Fifty-Third Faculty Senate
Northwest Missouri State University
Full Senate Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2026
3:30 p.m.
310 Admin Building

Members in Attendance:

Officers	
☒ Luke Campbell	President
☒ Peter Adam	Vice President
☒ Cindy Tu	Parliamentarian
☒ Jesse Lane	Secretary
☒ Mike Miller	Past President
College Senators:	**Alternates:**
College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences	
☐ TBD (1st term, 1st year)	☐ TBD (1st term, 1st year)
☒ Ahmed Malkawi (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Mohammed Meziani (1st term, 1st year)
College of Arts, Communication, and Social Sciences	
☒ Kim Casey (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Brett Chloupek (1st term, 2nd year)
☒ Devlin Scofield (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Ashley Davis-Black (1st term, 1st year)
College of Business, Mathematics and Technology	
☒ Casey Abington (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Ajay Bandi (1st term, 2nd year)
☐ Laura Kauzlarich (1st term, 1st year)	☒ Tiebing Shi (1st term, 1st year)
College of Education, Health, and Human Services	
☒ Linda Gray Smith (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Joel McCormick (1st term, 2nd year)
☒ Machelle Skinner (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Shelley Hiatt (1st term, 1st year)
School Senators:	**Alternates:**
☒ **Agricultural Sciences**: Jason Holderieath (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Ronda Driskill (2nd term, 1st year)
☒ **Business:** Kyungjoong Kim (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Weiping Wu (1st term, 1st year)
☒ **Comm. and Mass Media**: John Katsion (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Adam Whiteside (1st term, 1st yr)
☒ **Computer Sci & Info Sys:** Ratan Lal (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Gary Yu Zhao (1st term, 1st yr)
☒ **Education:** Cindy Schairer-Kessler (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Travis Dimmitt (1st term, 2nd year)
☒ **Fine & Performing Arts**: Joseph Tomasso (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Rachel Day (1st term, 2nd year)
☒ **Health Sci & Well**.: Jacob Tengelsen (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Damon Leiss (1st term, 2nd year)
☒ **HSS:** Travis Surprise (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Clay Awsumb (1st term, 1st year)
☒ **LLW**: Luke Rolfes (2nd term, 2nd year)	☐ Heather Hill (1st term, 1st year)
☒ **Math and Statistics:** Taylor Harrison (1st term, 1st year)	☐ Sara Sony (1st term, 1st year)
☒ **Natural Sciences:** Luke Monroe (1st term, 2nd year)	☐ Tish Warner (1st term, 2nd year)
***Note**: An X next to the name indicates they were present	

I. **Call to Order**
   a. President Campbell called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm
II. **Approval of Agenda**
   a. Motion to approve agenda: Linda Gray Smith
      i. Seconded by Jacob Tengelsen
      ii. Approved
III. **Approval of Minutes**
   a. Motion to approve: Cindy Schairer-Kessler
      i. Seconded by Travis Surprise
      ii. Approved
IV. **Reports**

