

University Senate Meeting

November 19th | 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. Challenger, C. Dilkes, C. Flores, C. Gunhouse, C. Reinisch, D. Falloon-Blake, D. Peterka-Benton, D. Trubatch, E. Jacobson, F. Lauby, I. Ren, J. Alexandre, J. Bilek, J. Robinson, K. Handeli, L. Carr, L. LeFever, L. Simeon, M. Chaifetz, M. Kamenetskiy, M. Smith, N. Kurzynowski, N. Panorkou, P. Haggerty, 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, Y. Bai, Y. Luo, Z. Aidala

Voting Members Missing:

C. Rodriguez-Unalt, D. Chong, H. Benton, O. Gharehgozli, W. Sullivan

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

- **Call to Order:** 2:08 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** overviewed the agenda, noting a full meeting and the aim to finish on time.

4. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the October 29th meeting were moved for approval by **Laureen LeFever**, with a second by **Adam Rzepka**. They were unanimously approved by acclamation.

5. Agenda Updates and Structure

- **Shannon Bellum** reminded the group that unauthorized recordings are prohibited except for those requiring accommodation. The minutes of this meeting shall stand as the official record of University Senate proceedings.
 - All comments were to be made via the hand-raising procedure both on Zoom and in the room to request the floor, with preference to those who had not yet spoken.
 - Discussion will proceed in an orderly fashion with one speaker at a time.
 - Senators who have not yet spoken will be given priority over those who have already held the floor.
 - Attendance distinctions (voting vs. non-voting senators) will also be considered in prioritization.
 - If a speaker raises a question or issue, those wishing to respond must raise their hand to enter the queue.
 - Senators are asked to refrain from speaking out of turn.
 - A designated agenda section, “Voices of the Community,” is reserved for thoughts and questions regarding Senate actions. Senators are asked to hold comments until that portion of the meeting.
- **Shannon Bellum** introduced an updated agenda format, grouping items under relevant Senate committees for improved clarity and flow. She advised that feedback would help refine future meetings.

6. Provost's Address and HEAL Fellow Presentations

- Opening Remarks by the Provost
Provost Stefanie Brachfeld expressed gratitude for faculty engagement and introduced the Higher Education Academic Leadership (HEAL) Fellows Program. She commended **Emily Isaacs**' role as advocate for faculty professional development and leadership.

- HEAL Fellows Program Overview

Emily Isaacs:

- Announced that HEAL Fellowship applications were open, with a deadline of December 19, and encouraged all interested to apply.
- Details were provided for two open information sessions for Q&A.
- Introduced current fellows: Peter Hosek (Kinesiology), Manveer Mann (Marketing), and Elenice De Souza Oliveira (Justice Studies).

- Presentations by HEAL Fellows

Peter Hosek, Department of Kinesiology:

- **Topic:** Physical Activity as a Vital Sign of Health: A Strategic Approach to Student Success
- **Introduction:** Peter Hosek introduced his project, emphasizing the role of physical activity as a vital sign of health and its connection to student success.
- **Project Aims:**
 - **Screening for Physical Activity**
 - Development of a simple two-question survey:
 - How many days per week do you participate in physical activity?
 - How long is each session?
 - Provides an estimate of weekly minutes of activity, benchmarked against the guideline of 150 minutes per week.
 - Incorporated into the Student Belonging Survey in collaboration with Dr. Christopher Donahue.
 - **Referral and Support System**
 - Students below recommended activity levels will be identified and referred to existing campus services.
 - Partnerships include Athletics, Recreation, CAPS, and Student Health.
 - Referral options:
 - Connection with personal trainers at Campus Rec.
 - Orientation to equipment and exercise basics.
 - Education on reducing anxiety and integrating activity into daily routines.

- **Implementation & Development:**
 - The program is in the development phase, with advertisements expected within 1–2 months.
 - Strong support and buy-in from partner groups across campus.
 - Modeled on Campus Rec 101, but tailored to students with low activity levels.
 - Plans for follow-up assessments (4–6 weeks post-participation) to measure impact on student habits.
 - Emphasis on scope management to refine and expand the program iteratively.
- **Long-Term Goals:**
 - Improve student fitness and overall health outcomes.
 - Track data to identify trends in physical activity.
 - Expand the program based on usage and effectiveness.

Manveer Mann, Department of Marketing:

- **Topic:** Scaling Up, Serving More: Expanding Faculty Engagement in Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning
- **Introduction:** Manveer Mann outlined a project focused on scaling up community-engaged teaching and learning across campus. The project aims to provide resources and scaffolding to support faculty participation in this pedagogy.
- **Project Aims:**
 - Increase Awareness and Build Expertise
 - Conduct faculty workshops to introduce community-engaged teaching and learning, highlight best practices, and provide training.
 - Four workshops planned; two completed, with additional sessions scheduled (including December 5th).
 - Collaborations include ITDS, CTAI, and the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships.
 - Development of a Knowledge Hub (Canvas community) to house resources such as best practices, assessment tools, and templates.
 - Post-surveys conducted to measure confidence and effectiveness.

- Sustainability planning underway to continue offerings beyond the fellowship, potentially through asynchronous online modules.
- Connect Faculty with Community Partners and Projects
 - Collaboration with the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships to develop a database of community partners and their areas of work.
 - Faculty will be able to identify partners aligned with their disciplines (e.g., exercise science, nutrition).
 - Beta version of the framework/tool already developed and populated with current partners.
 - Next steps include faculty feedback, iterative design, and integration with experiential education and career connections.
 - Aim to present the tool at the February workshop for review and refinement.

