

**Minutes from  
Auburn University Senate  
August 27, 2024  
3:30 p.m.**

**Via Zoom: <https://aub.ie/senatezoom>**

Meeting will open 15 minutes prior. Feel free to join early.

**Minutes**

Meeting called to order by Senate Chair, Lori Eckhardt, at 3:30 p.m.

**Establish a Quorum**

The attendance vote was opened and a quorum was established with 75 Senators voting present. When the vote closed at the end of the meeting, 81 Senators had responded present.

Senate Meeting [Minutes from June 11, 2024](#) were approved by unanimous consent.

**Remarks and Announcements**

University Senate Chair: Lori Eckhardt

Chair Eckhardt encouraged Senators to complete a feedback survey on the Senator Orientation held on August 14th. The survey link was posted in Canvas.

President: Chris Roberts

President Roberts introduced the latest leadership hire – Jim Carroll, Vice President for Facilities. While Carroll most recently came from the University of California, Davis, he was previously the University Architect for Auburn. In that role, he had a significant impact on the design and construction of the Mell Classroom Building and Gogue Performing Arts Center (GPAC).

Enrollment update: official census will be reported September 9, but preliminary data for Fall show Auburn enrolled some 6100 first-year and approximately 1300 transfer students. Graduate enrollment is 6194, which is up 87 students compared to last year. Growth occurred in master's programs whereas PhD programs remained relatively flat compared to last year.

Auburn has joined the Small Town and Rural Students (STARS) College Network. The network began last year with 16 schools (Stanford, Duke, Notre Dame, others) focused on trying to provide opportunities to students from rural communities. Auburn was invited to join. Membership comes with some extramural funding. The network now has 32 members.

Board of Trustees Update – Friday, September 6th will be the first meeting of the Auburn University Board of Trustees for this academic year. In this meeting, the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget will be presented for the Board's final review and approval. The proposed budget will include the 4% salary pool mentioned in a previous Senate meeting. A tuition increase, and some increases in housing and dining options will also be brought before the Board. Recommendations were based on a substantive analysis of market conditions and rates charged by our peers. The Board will also consider some facilities proposals – College of Human Sciences Academic and Research Building, a project at CADC's Rural Studio in Newbern, and the College of Engineering's project for an advanced manufacturing and instrumentation laboratory. Also looking at renovations to some on campus housing and an expansion of the patio at the Melton Student Center, which was championed by the SGA. From Athletics, there is a multi-use expansion of the north end zone at Jordan-Hare. Also, just as an FYI – not for the September Board meeting, but there will be a plan in the future for a renovation of Comer Hall, which will be on expedited timeline because of rapid deterioration. The Board of Trustees will review and consider approval of the university's strategic plan.

Auburn was recently recognized by Forbes as one of the Best State Employers for 2024.

Provost: Vini Nathan

Auburn takes its faculty census on the 9th of September, but this Fall, as of this morning, 128 new colleagues have joined the university in the faculty ranks.

Update on leadership searches: Relaunched the search for the Dean of the College of Nursing; CLA Dean Jason Hicks will chair search process.

Board of Trustees' September 6th meeting: there will be one item for the Board's consideration from the academic affairs side. It is a proposal from the College of Sciences & Mathematics, Department of Mathematics & Statistics is proposing a PhD in statistics and data science.

Strategic Planning Update: At the June Senate meeting, the strategic plan's 5 major goals and action items were shared. Since then, the working group has fleshed out the strategic plan and built out key performance indicators (KPIs). Each of the major goals will be championed by senior leaders, who are representing the vision and aspirations of everybody but led by President Roberts. This will be presented as an information item during the Board meeting and President Roberts will present as an action item for their approval on September 6th. If it is approved, there will be a presentation to the Senate at its September 17th meeting.

Update regarding analysis of faculty compensation, workload, and productivity: The Provost's office is leading this project and has spoken to four consultants as well as peer institutions who've done similar things. Consultants have shared examples of the work they have done, which has focused only on compensation and not on workload and productivity. This broader analysis will require a hybrid effort with external consultants and internal working groups as well. After the strategic plan is approved, efforts will shift to process maps and plans for the faculty compensation, workload, and productivity analysis.

SB129 Update: That law will become effective October 1st. Groups have looked at three areas affected by the law – centralized OID office, questions related to faculty and syllabi, and matters associated with HR. As of August 15th, a significant portion of those adjustments have been completed. Between now and October 1st adjustments will continue. Based on three guiding principles – amplify focus on access and affordability for our students; to create and sustain an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged; and to be consistent with applicable law.

