

Faculty Senate Meeting September 2, 2025

Senators Present: Anna Muenchrath (SAC), Chris Bashur (CCE), Tim Muth (COB), William Bowman (Library), Yanek Mieczkowski (SAC), Ratan Jha (APSS), Jessica Wildman (SOP), Matt Taylor (COA), Shawn Scott (COA), Nakin Suksawang (MCE), David Wilder (SOBA), William Arrasmith (MSE), Alan Brown (CCE), Marshall Jones (SOP), Wanfa Zhang (SAC), Chiradeep Sen (MCE), Charles Bryant (COB), Robert Joel Deacon (SAC), Marcus Hohlmann (APSS), Gary Zarillo (OEMS), Angel Otero (COB), Thomas Eskridge (EECS), Hamid Najafi (MCE), Csaba Palotai (APSS), Madhur Tiwari (APSS), Mehmet Kaya (BES), Melissa Borgen (BES), Adam Aboueid (COA), Robert Weaver (OEMS), Adam Prinkey (MSE), Patrick Converse (SOP), Tom Marcinkowski (MSE)

Proxies: None

Senators Absent: Sidhartha Bhattacharyya (EECS), Georgio Anagnostopoulos (EECS), Spencer Fire (OEMS)

Other attendees: John Nicklow (President), Shibo Liu (COES), John Z. Kiss (Provost), Nasri Nesnas (CCE), Amanda Thayer (SOP, Research Council), Kaylee Erdoes (Library), Heidi Hatfield Edwards (SAC), Suzanna Kozaitis (Library), Lisa Steelman (SOP), Jason Martin (Library), Raymond Bonhomme (Emeritus), Hamid Rassoul (APS), Eliza Healey (SAC), Nick Daher (COB), Rudi Wehmschulte (CCE), Tristan Fiedler (BES), Yasha Berchenko-Kogan (MSE)

Meeting began at 3:33pm

Open Forum with University Leadership

President Nicklow

- Renovation of the Hartley Room intended to allow for renting it out
- Four themes from the Campus Climate Survey
 - More parking
 - New parking system based on license plate readers.
 - New lot being paved between the All Faiths Center and the Varsity Training Center
 - Negotiating with the church on Country Club for expanded use of their lot
 - Forming a parking committee to analyze fees
 - Working on influencing student behavior (i.e. making the fine more expensive than the permit)
 - Warnings have been issued, but fines begin today.
 - Citations will be issued via email.
 - Accountability
 - Suggestions to rebuild job descriptions for every employee, including time commitments and KPIs with the idea of planning for merit raises.

- Communication
 - More concise weekly newsletter
- Continuing to improve morale and support for faculty and staff
 - Implementing merit-based performance reviews and salary increases
- Update on enrollment (this is not based on census data)
 - Record-breaking first-year class
 - Retention rate is over 84% (this will drop somewhat, but it's still tracking ahead of last year)
 - Graduate enrollment is down by about 50 students (domestic population is up; international is down (the word used was "obliterated"))
 - Overall enrollment on campus is up
 - Aviation had a record-breaking class
 - The ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) program had large enrollments as well
 - We need core programs (engineering and sciences) to be healthier
 - We are at 98% capacity for housing. National standard: if you are at 97% you are at capacity.
 - The new residence hall will be primarily for upper-division students.
 - The current first-year students will be held to a second-year campus housing
 - We are looking for incremental, sustainable growth.
 - We should be hiring more faculty if we are growing (which we are).
- Emphasis on safety and security

Question from Sen. Marshall Jones (SOP): Can faculty members park in student spots?

Initial answer is no. *ANSWER CORRECTED AFTER MEETING: Yes, faculty can park in student spots, and will not receive a ticket.*

Reserved spots are now \$800 (80 students pay this amount) and are going up to \$1200.

Question from Tom Marcinkowski: Complaint about limited parking in the lot north of University Boulevard during market days.

President Nicklow will relay this to security. Market Days will be changing. Market Days was going through a third-party, who was not collecting the necessary permits and waivers from vendors.

President Nicklow encourages the faculty to make a recommendation regarding a recording policy for classrooms.

Question from Nasri Nesnas: The issue of assigned spots for students and faculty has come up before. The agreement that was reached was that faculty and staff can park in any non-reserved spots, while students must park in student parking.

President Nicklow says that he will confirm this.

Sen. Anna Muenchrath notes that she is meeting with legal counsel to discuss a recording policy for classrooms and will bring it to the senate soon.

Question from Kaylee Erdos about how many times security will be going through each parking lot. President Nicklow says multiple times per day.

President Nicklow: In the current budget climate, we don't have the ability to fund five research initiatives (RSS, IRI, DGRATS, Research Buy Out, Teaching Buy Out). Something had to go, but the Senate is welcome to provide a recommendation to redistribute the cuts. Severe cuts were made to FTRI (Florida Tech Research Institute), RSS/IRI, and WFIT. RSS rewards strong performance, and merit-based salary raises should ameliorate that. If you think you are being underpaid, you should bring that to your dean.

