

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2025

Approved October 7, 2025

1. Call to Order

Called to order by Chair McLean at 1:05pm.

2. Roll Call

In Attendance:

Allen, Belim, Bergiel, Boyd, Brock, Bryan, Buzon, Chen, Colley, Council, Dyar, Elias, Eliison, Elman, Fleming, Green, Griffin, Hadley, Harte, Hildebrandt, Hopper, Ivory, Janzen, Kazeem, Khan, Kimbrel, Koczaks, Maggiano, Mendes, Moon, Ofoe, Peralta, Roberts, Ruffin, Shelmutt, Swift, Talbot, Viswanath, Webb, Wentz, Yang, Yarbrough, Yeh, Zot.

Absent:

Faucette, Riker, Seong, Sicignano.

3. Minutes

- A) The April 11, 2025 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes were approved electronically on May 12, 2025.

4. Discussion with Leadership

A) President

- *The President has been visiting classes over the first few weeks, reminding students about campus resources and providing his email address: presence connects to student success.*
- *Budget resolution runs out in the upcoming days: Pell grant and student success measures of important note since many of our students are first-generation. Start of legislative session soon: items not decided last session will come forward. A number of state legislatures are up for election or re-election: reminder to be mindful of USG role, do not speak of behalf of the university.*
- *Enrollment is up: just slightly over 16,000 students this semester. Huge effort from enrollment team, Housing, Provost's office and Scheduling. Will see how residence life and other factors will improve retention. Encouraged faculty to come out to games and other campus events.*

- *State of the University address will be held in November, an email was sent announcing date and other specifics.*
- *Questions:*
 - *Comment that faculty members can get into football games with up to three tickets with faculty ID.*
 - *Q: Address overlaps with teaching times regarding the State of the University address.*
 - *A: Will endeavor to provide a recording.*
 - *Q: Could it be moved to free hour?*
 - *A: The President was not opposed to that suggestion, but was trying to be aware of lunch hour.*
 - *Q: Word of thanks to share thoughts in survey. Any themes from responses?*
 - *A: Some themes that have emerged include concerns regarding the size of classes and classrooms, student success and what we can do better, questions about athletics; will continue to go through information. As with the leadership of any organization, he is happy to have conversations, and is aware that change can be difficult especially given the current academic climate while making sure that we are in line with the region and USG and federal levels. Student success should be a no-excuse priority. College athletics also a priority: branding and visibility opportunity, but not at the expense of the mission of the university. About 65-70% of tuition dollars go to academic and remainders go to administrative needs. At previous university, all gains came from administrative budget: academic mission was not touched. Strategic plan and student success priorities need to be aligned with budget: strategic plan is not just for accreditation, includes actionable items. 125th anniversary is 2031.*
 - *Q/Comment: Encouraged President to ask questions of faculty so that when our current strategic plan ends in 2026, the President can allow*

faculty to help shape and contribute to the next plan. How can we help you?

- *A: Appreciated comment. Values the forum of shared governance because diversity of thought builds a stronger institution. Values discussion on anything that comes forward as we develop plans and ideas: cannot speak to previous administrations and perception of impact of faculty voice, but has experience valuing input of faculty and previous faculty senate. Even without faculty senate, a form of shadow governance would still encourage passing ideas amongst faculty to move work forward. Student success and enrollment management are important aspects: what are the predictors where student enrollment drops or they fail to graduate? USG sets minimum admission criteria including 2.0 GPA and our average is over 3.0: are we doing students a disservice by admitting students on the lower end? These students may need more services. 40% of students who drop out do not go anywhere – would we be better off sending them to Georgia Technical or lowering credit hours for their schedules? Asked Provost for courses with high DFW rates. Do academic advisors have information regarding difficult courses? Can curriculum be revisited to improve courses or the perception of course difficulty? Do degree plans have particular roadblocks? Something is clearly not working since graduation rate of 43% has not really moved in the past decade. If students are failing in faculty courses, faculty should ask what they can do to help them: one more student success is one more student that we retain. U.S. colleges are seeking the same student body that we are: there must be something special about why they choose to come to UWG and the marketing we do to students and parents.*
- *Comment: Student preparedness: a recent NPR report mentioned nation's scorecard in reading and mathematics has dropped. Faculty reported that*

they can feel a difference in preparedness of students from past versus today.

