

Faculty Senate Notes

March 7, 2025, 3 - 5 PM

Location: Egan Library 211

And via Zoom

Brian Blitz, President	x	Charmaine Lewis, Natural Sciences	x
*Glenn Wright, Past President	(see SS)	*Glenn Wright, Social Sciences	x
Ali Ziegler, President-Elect	x	Jennifer Ward, Library	x
Mike Boyer, Business	x	X'unei Lance Twitchell, Juneau	x
Trevor Fritz for Robin Gilcrist, Career Ed	x	Joel Markis, Sitka	x
Kevin Spink, Education	x	Kasia Polanska, Ketchikan	x
Andrea Dewees, Humanities	x	Carin Silkaitis, Interim Provost	x

Guests: T. Bell, E. Price

- I. **Call to order 3 PM** – (3:06)
- II. **Roll call** – (3:06) T. Fritz is representing Career Education for R. Gilcrist today.
- III. **Approval of agenda** – (3:07) President Blitz noted that the discussion about the Board of Regents (BOR) motion will be moved up in the order of today's agenda. *A. Dewees moved to approve the agenda. L. Twitchell seconded. The motion passed without objection.*
- IV. **Approval of [February minutes](#)** – (3:07) *J. Ward moved to approve the prior meeting minutes. L. Twitchell seconded. The motion passed without objection.*
- V. **Announcements/Questions/Guests: Evan Price (Safety Committee)** – (3:08)

J. Ward announced that United Academics sent out a petition for signature regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and academic freedom that closes at 4:00 today. It will be presented to the BOR. Further information can be found in an email to faculty.

Health and Safety Officer E. Price led a discussion regarding past and future iterations of the UAS Safety Committee. He is soliciting input on the priorities of Faculty Senate (FS) for such a committee, including which faculty members should be on it. This group will serve all three campuses. Suggested priorities included disaster response training, chemical storage safety, field trip safety, among others. Potential committee members were discussed. E. Price noted that the Emergency Manager position is vacant and needs to be hired. He hopes to have the Safety Committee identified and ready to start meeting as early as April.
- VI. **Board of Regents (BOR motion).** – (3:21) B. Blitz opened the discussion on the recently enacted [motion by the BOR](#) regarding removal of the terms “affirmative action”, “DEI”, “diversity”, “equity”, and “inclusion” from university websites, titles, and materials. Interim Provost Silkaitis described the efforts undertaken so far by the UAS Executive Cabinet to comply with this directive. A preliminary inventory of the website has been

conducted. Currently there are 165 identified instances where changes may be needed. A shared governance committee could help review those pages and suggest alternate language. The work to change individual webpages will need to be approved by the head of the corresponding unit and assigned to the person responsible for updating that web page.

With regard to an ad hoc committee to assist with the implementation (agenda item V1.B.), FS leaders and the provost have had a preliminary discussion about the composition of such a group. C. Silkaitis reiterated that a secondary approver such as a dean would need to approve and assign the task of making changes.

Senators discussed the many painful challenges the BOR motion has presented and the pros and cons of moving forward to implement changes. Academic freedom and protections of free speech under the law were discussed. While some wanted to participate in order to make sure the changes are made with minimal disruption, others did not want to comply due to disagreement with the policy. It was affirmed that a person from each academic unit could serve on the committee. The need for staff representation, especially from the registrar's office, was noted. The work should begin right after spring break. It may go quickly if there are instances where one word can be substituted for another word multiple times. The powerful voice that union protected, tenured faculty members possess was stated.

L. Twitchell moved that faculty participate in such a committee, determine what language needs to change, determine how changes should happen, and advocate for the archiving of the changed pages so that they could be restored in the future. A. Dewees seconded the first part of the motion – to make a committee that recommends proposed changes.

After further discussion and awareness of the quick turnaround time required, *L. Twitchell amended the motion so as to authorize a committee to move forward with getting in compliance with minimal impact to the UAS mission and vision as a student serving institution and granting authority to the FS president to approve committee members. A. Dewees and G. Wright seconded. The motion passed with a simple majority. B. Blitz asked senators to share the need for committee members and have interested parties contact him by March 21.*

L. Twitchell moved that senate prepare a protest letter to the BOR. G. Wright seconded. Discussion ensued regarding the content and intent of the letter. This included concerns about student learning conditions, faculty working conditions, distraction from our mission at an important time in the academic year, and concerns that the action was not legal. Senators also discussed the related UAS resolution passed at the February senate meeting, the draft resolution from UAF, and engaging FA to take the lead in addressing this with the BOR. It was suggested that the letter voice support for the student regent who was the lone vote against the motion. *L. Twitchell could create a draft that could be shared with senators. After discussion, the motion to draft a letter passed.*

