16, 2025, 3:05PM, ZOOM**

Roxanne Hughes

Faculty Senate President, 9/23/25

Proposal to move Ethics from the General Education Requirements to University-Wide Requirements

Proposal:

Move the Ethics requirement from General Education to University-Wide requirements. Students would still be required to satisfactorily complete one approved Ethics Course.

Context:

Current General Education Requirement

Humanities and Cultural Practice/Ethics: Students must complete at least six semester hours in the combined area of Humanities and Cultural Practice and Ethics, of which at least three semester hours must be chosen from the combined Statewide Core requirement list. Students must complete at least one Humanities and Cultural Practice course and one Ethics course.

Credit hours:

- General Education courses should not be less than 3 credit hours. (This does not include 1-credit labs.)
- Variable credit hour courses should have a clear justification (ex: internship, seminar with rotating topics).

History:

The FSU Ethics requirement was established as a General Education requirement in 2015-16 as part of **Ethics and Social Responsibility** within the Liberal Studies for the 21st Century framework.

Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate various ethical positions.
2. Describe the ways in which historical, social, cultural or professional contexts shape ethical perspectives.

Proposed Requirement:

Ethics Student will complete one approved course with an Ethics designation with a grade of "C-" or higher. *

*Students who have completed an AA degree from an articulated institution (including those who have completed a high school AA degree from an articulated institution) will be considered to have completed the Ethics Requirement.

The learning objectives and the course approval process will not change.

The updated Humanities and Cultural Practice/Ethics requirement would become:

Humanities and Cultural Practice

Students must complete 6 credit hours in Humanities and Cultural Practice, of which at least 3 credits will be chosen from the statewide core course list.

Rationale and Benefits:

- In the continuing effort to make the FSU General Education requirements consistent with the Statewide Core requirements, the LSCPC proposes to move the Ethics Requirement to University-Wide requirements.
- As a University-Wide requirement, academic units would have greater flexibility to offer or require a specific course in their program of studies or major requirements.
- As a University-Wide requirement, approved courses may be offered at the 1000, 2000, 3000, or 4000 level.
- Credit hours:
 - 1. Graduation Requirement courses can be less than 3 credit hours if desired.
 - 2. State-Mandated Writing courses cannot be less than 3 credit hours.
- Ethics can be combined with any General Education designation.
- Ethics can be combined with any of the University Wide Graduation Requirements.
- If includes a writing designation the course can only fulfill one type of Writing requirement. A course may be E-Series/State-Mandated Writing “W” or Upper-Division Writing.
- Courses approved to meet the current Ethics General Education requirement would automatically be approved to meet the new University-Wide requirement.

Effective Date, Implementation Implications, and Strategy:

The proposed change would become official beginning Fall 2025.

Because the proposed change allows for courses approved for the General Education requirement to meet the new University-Wide requirement, there would be minimal, if any, impact on academic units.

Current students who have successfully passed approved courses meeting the Ethics Requirement will have that credit applied towards their Graduation Requirement.

The CoreFSU office would work with Advising First and the Council of Academic Affairs Deans to ensure advisors are aware of the revision and that appropriate publications (General Bulletin, It’s All Academic, etc.) and websites reflect accurate information.