



FACULTY SENATE  
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Faculty Senate**

February 19, 2026, 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

[Faculty Senate Meeting February 19.mp3](#)

[February 19 Proxy and Senators.pdf](#)

Items in **bold print** are items that require action by the Faculty Senate. Other items are for information only.

- 8) Call to Order – Susan Boddie
- 9) Declaration of proxies obtained prior to the meeting and request of proxies for those not given from Senators in attendance (sign-in sheet for proxies available).
  - a) Please send an email for the February meeting to [Xiaoai Ren](#) regarding proxies a minimum of one (1) week prior to the scheduled Faculty Senate meeting or as soon as possible if an unexpected absence needs to occur.

**3) Approval of the minutes of January 15, 2026, meeting of the Faculty Senate.**

Motion to Approve – Ryan Wander; Second – Haley Sherman. Minutes passed.

- a) See link here for minutes for all Faculty Senate meetings:  
<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/>

**4) President's Report – Susan Boddie**

- a) Committee chairs: Please send annual reports to [Susan Boddie](#)

Welcome everyone to our February meeting. As always, I hope your classes are going well. I will say things look wonderful on campus. I'm noticing a lot of changes: some pretty yucky looking buildings are no longer there, and things are getting repaired. We're really grateful for some of the improvements that we're seeing.

A couple of things you'll note from the agenda today. Dr. Wander is going to talk to us a little bit about our VSU virtual suggestion box. That'll be a little bit later in the meeting. And in our open discussion portion of the meeting, we're going to have one of our senators bring up a couple of talking points, question prompts, to hopefully engaged in a nice lively conversation in a town hall style fashion, as we did a couple of months ago. And at that time, ideally, I would like to be just the faculty senators so we could have a nice open discussion. We will take note of some of the questions and answers and then share what comes out of that discussion with Dr. Noviello and Dr. Crowe.

Another business as you noted in my emails: I was looking for volunteers to serve on the parking appeals committee. They have been meeting on Wednesdays, 3pm or 3:30 in person. I'm looking around the room to see if I might be able to solicit one more volunteer for that.

For our meeting next month, we are getting into the election season. We will be listing and taking some names for nominations for some of the forthcoming vacant senate executive positions. The parliamentarian and the secretary terms are for just one year, so we do roll those over each year and vice President, and President elect. You'll note in the meeting agenda next month that I will have any names that we have come up with listed. I'll continue to take nominations from the floor, and we will hold the official election in April. We'll present the nominees as well as to take any nominations from the floor at that moment before we vote by secret ballot.

Regarding the other Senate Committees or Senate seat vacancies, those are overseen by committees. COCO has been in communication with the Deans from the Respective colleges that do have upcoming vacancies in Senate seats, as well as committee positions. So be on the lookout for nomination requests from your colleges.

5) Updates from the Office of the President and Academic Affairs- Dr. William Crowe and Dr. Sheri Noviello

You probably know our legislators in George is in session, and they're talking about a lot of issues, mostly around money. There are some discussions about education, particularly higher education and distance education. We think we're in pretty good shape with the legislature. They're going to support the border state tuition waivers so that the folks from Florida and Alabama and our neighboring states can come here as in state students, which is important to us.

It looks like the bill that allows us to carry money over is going to pass as well. That allows us to take some money unspent and carried into the next year, it's state money and we do not need to give it back to state so we are excited about that, you'll hear a little bit more about the finance in the BAC meeting tomorrow if you want to get into the weeds around the financials and how we're spending and what's left over.

I've tried to get around as much as I can and talk to departments. If I hadn't been to your department, you'd like me to come. I'm happy to come speak at any time to your department. as a whole or with individual faculty members. I really want to be responsive and try to get on top of things as quick as we can. I'm trying to work as much internally as I can to get around and hear what the issues are. I'm also working a lot externally. My goal is by the middle of next month to been to every one of our 41 County school districts that we served to see where the areas for us are to have a better partnership with them. I think if we could do a great job recruiting students from those 41 schools, a lot of our enrollment issues would have gone away. Most of the superintendents that I've talked to are VSU graduates, so they really want to be supportive, but they kind of wonder where we are sometimes, so we're trying to fix that as the best we can.