a. Special Guests
    i. Chief Amanda Cullin – UPD
        1. No report
    ii. Phillip Motazedi – President, Student Senate
        1. Student Senate President Phillip Motazedi announced that the upcoming campus blood drive is scheduled for next Tuesday and Wednesday in the Tower View Room of the Student Union, urging all members to join and participate. In response to recent campus survey data indicating that students desire higher levels of involvement, the Senate is planning a student tailgate on October 31 from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at the pickleball courts near the recreation center. To incentivize campus-wide participation, the student organization with the highest attendance at the tailgate will receive a monetary prize. Additionally, the Senate will coordinate the ringing of the bell and the raising of the flag during the upcoming Walkout Day.
        2. Student Senate is actively searching for a nontraditional representative, defined as a student who does not fall within the typical undergraduate age range. Nominations should be sent directly to President Motazedi; while the Senate is prioritizing in-person students, they are fully willing to consider online students for the position. Furthermore, Mr. Motazedi noted that Senate leadership will travel to Kansas City this coming weekend to attend an advocacy and shared governance-focused leadership conference. A full report on the conference proceedings will subsequently be provided to the Faculty Senate.
        3. On administrative matters, Mr. Motazedi reported that he is meeting regularly with the Northwest Leadership Team (NLT) and working closely with top administrators to ensure Student Senate initiatives align smoothly with university leadership. As part of this collaborative effort, he is working alongside Stacy Carrick to thoroughly review and understand university budgets and funding structures. Finally, Mr. Motazedi extended an open invitation to the campus community, requesting that any Faculty Senate committee requiring student attendance or seeking student assistance get in touch with him directly to coordinate representation.
    iii. Ms. Krista Barcus – Vice-President of Culture
        1. No report
    iv. Dr. Tyler Tapps - Associate Provost, Academic Operations and Assessment
        1. Dr. Tapps was unable to attend. However, he submitted the following report: The university is looking at an electrical shutdown for 8-12 hours due to a contractor damaging an important electrical line during the power plant take down project. The project planning team is looking at November 27 (the Friday after Thanksgiving) and Saturday November 28 as a backup day. There will be a university communication coming out when we finalize details with the contractors. Please be prepared for area refrigerators and all plugged in personal items be unplugged and cleaned out before people leave for Thanksgiving break on

Wednesday. He will provide a list of the impacted buildings once we finalize it in the coming week or two.

v. Dr. Jana Gerard – Director, Learning & Teaching Center
    1. Dr. Jana Gerard presented the executive report, introducing herself to the assembly and noting that her tenure began on May 1st. She provided comprehensive updates on upcoming professional development initiatives, training resources, and administrative guidelines:
    2. Dr. Gerard announced that the new Professional Development (PD) Resource Hub is live and accessible via the shield-shaped dashboard icon on MyNorthwest. This centralized hub houses workshop registration links, instructional resources, previous training recordings, and the Bearcat Connection blog. Additionally, the center hosts Ed Tech Express every Friday at noon—a virtual, 30-minute session focusing on highly specific, bite-sized technology topics that are recorded for on-demand viewing. Looking ahead to the spring semester, a new teaching-focused podcasting series will be added to the hub. Dr. Gerard issued an open invitation for content contributors, asking anyone interested in being a guest blogger or helping produce the podcast series to contact her or visit the LTC site. When questioned from the floor regarding target topics for these platforms, she clarified that any subject directly related to teaching is welcome.
    3. Dr. Gerard inquired whether all attendees had received a copy of the book Small Teaching, instructing anyone who still needs a copy to get in touch with her. The text will serve as the foundation for an upcoming spring semester book study, and interested participants should email Dr. Gerard to register. She also shared preliminary details for the Winter PD Day scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, January 1st. The event will feature three structured rotations offering a total of 15 sessions co-led by university faculty and staff. To help shape future programming, Dr. Gerard will distribute a comprehensive campus needs assessment in November and requested that committee members actively encourage their departmental peers to complete it.
    4. To streamline support services, Dr. Gerard provided clear operational distinctions for handling campus accessibility questions. The assembly was instructed to route all formal, legal compliance questions directly to Stephani and Meckenzie. Conversely, any practical, "nuts-and-bolts" technical questions regarding how to physically format and make instructional materials accessible should be directed to the Learning & Teaching Center (LTC).

vi. Dr. Allison Hoffmann – Associate Provost of Enrollment Management and Student Success
    1. Dr. Allison Hoffman presented the enrollment and student success report, providing updates on spring registration timelines, retention technologies, and recent recruitment milestones:
        a. Dr. Hoffman announced that pre-registration for the spring semester has officially commenced, with initial tracking currently focused on senior enrollment numbers.