Chair Eckhardt announced that the requested budget presentation is on the agenda for the October Faculty Meeting. She then opened the floor to questions.

Roy Hartfield, Senator from Aerospace Engineering: Question regarding an HR policy that had previously covered staff and is now applicable to faculty as well.

President Roberts: Policy database is managed out of the General Counsel's office and will have to look into that.

Jennifer Mueller-Phillips, Senator, Dean of the Harbert College of Business: Curious about breakdown of newly hired faculty (tenure track/nontenure-track ranks).

Provost Nathan: 128 full time faculty have joined us. 70 NTTFs (clinical, research, extension, lecturers, professors of practice, and postdocs), 54 tenure track faculty, and 4 department heads/deans (administrators but have faculty rank, too)

Michael Baginski, Senator from Electrical & Computer Engineering: Clarification about budget. Comment regarding wifi issues recently and concerns about stability. Parking seems out of control. Any concern about parking problems that have seemed to have arisen?

President Roberts: Parking is a challenge. Parking Services has implemented a number of new changes over the past couple of years. Roberts will take back concern and comments and return with some more information.

## **Action Items**

Voting on use of Zoom for Senate meetings

Presenter: Lori Eckhardt, Chair

*Motion to continue holding Senate meetings via Zoom until after the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. A new vote would be conducted at the August 2025 meeting, which would be virtual.*

Hans Werner van Wyk, Senator from Mathematics and Statistics: Has there been any investigation into software other than Zoom for these meetings (such as Teams)?

Chair Eckhardt: so far, have not investigated other tools.

Sara Wolf, Senator from Education Foundations, Leadership and Technology: Proposed an amendment the motion: Continue holding Senate meetings via Zoom until the June 2025 Senate Meeting. A new vote would be conducted at that meeting.

Seconded by Rebecca Riggs, Senator from Biological Sciences

Discussion: Diana Samek, Senator from Human Development & Family Studies shared explanation from Ralph Kingston about timing of the vote. Senators who are leaving the Senate would be voting in June and new senators would be coming to enact the vote, so maybe wait until academic year so that the senators who are serving can vote.

Lisa Kensler, Immediate Past Chair: friendly amendment to change “until” to “through.” No objections were made to this change.

Amendment vote in Canvas: Continue holding Senate meetings via Zoom through the June 2025 Senate Meeting. A new vote would be conducted at that meeting.

Results of vote on amendment as announced in meeting:

Yes 45 / No 23 / Abstain 1

Voting was closed just after results announced. Final tally was Yes 48 / No 25 / Abstain 1.

Amendment passed.

Motion as amended: Continue holding Senate meetings via Zoom through the June 2025 Senate Meeting. A new vote would be conducted at that meeting.

Results of vote on amendment as announced in meeting:

Yes 44 / No 8 / Abstain 2.

Voting was closed just after results were announced. Final tally was Yes 45 / No 8 / Abstain 2.

Motion passed.

#### Voting on the nominees to Senate Committees

Presenter: Jaena Alabi, Secretary

[Nominees for Senate Committees](#) (pdf)

Voting Results: Yes 70/ No 1/ Abstain 2

Nominees were approved.

#### **Information Items**

##### Student Counseling & Psychological Services

Presenter: Joeleen Cooper-Bhatia

[slides](#) (pdf)

##### Office of Accessibility

Presenter: Barclay Bentley

[slides](#) (pdf)

#### **New Business**

Lori Eckhardt, Senate Chair

Roy Hartfield, Senator from Aerospace Engineering made a motion:

The Senate hereby implores the Administration and the Senate Leadership to adopt a University Faculty Meeting format that is compliant with Roberts Rules of Order including voting practices, and to present the proposed format to the Senate for approval before the next faculty meeting.

The chair declared that the motion had not been seconded before Liliana Stern, Senator from Economics, attempted to second the motion. Zachary Schulz, Senator from History, called a point of order – parliamentary inquiry that there were no grounds to second a motion that had already failed, which the Parliamentarian confirmed.

## **Adjournment**

Lori Eckhardt, Senate Chair at 4:58 p.m.