Enrollment for the spring, I think, is going to be essentially flat. We've been like that in the last several semesters. I'm hoping that's going to be a little bit different in the fall. If you go to the BAC meeting tomorrow, we're going to talk a little bit about the projections for the fall enrollment, the enrollment funnel looks good, but we're not sure that all the students that are in the funnel are going to translate into enrollment, but the numbers look really good and encouraging.

And then the last thing, what I'm really trying to do is help all of us feel free to be creative and go and do things quickly. I've told our folks to put their tennis shoes on. I'm very impatient. I don't like things not to get solved immediately, so we need to move, and I want faculty, department heads to feel like they have the freedom to be creative, and let's start new things. If it doesn't work, stop doing it. We'll do something else. But I think we just need to take the cap off of everybody. We have a lot of creative people. I think part of our job is for administrators to just get out of the way a little bit and make it easier to do things.

**Q.** You said something about the state funds being carried over from year to year? Traditionally, we had this end of year money that, is that related?

**A.** It is related. And I'm working with Tracey to try to get more of that. The carryover money is a percentage of our total budget. We can carry 5% of our total budget into the next year. I really like to sit down, particularly on the academic side and talk about where these opportunities are. Where could we invest money that would give us a good return with enrollments in developing programs? We even talked about giving some funds to Deans so that they could allocate creative professional development, program development, and do some things out of the ordinary that would help.

Our real challenge to me that we haven't done very well is what's our value proposition is to our potential students and our community. Why would you support VSU if you were a donor? Why would you come here if you were a student? And I think we need to fine tune that a little bit to get a little clearer.

### Provost Updates (By Sheri Gravett)

Dr. Noviello has been out at the University of West Georgia. Just a couple of things that we talked about. Some of you may have heard that we had a report last week on the academic Affairs Strategic Plan, and a number of you were there. Some of you presented. There's a lot going on here, and I think we've got some very positive changes coming down the line with people working very, very hard. Just a couple of things that you may see sooner rather than later.

One of those things is really looking in depth at our academic programs, and Dr. Michael Black has created an academic wellness report. And he has shared this with the Deans and the department heads, and this is a quite complex document. It has metrics that many of you are familiar with, such as how many graduates you have. But then it also has some questions that program directors should fill out. Like, did you change your curriculum this year? And if so, did you update your curriculum maps so that students will know what the changes are coming in the curriculum this coming year? This is going to roll out later in May this year, and he's going to prepopulate the Metrics sections and said it's all the department's heads who may pass them along for some program directors. But this is something that department heads can look at over the summer, begin to fill out and do some things with, and then it'll be in shape, hopefully in the fall when everybody's back on campus.

This is going to happen now every year, and some of this may also take the place of many of you who have been through the comprehensive program review, or CPR, which we do every seven years. And of course, many had said, well, every seven years, maybe a little too late to judge how well the

program is performing. So, this will give us a chance to stay on top of our programs on a yearly basis.

Another goal for this coming year was to create the Mary Virginia Terry Center for experiential learning. A number of you have been to the candidates' interviews. We have had four candidates on campus for the last several weeks. And so that process has just concluded, so hopefully in a little bit, we might have a director of the Mary Virginia Terry Center.

**Q.** I was told that if you took them position, you had to give up your tenure.

**A.** Correct. Yes. This is a position that is non-tenured. And it's a director position that would not have a faculty status associated with it.

**Q.** So you lose your job in your lady, you run up a job here for good?

**A.** **That** is left up to the candidate to decide. And remember the field was open to a variety of folks that may or may not be academics that would not have been interested in the faculty position anyway. Cause this is going to be a full time hit on the ground running job.

Meeting minutes from committees should be sent to [fsec@valdosta.edu](mailto:fsec@valdosta.edu) **AND** to [archives@valdosta.edu](mailto:archives@valdosta.edu) with "Archives Faculty Senate Papers" in the subject line. Please label minutes documents as shown in the following examples:

- Technology\_Minutes\_04-29-2022
- Academic\_Honors\_and\_Scholarship\_Minutes\_08-28-2021

Thank you for your assistance in getting and keeping our records up to date.