A clearer picture of total spring enrollment trends is expected to emerge over the next few weeks. Regarding continuous retention and persistence efforts, she highlighted an email distributed earlier in the day by Leslie Plinka to all academic advisors, which contained valuable student success tips and guidelines.

b. The university's student chat bot has achieved a 55% engagement rate with the student body. Following meetings with online educational partner RisePoint, a pilot communication flow is being developed specifically for online undergraduate students to launch this spring. This system will be adapted to fit the seven-week course structure by removing traditional milestones like midterm grade checks. Leadership is working closely with RisePoint to avoid communication overlaps and ensure seamless integration with their upcoming AI tool, Sky.

c. Dr. Hoffman expressed gratitude to faculty and staff who attended the recent Saturday Academic Showcase, which drew a highly energetic crowd of 91 prospective students. Moving forward, an application station will be integrated into all on-campus recruitment events. High school seniors who complete their application on-site will receive an exclusive senior gift. These initiatives are strategically designed to narrow the application gap before the university hits its first major recruitment milestone for the Fall 2027 freshman class: the opening of student housing applications on November 6th.

vii. Dr. Elise Hepworth – Dean, College of Arts, Communication, and Social Sciences

1. Dr. Elise Hepworth presented an extensive update on behalf of the Northwest Core Committee, outlining evaluation metrics, structural feedback, and critical timeline guidance for curriculum submissions:

a. Dr. Hepworth reported that the committee continues its evaluation of the general education core curriculum. Initial testing on "option one" determined that reducing the core structure made no measurable difference to student time-to-completion, course delivery models, or total tuition costs. Dr. Hepworth clarified that the discussed range of 42 to 47 credit hours completely excludes Northwest institutional requirements; when accounting for inter-institutional mandates, the true general education core total spans 48 to 51 credit hours. To preserve the university's foundational student learning outcomes while optimizing student flexibility, Dr. Hepworth is designing a hybrid general education solution. In parallel, the Designated Curriculum Committee (DCM) is reviewing the institution's core philosophy and has distributed preliminary drafts to help guide this foundational work.

b. The committee is collecting widespread campus feedback through targeted individual unit meetings and briefings

with the Faculty Senate executive leadership team. Extensive written feedback is being compiled for committee review, including arguments regarding specific required coursework like digital literacy. A senator underscored three distinct arguments against removing computing requirements: promoting digital safety awareness, bridging the digital skills divide through uniform classroom access, and directly aligning with goal three of the NARC proposed statement. The senator cautioned that removing digital literacy could inadvertently damage enrollment or revenue in underlying programs, suggesting it remain as an open inductive elective if a removal occurs. Dr. Hepworth confirmed these specific items are included in the multi-page feedback document.

c. When questioned regarding the committee's mandate, Dr. Hepworth clarified that the core charge is not explicitly to reduce or expand credit hours, but rather to analyze how the general education framework impacts student success barriers and completion metrics. In response to floor inquiries regarding exact decision timelines and upcoming curriculum deadlines, Dr. Hepworth strongly advised that academic departments and secondary education programs—many of which exceed the traditional 120-credit limit—should not pause operations or wait for the ad hoc committee's final resolution. Departments are urged to proceed independently with their current curricular plans and submit their documentation based on high- and low-case credit hour expectations. Dr. Hepworth committed to publishing regular, weekly email updates to keep all academic units and department chairs fully apprised of the committee's ongoing milestones.

viii. Dr. Rose Marie Ward – Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

1. Dr. Ward announced several upcoming grant opportunities and invited interdisciplinary faculty involvement. The university is pursuing multiple artificial intelligence (AI) grants in collaboration with state entities; interested faculty from any discipline are encouraged to email the Provost's office to join the development conversations. Additionally, following the State of Missouri's $216 million allocation for rural health, decisions are underway for the first round of proposals. Faculty and units adjacent to rural health are urged to submit their names to the Provost to participate in future funding cycles. Finally, Dr. Ward highlighted a National Institutes of Health (NIH) instrumentation grant program tailored for smaller, resource-limited, rural-serving institutions. This program funds teaching and research equipment valued between $25,000 and $250,000, with a firm submission deadline of January 26, 2027.
2. The next strategic plan feedback session is scheduled for next week, and faculty are encouraged to continue reviewing and shaping the draft materials shared in the recent newsletter. Dr. Ward noted that the university's institutional think tank, the

