University Senate Meeting

October 29, 2025 | 2:00 P.M. | SBUS 255

- Meeting Minutes: S. Sangregorio

Voting Members in Attendance:

A. Rzepka, A. Spadaccini, A. Talamo, A. Toro-Carnevali, B. Garlick, B. Krist, C. Baird, C. Dilkes, C. Flores, C. Reinisch, C. Rodriguez-Unalt, D. Trubatch, E. Jacobson, F. Lauby, I. Ren, J. Alexandre, J. Bilek, K. Handeli, L. Carr, L. LeFever, L. Simeon, M. Chaifetz, M. Kamenetskiy, N. Kurzynowski, P. La Fountain, R. Kunstadter, R. Misra, S. Baglieri, S. Bellum, S. Collins, S. Ghoshal, S. Mamonov, S. McCarthy, S. Nicholas, S. Nowak, S. Sangregorio, T. Gorman, W. Colucci, W. Sullivan, Y. Bai, Y. Luo

Voting Members Missing:

C. Challenger, C. Gunhouse, D. Chong, D. Falloon-Blake, D. Peterka-Benton, H. Benton, J. Robinson, M. Smith, N. Panorkou, O. Gharehgozli, P. Haggerty, Z. Aidala

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order
- **Call to Order:** 2:15 PM
- **Shannon Bellum** called the meeting to order.

2. Call for Quorum
- **Shannon Bellum** asked to confirm the quorum.
- **Sarah Sangregorio** confirmed that there was a quorum.

3. Land Acknowledgement Statement/Introduction
- **Shannon Bellum** read the land acknowledgement statement.
- **Shannon Bellum** announced changes in meeting order, prioritizing the space study presentation.

4. Space Study Presentation

- The space study presentation and associated documents were made accessible to all Senate members (voting and non-voting) via a shared drive; a limited number of printed studies were also distributed.
- **Sean Connelly** led a detailed presentation initiated in response to recurring requests for additional space. Leadership noticed a mismatch between perceived space needs and observed underuse, prompting a decision to gather objective data.
- The study focused on four main buildings (Cole Hall, Dickson Hall, University Hall, Overlook) chosen as a representative sample—containing 43% of enclosed offices and 63% of open workstations, as well as 45 meeting rooms.
- Over 1,000 passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors were installed across the campus to measure actual occupancy via movement detection in 15-minute increments. Large spaces, like classrooms and meeting rooms, used several sensors for accurate heat mapping. Sensors were calibrated, and the study's classroom data collection phase was doubled to twelve weeks to ensure reliability via spot checks and adjustments.
- Survey methodology included distributing two robust campus-wide surveys to faculty, staff, and administrators to identify their usage patterns, workspace preferences, and needs. Specifically, 363 respondents from enclosed offices participated.
- Key survey findings showed that in-person collaboration with colleagues and students was the leading reason for coming to campus—collaboration valued more highly than individual office work. There was broad dissatisfaction with the variety and proximity of collaborative spaces, and many commented that current furniture did not support flexible, comfortable use. Both instructors and administrative staff preferred improvements, with instructional staff focusing on classrooms and administrative staff emphasizing access to private workspaces.
- Utilization data painted a mixed picture: classroom usage was higher than offices and workstations but still fell short of desired levels. Only about 27 of the possible 54 weekly hours in classrooms were scheduled with classes, and real use sometimes exceeded this through informal meetings and study sessions. Offices and workstations were consistently underutilized relative to their capacity—often below expectations for on-campus use, with remote work noted as a factor. Meeting rooms were regularly booked for much fewer attendees than their capacity allowed.
- Suggestions emerging from the data included the adoption of shared workplaces or hoteling models (enabling multiple users per office or

flexible usage via modular furniture), redesigning and downsizing furniture to increase density and capacity (as demonstrated by Human Resources' increase from 8 to 14 occupants in Cole Hall), and a broad call for more adaptable, interactive, and collaborative spaces. The study recognized trends at other institutions moving toward denser, more flexible work environments and noted that the definition and measurement of effective occupancy must evolve alongside remote work.