■ **Early Outcomes:**

- Workshop series successfully launched with strong partner support.
- Prototype of the community partner framework completed and scheduled for stakeholder presentation.
- Positive progress reported; project is in a strong developmental stage.

Elenice De Souza Oliveira:

- **Topic:** Advancing a Sustainable Framework for Human Flourishing
- **Main Goals:**
 - Develop a Flourishing Training Framework
 - Focused on student success, leadership, and professional skill development.
 - Reframes flourishing not just as individual well-being, but as a set of learnable competencies (e.g., attention, self-awareness, community engagement).
 - Designed to help students thrive personally and contribute to flourishing communities.

- Design and Implement a Pilot “Training-to-Training” Program
 - Builds competencies across undergraduate, graduate, and professional development programs.
 - Establishes a trainer-to-trainer model where students and staff learn flourishing skills and then teach them to peers.

- **Key Activities & Partnerships**

- Pre-Med and Health Program
 - Strong partnership established through prior workshops.
 - Pilot focused on peer mentors, who learn flourishing skills and apply them with mentees.
 - Seven workshops delivered; resources shared via a Community Canvas.
 - Pre- and post-tests plus qualitative data collected for evaluation.
- Training-to-Training Expansion
 - Development of a manual and framework for broader implementation.
 - Partnerships include:
 - Career Center (training staff to cascade skills).
 - Academic Success Tutoring and Student Affairs (scheduled training sessions).
 - Counseling Program (PhD and Master’s students learning and applying skills in professional contexts).

- **Outcomes & Next Steps**

- Phase One: Peer mentors trained; next semester they will teach flourishing skills to mentees and other students.
- Evaluation: Ongoing data collection to refine framework and training manual.
- Expansion: Scheduled training sessions with multiple campus partners.
- Sustainability: Plan to form a committee to carry the program forward beyond the pilot year.

- Long-Term Vision: Create a scalable, sustainable framework that embeds flourishing skills into student success, leadership, and professional development across the university.

7. Student Government Association (SGA) Bill

- **Shannon Bellum** reported for the SGA:
 - **Bill Submission:**
 - The SGA has submitted a bill, with full contents available in the shared drive.
 - The idea for the bill was originally proposed by **Provost Gonzalez** prior to his departure.
 - **President Koppell** has not yet provided feedback on the matter.
 - **Legislative Action:**
 - The bill was **passed unanimously** by the SGA legislature.
 - In accordance with the SGA constitution, the Senate is asked to **review and provide feedback**.
 - **Oversight & Process:**
 - Bills outside the purview of the SGA are directed to the appropriate authority (Board of Trustees, President, or Senate).
 - The bill has been forwarded to the **Student Affairs Council**, which will review it and report back.
 - **Request:**
 - The SGA seeks an **official response** regarding the bill.
- **Emily Isaacs** asked for more information on the bill.
- **Shannon Bellum** explained that the goal of the bill is for professors to share their syllabi early, ideally before course registration begins.
- **Pascale La Fountain** will be reaching out to **Emily Isaacs** and others to discuss this further.

8. Council and Committee Reports

Student Affairs Council

Shannon Bellum noted that the Student Affairs Council put a report on file in the Senators shared drive and that Pascale La Fountain will be able to answer questions on that.

- The full report is in the Senate Shared Drive.

Academic Affairs Council

- No report.

Elections Committee

- No report.

Just and Sustainable Practices Committee

- No report.

9. NAAL Report

- **Catherine Baird:**

- AFT and AAUP locals joined together nationwide for a day of action under the campaign “Higher Ed: Saving Lives, Building Futures, and Harming the Economy.”
- Local 1904 and Local 6205 participated by organizing a food and resource drive for the Red Hawk Pantry.
 - Drive ran from Friday, November 7 to Friday, November 14.
 - Donations are still accepted; details are available on the Red Hawk Pantry webpage.
- On behalf of the Local, members were wished a happy, healthy, and restful holiday.

10. Foundation Report

- **David Trubatch:**

- Foundation Overview:

- The University Foundation is a separate but closely affiliated organization that manages philanthropy directed to the university.
- The Foundation Board recently met, preceded by a gathering at a newly designated alumni space on Normal Avenue, which also houses offices for University Development.
- Upcoming Event – Giving Tuesday:
 - Giving Tuesday is a national campaign, with Montclair State hosting multiple activities.
 - Donations to the university can be specific to programs of interest, not general contributions.
 - The Foundation manages funds such as the AFT Local 1904 Scholarship Fund, among many others.
 - Senate members and the broader community are encouraged to review Giving Tuesday announcements and support initiatives aligned with their interests.
 - Emphasis was placed on philanthropy as a way to enhance the university’s “margin of excellence” rather than fill gaps.
 - The Honors Edge Program and the lacrosse teams have grown significantly due to external donations.
 - “What could make Montclair State University better than the Senate could support? I’m happy to organize a group that wants to think of something and then advocate for funds.”
 - Members were urged to engage with Giving Tuesday materials and contribute to programs that resonate with them.
- **Mary English** reminded the members that on Giving Tuesday, contributions may be directed to any cause of personal choice. Donors have the option to designate a specific area of interest or select from the initiatives presented. This flexibility ensures that individuals can support programs most meaningful to them and advance the mission of the university.