- *A: Acknowledged this perspective. Removal of SAT will revert back to a requirement next year. Narrative of college blaming high school, high school blaming parents, but need to accept students as they are and use campus resources like the Writing Center or tutoring to assist students. Raising admissions standards may not fit with regional comprehensive university mission. Provisional admissions, UNIV 100 for studying and time management may be helpful.*
- *Q: Academic freedom transparency and oversight regarding curriculum given current climate. Are there guided policies to help to determine when faculty should be asked to modify curriculum or assignments? If faculty are terminated or pressured will there be clear policy that covers that, including recourse for the faculty?*
 - *A: Chancellor and Board are supportive of academic freedom and free speech, not without certain considerations. A recent case of a The President noted that in all cases he would defend the faculty mission as appropriate. Not limiting freedom, but being cognizant of audience. Values academic freedom, but even AAUP acknowledges limitations.*
- *Q: Do we have safeguards for dual enrollment courses? If someone objects to something that may not be objectionable, do we have guidance?*
 - *A: Ability to teach has to be relevant to subject matter being taught. There needs to be uniformity in instruction, not including own unrelated viewpoints or irrelevant content.*
- *Q: Is there a policy about giving a faculty member a voice now that we have had the experience with English?*
 - *A: Provost: Completely believes in shared governance and faculty expertise. What is in a course needs to be reviewed and defined by faculty in those areas. If a third party or other individual questions*

content, going back to review and definition can defend choices and help in response. Reduces individual exposure to questions regarding expertise or teaching practices. Peer and comps, accreditation, due process also part of conversation. Within the USG, the free exchange of ideas is respected regarding majority and minority opinion.

- *Q: Where does parental influence come into the discussion of academic freedom?*
 - *A: Dual enrollment numbers are increasing. Some sections are all dual-enrollment and we are the vanguard of that shift. Trying to explore MOU and frequently asked questions as a valid approach so that we understand the rules of engagement with the sensitivity that when we teach minors; we need to be mindful. There is already precedent in USG as is the case with campus carry: if a minor is in a class, weapons are not allowed. These inquiries come up every year: when faculty are establishing content and no one else has reviewed this content, then that can be of concern.*
- *Q: Is it legal for students to film our classes? Do we have the right to ask disruptive students to leave our classes?*
 - *A: As a faculty member, that is your classroom: if anything that interferes with the safety of students or the operation and mission of the university occurs then you as the faculty member can ask them to leave. Would prefer to de-escalate first, call police if needed. Provost will follow up regarding filming.*
- *Comment regarding due process for faculty: what is established or what needs to be established? What faculty content questions should be addressed regarding what should be established? Faculty often teach subjects that may include content that generates controversy or questions outside of the academic setting. Faculty should be afforded due process before action is taken. May disagree with results, but if process was*

followed, people could feel more comfortable. This is a different question from relevance of content.

- *A: The faculty handbook should include information. Comment: nothing is included regarding the content in a particular course. Provost: the process of dismissal is elaborate. Comment: but only for tenured faculty, but we have many untenured faculty where some processes do not apply. Provost: conversations with system office state that distinction does not exist, only notification timelines. Can revisit this in the coming year. ACSB and other groups have policies and we could look to what exists and refine.*
- *Q: State has a list of buildings that should be demolished. Is there an update on our two buildings stated to be demolished?*
 - *A: Once something is approved it goes to the Governor's office, no further updates.*
- *Q: Will President visit individual colleges?*
 - *A: Yes, happy to work with the Provost and team to be part of college or department meetings. Appreciated invitation.*

