

Senate Steering Meeting
February 11, 2025
3:30 pm
107 Samford

Present: Lori Eckhardt (Chair), Jaena Alabi (Secretary), Virginia Davis (Chair-Elect), Rachel Prado (Secretary-Elect), Lisa Kensler (Immediate Past Chair), Vini Nathan (Provost), Andrew Pendola (Rules Appointee), Tom Leathem (Presidential Appointee)

Absent: L. Octavia Tripp, J. Brian Anderson,

Special Guests: Chris Lepczyk, Chair, RISE Committee; Paul Esposito and Jeff Dyal, Veteran Resource Center; Jill Albin-Hill, Office of Information Technology; Allison Batts, Parliamentarian; Norman Godwin, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm by Chair Eckhardt

[Minutes from the January 15, 2025 Steering Meeting](#) were approved by unanimous consent.

Agenda for the February 18, 2025 Senate Meeting was approved by unanimous consent.

Remarks and Announcements

Provost Nathan shared that President Roberts will have a few remarks about recent executive orders and she will share updates on the teaching professor title series and the faculty compensation study.

Information Item Presentations

Veterans Resource Center: Paul (Puck) Esposito and Jeff Dyal previewed a presentation on the Veterans Resource Center, including its mission and values, programs and outreach services, and comprehensive support they offer to Auburn's military-affiliated community. Steering Committee members asked for clarification on some points and recommended Esposito and Dyal clearly articulate what they'd like members of the Senate to do.

Teams and Team Voice Update: Jill Albin-Hill shared information on the ongoing shift from previous/current phone system to using Microsoft Teams as a collaboration and communication platform. Several questions were asked to clarify how this change would affect faculty and employees in various scenarios. It was suggested that in addition to this brief overview/update to the Senate, it may be beneficial to have a larger venue, such as a town hall.

Action Item Presentations

Resilience, Innovation, Sustainability, and Engagement (RISE) Committee Report: Chris Lepczyk shared information on the Office of Sustainability and requested that the RISE Committee be involved in planning for the office's future as its director will be retiring soon.

Suggestions were provided for restructuring the presentation slightly, as well as tweaking the wording for a motion that the Senate can vote on.

Vote on Calendar and Schedule 2027-2028: Jaena Alabi reminded Steering Committee members of the proposed 2027-2028 Calendar that was presented in November by the Calendar and Schedules Committee Chair, Karen Battye (who will be present for the February Senate meeting).

Call for Nominations for the floor for Rules Committee Members: Jaena Alabi shared that the Senate floor will be opened for nominations to the Rules Committee. There will be three vacancies to fill for 2025-2027.

Candidates for Chair-Elect and Secretary-Elect: Jaena Alabi shared the list of candidates for University Faculty/Senate Chair-Elect and Secretary-Elect who will be announced at the February Senate meeting. The process for petitioning to be on the ballot will also be shared again, as well as the dates that voting will be open.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm

Mission: The Steering Committee acts on behalf of the AU Senate on matters requiring attention between meetings of that body and assists the chair of the Senate in setting the agenda for Senate meetings. In addition, it is concerned with the academic affairs of the University, with particular attention given to the need for developing and recommending policies under which these affairs are conducted. It works closely with other Senate committees to aid them in their assignments.