11. Council and Committee Reports, Continued

Administrative Affairs Council

- **Lauren Carr:**

- Updated on tuition exchange program recommendations with reference links in her written report.
- Introduced **Jestina Casas** to explain the report section pertaining to the Workday Student timeline
- **Jestina Casas:**
 - **Workday Student Project Update**
 - Project Status
 - The project is in the final phase of the architect and configure stage (Workset D).
 - Transition to end-to-end testing is scheduled for Spring 2026.
 - From November 18–20, Montclair workstream leads and implementation partners (Alchemy) are conducting on-site sessions to finalize key processes, including:
 - Beginning of term activities
 - Waitlist management
 - Change of major workflow
 - Testing will evaluate these processes across different student personas.
 - Engagement Activities
 - Workday Project Management met with Student Development & Campus Life managers to provide updates and align on upcoming decision points, emphasizing engagement as testing approaches.
 - Workday Student Change Network launched with kickoff sessions at Montclair and Bloomfield.
 - Attendance: 61 students, faculty, and staff.
 - Key themes raised: accessibility, training, testing participation.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for January.
 - Invitation form included in the meeting materials for additional participants.
 - Student Outreach
 - Multiple student focus groups conducted this fall with support from faculty.
 - Presentations delivered in classes to raise awareness and gather student perspectives.

- Flexible presentation formats available (15–60 minutes).
- Upcoming engagement: Bloomfield Writing 109 Symposium on December 11.
- The project team remains focused on maintaining momentum, broadening campus engagement, and preparing for testing.
- Faculty are encouraged to invite the team to classes or meetings to further student and community awareness.
- The full report is in the Senator Shared Drive.
- **Lauren Carr** introduces **Eve Lotito**, representing the Generative AI Committee.

Generative AI Committee

- **Eve Lotito:**
 - Policy Development:
 - Work is underway to draft policies regarding the teaching, instructional, and professional use of AI on campus.
 - Existing AI policies from peer institutions are being referenced as models.
 - A draft of disciplinary-related AI use policies is expected by the beginning of Spring semester.
 - In Spring 2026, feedback will be solicited from the Montclair campus community, after which the policies will be finalized and submitted to university administrators.
 - Course Development:
 - A new course titled Responsible AI is being co-developed by Ashwin Vaidya and Eve Lotito.
 - Current campus courses focus primarily on AI literacy and competency; this course addresses the gap by offering a critical perspective on AI use.
 - The course is intended to be offered as an interdisciplinary course, enabling students from diverse fields to benefit from this perspective.
 - Ashwin has contributed significantly to the project but was unable to attend the meeting.

Academic Calendar and Scheduling Working Group

- **Lauren Carr** introduces **Lisa Michalowicz**, co-chair of the Working Group with Lora Billings.
- **Lisa Michalowicz:**
 - The committee held its first meeting on Monday.
 - No official report is available at this time.
 - Immediate priorities include:
 - Recruiting additional faculty members to ensure proper representation.
 - Gathering data to inform future planning.
 - The committee will reconvene in **mid-December** to begin outlining procedures and determining organizational approaches.
- **David Trubatch** noted that when the academic calendar and scheduling working group held its first meeting, only one faculty member was present at the session.
 - As a Senate working group, faculty and instructional staff participation is considered essential to ensure recommendations are practical and aligned with classroom realities.
 - **David** emphasized the importance of having more faculty and instructional staff involved to provide input and ensure that plans and recommendations reflect the needs of those actively engaged in teaching and course scheduling.
- **Pascale La Fountain** asked **Shannon Bellum** if participants in the working group had to be members of the Senate. **Shannon** confirmed that members did not have to be members of the Senate. **Pascale** asked who people would contact if interested. **Shannon** mentioned that Shannon could be a point of contact, as well as both chairs of the committee (**Lora** and **Eve**), and **David Trubatch**.

12. Report from Dean Mili on CHSS Restructuring

- The restructuring of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) has been the subject of extensive and passionate discussion since July 1.
- **Dean Mili** emphasized the seriousness with which all decisions are taken, recognizing the commitment and passion of faculty and staff.
- Since July, approximately 20 meetings (90 minutes each) have been held with department chairs, college leadership, and the broader college community.

- Key themes emerging from these discussions include:
 - Disciplinary integrity
 - Shared governance
 - Building from a point of strength
- CHSS represents nearly one-quarter of the university's faculty and students and carries a significant mission within the institution.
- Disciplinary integrity and shared governance have been identified as the primary criteria guiding restructuring.
- Clarified there is no final decision on the existence or elimination of department chairs; the internal structure remains under discussion.
- Additional goals include:
 - Increasing interaction across disciplines
 - Minimizing administrative redundancy
 - Evaluating and celebrating the diversity of disciplines within CHSS
- The restructuring process is iterative, involving feedback from faculty, department chairs, staff, and students.
- Emphasized better support for faculty leadership, relieving chairs of certain administrative burdens (event planning, student recruitment) to allow more focus on mentoring, teaching, and research.
- Addressed concerns about centralization: previous resource redistribution was driven by constraints; the future model may allow dedicated staff per "school" for better coordination.
- The restructuring committee submitted its report in the summer.
- The President requested further faculty input, leading to an additional meeting with 15 members of the college.
- A model with the most support was refined against the criteria and iterated with input from department chairs, faculty, and students.
- The current model proposes four schools, with internal design left to the college.
- Department chairs are now developing detailed models.
- The Dean's office will synthesize input and circulate drafts for further review.
- Faculty, staff, and students have actively contributed to the design process.
- **Dean Mili** emphasized appreciation for the high level of engagement and input.
- The process seeks to balance faculty participation with timely progress.
- Some misinformation has circulated, including claims that the college or programs are being closed.