Provost Kiss

- We have three national searches going on.
 - Chief Research Officer
 - COES Dean
 - COPLA Dean
 - Please participate in the searches.
- In late June, FIT received notice that the federal government was putting a 15% cap on IDC (indirect costs) for all grants. This could change in the long-term, but we need to assume this amount will hold. This was a cut of \$1 million to the research budget.
 - Cut \$300,000 from the FTRI budget
 - Cut 60% of the IRI budget that is distributed at the Provost's discretion
 - Cut in RSS
 - DGRATS did not get cut because it supports graduate students as well as faculty research (although this program now has a \$300,000 shortfall)
 - The Research Council was consulted about the cuts.
 - The external consultant recommended cutting RSS completely because it is not a best practice, but Provost Kiss wanted to phase it out gradually.
 - If the Senate wants to redistribute the way the cuts were handled, we can offer a proposal.

Comment from Tom Marcinkowski about the drop-off between interested prospective students and actual applicants and the fact that faculty no longer have an active role in this process.

President Nicklow: Inquiries from prospective students are going through the departments. Some departments move quickly to respond to students and admit them, while others don't (from 2 weeks to 6 months) The administration can help to take some of the workload and create efficiencies, but this needs to be handled on a department-by-department basis.

Approval of past minutes: Correction of "weather" to "whether" for April 1 minutes. Minutes for Feb 4, Mar 4, Mar 25, Apr 1, and Apr 15 approved as corrected.

Committee Reports

- Academic Policies Committee: open position
- Administrative Policies Committee: Sen. Kaya has nothing to report, but the committee is looking for members.
- Faculty Excellence Committee: Sen. Wilder says that the process will be starting soon.
- Scholarships Committee: Sen. Brown says that the committee is out of season, and he will be contacting prior committee members to gauge their interest soon.
- Technology Resources and Infrastructure: Sen. Bowman requests new members for the committee.
- Welfare Committee: Sen. Jones notes that the chair position of this committee must be filled by the end of the academic year.

No Old Business

New Business

- Nominations are open for the Chair of the Academic Policies Committee and the Welfare Committee. Nominations remain open until at least the next meeting.
- Sen. Jones brought the following motion: The Senate would benefit from establishing a parliamentarian to assist the Senate President in managing procedures. This position would not be a new Executive Committee member but may be held by a senator or a non-Senate faculty member. The intent is to provide expertise and support that enables the Senate President to more effectively serve both the Senate and the faculty. Not a voting member of the Senate, or a Senate Officer, just a faculty member willing to serve in this role.
 - Discussion followed (Sen. Arrasmith, Sen. Wildman, Sen. Scott, Tom Marcinkowski, Nasri Nesnas, Sen. Jones, Sen. Brown, Sen. Bashur)
 - Approved by voice vote. No dissensions or abstentions.
 - Nominations opened. Tom Marcinkowski accepted nomination. Approved by voice vote. No dissensions or abstentions.

Open Forum regarding pre-circulated concerns about the RSS/IRI program changes

- The conversation centered on whether the budget shortfall really exists since older grants still have the higher overhead amount. The conversation then shifted to assuming that if the cuts need to be made, are we happy with the way they were made, or do we want to redistribute the research initiatives (how valuable, for example, is the current version of DGRATS?). We need to consider the downstream effects of any changes (i.e. to grant applications, teaching loads, administrative loads, etc.) Ultimately, we need to review what was done and make a recommendation about whether and/or how to reallocate resources this. The Research Council has been talking to Chief Research Officer Rassoul about the distribution of research initiative funds. There was also discussion of the fact that RSS is supposed to be granted based on past grant performance, in which case those grants would have been earning full overheads. Also, how will the changes in federal grantmaking affect tenure and promotion. Do our guidelines need to be updated? Tom Marcinkowski proposed a five-step process: fact-finding, forming an informal group led by Amanda Thayer and Sen. Kaya in order to review and analyze the information,

inviting Provost to the Senate to discuss our findings and ask questions, discussing within the Senate what our recommendation should be, and finally bringing motions to the floor. (Sen. Arrasmith, Sen. Bowman, Nasri Nesnas, Sen. Wildman, Tom Marcinkowski, Sen. Suksawang, Sen. Marshall Jones, Amanda Thayer, Sen. Hohlmann, Sen. Kaya, Sen. Scott)

- Call for comments: What research initiatives are most important to faculty? Which would they be ok to see go? Do colleges need to revisit the tenure and promotion guidelines in light of the current research climate?

Announcements/Solicitations for Feedback

1. **Standards of Conduct Policy:** Per the “People of Excellence” Pillar, Tactic 1.4, a new Standards of Conduct policy has been created. The POE committee is soliciting faculty feedback on this policy. Please send feedback to Sen. Wildman by **Thursday, September 11** to be collated and sent to the POE committee.
2. **Faculty Development Budget Proposal:** The Strategic Planning “People of Excellence” sub-committee developed a budget proposal regarding faculty professional development opportunities. Please bring this proposal back to your constituents and either send feedback to Sen. Wildman or bring feedback to the October Senate meeting for discussion.
3. The [Faculty Senate handbook](#) with all AY24-25 changes made is now uploaded to the Senate website. If there are any further corrections or revisions needed (at any time!), please bring those to the attention of our Administrative Policies Committee Chair, Dr. Mehmet Kaya at mkaya@fit.edu.
4. Senate has been asked to provide more input in event planning (e.g., Welcome Reception, Faculty and Staff picnics). Would any existing Senators be willing to serve as an “Events Ambassador” to interface with the event planning groups and give faculty input? Please reach out to Sen. Wildman.

Adjournment (5:00)