- **David Trubatch** asked about the systems that support scheduling. Discussion addressed challenges with space scheduling—the software system (25Live) was seen as incomplete and a barrier to optimal use, as not all spaces were shown equally or available to all users. There was agreement that technological and organizational reforms are both necessary. The study also noted that classrooms were sometimes utilized more outside formal schedules due to informal gatherings, reinforcing the need for flexible interpretation of utilization rates.
- **David Trubatch** raised concerns about inconsistent messaging regarding work-from-home policies and the need for clarity between expectations for remote work versus shared space use. He highlighted the importance of consistent university-wide communication for staff who may have less flexibility than faculty.
- **Shawn Connolly** acknowledged these concerns and agreed that policy and data implications of remote work must be recognized. He mentioned ongoing efforts to redesign certain areas (such as Cole Hall) to create denser shared spaces and work collaboratively with affected staff.
- **Erik Jacobson** referenced a committee on academic scheduling and its impact on classroom surveys.
- **Shawn Connolly** responded that classroom surveys were delayed due to schedule changes, and ongoing adjustments are anticipated.
- **Sarah Ghoshal** asked about shared offices; **Shawn Connolly** responded that, to his knowledge, the monitored buildings did not have shared offices but noted this strategy might spread. He highlighted the new interdisciplinary science building design will prioritize shared, collaborative spaces, eliminating private offices.
- **Bill Sullivan** and **Shawn Connolly** discussed classroom scheduling rates (~54% scheduled usage), with strategies needed to cope with changes.
- Parking challenges were discussed with mention of ongoing strategies and a traffic study.
- **Antonio Talamo** inquired about extending occupancy surveys to non-academic buildings; **Shawn Connolly** explained there are no current plans due to capacity issues.

- **Anastasia Spadaccini** asked about consideration for spaces without recorded activity (e.g., when someone is on sabbatical). **Shawn Connolly** clarified that such spaces were excluded from active data.
- Discussion of how sensors triangulated motion to generate occupancy heatmaps; physical counts were conducted to validate the data.
- **Tim Gorman** asked about plans for Dickson Hall renovation; **Shawn Connolly** said no. He explained the high costs ($800/sq ft) and confirmed that while data would guide future plans, no immediate renovations are scheduled. Furniture changes would be considered where feasible. He added he'd be happy if he could get funding to fix the HVAC system in Dickson Hall.
- **Alfredo Toro-Carnevalli** raised concerns about potential capacity loss if furniture is changed; **Shawn Connolly** agreed that any changes reducing capacity significantly would be reevaluated.
- Conceptual designs and gradual strategy deployment are the current approach regarding the space study findings.
- **Yeon Bai** asked how the sensors knew what percentage of the seats were filled. **Shawn Connolly** stated that the system used multiple motion sensors to create heat maps of people in rooms, with manual counts done to verify accuracy.
- **Kathleen Loysen** and **Pascale LaFountain** raised questions regarding upgrading classroom technology and whiteboards (dry-erase boards) in places like Dickson Hall. **Shawn Connolly** noted technology improvements would be considered as part of renovation efforts; dry-erase boards are inexpensive but require a formal request.
- **Yeon Bai** asked if the main purpose of sensor studies is to inform future construction and renovation. **Shawn Connolly** confirmed.
- **Shawn Connolly** promised to share the results of the traffic study when available.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **Shannon Bellum** asked for approval of minutes from May 14, reviewed the process for approving the May 14th meeting minutes, clarifying that those who were senators before May 14th could vote on those minutes.
- **May 14th Minutes**
  - Initial Motion to approve: **Bill Sullivan**
  - Seconded: **Lauren Carr**
  - Approved by acclamation
- **September 17th Minutes**
  - Motion to approve: **Saundra Collins**
  - Seconded: **Tim Gorman**

- ○ Approved by acclamation

6. Announcements

- **Shannon Bellum** announced:
  - ○ Unauthorized recordings of Senate meetings are prohibited except as technological accommodations.
  - ○ Official records are maintained through the meeting minutes.
  - ○ Attendees were reminded to use the hand-raising system and to follow the process for floor access.
  - ○ Priority is given to senators who have not yet spoken; non-voting attendees were asked to speak during **Voices of the Community**.