- Such actions were described as harmful to the institution's reputation and to students.
- While these concerns stem from a minority, the majority of faculty uphold the values of the college and university.
- The restructuring aims to re-energize disciplines, particularly in light of declining enrollment.
- Focus will be on creating synergy across departments and investing in multidisciplinary engagement.
- The process involves calculated risks but is intended to elevate CHSS to the next level.

Discussion

- **Adam Rzepka** affirmed that disparaging the university or falsely telling students their programs are closing is incorrect and not endorsed.
 - A correction was offered regarding the survey results from the eight-month planning process:
 - Model One received ~16% of the vote.
 - Model Two (splitting the college in two while maintaining departments) received ~60–70% of the vote.
 - Model Three (closest to the current model being pursued) received ~8% of the vote.
 - It was emphasized that the model now under consideration was not the one that received the most votes.
 - A key question was raised: Is it settled whether CHSS will retain departments with chairs?
- **Dean Mili** answered that the question of whether CHSS will retain departments or department chairs is not yet settled.
 - The guiding principle is the preservation of shared governance, ensuring each discipline elects its representative, regardless of title (chair, head, etc.).
 - The current model under discussion includes the concept of disciplinary heads, but naming conventions remain flexible.
 - The focus is on achieving restructuring goals:
 - Preserving disciplinary integrity and shared governance
 - Creating synergy and maximizing interaction across disciplines

- Reducing redundancy in administrative tasks
 - Allowing faculty leaders to devote more time to research, teaching, mentoring, and discipline-specific work
 - Certain functions may be consolidated at the school level to improve efficiency and better serve students and faculty.
- **David Trubatch** stated that the question of whether departments will have elected chairpersons cannot be “fudged.”
 - At Montclair State, as a New Jersey public university, certain responsibilities associated with chairpersons fall under terms and conditions of work, which are subject to negotiation with the exclusive collective negotiations agent, not the University Senate.
 - While some chairperson duties may be flexible, roles tied to contractual obligations (e.g., participation in reappointment processes, self-assessment) must be formally addressed.
 - If a department does not have an elected chairperson, current agreements require the appointment of an Associate Director for Faculty (ADF) to fulfill those contractual obligations.
 - Other chairperson functions not tied to collective bargaining would need to be organized separately.
 - **David** emphasized that while he is not taking a position, it is important to clarify that shared governance in this context has legal and contractual dimensions that must be respected.
- **Tim Gorman** noted they initially shared the same question raised by **Adam** regarding the status of department chairs.
 - Following recent meetings, many faculty had the impression that the position of chairs was being eliminated, an understanding that was widely discussed among CHSS colleagues.
 - **Tim** emphasized the importance of clear communication throughout the restructuring process to avoid shared misunderstandings.
 - **Tim** expressed relief that no decision has been made to eliminate chairs, but also noted that no commitment has been made to retain them.
- **Dean Mili** stated that the restructuring process remains focused on overarching goals and criteria, rather than fixed titles or structures.
 - Whether the outcome involves department chairs, disciplinary heads, or schools functioning as “mega-departments” is still to be determined.
 - The design proposed by colleagues at the recent meeting provides a starting point for further development.

- It was emphasized that there is an open possibility of retaining department chairs, but no final decision has been made.
 - The priority is for the college community to work collaboratively toward a model that meets agreed criteria and advances the restructuring goals.
- **Tim Gorman** then noted that **Dean Mili** had previously stated that scheduling classes, a responsibility currently performed by department chairs, could potentially be managed more effectively at the school or college level.
 - A question was raised regarding whether there are additional tasks or responsibilities currently handled by chairs that might also be better suited to administrative oversight
- **Dean Mili** clarified that department chairs currently spend significant time on administrative tasks such as:
 - Event organization
 - Student recruitment
 - Alumni engagement
 - Logistical tasks (contacting alumni, ordering food, reserving rooms)
- **Dean Mili** emphasized that these responsibilities could be handled more effectively at the school or college level, allowing chairs to focus on:
 - Faculty mentoring
 - Curriculum development
 - Research and teaching
- An example given by **Dean Mili**: A recent alumni event required extensive chair involvement, but the Student Success Center could have provided resources and support.
 - Centralized coordination would also prevent conflicting events and improve attendance, ensuring stronger representation of the college.
- **Dean Mili**: The goal is to relieve chairs of non-governance administrative burdens and streamline operations for the benefit of faculty, students, and the college's public image.
- **Laura Field** stated her appreciation for the discussion on supporting department chairs.
 - A concern was raised that the administration has not provided a clear message on how chairs will be supported.
 - Suggestions included providing professional development opportunities and professional staff support within units.

