



Faculty Senate, 8 May 2026 at 11:00 am

In Attendance

Sarita Rhonemus, Tina Strock, Vanessa Godfrey, David Balok, Jeff Yeager, Erika Morrow, Vince Mateescu, Jack Sheffler, Cathy Deeb, Darrel Malamisura, Julie Orr, Kristin Hicks, Cody Chambers, Dharshana Arachchi, Darrin Martin, Angela Lambert, Karen Grogan, Amanda Matoushek, Bill Bennett, Albert Berkoh, Rodney Montague

Overview

Faculty Senate focused on end-of-year priorities, including strengthening academic quality, improving student retention and persistence, and better organizing institutional processes for the coming academic year. Leaders also reviewed online college expectations, RSI and accessibility compliance, SOP documentation, and the results of a no-confidence vote.

Leadership Message and Priorities for 2026–27

Sarita Rhonemus opened by thanking faculty for their service and continued engagement, especially around HLC work, and urged the Senate to keep discussions civil, respectful, and collegial. She asked the group to shift its energy toward issues with the greatest impact on students and identified six focus areas for 2026–27:

- student retention and persistence
- teaching and learning
- course quality and rigor
- student engagement and RSI
- advising
- assessment

She emphasized that the college now has access to more institutional data, including through Power BI, and said that data should be used to improve outcomes. She also said faculty concerns should still be raised, but the Senate should aim to keep the long-term focus on strong academic programs and student success.

Recognition of Progress and Institutional Direction

Darrin Martin echoed Sarita's remarks and highlighted several positive trends from the year: enrollment is up, retention is about the same, graduation rates are up, donations are up, and the institution is making progress with legislative relationships. He framed students as the institution's "product" and employers as the customers, arguing that strong academic preparation and soft skills both matter to regional and broader workforce needs.

He also noted that the university is growing and that faculty and staff should continue building the institution's footprint and external relationships. He planned to send a year-end letter after graduation that would highlight positive quantitative and qualitative developments.

Graduation and Faculty Recognition

Dr. Martin announced that graduation would be held the following Saturday and said all faculty were expected to attend. He added that emeritus status recognition would be moved to graduation itself, alongside the traditional recognition of the Faculty of the Year and 50-year graduates, so that the ceremony would publicly showcase faculty contributions in front of the larger audience.

He also reported that last night's ceremony (the SGA Awards banquet) was a strong celebration and that the registrar announced approximately 307 graduates this year, up from about 260-something the prior year.

Old Business: Handbook, SOPs, and Catalog Issues

Darrel Malamisura updated the Senate on handbook and procedure-related work. He said there would be a few tweaks to the handbook and that anything substantive would be sent out for review before implementation. A key change under discussion is renaming the Technology Committee to Technology/AI.

He also reported that a standard operating procedure committee has begun compiling written processes for common tasks. The goal is to identify areas where no written process exists, ask the relevant department how the task is done, draft a short bullet-point procedure, verify it with the department, and build a centralized SOP book for MyBSU so staff are not relying on informal phone explanations.

Darrel raised a separate problem with the online catalog: searches are defaulting to an archived catalog version, which may be causing inaccurate information to appear. Sarita said she had not personally experienced the issue but would notify Darlene to investigate. The group agreed that the problem needs attention because students will not know the difference between current and archived versions.

Old Business: Faculty Evaluation and Moodle Templates

Darrel also proposed creating separate Moodle pages for each faculty member to store promotion/tenure materials and annual evaluation materials. He said this would make the process

digital, more efficient, and less dependent on paper, and would allow committees to access only the relevant folders or pages when needed. He noted that he had spoken with Cody and that a structure could be built from the promotion-and-tenure template and the annual evaluation form.

Sarita initially said she thought the plan had already been set up the previous year, but Darrel clarified that the work still needs to be completed. The idea is to demonstrate the upload process during faculty institute so faculty can manage their documents more easily.

Committee Updates

Jeffrey Yeager reported that the AI committee will meet several times over the summer and aims to have a process ready by the beginning of the fall semester. Darrel agreed that a process, rather than a formal policy, makes sense because AI changes too quickly for static policy language.

Darrel also noted that P&T recommendations had been made and sent up to Sarita. He then explained that next year the handbook will likely be changed so that one senator sits on each standing committee, which should improve communication and reduce the need for him to track down committee information secondhand. Deans were asked to send in any final committee membership changes, recognizing that those changes will not take effect until July 1 and likely will not fully matter until Faculty Institute.

Online College, RSI, and Accessibility Compliance

Cody Chambers, Tina Strock, and Erika Morrow presented updates on the Online College and compliance requirements. Darrel explained that there has been confusion about the distinction between the Online College and regular online courses, and that the Online College is its own entity.

Cody said the institution is revising the Online College calendar so that it aligns with fall and spring schedules, with possible summer crossover because of the eight-week structure. Amanda Matoushek asked whether the new calendar would match current eight-week sessions, and Cody confirmed it would, with the main difference occurring in summer.

The group spent considerable time clarifying the Online College master-course model. Cody explained that master course shells must be generic and cannot include the instructor's likeness, name, or voice. If a faculty member teaches the course directly, their personal materials may be included, but the master shell must be suitable for use by any instructor if the course needs to be reassigned. He said if a course includes videos, those videos in the master shell cannot show the instructor's face or voice, though open-content videos can be hosted externally and linked or embedded when appropriate. He also noted that syllabi submitted in Word format can be converted using AI.

Darrel added that the distinction matters because some faculty who are paid to build master templates have been treating them like personal course spaces. Cody reiterated that the goal is for the master shell to function as a ready-to-teach template for any instructor, including adjuncts.

Cody further said that course reviews are underway because the deadline has passed, and the team will continue evaluating courses each Monday until they get through all submissions. Erika confirmed that May 31 is the deadline. The team encouraged faculty to keep working on their courses and to reach out if they need help.

Tina reminded faculty that activity completion tracking should be turned on because it supports RSI and helps students. She offered one-on-one help for anyone who needs a refresher on setting it up.

The group also discussed ADA compliance. Cody said a message would be sent out the following week explaining that all courses, not just Online College courses, will need to be compliant to avoid fines. The plan is to review every course for compliance. Darrel emphasized that faculty can contact Moodle support for help converting PowerPoints, adding notes, or handling other template issues, and that the support team can make the process much easier.

Watermark and Assessment Requirements

Darrel said Watermark rubrics need to be moved into the specific classes tied to each program's curriculum map. He stressed that this should already have been completed, but noted that he understands some departments historically did this late. He said his urgency is tied to upcoming accreditation work in the School of Business during the summer.

He also reminded deans to make sure faculty are placing course climate links in Moodle templates and checking that those links are present. He noted that some student feedback suggests the link may be allowing multiple submissions, and Sarita said she would ask Computer Services to look into it.

No-Confidence Vote Result

Darrel presented the tally from the second no-confidence vote. Based on the 46 returns, the vote passed, with roughly 56% voting yes and approximately 26% voting no and 18% abstaining, according to the rough counts discussed in the meeting. He said he would forward the result to the president and board members, along with the revised document that includes additions to the original version.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion made by Julie Orr, seconded by Vince Mateescu, and approved via acclamation.

Closing and Summer Schedule

The meeting ended with confirmation that there was a quorum, approval of the minutes, and adjournment. Darrel said the Senate would meet only twice during the summer, likely once in June and once in July, with meetings intended to be short and focused on updates.

Meeting Adjournment

Motion made by Vince Mateescu, seconded by Julie Orr, and approved via acclamation.

Meeting ended at 11:56 am