7. Remarks from Acting Provost Stefanie Brachfeld

- **Provost Brachfeld** provided updates on research and graduate student scholarships:
  - ○ Announced the second cycle of the student-led research scholarship and creative activities grants.
  - ○ 24 grants awarded to undergraduates, masters, and doctoral students, totaling $93,000, ranging from $2,000 to $5,000 per project.
  - ○ Grants reviewed by a committee of graduate students, providing them training and professional experience.
  - ○ Encouragement to faculty to promote student participation; only applicants from six colleges or schools—others encouraged to apply in the future.
  - ○ Upcoming communication to announce recipients.
- **Provost Brachfeld** highlighted the graduate school micro-internship program:
  - ○ Program funds on-campus, skill-oriented projects for graduate students, up to $5,000 per project.
  - ○ Host units propose projects and develop a mentoring plan; hiring is managed by the Provost's office.
  - ○ Proposals brief (two pages), deadline November 17.
- **Provost Brachfeld** highlighted the newsletter and graduate student event proposal form:
  - ○ Graduate school newsletter launched with positive feedback.
  - ○ Event proposal form for graduate students to submit ideas, events, and budget requests included in the next newsletter.
  - ○ Faculty are encouraged to work with students to shape and submit proposals.

- **Provost Brachfeld** noted the upcoming Alpha Epsilon Lambda induction ceremony (Graduate Student Honor Society) on November 20.
  - 90 eligible students; 50+ RSVP'd. Faculty urged to encourage more RSVPs.
- Question raised by **Pascale LaFountain** regarding graduate student representation in the Senate.
- **Provost Brachfeld** supports greater graduate student inclusion.
- **Shannon Bellum** clarified there is a current standing (non-voting) graduate student Senate position, unfilled—Graduate Council invited to name a representative.
- **Saundra Collins** introduced the advocating for the graduate student position on the Board of Trustees. **Mary English**, faculty rep to the Board, affirmed this issue will be raised at the next board meeting.

8. Council and Committee Reports

Academic Affairs Council

- **David Trubatch:**
  - Council met over fall break; appreciation expressed for attendance.
  - Reported on Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC):
    - UCC delivered a proposed charge as part of an overall push for structured governance.
  - Charge to be reviewed by Academic Affairs Council; initiative to bring clarity and structure to shared governance continues.
  - Academic policy development:
    - A working group formed (lead: **Kyle Dobbeck**) to develop common definitions and terminology for academic policies.
    - Academic Policy Committee revising processes for proposal/comment integration, increasing transparency and involvement.
  - Foundation Board Report:
    - **David Trubatch** serves as Senate executive rep on the separate foundation board (501(c)(3)).
    - The board manages university endowment and issues grants for university purposes, including scholarships and research.
    - Foundation board composition and purpose described.
    - **David Trubatch** explains the foundation's role as supporting the mission of the university.

- Emphasizes that the Foundation works to support the university's mission, not as a profit-generating body.
- Discusses the motivation behind giving, explaining that many contribute out of support for the university's objectives.
- Highlights non-routine expenses as funding targets, such as special programs (e.g., lacrosse team sustained primarily by donations, and the Honors Edge honors program, similarly donor-backed).
- Suggests the Senate could organize a fundraising effort to collectively support important, mission-aligned projects, and invites participation.
- Proposes a focus area: improving student access to course materials (not fully covered by tuition); mentions possible support for open-access resources and facilities.
- Invites those interested to join a group to brainstorm fundraising ideas, noting upcoming Giving Tuesday and "Monday for Montclair."
- Stresses collaboration with professional Development Office staff for execution.

Administrative Affairs Council

- **Lauren Carr:**
  - The Council is preparing a recommendation on committee membership and composition.
  - The Council sent the tuition exchange program description to the President.
  - **Lauren Carr** will report updates next month.
  - The **Workday Student Talking Points and Repor**t were shared with the Senators.
    - Opportunity for **Kathy Zamora** to comment
  - **Lauren Carr** introduced OIT Liaison **Antonio Talamo**
    - **Antonio Talamo** Invited to speak, no comments
    - Report link provided
  - **Lauren Carr** introduced University Safety Committee Liaison **Marshall Chaifetz**
  - **Marshall Chaifetz** reported on two main items:
    - **Parking Enforcement**

- The police department announced **increased ticketing** for cars parked in the wrong spots.
- A **new ticketing system** is planned for the parking deck; rollout may take time but should be more efficient.
    - **Traffic Management**
        - More staff are being deployed during **busy times** to direct parking.
        - This has **reduced exit times from campus**, though conditions are still not ideal.
    - The report is in the Senator Shared Drive.

Student Affairs Council

- **Pascale LaFountain** provided the Student Affairs update, focusing on several key areas:
    - **Trans Student Belonging & Restroom Access:** Pascale reported ongoing efforts to improve access to restrooms for trans students across campus. She noted that:
        - The university is actively updating related websites.
        - Additional restrooms are being addressed: signage is being fixed or improved, and locking systems are being upgraded.
        - Facilities and the custodial offices are collaborating closely and making progress to ensure that all students have access to the facilities they need.
    - Student Employment Task Force Updates:
        - **Christina Rodriguez-Unalt** has started representing the Senate on the Student Employment Task Force.
        - **Leila Simeon** participates as the student representative.
        - The Task Force discussed concerns brought by student representatives, especially regarding parking and handicapped-accessible spots.
    - Collaboration with Committees: **Pascale LaFountain** said she intended to connect with **Marshall Chaifetz** (the university safety committee liaison) to align efforts on parking and accessibility issues, acknowledging the overlap in concerns with the safety committee.

- - **Dining and Catering Issues: Pascale La Fountain** explained that there were conversations about student frustrations with dining, including long wait times and other service issues.
    - **Brian Conway** from Gourmet Dining is scheduled to attend the next Student Affairs Council meeting to discuss and seek solutions to these student concerns.
    - The focus is on finding links and solutions between recurring student complaints and what can realistically be changed or improved in dining and catering services.
  - **Christina Rodriguez-Unalt** gave an update on the Student Employment Task Force.
    - The Student Employment Task Force met once so far this semester.
    - Focus: launching a Canvas course module for student workers covering Workday login, policies, procedures, and training.
    - Current priority: developing a supervisor version of the course. Status: scripts are being finalized
    - The full report is in the Senate Shared Drive.

Elections Committee

- **Christina Dilkes** began by updating the group on recent Senate elections:
  - The committee ran elections for Senate seats that were open, specifically the at-large positions.
  - There were four open seats. She reported that they were able to fill all four through a process of self-nomination, meaning individuals nominated themselves for these roles.
- **Christina Dilkes** then provided the outcomes:
  - For the at-large staff senator position: Carlos Flores was elected and is receiving a vote of confirmation for being seated as a senator.
  - For at-large faculty positions: Three out of five available seats were filled. The other two faculty seats that remain unfilled will be assigned as constituency seats for the next round of elections in the spring.
  - The three faculty members elected as at-large senators are **Heather Benton**, **Jacob Bilek**, and **Jo-Ann Robinson**.

- **Christina Dilkes** also reported on the adjunct seats:
  - When a previous adjunct senator, Arnie Korotkin, left, the committee facilitated additional voting.
  - As a result, **Brian Krist** was elected to fill one of the adjunct senator seats.
- **Christina Dilkes** concluded with a summary:
  - All four identified senator positions (one staff and three faculty at-large, and one adjunct) have now been seated as of this meeting.
  - Remaining at-large faculty seats will be readdressed in upcoming elections, scheduled for the spring.

Constitution Committee

- **Tim Gorman** provided committee updates:
  - Announces two draft amendments in circulation, with plans for first reading in November.

Just and Sustainable Practices Committee

- **Erik Jacobson** announced two initiatives:
  - Updates on plans for a community climate anxiety event (collaborative, multi-unit).
  - Efforts underway to get more info about campus waste flows; considers influencing RFP for waste services.

9. NAAL Report

- **Catherine Baird**:
  - The Union hosted multiple **workshops** on sabbatical, reappointment, and faculty/librarian/teaching faculty matters.
    - Continued work with the **New Faculty Program**.
  - **October 22**: Council of New Jersey State College locals held a **legislative breakfast**.
    - Attended by members and officers.
    - Brought together AFT members from five state institutions with legislators and higher education committee leaders.
    - Purpose: demonstrate attention to and concern for **New Jersey higher education issues**.
  - Labor Walks:
    - Previously organized labor walks.

- Upcoming event: **Saturday, November 1** in Union County, 8:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- Reminder: **vote** in the upcoming election and join the walk if available.
- **Bill Sullivan** reminds the group about a walk in Essex County - Maplewood on Springfield Avenue and welcomes everyone to join the Union in multiple New Jersey locations for walks.

10. AFT Local 6025 Update

- **Mary Wallace:**
  - Applauds university Senate for supporting voting rights for adjuncts, underscoring unique status among state peers.
  - Raises concern over handicapped parking, particularly misuse by maintenance and fencing trucks.
  - Describes recent enforcement incident (police indecision re: handicapped spots) and ongoing dialog with campus police and administration, urging designated spaces for work vehicles.

11. Senate President's Report

- **Shannon Bellum** provided the following report:
  - New Jersey Mutual Academic Defense Compact
    - Discusses letter from Rutgers Senate President regarding the proposed New Jersey Mutual Academic Compact (coalition of university Senates).
    - Points Senators to resources on shared drive, names **Erik Jacobson** as liaison, and outlines plan to vote on compact resolution at next meeting.
  - Committee Selection
    - Raises process concern about how committee members are appointed (selection vs. election), aiming for better alignment and communication with administration.
    - Reports ongoing talks with President Koppell seeking a more consistent policy allowing Senate input.

Committee on Freedom of Expression Resolution

- The first business item requiring a vote is a resolution from the committee on Freedom of Expression.
    - **Sarah Sangregorio** confirms quorum.
    - The resolution was introduced by **Adam Rzepka**.
        - The Committee on Freedom of Expression presented a resolution opposing the U.S. Department of Education's proposed "Compact" for universities and colleges. The compact, which is linked in the draft resolution, has been widely rejected by academic institutions and organizations. Of the nine universities initially offered the compact, seven have explicitly declined, and the remaining two did not agree by the initial deadline. Major professional associations—including AAUP, AACU, ACP, and JGP—along with numerous university senates, have also issued statements rejecting the compact.
        - The Committee expressed concern that adoption of the compact by any major university could have significant negative implications across higher education. While most institutions have rejected the proposal, some, such as UCLA and the University of Texas, are reportedly considering or negotiating versions of it.
        - This resolution aligns the Senate with the broader academic community in opposing the compact. The Committee invited questions or discussion from members.

- The resolution was distributed before the meeting to Senators.
- The floor was opened for discussion on the resolution.