- Faculty perceive the proposed shifting of duties away from chairs not as a benefit, but as a loss of faculty leadership and decision-making authority.
 - It was emphasized that strengthening existing chair structures would likely be better received by faculty than reducing their responsibilities.
- **Dean Mili** emphasized a dual focus on developing leadership and reducing administrative burdens for department chairs.
 - Chairs are being encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities, including higher education leadership programs, with applications currently open.
 - Departments with small numbers of faculty are often stretched thin; restructuring aims to provide support by centralizing administrative tasks.
 - The restructuring will also allow for dedicated professional staff at the school level, addressing current limitations in staffing at the department level.
 - Overall goal: enable chairs to focus on faculty mentoring, curriculum, and disciplinary leadership, while administrative functions are handled more efficiently.
- **Laura Field** expressed that additional help and support is welcome, provided it does not dilute leadership or faculty decision-making authority.
- **Dean Mili** reiterated agreement on the importance of supporting department chairs.
 - Emphasis was placed on helping chairs grow their leadership by freeing up more time and hours for them to focus on core responsibilities.
 - The goal is to strengthen chairs' leadership capacity through reduced administrative burdens and increased support.
- **Fanny Lauby** raised a question about the proposed support for administrative tasks currently handled by department chairs.
 - It was noted that in recent years, many of these resources (e.g., program assistants) have already been centralized at the college level, pulling support away from departments.
 - Tasks such as event organization, alumni list management, and outreach are examples of responsibilities that were previously managed by program assistants but are now centralized.
 - Faculty expressed concern that this centralization has not alleviated the workload for chairs, and questioned how the proposed model of

dedicated staff at the school level would differ from the current system.

- The suggestion was made that redistributing resources back to departments might better support chairs and allow them to refocus on faculty leadership and academic priorities.
- **Dean Mili** explained the rationale behind past centralization of administrative support.
 - Departments vary greatly in size (from fewer than 10 faculty to nearly 40).
 - Resources were insufficient to provide dedicated staff for each department.
 - Centralization was adopted as the only feasible solution.
 - Under the new restructuring, each school will have dedicated staff, improving support capacity.
 - Beyond staffing, schools will also provide coordination of activities and events across departments.
 - Example: Alumni events could be organized and coordinated at the school level, avoiding duplication and improving efficiency.
 - Currently, such decisions are made independently by departments, leading to fragmented efforts.

13. Council and Committee Reports, Continued

Constitution Committee

- **Tim Gorman** introduced two proposed amendments to the University Senate Constitution for their **first read**.
- Amendments require **three sequential reads** in Senate meetings, followed by a vote on the third read.
- The timeline is important because the amendments affect **spring elections**, and the Senate process requires multiple reads before voting.

Amendment 1 – Article X, Section C (Election Sequence)

- **Current system:**
 - At-large elections are held first (announcement in February, voting in March).
 - Unsuccessful candidates may then run in constituency elections.

- Constituency elections cover seats tied to specific colleges, adjunct faculty, professional staff, and other Dean-administered units.
- Problem: unfilled seats often remain, requiring additional at-large elections in the fall.
- **Proposed change:**
 - Hold constituency elections first (including adjunct, professional staff, and college-based seats).
 - Allow unsuccessful candidates from constituency elections to run in the at-large elections.
 - Any unfilled constituency seats would convert to at-large seats and be contested in the spring.
- **Rationale:**
 - Streamlines the election process.
 - Reduces the need for repeated elections in the fall.
 - Ensures all seats are filled more efficiently.
- **Feedback so far:**
 - Mostly focused on terminology (e.g., “constituent” vs. “at-large”).
 - No substantive changes have been made yet to the amendment text.

Amendment 2 – Article III, Section B (Senate Seat Apportionment)

- **Proposed change:** Adjusts the apportionment of seats in the Senate to reflect updated representation needs.
- The draft has already been revised based on committee work led by **Erik Jacobson**.
- **Erik Jacobson** will present details and rationale.
- Constitutional amendments require three reads before a vote.
- Amendments remain open to feedback and revision during the first and second reads.
- Final vote scheduled for January, ensuring changes can be implemented in time for spring elections.

Shannon Bellum interrupted to ask if there was motion to extend the meeting because the meeting was at time. **Erik Jacobson** made the motion, seconded by **Siobhan McCarthy**.

- Tim Gorman continued to explain the first amendment.

Proposed Revision (Four Key Points)

1. Regular elections will be held in the spring term.
2. Two elections will be conducted for voting members other than at-large seats; unsuccessful candidates may then run for at-large positions for which they are eligible.
3. If a non-at-large seat goes unfilled, it will convert to an at-large position. An election for that seat will be held in the spring term with other at-large elections. At the conclusion of the three-year term, the seat will revert to its original category.
4. All elections must be concluded at least one calendar week before nominations close for the Executive Board.

Language Discussion

- Concerns were raised about terminology: “constituent,” “at-large,” and “non-at-large.”
- “Non-at-large” was acknowledged as somewhat clunky but chosen to cover seats that are not strictly constituency-based (e.g., adjunct and professional staff seats).
- The rationale for retaining “non-at-large” is to ensure clarity and flexibility if new seat categories are created in the future.
- While “constituent” could be clearer, the consensus was that keeping “non-at-large” is acceptable as a relatively minor issue.
- No questions for **Tim** on Amendment 1.
- **Erik Jacobson** discusses Amendment 2.

Purpose

- The amendment seeks to replace arbitrary seat allocations with clear ratios and rules for representation, ensuring consistency and scalability as the university grows.
- Builds on last year’s revision and report, moving toward a numbers-based system rather than ad hoc decisions.

Section Revisions

1. Language Clarification (Non-substantive change)

- Voting members shall be elected/appointed from each academic unit with an academic dean as principal administrator.

- Constituency groups within each dean-administered unit defined as:
 - Tenure-eligible faculty (including librarians, excluding temporary/visiting appointments)
 - Teaching faculty (NTTPs)
 - Professional staff
- Only individuals with appointments greater than half-time are counted for seat allocation and eligibility.
- Ratio: 1 seat per 25 members, rounded up if 13 or more remain; minimum of 1 seat if >0 members; maximum of 6 seats.