## **Meeting Attendance**

### **Senate Officers**

Lori Eckhardt	Chair
Jaena Alabi	Secretary
Rachel Prado	Secretary-elect
Lisa Kensler	Immediate Past-Chair

### **Absent without substitute:**

Virginia Davis	Chair-elect
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### **Administration**

Susan Hubbard	Dean, College of Human Sciences
Jennifer Mueller-Phillips	Dean, Harbert College of Business
Jason Hicks	Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Dean Hendrix sub for Mario Eden	Dean, College of Engineering
Ed Thomas	Dean, COSAM
Steve Taylor	VP of Research

### **Absent without substitute:**

Rob Wellbaum	VP for Development
Leigh Ann Ross	Dean, Harrison College of Pharmacy
Joffery Gaymon	VP Enrollment Mgmt.

### **Ex-Officio Members**

Vini Nathan	Provost
Shali Zhang	Dean of Libraries
Jack Hilton	SGA President
Esther Akinrinde	GSC President
Kimberly McCadden	Staff Council Chair
Thomas Sawyer	A&P Assembly Chair
Tom Leathem [Pres.]	Steering Committee
Octavia Tripp [Rules]	Steering Committee
J Brian Anderson [Pres.]	Steering Committee

### **Absent without substitute:**

Andrew Pendola [Rules]	Steering Committee
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### **Senators by Departments**

Xu (Joyce) Cheng	Accountancy
Roy Hartfield	Aerospace Engineering
Geni Payne	ACES
Wendiam Sawadgo	Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
Paul Dyce	Animal Sciences

Kevin Moore [2nd]	Architecture
Sarah Odens sub for Lauren Woods,	Art
Russ Chesser	Aviation
Rebecca Riggs	Biological Sciences
David Blersch	Biosystems Engineering
Jeff Kim	Building Sciences
Regina Gramling	Business Analytics and Information Systems
Elizabeth Lipke	Chemical Engineering
Evert Duin	Chemistry and Bio Chemistry
Joel Hayworth [2nd]	Civil Engineering
Kevin Smith	Communication and Journalism
Sanjeev Baskiyar	Computer Science & Software Engineering
Jung Eun Lee	Consumer & Design Sciences
Jesus Tirado sub for Christopher Clemons	Curriculum & Teaching
Murali Dhanasekaran	Drug Discovery and Development
Liliana Stern [2nd]	Economics
Sara Wolf	Educational Foundations, Leadership & Technology
Michael Baginski [2nd]	Electrical & Computer Engineering
Sunny Stalter-Pace	English
John Beckmann [2nd]	Entomology & Plant Pathology
David Cicero	Finance
Nathan Whelan {2nd}	Fisheries & Allied Aquaculture
Christopher Lepczyk sub for Robert Gitzen,	Forestry, Wildlife, and the Environment
Steph Shepherd	Geosciences
Jan Kavookjian	Health Outcomes Research and Policy
Zachary Schulz [2nd]	History
Elina Coneva	Horticulture
Clark Danderson	Hospitality Mgmt.
Diana Samek	Human Development & Family Studies
David Smith	Industrial Design
Rich Seseck [2nd]	Industrial and Systems Engineering
Christopher (Brooks) Mobley	Kinesiology
Kasia Leousis [2nd]	Libraries
Liesl Wesson	Management and Entrepreneurship
Jeremy Wolter [2nd]	Marketing
Hans Werner van Wyk [2nd]	Mathematics and Statistics
Nicholas Tsolas sub for Sabit Adanur [2nd]	Mechanical Engineering
Lee Johnson	Music
Caralise Hunt sub for Chris Martin [2nd]	Nursing
Kevin Huggins	Nutritional Sciences
Anna Margaret Goldman	Outreach
Katharine Horzmann	Pathobiology
Lena McDowell [2nd]	Pharmacy Practice
David Miller	Philosophy
Luca Guazzotto [2nd]	Physics
Spencer Goidel	Political Science
Amit Morey	Poultry Science
Alejandro A. Lazarte	Psychology
Latifat Cabirou	Special Ed. Rehab. Counseling/School Psych
Gregory Spray	Speech Language and Hearing Sciences
David Strickland [2nd]	Supply Chain Management (new)
LTC Michael Quinn	ROTC Air Force
LTC Laura Fryar	ROTC Army
Captain Michael Witherspoon	ROTC Naval

Danilea Werner  
Adrienne Wilson  
Chance Armstrong  
Kerri Munoz

Socio/Anthro/Social Work  
Theatre and Dance  
Veterinary Clinical Sciences  
World Lang & Literatures

**Absent without substitute:**

Vinicia Biancardi [2nd]  
David Han [2nd]

Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology  
Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences