

General Assembly, 25 September 2026

In attendance: Darrel Malamisura, Vincent Mateescu, Billy Davis, Vanessa Godfrey, Darrell Thompson, Betty Nash, Amanda Quesenberry, Tina Nicholson, Julie Orr, Bill Bennett, Katherine St. Clair, Tara Mullins, Terene Stiltner, Ethan Harvey, Sarah Keffer, Ainur Kenzhetaeva, Shelia Sargent-Martin, Adrian Ayersman, Angela Lambert, Sudhakar Jamkhandi, Jeff Yeager, Charlie Chen, Young Kim, Rod Montague, Jack Sheffler, James Wynn, Kristin Hicks, Bonnie Reese, Albert Berkoh, Ashish Patel, Collin McGee

Meeting called to order at: 3:04 pm

Approval of minutes: A motion to approve minutes from the previous meeting was made at 3:05 pm. Jeff Yeager motioned and Julie Orr seconded. Motion passed via acclamation.

Overload pay

Early in the meeting, Jack gave an update on overload pay. He said HR was working on it, but payroll software issues and staff turnover in HR were causing delays. Darrel described his own payroll contract issue, saying the administration had tried to split his overload into two contracts with different dates, which he rejected and sent back for correction. The group then clarified who was in HR, with Kristin identifying Caroline Dixon as director and Morgan Comer as the assistant.

Board interim update

The conversation shifted to interim leadership and the administrative hiring process. Jack said the institution was waiting for the department/administration to start candidates for an interim position, but no criteria had been shared. Darrel explained that, historically, administrative hires involved a committee and faculty input, but current policy no longer requires that. He argued the general faculty should push for representation on search committees for administrative positions so that there is documentation and accountability rather than decisions being made only by the president or board. He also noted that the interim could potentially later become a permanent applicant, which he viewed as a conflict risk.

Student representation on the BOG

The student representative issue came up next. Vincent noted that the board website listed the student representative as TBD even though the current year had already begun. Jack said the representative existed but might not be listed correctly. Ethan explained that the web page was likely outdated and could be fixed by emailing Charles.

Organizational chart update

The group then discussed communication problems and organizational charts. Darrel said the org chart still had outdated names and that administrative records were slow to update. Jack wanted to know who reports to whom and urged that the org chart be completed soon.

Restoring faculty input in hiring

A major portion of the meeting focused on the board president/interim president process and faculty governance. Darrel and Jack argued that administrative positions should go through a committee process, with faculty recommendations and documentation, rather than being handpicked. Darrel said he would push for a formal request to restore that process.

Communicating with the HLC

Jeffrey asked whether the HLC was aware of the institution's current situation. Darrel said the executive officers had recently met with Cathy Deeb, and faculty concerns had been clearly explained: faculty are underpaid, overworked, and burdened with administrative failures. Angela advised that the executive board talk with Sarita for clarification on HLC communications, since the board chair had reportedly already been in touch with HLC. Darrel said he would try to follow up with Cathy as well.

Stipend compensation issue

Vanessa then raised a separate compensation issue: faculty who created online courses had not received the promised stipend. Amanda confirmed she had not been paid either, and Terene said she had heard the money might only arrive as a "Christmas gift." Darrel said he would ask Jack to formally request an update from the board/president.

Concerns to discuss with the provost

Darrel said Sarita still has to meet regarding the structure of the teaching contracts. He wanted to know why the language in the contracts was changed in the first place, and he noted the previous president did not want to return to the previous contract until issues with the current contract were fixed, of which he expressed suspicion. Darrel then turned to online forms like upward evaluations and short leave forms. According to Darrel, IT rolled out a new program for the purpose of recordkeeping, only to eventually find out the program does not accomplish that goal, "which kind of defeats the purpose of what we wanted". Further, Darrel pointed out that keeping physical documents does not work either because the documents tend to be lost with the changing of deans and/or administrators. In the end, Darrel said he wants faculty to have as much control of these documents as does the administration, expressing his preference for faculty to have digital copies of documents. That way it lessens the likelihood of these documents suddenly disappearing forever.

Overload pay update

The meeting then explored the topic of the problematic practice of paying overloads based on class enrollment after attendance verification. Darrel said the current system is harmful, unethical, and likely illegal because faculty often do not receive contracts until 3–4 weeks after classes begin. He argued that contracts should go out before classes start and that full pay should not depend on arbitrary enrollment thresholds. Jack said he had experienced a similar issue in the past, even being asked to teach over Christmas break to meet contract requirements. Julie and Angela pushed back on any strategy that would hurt students, saying they could not support abandoning classes or deleting them to make a point. Darrel acknowledged that concern but insisted the current system leaves faculty with no meaningful leverage unless they file an institutional grievance, which he warned could freeze overloads and likely impact students anyway.

The pay structure in general

Others weighed in on the enrollment-based pay structure. Jeffrey said other institutions in the state send contracts in week one and sometimes pay extra when classes exceed a certain size. Vanessa suggested that faculty could refuse to attend Faculty Institute if they have no contract, but Darrel clarified that the issue is not regular load contracts; it is supplemental overload/adjunct contracts. Darrel reiterated the finding from faculty senate that the administration is saving only about \$33,000 while damaging morale and creating legal exposure. He said he may pursue an institutional grievance and possibly contact HLC and HEPC if the situation is not corrected.

Concerns about Watermark

The final major topic was Watermark, the new student learning/licensure assessment system replacing LiveText. Darrel, with Cody's help, had spent time testing it and concluded that it is more complicated, less user-friendly, and more expensive than LiveText. He said it does not integrate with Moodle as promised and requires faculty and departmental leads to manually create templates, attach rubrics, and manage records, with some tasks taking up to 72 hours. Terene, Bonnie, and others agreed that it was confusing and difficult to use, and Bonnie raised concern about yearly October 15 reporting deadlines. Darrel said many faculty would struggle to use it and some would not be able to use it at all. He suggested the institution cancel the contract and instead use Excel or Google-based solutions, which he believed could accomplish the same thing more cheaply. The group agreed to spend the next couple of weeks testing Watermark and reporting back to their Senate representatives so a final decision could be made. Finally, Vincent asked about the link to LiveText on myBSU. Darrel clarified that not only is Watermark a different link, but also a different card on myBSU altogether.

Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was submitted at 4:03 pm. Sudhakar Jamkhandi motioned and Julie Orr seconded. Motion passed via acclamation.