- A. **Here is a draft resolution from UAF Faculty Senate** – (4:13) *J. Markis moved to endorse the UAF draft resolution asking for the BOR to rescind the recently passed motion. M. Boyer seconded. The motion passed. B. Blitz will share this endorsement with Faculty Alliance (FA).*
 - B. **Create an ad hoc implementation committee. (Glenn)** – *(See discussion above.)*
- VII. **Curriculum Committee [Report Feb 21](#):** –
 - A. **Initial Approval**
 - 1. **WELD 275** – (4:16) *J. Ward moved to approve the proposal for initial senate review. J. Markis seconded. The proposal passed initial senate approval without objection.*
 - B. **Final Approval**
 - 1. **Outer Coast (OC) courses ([spreadsheet with all the courses](#), [current MOA](#))** – (4:18) President Blitz noted that an additional MOA will be needed if OC courses are to be transferred to UAS and asked if anything additional was needed before the courses were approved. Written confirmation that OC will be required to do the related assessment work is still needed. Sitka requests better communication and clarification about the benefits of UAS’s relationship with OC. L. Twitchell shared historical information about OC. No action was taken on the courses pending further information on the items discussed.
 - 2. **Environmental Studies B.A.** – (4:28) *J. Ward moved to approve the proposal for final senate approval. K. Spink seconded. The proposal passed final senate approval without objection.*
 - 3. **Special Education B.A.** – (4:29) With regard to the Praxis II exam, K. Spink articulated the distinction between the educational attainment an academic degree confers versus a professional exam for licensure that may be required by a state agency. L. Twitchell moved to approve the proposal for final senate approval. J. Markis seconded. The proposal passed final senate approval without objection.
 - 4. **ANTH 455** – (4:36) *J. Markis moved to approve the proposal for final senate approval. J. Ward seconded. The proposal passed final senate approval without objection.*
- VIII. **Old Business**
 - A. **[Handbook edits \(part 1\)](#) and [list of changes](#). Strikethrough for deletions, red text for additions. (vote)** – (4:37) *J. Ward moved to approve the list of handbook edits with an additional correction of a typo on page 48. L. Twitchell seconded. The motion passed with no objections.*
 - B. **[Humanities proposal concerning A.A.S. degree requirements](#). (Andrea)** – (4:41) A. Dewees noted that the curriculum proposal that triggered this topic has been revised, therefore this issue is no longer time sensitive. UAS does not have articulated minimum requirements for AAS degrees as UAA and UAF have. T. Bell joined the discussion to explain that her program has an increasing number of courses and credits to meet the evolving needs of specialized accreditation. Many Health Information Management (HIM) programs around the country have dropped a second writing course as a way to keep the credit load manageable,

affordable, and competitive while meeting industry standards. Senators discussed the unique need in this program and ways to best move forward as the change would be beneficial to the HIM program. *J. Markis requested that the item be tabled to a future meeting when more information is available.*

IX. New Business

A. [BoR motion](#). *[Discussed earlier. See item VI.]*

1. Here is a [draft resolution](#) from UAF Faculty Senate
2. Create an ad hoc implementation committee. (Glenn)

B. Course Substitution form (Robin) – (4:51) Not discussed.

C. Blackboard original vs. Ultra (Mike) – (4:51) M. Boyer recently learned that our current contract with BlackBoard expires in June. He hopes that the new Chief Information Officer will be better at sharing important information like this.

D. Open Enrollment dates and Student Course Ratings (Joel) – (4:52) J. Markis noted that the dates for open enrollment, April 15-May 3, are extremely difficult for faculty. He is asking that this concern be shared with statewide in hopes that faculty could have adequate time to review the options. *B. Blitz will bring this to FA to see if others are interested in supporting this change.*

J. Markis would also like to see more flexibility to extend the timeline for student course ratings in the hope of getting better return rates. Whether the whole system should be revamped was mentioned. *Senators were asked to bring this to their units to see if there is interest in making changes.*

X. FS President's Report:

A. Faculty Senate President Elect (any nominations for next year?) – (4:59) B. Blitz noted that the nomination period is open now through the end of March.

B. Faculty Initiative Fund: need reviewers for Fall 2025– (4:59) Please let President Blitz know of anyone interested in this opportunity.

C. Faculty Time Off (FTO): Save your department's budget by taking all of your FTO. Cash out some if you want ([FTO Cash-in form](#), [Faculty Time Off FAQs](#)). The point is that if you have any FTO left on May 10th, then Statewide gets the money. – (5:00)

XI. Faculty Alliance (FA) Report: Met with 49 legislators individually to discuss our [Legislative Priorities](#) – (5:00)

XII. Interim Provost's Report – None.

XIII. Committee Reports

A. CELT report: Faculty Representation on CELT.

1. The following message was sent to faculty: "The UAS Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is seeking faculty representatives from the School of Career Ed; School of Education; Library; Ketchikan campus; Sitka campus; and the Departments of BPA, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, for FY 25-26 academic year to help shape faculty development initiatives and support innovative teaching and learning. Representatives meet with the CELT team for 1 hour every other week (typically on Monday's) to collaborate on programming and share faculty perspectives. We encourage participation from faculty across all units,

though representation from every unit is not mandatory. Please direct any questions to uas.celt@alaska.edu. Selection of faculty representatives will be handled within each unit." – (5:00)

2. **CELT Liaison to Faculty Senate.** The Liaison position was created several years ago when the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) was established. As CELT has evolved to include more faculty, due to the folding of TLTR into CELT, most of the duties expected of the Liaison are no longer required or are shared by all faculty members serving on CELT. As such, we recommend that the Liaison position be retired, and an annual reminder be sent to faculty about service on CELT (see above).
3. CELT will add the preparation of the monthly report to FS as a standing item on the agenda. As necessary, a CELT member will coordinate with the FS President about items requiring FS approval.

B. Graduate Committee: – No report.

C. Research and Creative Activity: The RCAC website is in the process of moving from the School of Arts & Sciences to the Provost Office, and will soon post the UAS policy, standards and guidelines for undergraduate research ethics.

D. Sustainability Committee: Gearing up for Earth Day 2025 (April 22).

XIV. **Adjournment.** No later than 5 PM ish – (5:01) *M. Boyer moved to adjourn the meeting. J. Ward seconded. The meeting adjourned with unanimous consent.*

Next Meetings: April 4, May 2