## 6) Permanent Committee Reports

- a) Academic Committee ([fs-stat-ac@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stat-ac@valdosta.edu)) – Sheri Gravett; Find agendas and minutes here: <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/registrar/academic-committee.php>

We have one-degree name change. We have to notify the system office about it. Our Master of Accountancy has asked us to change the Master of Accountancy in accounting and analytics. That shows a new dimension to some of the work they're doing. There is a proposal for an MS in business intelligence and analytics. And then there's also a BS into sports management. Both have come up. The curriculums have been approved, they're much bigger packets that we are still working on, trying to get them ready to go to the system, and then the system decides whatever they want to put it on the Board of Regents meeting for final approval.

We also have one new course that hopefully will get approved and added to our core impacts, Geography 1073. How does the weather change human history? Hopefully it will be a three-hour course in the technology area of the core that will give our students further options.

- b) Committee on Committees ([fs-stat-coco@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stat-coco@valdosta.edu)) – Kristin Kirchner

Proxy – Haley Sherman

The colleges are conducting their respective elections for next year's faculty Senate seats. Please contact the head of Coco Dr. Kristen Kirchner, if you have any questions regarding your term or future service on faculty senate.

- c) Faculty Affairs ([fs-stat-fa@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stat-fa@valdosta.edu)) – Joe Mason

The academic administrative review tool was approved by the President and has moved forward to Barry Fitzgerald to be made into a Qualtrics survey and that should be ready in the near future.

- d) Faculty Grievance Committee ([fs-stat-fgc@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stat-fgc@valdosta.edu)) – John Dunn

Thanks to the committee for doing some hard work. And I sent a copy of the Faculty Grievance Document to Susan and Susan was going to let the provost look at it. But I'd like to say the committee did a lot of good work.

## 7) Standing Committee Reports

- a) Academic Honors & Scholarships ([fs-stand-ahs@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-ahs@valdosta.edu)) – Chalise Ludlow

We met and have finished voting for the GLARDA award, and it has been turned into the provost and so we're excited. I did send an email around for the Annie Powe Hopper award. It's a very, very special award and I encourage you to nominate your students for this award. It is the highest award we give in academics, at VSU, and it's a very special award as you get to know about who Annie Hopper was and what effects she had on education and so please do that and turn those in ASAP.

- b) Academic Scheduling & Procedures ([fs-stand-asp@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-asp@valdosta.edu)) – Kelly Davidson

No report

- c) Athletic Committee ([fs-stand-ac@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-ac@valdosta.edu)) – Kristin Kirchner

Proxy – Haley Sherman

No report

- d) Human Capital Committee ([fs-stand-hcc@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-hcc@valdosta.edu)) – Selena Nawrocki

The committee will be presenting a policy statement regarding belonging, accessibility, and engagement later in this meeting.

- e) Educational Policies ([fs-stand-ep@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-ep@valdosta.edu)) – Chris Dillon

No report

- f) Environmental Issues ([fs-stand-ei@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-ei@valdosta.edu)) – Mike Bochenko

Today was the Arbor Day celebration, so the committee was pleased that the ceremony was dedicated to Dr. Linda Most who spent many of her years advocating for maintaining the campus. At the ceremony today, there was a tree dedicated to her right outside of the Odum library. If she

was still with us, she could just look out the window and see the tree.

