

Auburn University Senate

November 12, 2024

3:30 pm

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

Meeting will open 15 minutes prior for signing in early if you care to do so.

Minutes

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

Establish a Quorum

The attendance vote was opened and quorum was established with 70 members present as of 3:33 p.m. When the quorum vote closed at the end of the meeting, 85 Senators or substitutes had responded present. Senate Meeting Minutes from October 15th, 2024, were approved by unanimous consent.

Remarks and Announcements

President: Chris Roberts

The Board of Trustees will meet on Friday, November 15th. Three facilities-related items that faculty should be aware of will be presented for approval: seeking final approval for the new gulf coast engineering research station in Orange Beach; the College of Human Sciences academic and research building is going through its second approval phase; and a comprehensive renovation of Comer Hall is being proposed.

There is strong interest in Auburn's undergraduate programs. For next year, the university has already received 45k applications. The rate of increase for freshman and transfers has slowed, but still shows growth.

Provost: Vini Nathan

The new interim Dean of the College of Agriculture and Director of the Alabama Experiment Station is Dr. Art Appel, who will begin in that position on January 1. The search advisory committee has been created, with Dean Mario Eden as the chair. An external firm, Breckenridge Partners, will assist with a national search for the permanent position.

Provost Nathan provided a status update on the comprehensive analysis of faculty compensation, workload, and productivity. The composition of the steering and advisory groups were shared [[link to document with steering and advisory group members](#)]. The steering work group, along with Provost Nathan, Kelli Shomaker, Amanda Malone, Matt Campbell, and Bryan Elmore, held an introductory meeting last week. The working group will vet the four consulting firms and make a recommendation to the President and to the Provost's office. Progress on this process will be shared through Senate updates and through monthly newsletters.

At the Board of Trustees meeting this Friday, there will be three information items from academic affairs, all of which are related to graduate certificates. There will be new graduate certificates created: one in neuroscience from the department of Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy; and one in veterinary social work, from the department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts. The third information item is the closure of a certificate in movement skills analysis from the department of Kinesiology, College of Education.

As of January 2025, the Auburn chapter of Phi Beta Kappa will be administratively housed in the Honors College. Faculty who have been championing this honor society will continue to be engaged but the administrative roles will be done through the Honors College. The Honors College will also be announcing an internal search for their next Assistant Director for the National Prestigious Scholarships, an existing position that has been vacant for some time. There will be an announcement in Auburn News. Anyone interested in knowing more about it should reach out to Laura Stevens, Director of the Honors College, or Chase Bringardner, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

Questions:

Liliana Stern, Senator from Economics, followed up from a previous question about an abnormal raise received

by a faculty member in her department and said that she had not received a response. Provost Nathan responded that she cannot discuss personnel matters and that the individual who requested information via formal channels has received a response.

Nick Tsolas, Senator from Mechanical Engineering, asked for a status update on a February 2024 motion to increase the 403 retirement cost share. Provost Nathan said that she would request information from Kelli Shomaker and provide an update. President Roberts said that this request is being considered throughout the entire budget process. The administration is weighing allocation of resources toward different benefit opportunities and trying to maximize the number of people who will benefit from funds.

Diana Samek, Senator from Human Development and Family Studies, requested an update on the teaching professor title series presented by the NTTF Committee and approved by the Senate. Provost Nathan asked Associate Provost Norman Godwin to respond. Associate Provost Godwin stated that a working group of faculty, department heads, and others has been established to work through implementation issues and that this proposal is moving forward. The working group is also talking to other institutions with similar series, but they have found that implement is highly context dependent. The group is working to put together a good package to move forward on this.

Action Items

Proposed Calendar and Schedule 2027-2028

Presenter: Karen Battye, Chair

Karen Battye presented the proposed academic calendar for 2027-2028. Fall is a standard seventy-two calendar day term, starting on Wednesday, August 16th and ending with commencement on December 11th. The Fall 2027 calendar also includes two days for Fall Break. There was a request from Auburn Abroad to extend the time between the Christmas holiday break and the return for spring classes to allow for more international opportunities for students during this time. The Spring 2028 semester, slated to begin on Monday, January 12th, also consists of seventy-two calendar days, includes spring break during the second week of March, and concludes with commencement on May 6th. The Summer 2028 term will start May 16th, with each mini term having twenty-four days. Summer 2028 commencement is scheduled for August 5th.

Questions:

Melinda Camus, non-senator from the College of Veterinary Medicine, noted that extending the start day in January makes it hard to get VetMed students into their clinical rotations and the college may need alternate plans for their clinical students. Battye responded that the Registrar's Office has worked with VetMed in the past on issues like this and would be happy to do so again.