2. At-Large Seats (Substantive change)

- New formula: 1 at-large seat per 200 individuals across constituencies and academic units.
- Rounding rule: if remainder ≥ 101 , round up.
- Current system: fixed at 3 seats without rationale.
- Benefit: seat numbers will scale automatically with university growth, avoiding repeated constitutional changes.

3. Additional Voting Members (Mixed changes)

- Undergraduate student seat (appointed by SGA Executive Board, carrying ≥ 3 semester hours) – unchanged.
- Adjunct faculty seats (new ratio):
 - 1 seat per 200 adjunct faculty, minimum 1, maximum 6.
 - Only adjunct faculty vote for these seats.
 - Unfilled adjunct seats do not convert to at-large; nominations reopen in the next election cycle.
 - Current system: fixed at 3 seats without rationale.
- Professional staff seats (new ratio):
 - 1 seat per 25 professional staff in non-dean-administered academic units, minimum 1, maximum 6.
 - Only professional staff in non-dean units vote for these seats.
 - Unfilled seats do not convert to at-large; nominations reopen in the next election cycle.
 - Current system: fixed at 3 seats without rationale.

4. Additional Rules (No substantive change)

- Elections Committee Chair must obtain census numbers from administration to determine seat counts.

- Any change in voting member numbers must be confirmed by full Senate before elections open.
- Eligibility rules: criteria to hold a seat and vote must be identical.

Key Substantive Changes

- Adjunct faculty representation: ratio-based, potentially increasing to the maximum of 6 seats.
- Professional staff representation: ratio-based, potentially increasing beyond the current 3 seats.
- At-large seats: ratio-based (1 per 200), scalable with university growth.

- **David Trubatch** commented that the exact number of seats under the new ratios has not yet been calculated.
 - It was emphasized that the Senate should be provided with a clear report of immediate-term seat counts before proceeding further.
 - A second concern highlighted the need for a transition plan.
 - Past experience showed that implementing changes without a transition strategy led to complications.
 - Any adjustment to seat ratios must include a plan for how to move from the current system to the new one.
 - David acknowledged these gaps and committed to ensuring that both the seat count calculations and a transition plan will be prepared before the second reading of the amendment.
- **Tim Gorman** stated that the Constitution Committee will convene again before the December Senate meeting to review feedback and questions from members and work through implications of the Second Amendment, particularly regarding apportionment of representation. The goal is to allow more time to examine details and refine the proposal. The committee intends to address these issues thoroughly in the next session.

14. Adjunct Union AFT Local 6025 Report

- **Mary Wallace** expressed relief that the general election is concluded.
 - A special election will be held to fill the seat vacated by Mikie Sherrill.
 - Locals 1904 and 6025 will conduct another student voter registration drive to encourage participation.

- The joint food drive organized by Locals 1904 and 6025 was successful.
 - Local 6025 additionally donated \$500 in gift cards and money to the food bank.
- Recognition was given to the importance of adjunct faculty representation:
 - Montclair has approximately 1,500 adjuncts teaching.
 - Montclair is the only university senate in the state with adjuncts voting, which was described as a point of pride and honor.

15. Caucus Reports

Latinx Caucus

- No report

Asian American Caucus

- No report

African American Caucus

- No report

Disability Caucus

- **Jacob Bilek for Stephanie Spitz:**
 - All are welcome to attend the upcoming general membership meeting this Friday, regardless of caucus membership.
 - Attendees are encouraged to bring a friend.
 - The meeting will feature two community partner presentations to provide an opportunity to hear their perspectives and engage in conversation with the presenters:
 - Marie Cascarano – Health Promotions
 - Samuel Shapiro – Disability Resource Center

16. Resolutions

Participation in the New Jersey Mutual Academic Defense Compact

- **Erik Jacobson** provides an updated resolution. Full text is available in the shared drive.

Summary of Resolution

- The Senate considered a resolution to join the New Jersey Mutual Academic Defense Compact (NJ-MADC).
- Core principles affirmed:
 - Shared governance
 - Academic freedom in teaching, research, and learning
 - Freedom of expression for all community members
 - Integrity of scholarly inquiry
 - Commitment to enrolling and serving a diverse student body as a public good
- **Rationale:**
 - New Jersey colleges and universities share a collective responsibility to defend these principles.
 - An infringement at one institution should be considered an infringement against all.

Resolution Details

- Montclair State University Senate affirms its commitment to these principles and joins the NJ-MADC alongside other New Jersey colleges, universities, and shared governance bodies.
- The Senate will select representatives to participate in NJ-MADC deliberations.
- Representatives will explore voluntary collective responses to infringements of core principles and engage in collaborative initiatives that amplify a cross-institutional voice.

Clarification

- This resolution does not commit the Senate to administrative obligations such as financial aid or legal aid (language included in a prior spring version).

- Instead, it commits the Senate to collaboration and collective defense of academic values, with specific commitments to be negotiated within the coalition by Senate representatives.