B) Provost

- *Chair McLean had passed on comments of interest; the Provost is committed to addressing faculty questions.*
- *Going the extra mile for students. The Provost shared an example of a student who was admitted at two USG institutions, but could not get into needed courses. Student revisited UWG and was able to take classes: they ultimately chose UWG. We have had many new hires thanks to enrollment growth. Mindful of promotion, tenure, annual review: overloads are not sustainable in long-term. Increased resources help to accommodate students where other universities might not. Another example was shared of student who was only eleven credits from graduation, but left previously. Worked with program coordinators and chairs to allow student to re-enroll and graduate, hopefully in the next calendar year. Meeting needs of students that are just coming from high school and non-traditional students. Already planning for spring 2026. Recognizes heavy lift and*

growing pains as we increase enrollment including 2,000 dual enrollment students. Demographic cliff in 2027, but we are finding creative ways that accommodate institutional changes. Chancellor recognized dual enrollment and effort to increase and sustain undergraduate enrollment. Conversing regarding enrollment management, streamlining, etc. 909 students pre-registered into courses for spring semester on-campus, first time, full-time. Previously we recorded losses of up to 30% of students who live on campus from fall to spring: trying to avoid in future.

- *Computing and CS accreditation visit, kudos to programs.*
- *Regents Advisory Council restructuring statewide. Now have chief academic advisory groups that will be meeting virtually. Advisory teams will meet once per year in person: information will be shared with program coordinators and in Provost's Council. (See [Figure 1](#).)*
- *Vacant position in office of the Provost: David Newton is Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Internal search in the spring, welcomes applications for internal search. Lindsay Buffington transitioning to continuing education, Douglasville, Townsend, online, etc. David Newton did phenomenal work in working to assist with Curriculog and SACSCOC needs. Appreciates his expertise.*
- *ITS will discuss shifting phones: several cost escalators mean shifting dollars and this helps in that regard. If faculty want a handset that is still possible. If not, it will ring on UWG device or Teams on personal device. Not requiring you to use your personal device. Maintenance costs of handsets and associated items will be cost savings. Can still receive and make calls internally and externally with Teams.*
- *Support for faculty academic freedom. Affirms Chancellor's comments, we can improve our wording and revisit due process if there is a need for clarity even for non-tenured faculty. Faculty need to have confidence that they can teach and do their work as subject experts. Units should consider how content is chosen by faculty. Making content relevant on discipline is a good place to start.*

- *Standardization. Not calling for blanket unit standardization, just coherence: if there are many sections of a course, faculty need to have decided what should be in the course to promote equivalence in learning. Coming together as a faculty is the goal. Benefits such as common textbooks can be helpful, then Outfitters can stock and buy back. No goal of homogenizing or making all sections the same.*
- *Dual enrollment rules of engagement, letting students know that it is a college course and if uncomfortable with content, they may select a different section based on the syllabi. Perception versus implementation and explaining if there are external inquiries helps to drive answers and defend faculty. Faculty collectively define the corpus of their disciplines and individual courses are reviewed on a regular basis tied to accreditation, peer, and comps, then that is the best response. Individual situations will come up, but if we follow our process that is the best place to start.*
- *Q: Are faculty informed whether dual enrollment students are in their courses?*
 - *A: Needs to look into if/how we are alerting faculty to dual enrollment to address discomfort, accommodations, or provide an alternate assignment. Notifying via the syllabus that this college content and that diverse collegiate content is appropriate with awareness.*
- *Q: Are high school counselors being contacted regarding awareness?*
 - *A: Yes, and this will continue to be reinforced. Will do a better job to ensure that students and parents know the content and expectations of their courses.*
 - *Q: what happens if complaints are made even if they picked a different class?*
 - *A: Provost will field those inquiries and state that faculty have chosen their content.*
 - *Q: What about advocacy?*
 - *A: We will respond and say that we have a wealth of choices and a marketplace in ideas.*
 - *Comment: Suggestion when speaking with advisors or counselors that they need to understand the chain or process regarding complaints,*

including faculty, chair, deans, etc. Making that a uniform message to students and parents may help them understand.