Northwest Vanguard, recently met to generate pilot initiatives, with a follow-up session scheduled for November. Furthermore, a joint meeting between the Student Senate, Staff Council, and Faculty Senate will take place next week; faculty are asked to route collaborative ideas through Faculty Senate leadership. Looking ahead to the spring, the university will host a week celebrating research and innovation in April, featuring the Celebration of Scholars and the Day of Green on April 7th. This event will bring alumni back to campus, and faculty are encouraged to feature diverse student and classroom research projects to attract prospective attendees.

3. In response to faculty feedback regarding heavy workloads, the administration collaborated with the Registrar to streamline the review process for 500-level courses. For dual-listed courses where a department intends to move all students exclusively to the undergraduate level, the course can simply be renumbered into the 100–499 undergraduate range, eliminating the 500-level designation through an expedited review process. If graduate-level credit must be maintained, a separate course within the 500–699 graduate range must remain.
4. Dr. Ward commended Dr. Allison Hoffman's team for their data-driven student persistence efforts, emphasizing that the student chat bot has maintained an engagement rate above 50%. The technology successfully identified critical student needs, revealing that 17% of surveyed students experienced homesickness and 77% reported financial struggles with bills. In response, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs immediately cross-collaborated to deploy targeted intervention plans. Dr. Ward concluded by reminding the assembly that student recruitment remains a campus-wide responsibility, noting that plans are underway to launch a dedicated website for the Rural Health Center in the early spring to better connect faculty, students, and community partners with grant-funded projects.

b. Senate President – Luke Campbell
    i. President Campbell provided a short report thanking everyone for all of their hard work in their committees.

c. Committee Reports

i. Academic Petitions – Ahmed Malkawi

1. On October 8, Academic Petitions had a follow-up meeting to review further information that was requested from the advisor and the school chair concerning an urgent petition that was initially reviewed by the committee on October 6. The committee deliberated the information provided and voted on the petition. Four members of the committee were absent and five others who were in attendance voted. The case was approved based on five votes (Yes: 3; No: 1; and Abstention: 1). On October 20, Academic Petitions met to review two new petitions, both of which were approved unanimously.

ii. Assessment and Retention – Linda Gray Smith

1. Dr. Smith presented the Assessment and Retention Committee Report, outlining the agenda for the committee's meeting

scheduled for October 22. The meeting agenda focuses on two primary tasks: reviewing and providing feedback on faculty evaluations, and reviewing the draft of the Northwest Performance System to verify its accuracy.

2. The Learning and Teaching subcommittee received 10 proposals (and we only needed 9) by the due date for the January Professional Development Day. They appreciate the generosity of the Provost for offering an honorarium to be used for more PD as an incentive to teach our colleagues. They plan to discuss the proposals and make our recommendations at our next meeting tomorrow, Thursday, October 22.

iii. CDR – Joseph Tomasso

1. Dr. Tomasso presented the Curriculum Development and Review (CDR) Report, highlighting recent proposal approvals, current system volume, and key submission deadline clarifications. The committee approved 10 proposals during its October 13, 2026 meeting. As of October 20, 2026, there are 189 proposals currently in the system, with a substantial influx of additional proposals anticipated. CDR will attempt to process 49 proposals at their next meeting on October 27.
2. To assist faculty with submission planning, Dr. Tomasso provided clarification regarding the November 2, 2026 and February 1, 2027 submission deadlines. The November 2 deadline is specifically designed to ensure that proposals requiring COTE, DCM, or Graduate Council review have adequate time to progress through CDR and the Faculty Senate. Dr. Tomasso noted that while CDR will not refuse proposals submitted after November 2, late submissions risk not completing the necessary approval steps in a timely manner. Additionally, proposals requiring revisions may need to extend their approval timeline into the spring semester. The report also provided the complete meeting and approval schedule spanning COTE, DCM, Graduate Council, CDR, Faculty Senate, and Board of Regents meetings through Spring 2027. The next meeting for DCM will be October 22 and they will propose language change in the catalog to include a description of the Northwest Core, including a Mission Statement.