Discussion

- **David Trubatch** asked what other universities have joined the compact.
- **Erik Jacobson** defers to **Adam Rzepka**, who stated that:
 - The compact has already been passed by Rutgers University Senate.
 - Montclair would likely be the second Senate to adopt it.
 - The resolution is currently under consideration at Stockton, Kean, and TCNJ Senates, with indications that they will also pass.
 - Some of these institutions had previously passed the National Mutual Academic Defense Compact last spring.
 - The current proposal builds on that national framework, but operates at the state level, with corollary approval from university leadership.
- **Susan Baglieri** raised concerns regarding the procedure for electing Senate representation to the NJ-MADC, specifically asking when will the procedure be determined and stating that the Senate should know and establish this process before voting on the resolution to join the compact.
- **Shannon Bellum** answered that the Senate will follow its established election practices for selecting representatives.
 - The process will be handled by the Elections Committee, which will:
 - Run a nomination ballot.
 - Distribute the ballot to all voting senators.
 - This ensures consistency with existing procedures for electing Senate officials.

Voting and Voting Procedure

- **Shannon Bellum** asks if there is still a quorum for the vote.
 - **Sarah Sangregorio** confirms quorum.
- **Shannon Bellum** asks if there is a motion to call the vote.
 - The vote was called and seconded.
- **Shannon Bellum** explains that, for this ballot, the Senate is conducting open voting. A spreadsheet will be displayed on screen to show the votes as they are entered. The spreadsheet is used solely for tallying purposes and will not record how individual senators voted.
- **Sarah Sangregorio** will be responsible for tallying the votes using the spreadsheet. Once the tally is complete, the final vote count will be announced to the Senate.

- **The resolution passed:** 21 Yes | 1 No | 9 Abstentions
- The Elections Committee will reach out to all voting senators regarding representation, issue a nominations announcement to invite candidates, and provide details on when the election will take place and how it will be conducted.

CHSS Chairs Resolution

- **Tim Gorman** reads the resolution:

The University Senate wishes to express its concern and disappointment about recent proposals and discussions with leadership concerning the potential replacement of department Chairs with managerial Directors. However, according to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, effective shared governance requires strong faculty leaders as well as a capable board and an actively engaged president. Coordinating efforts, Chairs can enable the institution to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities in a timely manner. For this reason, we believe that Chairs play an essential role in the future success of CHSS.

The latest restructuring plan for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, announced on November 10, does not provide a clear internal structure for the proposed schools nor does it present a detailed vision of how the future College would thrive without the core functions currently vested in Chair-led departments. A strong collaborative partnership with department leadership, led by Chairpersons, will help bear the heavy load of the CHSS restructuring, and any other future transitions the university seeks to undertake.

Academic institutions rely on collaboration, shared governance, and intellectual pursuit and community. Chairpersons play a crucial role in both the shared governance structures and day-to-day operations of academic departments. While Deans and Directors can play an essential role in strategic alignment and policy implementation, Chair leadership excels in building trust, more authentic discourse, and facilitating sustained cultural and academic growth.

Power dynamics are deeply embedded in academic organizational settings. Instructors and staff may self-censor and suppress honest reporting in discussions with deans, directors, and senior leadership. Chairpersons, elected by their peers, can bridge the gap and remove hierarchical pressure, enabling frank discussions of challenges and opportunities that often remain invisible to deans or directors. Chairpersons understand the immediate realities of academic life which then produces more practical, current,

and empathetic problem solving than top-down guidance alone could. Greater psychological safety is created under Chair leadership and that, in turn, invites experimentation and collaboration. Without concern for administrative optics, departments have higher potential to become incubators for new ideas, and innovation.

The role of Chair is also student-facing, and Chairs serve as an accessible frontline point of contact for students as well as instructors. They act as a point of reference for student advising, grade grievances, and they are accessible to provide immediate feedback on instructor-student concerns. Chairpersons have direct line of sight on both the program requirements, and the availability of specialized instructors for any given term that can impact the scheduling needs and ultimately, time to degree completion of students enrolled in their programs.

Many of the roles and responsibilities of Chairpersons, such as those around personnel actions, are laid out in negotiated agreements at the state and local level. Further, Chairpersons are the named first step in student process policies, such as the Grade Grievance Policy and credit adjustments.

If the position of Chair were to be eliminated, these clearly-defined roles could potentially be scattered among several employees, such as faculty area heads, Associate Directors of Faculty, or other coordinators, or not covered at all. Maintaining this central and vital source of institutional leadership and student-centered decision-making will help strengthen the quality of instruction and research in CHSS, supporting the very goals the Administration aims to advance through the restructuring effort.

Department Chairs are elected by peers and, typically, are scholars of the same or a related discipline. As elected individuals, subjected to recall, they are empowered to legitimately speak and act on behalf of their department—this makes them fundamental to shared governance, transparency, and academic freedom. Instructors and program staff benefit most from a centralized leader selected among their peers, who can provide a well rounded, future-focused vision for curriculum and program goals reflective of global disciplinary standards, as well as one that takes into account student experiences.

In summary, these points underscore the fundamental role that department Chairpersons perform in shared governance, and the fundamental role that shared governance plays in the vitality, community, and mission of the university. Sharing governance in the face of sweeping and transformative change can help shift the thinking and planning of senior leadership, managers, instructors, and staff from

defending outdated, narrow interests to aligning efforts to plan for new challenges and external pressures.

As the steward of shared governance at Montclair State, the University Senate believes that the restructuring of its largest and oldest College presents important opportunities to reaffirm these principles.