Discussion
- **Jerise Fogel** expressed strong agreement with prior comments opposing the U.S. Department of Education's proposed compact. Concerns were raised about the compact's potential conflict with the college's mission as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Specific emphasis was placed on how the compact's policies could undermine efforts to support LGBTQ+, nonbinary, and transgender students, maintain an ethnically diverse student body, and provide resources for international students. The member

noted that these priorities are central to the institution's mission and that the compact appears fundamentally at odds with them. The member reaffirmed opposition to signing the compact.

- **Shannon Bellum** reaffirmed that no one here on campus has said that they're going to join the compact, so we're not fighting against that.
- **Marshall Chaifetz** noted that, after reviewing statements from other universities, many explicitly call on their presidents not to agree to the compact. The current draft resolution does not include such language, and the member inquired about the reasoning behind that choice.
- **Adam Rzepka** clarified that the current resolution is intended to express the Senate's position rather than make a formal recommendation to the college president. The discussion emphasized that the compact has been described by many organizations as a "loyalty pledge," trading preferential access to federal funding for federal oversight, including internal monitoring of viewpoint diversity and faculty speech. Concerns were raised that if even a few universities accept the compact, this trade-off could become widespread, creating significant implications for academic freedom.
- **Erik Jacobson** commented on the choice of language in the resolution, noting that "censure" implies a disciplinary action within a shared governance body, whereas "condemn" more clearly communicates rejection and a judgment that the compact is reprehensible.
- **Tim Gorman** agreed with prior comments from **Marshall Chaifetz** and proposed revising the resolution to explicitly recommend that the Senate call upon or encourage the president to resist any pressure to sign the compact. This approach was viewed as more logical than simply stating Senate opposition. The member also noted that such language would ideally prompt a response from the administration regarding its position. It was emphasized that the compact remains an active issue, as all universities may face pressure to sign.
- **David Trubatch** explained the distinction between a resolution and a recommendation within Senate practice. A

resolution conveys the sense of the Senate, while a recommendation is a specific proposal that carries an obligation for the university president to respond, providing rationale if not adopted. Recommendations are considered more weighty and, by tradition, require two votes unless rules are suspended. The member emphasized that passing a resolution does not preclude later adopting a recommendation and encouraged the Senate to make these choices intentionally and with full understanding of the implications.

- **Erik Jacobson** expressed support for passing the resolution during the current meeting, provided the language is finalized. They recommended adopting the resolution now to convey the Senate's position and then exploring a subsequent recommendation as a next step, rather than delaying action.
- **Shannon Bellum** clarified that if the Senate adopts a recommendation, it could be referred to a council for development and then returned for consideration in November. If a quorum is present, the Senate can proceed with a vote.
- **Shannon Bellum** asked if there was still a quorum.
- **Sarah Sangregorio** confirmed a quorum was still present.
- **Shannon Bellum** called the question.
  - Motion to vote: **Bill Sullivan**
  - Seconded: **Erik Jacobson**
- **Shannon Bellum** clarified that the easiest way to calculate votes will be using the spreadsheet method previously employed. The spreadsheet will be used solely for tallying votes, not for recording individual voting choices, and will be destroyed after the tally is completed. **Shannon Bellum** outlined the voting process: voting members in favor will raise their hands, followed by those opposed, and then those abstaining. Abstentions will not be tallied but will be recorded to ensure all votes are captured. The Senate President does not vote unless there needs to be a tiebreaker.
- **The resolution passed with a majority.**

12. Caucus Reports

Latinx Caucus
- Provided a report.

Asian American Caucus
- No report

African American Caucus
- No report

Disability Caucus
- **Stephanie Spitz:**
  - The next general membership meeting of the Disability Caucus will be held on Friday from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. All fall meeting dates and the Zoom link for these meetings were shared in the chat.

13. Meeting Adjournment
- **Call to Adjourn:** 3:59 PM
  - **Erik Jacobson,** Motion to Adjourn
  - **Tim Gorman**, Seconded
  - **Shannon Bellum:** Adjourned by Acclamation