The committee had two motions put forth. One is to recommend that president or provost allowed the city of Valdosta to install and maintain a water goat at the one-mile branch. There will be no charge to VSU, and it'll be maintained by the city. There's another motion about having the environmental Committee website update their webpage. Finally, the VSU Rotaract Club offered to host the Craft workshop using recyclable materials that were not put into formal motion.

g) Faculty Scholarship ([fs-stand-fs@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-fs@valdosta.edu)) – Mary Beth Rousseau

Faculty scholarships continue to be busy. I'd like to thank all the committee members for their careful attention. We have two more meetings this semester, so the next deadlines are March 2nd and April 20th. Those deadlines will take us through to the end of the fiscal year, because we don't meet in the summer.

h) Internationalization and Globalization ([fs-stand-igc@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-igc@valdosta.edu)) – Byeonghwa Park

No report

i) Library Affairs ([fs-stand-la@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-la@valdosta.edu)) – Jodi Cronin

We met last week and voted on the library contingency funds. Everybody who submitted their stuff with a complete packet has already been notified their funds were approved or denied.

j) Student Affairs ([fs-stand-sa@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-sa@valdosta.edu)) – Jieun You

Planning to meet in March

k) Technology Committee ([fs-stand-tc@valdosta.edu](mailto:fs-stand-tc@valdosta.edu)) – David Cole

No report

8) Unfinished Business

a) Faculty Grievance document revisions update.

9) New Business

a) **Belonging Accessibility Engagement Statement**

Motion to consider the document – David Cole; Second – Chalise Ludlow.

Dr. Nawrocki speaks about the Belonging Accessibility Engagement Statement from the Human Capital Committee.

The human capital Committee has developed a policy to align with changes that are occurring within diversity, equity, and inclusion. The university DEI policies are undergoing dismantling and rebranding, driven by state legislation and federal executive orders targeting funding. Key changes including the elimination or renaming of DEI offices to names such as office of access and engagement of community.

Belonging accessibility and engagement policy is still critical for universities to enhance student retention, improve academic outcomes, and ensure equitable environments. This type of university policy has shifted from broad centralized diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives for the more decentralized belonging framework.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the key changes that we found in our research, related to these types of policies and approaches.

- Number one, rebranding and restructuring DEI in response to anti DEI legislation, many institutions have rebranded diversity and would be inclusion offices to belonging, respect, and fairness, or campus life. The human capital Committee, along with recommendations from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee have selected the terms of belonging accessibility and Engagement for this policy.
- Number two, the shift from inclusion to belonging. There's a growing focus on fostering a general sense of belonging for all students rather than just underrepresented groups. A strong sense of belonging is a primary driver of academic success. These policies help students feel connected to the institution, which significantly increases the likelihood of persistence through graduation. The policy presented here goes beyond students to also protect faculty and staff, ensuring they feel supported in their work, in value for their contributions to the university.
- Number three, accessibility and digital inclusivity. Accessibility policies are now evolving to be more comprehensive, moving beyond basic disability accommodations, to incorporate digital accessibility in compliance with new stricter federal regulations. These policies ensured the institution meet legal requirements for both physical infrastructure, and digital, online learning materials. ensuring a usable experience for all. In conversations with Jamie Landau, the Human Capital Committee has expanded the scope of this policy to include accessibility. The goal of the statement is to create a campus environment where we all feel valued, supported, and able to participate fully in academic and community life.

**Q.** I need clarification. We have an existing framework for policies to be posted and get public comments and then voted on here. And I'm not sure if we're doing that.

**A.** The document was one of the meeting attachments to review.

**Q.** There's a nondiscrimination policy. There's Americans Disabilities Act. There's title IX. All needs to be articulated, doesn't it? What does this statement mean for all those things? Are they a position to supervise this, or what? Is this a statement or a policy?

**A.** Yeah, it is a faculty senate resolution. This is how we are going to behave. We have other existing policies that fall under federal guidelines. I don't think we're looking at this as an overarching university policy. This is not something we send forth to the President to add to the various VSU policies.

**Q.** I have a question about the word belonging in place of inclusion. I'm not a social psychologist or

any other field that studies the meanings of words. My common sense tells me that inclusion is more on putting the pressure on the existing institution to accommodate the minority groups of smaller groups but belonging puts pressure on those who are in lower numbers, they have to somehow belong to what's generally going on. I'm considering whether we should use the word inclusion instead of belonging.

**A.** This is in response to changes in countrywide.

**Q.** It was illegal to begin with the president did not have any power to issue that. And the directive has been withdrawn, so I'm not sure why we are feeling the pressure to change the words, bending even before the legislation is passing into law.