Discussion

- **Laura Field** spoke in support of the resolution affirming the importance of department chairs.
 - Noted that the union has already stated opposition to structures excluding chairs, citing their essential and often underappreciated work.
 - Emphasized that the university should strengthen support for chairs and shared governance, rather than shifting responsibilities to management.
 - Highlighted that chairs provide faculty with a safe space for innovation and open dialogue, which is critical for flexibility and change.
 - Stressed that for restructuring to succeed, chairs—who best understand both disciplines and students—must be central to the process.
 - Concluded with strong endorsement of the resolution, underscoring the need to support and empower department chairs.
- **David Trubatch** noted that the document contains many important points but is lengthy, involved, and edited on the fly, making them hesitant to adopt it without revisions.
 - Clarification was offered:
 - Resolutions do not require or compel a response from administration.
 - Recommendations, however, create at least a moral obligation for administration to respond with a rationale if not followed.
 - Suggestion:
 - Do not vote immediately on the resolution.
 - Refer it to a council or working group to refine and possibly reframe it as a recommendation.
 - This would ensure a more polished, careful, and effective document.
 - Procedural note:
 - Recommendations normally require two readings under Senate practice.
 - Rules can be suspended if time is a concern, as has been done before.

- Emphasis:
 - **David** is not opposing the document, but proposing a different path to make it more effective and impactful.
- **Adam Rzepka** noted that the document contains many important points but is lengthy, involved, and edited on the fly, making them hesitant to adopt it without revisions.
 - **Adam** also noted that a shorter, polished draft of the resolution had previously been prepared by CHSS senators and the Senate Executive, but the current version is a rewritten, longer draft.
 - Emphasized that timing is critical: if the Senate does not act at this meeting, it will likely be too late for the resolution to have any impact at the next meeting.
 - Pointed out the rapid pace of developments, underscoring the urgency of making the Senate's position clear.
 - Argued that a resolution is preferable to a recommendation in this case:
 - A resolution immediately makes the Senate's position known.
 - A recommendation does not require a response from the President, and past responses have sometimes taken years with no obligation regarding content.
 - While acknowledging that recommendations can be useful in some cases, **Adam** concluded that given the urgency, a resolution is the stronger and more effective option.
 - **Shannon Bellum** clarified that recommendations do receive responses.
 - Under current Senate leadership, responses have been provided more promptly than in the past.
 - Recent recommendations have typically received replies within a couple of weeks, demonstrating a commitment to timely engagement.
 - **Tim Gorman** emphasized that timing is critical, echoing **Adam**'s earlier point.
 - Acknowledged that drafting the resolution over the weekend was not preferred practice, but necessary due to urgency.
 - Noted that the internal structure of the proposed schools is still undecided, but may soon be finalized without chairs.
 - Warned that delaying action could mean missing the window to influence the outcome.
 - Expressed belief that the Senate's position is reaching the administration and could have an impact, even if uncertain how much.
 - Concluded that it is vital to weigh in now, as this is the current moment of opportunity.
 - **Fanny Lauby** echoed points made by **Tim** and **Adam**.

- The group considered both options (resolution vs. recommendation) and decided to pursue the one that could be adopted most quickly, given the urgency of current administrative decisions.
- Observed that some in the administration appear to be hesitating on the final restructuring plan, and a resolution would serve as a timely push.
- Emphasized that the priority is to state the Senate's position on the role of chairs, rather than seeking a formal response from administration, which is expected to be non-committal.
- **Sarah Ghoshal** emphasized the importance of issuing the resolution from the University Senate itself.
 - Noted that this action could serve as a model for other colleges in future restructuring efforts.
 - Stressed that adopting the resolution would place the Senate's stance on the official record regarding the retention of department chairs.
 - Highlighted that the resolution's impact would extend beyond the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, potentially influencing broader university practices.
 - Concluded that it is critical to act quickly so the Senate's position is documented and recognized.
- **Alfredo Toro-Carnevali** voiced support for colleagues' earlier remarks.
 - Stressed that timing is critical: delaying action by a month or until the next meeting may be too late for the resolution to influence ongoing decisions.
 - Reiterated the importance of acting promptly to ensure the statement has impact.
- **David Trubatch** emphasized the importance of consensus over parliamentary procedure.
 - Noted uncertainty about whether the issue of department chairs is broadly supported across the Senate or primarily within CHSS.
 - Expressed the view that if broad support exists, the Senate should ultimately issue a recommendation rather than a resolution.
 - Stated reluctance to suspend rules immediately to convert the current resolution into a recommendation, as a recommendation should be more carefully drafted.
 - Proposed possible paths forward:
 - Vote on a resolution today, while also creating a framework for a recommendation process.
 - Treat today's action as a first reading of a recommendation, with a second reading and vote in December.
 - Alternatively, prepare a revised draft in advance of the December 17 meeting, then suspend rules to pass it at once.

- Clarified that the concern is not opposition to the resolution, but a desire for a more polished and effective statement.
- Concluded that given the apparent broad consensus, the Senate should prepare to move forward with a recommendation in one of the outlined ways.

Voting and Voting Procedure

- Motion to call the question carried by unanimous consent.
- **Shannon Bellum** asks if there is still a quorum for the vote.
 - **Sarah Sangregorio** confirms quorum.
- **Shannon Bellum** explains that, for this ballot, the Senate is conducting open voting. A spreadsheet will be displayed on screen to show the votes as they are entered. The spreadsheet is used solely for tallying purposes and will not record how individual senators voted.
- **Sarah Sangregorio** will be responsible for tallying the votes using the spreadsheet. Once the tally is complete, the final vote count will be announced to the Senate.
- The resolution passed with a clear majority.

17. Meeting Adjournment

- **Call to Adjourn:** 4:20 PM
 - **Christina Dilkes**, Motion to Adjourn
 - **Tim Gorman**, Seconded
 - **Shannon Bellum**: Adjourned by Acclamation