Gregory Spray, Senator from Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences asked if the committee had considered shifting Fall Break to early November so that students can travel home and vote. Battye responded that it has not, but that she could take it back to the committee for discussion.

Luke Oeding, non-senator from Mathematics and Statistics, asked if this calendar matches that of Auburn City Schools, especially for Fall Break, Spring Break and other holidays. Battye said that for each proposed calendar, she looks at the Auburn City Schools calendar. For this calendar, however, Auburn City Schools hasn't yet posted their calendar. Her understanding is that they follow the Auburn University calendar when that happens. The selected dates for holidays and breaks match the times when these breaks have traditionally been scheduled.

Battye moved that the senate approve the proposed 2027-2028 calendar.

Chair Eckhardt noted that since this motion comes from a Senate committee, it doesn't require a second. The Senate will vote on this motion at its January meeting.

Library Committee Report

Presenter: Wesley Lindsey, Chair

Wesley Lindsey shared information on the members of the Senate Library Committee, as well as the committee's three functions: interfacing between library services and academic units, advocacy body for the libraries' resources/services, and engage with libraries' strategic plan.

Information Items

Update on Endeavor, the Electronic Research Administration (ERA) System

Presenters: Martha Taylor

Taylor provided an update on the continued roll out of modules in Endeavor, the university's Electronic Research Administration system. Faculty have already been using Endeavor for reporting conflicts of interest, and the IRB module went live this August. The grants module will go live in January. While all full-time employees will use Endeavor (for its Conflict of Interest module), faculty are most likely to engage with it through proposal or protocol development, review, and submission. Users are assigned specific roles that allow them to do certain things in the system (such as submit an IRB proposal or review a protocol). The system will help automate processes going forward. It also has cross module connectivity so that someone who has an IRB protocol, conflict of interest management plan, and proposal can review all of these in the same system. Endeavor's benefits include enhancing efficiency, removing duplication of effort, increasing transparency, facilitating collaboration between offices and researchers, improving data accuracy and reporting throughout the project lifecycle, facilitating compliance (it has various requirements included when proposals are created), and providing a dashboard that displays users' pending and completed activities. Taylor shared sample screenshots from Endeavor.

Questions:

Steph Shepherd, Senator from Geosciences, was recognized. She deferred to another attendee who had his hand raised. Jordan Harshman, non-senator from Chemistry and Biochemistry, noted that there had been significant issues with the transition to Endeavor's IRB module. He asked if there would be opportunities for faculty to give feedback, do testing, and receive training while the current and new systems co-exist for a period of time so that such issues could be addressed. Taylor responded that when implementing the IRB module in Endeavor recently, there were some issues with data and field mapping in the new system, which meant some content was unable to be converted. Taylor will ask Risk Management and Safety individuals to have office hours to work side by side with investigators to put BUAS into the system. IACUC may run two systems simultaneously for a short time. They have had some project champions – investigators who have played around with system and given feedback, but more of that may be needed.

Evert Duin, Senator from Chemistry and Biochemistry, noted that he gets a lot of information from the NSF site itself when submitting proposals and asked if Endeavor would provide similar feedback. Taylor said that proposals that go to grants.gov will go automatically when submitted in Endeavor. NSF proposals, however, go through research.gov, so college-level designees will help investigators do manual data entry for these proposals (as well as others that use some other system).

Ali Krzton, non-senator from the Libraries, asked if the grants and agreements module included anything about data management planning. Taylor responded that the module contains information about data use agreements but not about data management plans. She suggested that Tony Ventimiglia would be able to answer this question in more detail.

Karen McNeal, non-senator from Geosciences, asked about the process for soliciting feedback and following up on users' concerns and suggestions. Taylor said this was a good idea and that even if they might not be able to change some things in the system, they may be able to change some business processes. A benefit of using Huron is that they have a support website where ideas for improvements or enhancements can be submitted. The assumption is that people would email the Office of Research and Scholarship Analytics with questions, but Taylor noted a need to set up a formal feedback loop.

AU App Update

Marybeth Murphy, Richard Campbell, Kionna Coleman

Marybeth Murphy shared information on the new centralized Auburn University App, which was debuted in May of this year in Camp War Eagle sessions. In addition to making it easy to access some of the most commonly used resources, the AU App also connects to other university apps, including campus safety, parking and transportation, and the new interactive, 3d campus wayfinding map, among others. OCM has shared the app with various student groups, Staff Council, and A&P Assembly, and would like to encourage faculty to download, use, and provide feedback on the app.

Questions:

Sara wolf, Senator from Education Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, asked about accessibility and if the AU App had a connection to AU Access.