**A.** I think what we were doing as an institution was trying to get ahead of some of the changes. We were following our directives from our upper administration, the University System of Georgia. I don't think it's on us to be able to just determine. We have the USG; the Regents Office passes all the information to all the institutions from that the Administration.

**Q.** They have given us the words to work with?

**A.** All of the website reviews and things that happened last year, that we were all working through to make sure that we were putting the needs of our students and the institution and all of the USG institutions collectively and ensure that we were in compliance. And this isn't new information.

**Q. Did** they give any reasons for what the problem was with those words?

**A.** Political buzzwords

**A.** Initially, when we were drafting this statement, we were using the word inclusion, and we were told that was not considered, and it was suggested that we changed that to belonging.

**A.** This was all very transparent across the institution. There were keywords that were searched on the website, and the suggestion was made to not change mindset, but find other words, other wording to use.

**Q.** How will this document be used?

**A.** It's for the human capital Committee.

Motion to put this document to a vote for adoption – Nathan Moates; Second – Jodi Cronin. 1 rejection. 3 abstentions. Motion passes.

## **b) Virtual Suggestion Box Presentation**

Ryan Wander - I am here to plug this thing called the virtual Suggestion box in this meeting. Jamie Landau and I are cochairs of the Faculty Success Council. We are trying to get faculty to use the virtual suggestion box with greater frequency and to use it as a space where you can anonymously share ideas about how to make this a better place for faculty, and therefore for our students and therefore

for our staff as well.

I've included the [link](#) to the virtual suggestion Box website, that's also included a QR code. You can of course identify yourself if you desire. For full transparency, those messages do go initially to Jamie Landau and me, and then we will hopefully serve as good ambassadors as messages move the chain. If you have any questions for me, feel free to ask them for now or contact me at [rwander@valdosta.edu](mailto:rwander@valdosta.edu).

**Q.** If you could give us a little more clarity on where the suggestion will go from you and Dr. Landau. It's one of the next steps, and what is your ultimate end goal?

**A.** Yeah, so the ultimate end goal, we would go through the document ourselves, and then take it to the Faculty Success Council, which is a body of 12 of us on that council. We would discuss those suggestions initially and after that, we'd be able to figure out how to move suggestions that are deemed relevant and useful by the council and figure out how to move that up the chain.

**Q.** Hi, is there any limit to the suggestions that you accept?

**A.** No.

**Q.** Okay, and the other question is: have you thought about any method of posting past suggestions?

**A.** We haven't, but this is definitely something that I'll bring to Dr. Landau and the rest of the Faculty Success Council.

**Q.** My only question is, how can we access those after today's meeting? Are you planning to email across campus to all the faculty?

**A.** If I can access a list of, yes, I will do my best to make that happen. Currently, Dr. Landau is in the process of putting flyers around campus, but I will also figure out a way.

**Q.** Simple suggestion is everybody wants to really contribute ideas; it might be good to have another item, to self-categorize on which area you're making suggestions to.

## 10) General Discussion

N/A

## 11) Adjournment

Motion to adjournment– Kelly Davidson; Second – Ryan Wander

Reports and agenda items due to president: ([sboddie@valdosta.edu](mailto:sboddie@valdosta.edu)) by April 2.

At the request of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee ([fsec@valdosta.edu](mailto:fsec@valdosta.edu)) any actions sent to the president : ([sboddie@valdosta.edu](mailto:sboddie@valdosta.edu)) for possible inclusion in the Senate agenda should be accompanied by a written document with the rationale and purpose of the decision. The Executive Committee requests that these documents be submitted via email attached as Word documents.

Proxies sent to secretary ([xren@valdosta.edu](mailto:xren@valdosta.edu)) by March 20. Next

Faculty Senate meeting: March 26, 2026, at 3:30 p.m.

## **Attachments**

- A. Faculty Senate Calendar 2025-2026
- B. Faculty Senate Minutes 1-15-2025
- C. Belonging Accessibility Engagement Statement