iv. Research – Kimberly Casey

1. Dr. Casey presented the Faculty Research, IRB, and Animal Welfare Committee report. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received 11 project submissions and has approved eight to date, while the Animal Welfare Committee has not convened. On the research front, the committee met with the Provost on October 8 and October 15 to discuss concepts related to research, scholarship, and reporting mechanisms, providing feedback while taking care not to advise directly on promotion and tenure matters. The committee noted that an individual member shared an idea document with the Provost without prior committee review, an issue that will be addressed following the completion of research fund distributions. Additionally, the committee agreed to collaborate with the Celebration of Scholars Committee to establish an organizational framework for disseminating faculty

scholarship during Research Week; a three-member subcommittee was formed, and Dr. Casey will reach out to the Celebration Committee chair to facilitate joint planning. Finally, the committee received ten grant proposals scheduled for consideration during meetings on October 29 and tentatively November 5; however, members must first resolve an unannounced change made to the evaluation rubric last year that significantly altered the scoring process used continuously from 2019 through 2024.

v. *Faculty Welfare, Budget, and Finance – Casey Abington*
    1. Dr. Abington presented the Faculty Welfare, Budget, and Finance Committee report covering the committee's October 12, 2026 meeting. The meeting centered on a detailed discussion with Provost Ward regarding proposed revisions to the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) portfolio process, aimed at reducing the volume of ancillary documents, improving formatting consistency, facilitating easier navigation, and enabling candidates to present their strongest cases through expanded narrative explanations and broader activity recognition. To foster consistency across portfolios, the proposed guidelines establish a 20-page portfolio limit. Regarding portfolio contents, committee members discussed the Provost's recommendation to provide the Curriculum Vitae to reviewers separately rather than including it directly in the portfolio, with several members expressing that the CV should remain an integral part of the portfolio. Additionally, committee members requested further clarification regarding the decision to no longer require annual evaluations within the portfolio.
    2. Under the proposed revisions, student advising responsibilities would move under the Teaching category to better acknowledge the significant time commitment involved, though committee members noted that assigned advisee counts do not necessarily reflect advising quality and suggested an advising award as an alternative form of recognition. To standardize evaluation letters, the Provost is working with department chairs to establish a structure comprising three performance letters: an internal letter for teaching, an internal letter for service, and an external letter for research and scholarship. The committee also examined how broader scholarly activities will be recognized and addressed concerns regarding how materials outside the portfolio—such as disciplinary records—might be introduced by reviewers, noting that policy language requires further clarification regarding whether such items can constitute grounds for denying promotion or tenure. Committee members will gather additional feedback, and Provost Ward will return for further discussion at the November 9 meeting.
    3. In other business, the committee examined a proposal to redefine nursing workload expectations, specifically focusing on lab and clinical workload calculations as well as accreditation requirements. Implementing these changes may necessitate revisions to Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook, including the potential creation of a new faculty classification; the proposal is

being shared with committee members for feedback, and Brooke McAtee will be invited to a future meeting. Finally, Dr. Daggs delivered a benefits update stating that USI is finalizing the Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance renewal for evaluation by the Northwest Leadership Team prior to open enrollment, and it was noted that Dr. Tatum announced at the October 7 Faculty Senate meeting that the next Employee Satisfaction Survey will be administered in Fall 2027.

vi. *AI Committee*
    1. No report
vii. *Shared Governance Committee*
    1. No report