Murphy responded that Canvas and Banner have been fully integrated into the app, and that AU Access is available as an external link in the app. She noted that the app underwent a beta screening process to address accessibility concerns and encouraged anyone who notices an accessibility issue with the app to submit feedback via aub.ie/auappfeedback.

New Business

Liliana Stern, Senator from Economics, moved that, per the direction of President Roberts, the Senate asks the Board of Trustee or their designee to come to the next Senate meeting to explain why the President and the people he supervises earned higher salary raises than the faculty in this fiscal year.

Roy Hartfield, Senator from Aerospace Engineering, seconded the motion.

Chair Eckhardt stated this would be put on the agenda for the January meeting for discussion and vote.

Adjournment

Chair Eckhardt adjourned the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

Attendance

Senate Officers

Lori Eckhardt

Virginia Davis

Jaena Alabi

Rachel Prado

Lisa Kensler

Chair

Chair-elect

Secretary

Secretary-elect

Immediate Past-Chair

Administration

Rob Wellbaum

Leigh Ann Ross

Susan Hubbard

David Paradise sub for Jennifer Mueller Phillips

Jason Hicks

Mario Eden

Ed Thomas

Joffrey Gaymon

Steven Taylor

VP for Development

Dean, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dean, College of Human Sciences

Dean, Harbert College of Business

Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Dean, College of Engineering

Dean, COSAM

VP Enrollment Mgmt.

VP of Research

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
Andrew Pendola [Rules appt.]	Steering Committee
Tom Leathem [Pres. appt.]	Steering Committee
Octavia Tripp [Rules appt.]	Steering Committee
J Brian Anderson [Pres. appt.]	Steering Committee

Senators by Departments

Xu (Joyce) Cheng	Accountancy
Geni Payne	ACES
Roy Hartfield	Aerospace Engineering
Wendiam Sawadgo	Ag Economics & Rural Sociology
Vinicia Biancardi [2nd]	Anatomy, Physiology & Pharmacology
Paul Dyce	Animal Sciences
Kevin Moore [2nd]	Architecture
Sara Gevurtz sub for Lauren Woods	Art
Russ Chesser	Aviation
Rebecca Riggs	Biological Sciences
David Blersch [2nd]	Biosystems Engineering
Jeff Kim	Building Sciences
Regina Gramling	Business Analytics and Information Systems
Elizabeth Lipke	Chemical Engineering
Evert Duin	Chemistry and Biochemistry
Kevin Smith	Communication and Journalism
Sanjeev Baskiyar	Computer Science & Software Engineering
Jung Eun Lee	Consumer & Design Sciences
David Han [2nd]	Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences
Jesus Tirado sub for Christopher Clemons	Curriculum & Teaching
Murali Dhanasekaran	Drug Discovery and Development
Liliana Stern [2nd]	Economics
Sara Wolf	Educational Foundations, Leadership & Tech
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
Robert Gitzen-[rpl]	Forestry, Wildlife, and the Environment
Steph Shepherd	Geosciences
Jan Kavookjian	Health Outcomes Research and Policy
Zachary Schulz [2nd]	History
Clark Danderson-[rpl]	Hospitality Mgmt.
Diana Samek-[rpl]	Human Development & Family Studies
Rich Sesek [2nd]	Industrial and Systems Engineering
David Smith	Industrial Design
Christopher (Brooks) Mobley	Kinesiology
Kasia Leousis [2nd]	Libraries
Liesl Wesson	Management and Entrepreneurship
Jeremy Wolter [2nd]	Marketing
Hans Werner van Wyk	Mathematics and Statistics
Nicholsa Tsolas sub for Sabit Adanur [2nd]	Mechanical Engineering
Lee Johnson	Music

Linda Gibson-Young sub for Chris Martin [2nd]
Kevin Huggins
Anna Margaret Goldman
Katherine Horzmann
Lena McDowell [2nd]
David Miller
Luca Guazzotto [2nd]
Spencer Goidel
Amit Morey
Alejandro A. Lazarte-
LTC Michael Quinn
LTC Laura Fryar
Captain Michael Witherspoon
Danilea Werner
Latifat Cabirou
Gregory Spray
David Strickland [2nd]
Adrienne Wilson
Kerri Munoz

Absent without substitute:

Chance Armstrong
Elina Coneva
Joel Hayworth [2nd]

Veterinary Clinical Sciences
Horticulture
Civil Engineering

Nursing
Nutritional Sciences
Outreach
Pathobiology
Pharmacy Practice
Philosophy
Physics
Political Science
Poultry Science
Psychology
ROTC Air Force
ROTC Army
ROTC Naval
Socio/Anthro/Social Work
Special Ed. Rehab. Counseling/School Psych
Speech Language and Hearing Sciences
Supply Chain Management (new)
Theatre and Dance
World Lang & Literatures