V. <u>Old Business</u>

a. Senator and Alternate for College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences
    i. On the 9th, Michael Miller sent emails out to leadership in the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences asking them to send him names of faculty members who are interested in stepping up as College Senators and Alternates, but he received no response.
    ii. A motion was made to waive the Tenure requirements for College Senator and Alternate for this one specific instance.
        1. Motion by Jacob Tengelsen
        2. Seconded by Cindy Schairer-Kessler
        3. Vote
            a. In favor: 19
            b. Opposed: 0
            c. Abstained: 0
            d. Vote passed unanimously

VI. <u>New Business</u>

a. Proposals
    i. CRIM 46250 Crime in America
    ii. CRIM 46323 Crime Media Culture
    iii. CRIM 46328 Crime & Policy
    iv. CRIM 46340 Community Justice
    v. CRIM 46404 Crimes of the Powerful
        1. Motion to bundle all CRIM courses: Kim Casey
            a. Seconded by Travis Surprise
            b. Vote to bundle: Yes (Unanimous)
        2. Motion to approve bundle: Joseph Tomasso
            a. Seconded by Kim Casey
            b. Vote:
                i. In favor: 19
                ii. Opposed: 0
                iii. Abstained: 0
                iv. Vote passed unanimously
    vi. Geographic Information Science Major, 42 Hours: B.S. – Minor Required
        1. Did not send to review: Ag, Math, Computer science, English
    vii. Geographic Information Systems Certificate, 15 Hours
    viii. Geospatial Technology Minor, 24 Hours
    ix. GEOG 32430 Geopolitics of the Drug Trade
        1. Motion to bundle 32430 and all GEOG program changes: Joseph Tomasso

a. Seconded by Jacob Tengelsen
b. Vote to bundle: Yes (Unanimous)

2. Motion to approve bundle: Travis Surprise
    a. Discussion opened regarding a problem with the Geographic Information Science Major curriculum changes. A senator noted that the following schools were not notified of necessary approvals in the initial submission: Agriculture, Mathematics, Computer Science, and English.
    b. A motion was made to approve the bundle but provisionally approve the Geographic Information Science Major on the condition that Faculty Senate will send the curriculum changes back to the faculty member who proposed it and the faculty member will fix this issue.
        i. Motion by Jacob Tengelsen
        ii. Seconded By Cindy Schairer-Kessler
    c. Vote:
        i. In favor: 19
        ii. Opposed: 0
        iii. Abstained: 0
        iv. Vote passed unanimously

b. Law & Politics Minor, 24 Hours
    i. Motion to approve: Kim Casey
        1. Seconded by Cindy Schairer-Kessler
        2. Vote
            a. In favor: 19
            b. Opposed: 0
            c. Abstained: 0
            d. Vote passed unanimously

VII. Items from the Floor

a. A senator mentioned Geography Awareness Week, being held during the week of November 16 through November 20, and asked faculty to spread the word to their students about the events. The senator also mentioned how the Geography Program is working with students in the education program to provide lessons to students at Horace Mann. For more information on Geography Awareness Week, the event flyer will be provided to Faculty Senators along with the minutes.
b. A senator discussed the recently held Interdisciplinary Roundtable meeting between the Geography Program and other related disciplines. The meeting was a successful first-step to creating cross-disciplinary dialogue and will continue into the future. The Geography Program plans to host another roundtable discussion in Fall of 2027 and the senator asked that faculty members join in future discussions.
c. A senator discussed Missouri Hope and its events this past weekend. According to the senator, Missouri Hope coordinators motivated 108 individual students and participants to work through three days of disaster scenarios, successfully training 43 students in various disaster response scenarios.

VIII. Closed Session

a. Faculty met for a closed session.

IX. Adjournment

a. The meeting adjourned at 5:16 pm CDT

Submitted by,

Dr. Jesse M. Lane
Faculty Senate Secretary