- *A: Problems are best solved locally. Encourages the opportunity for students to work with faculty including an alternate assignment or not.*
- *Q: Senators represent faculty, if this discussion is a snapshot of concern, what message could Provost's office share with faculty to alleviate concerns?*
 - *A: President and Provost support faculty: if someone wants to challenge faculty, they should bring questions to the administration. Asked Deans for faculty governance of content and periodic review, can share more broadly, can share with senate, put in newsletter. Does not want to create an event that may unduly add to anxiety. Encourages faculty to listen to Chancellor's comments, encouraging respectful and civil debate. As educators we expose people to ideas and invite them to critique and debate in publications and in the classroom. Will not go through all the hypotheticals as that may fuel the fire.*
 - *Comment that sometimes having it in writing can be helpful.*
 - *Provost: When people talk about the value of higher education, he will advocate. Appreciates questions and conversation.*
- *Merit. In April, the USG allocated funds for merit. Appreciates Governor and Chancellor support. Merit allocated to different institutions including receiving annual reviews for faculty and staff: used for basis of allocation. Up to 4%, but average of 2% of top 15% of annual evaluations. OHR, working with Office of the President, allocated from an equity perspective. Respects faculty handbook section regarding merit, and that is typical if an institution is provided funding from an annual budget perspective: that was not the scenario that we were in. Communication sent to chairs, deans, etc. and letters went out. CUPA analysis, equity is of great importance and the Provost will continue to advocate in this regard.*

- Q: Why was this instance different?
 - A: Guidance was from USG parameters: 2% average to top 15%.
Will provide more communication moving forward.
- Q: Transparency and increased communication would be appreciated.
 - A: Agreed, is committed to improving.
- *Notable curricular changes. General education course talking about technology and society and potentially controversial content, coming out of philosophy in the coming months. Commends faculty for thinking about this: shows the relevance of philosophy across disciplines regarding how technology changes and impacts the world. Great work of colleagues doing new things. Just one example of great work that faculty are doing. Embodies spirit of UWG and what we are here to do.*

5. Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Laura McCloskey Wolfe, Committee Member)

Action Item (Figure 2):

Approved with 45 in favor, 2 abstentions, zero objections.

A) UWG Faculty Senate Resolution of Appreciation for Interim President Monga

Request: Approve

Statement of appreciation for Dr. Monga's service as Interim President, his contributions to campus culture and climate, and for his efforts to enhance the nature of relationships between faculty and staff and the university's senior leaders.

Information Items (Dylan McLean, Chair):

1) General Information Updates

a) General information updates.

None at this time.

2) Committee Chair General Updates

a) *SFAC: asked for members to see him afterwards to get to know everyone.*

b) *TLC: encouraged faculty to pass along issues from colleagues, students, or selves, can email at jswift@westga.edu.*

6. Old Business

A) None

7. New Business

A) Curriculog Updates. (Dr. David Newton, Senior Fellow for Student Success)

- 1) *Curriculog is open, many submissions received. Senators are encouraged to share with programs and units the deadlines provided on UPC and GPC websites. Notable deadlines include January faculty senate meeting for USG approvals, March for other items.*

B) ITS Updates. (Kirk Inman, Assistant Vice President and Chief Information Officer)

1) Telecom Migration/Redesign Update

- i. *Unified cloud-native service. USG mandates and multiple areas of influence in telecom on campus required creative solutions and planning. Solution captures all use cases across campus. Communication going out today and then will be implemented. Phase 1 is moving all existing lines into the new platform. Teams as primary interface for calling. Phase 2 will begin after break and will address issues regarding call centers, elevators, alarms, etc. with goal of completely coming off Avaia in FY 26. As we transition telecom, we will work with IFE to have tutorials and navigate Teams interface. (An in-progress website link was provided 10/7/25: <https://workwest.westga.edu/its/teams-calling-transition/index.php>)*
- ii. *Q: What is the justification that faculty only need internal communication?*
 1. *A: Data support: thorough analysis of faculty usage and calls conducted over past years. If a faculty member needs a line, then it will be provided.*
- iii. *Q: is there a danger to not have phone availability?*
 1. *A: This is not an ITS decision. Provost: every faculty member will have a phone number, this is to avoid cost escalation, not to cut budgets or limit calling availability.*
- iv. *Q: Office is a dead spot for WiFi.*
 1. *A: This is a separate discussion: report as a service request.*
- v. *Q: What is priority three/low in the service request?*
 1. *A: priority 1 is in class or instruction, will need to know more details.*

- vi. *Extension-line only means that faculty can receive outside calls.*
- vii. *For 911, use cellphones, but each office has E911 designation.*

2) Email Alias options and request process

- i. *There is a policy for provisioning aliases for email in user account, consider consistent naming convention for UWG. Put in service ticket. Example of the President: already had cjohnson in the system so that communications were not missed. President is CMjohnson.*

3) Microsoft Teams integration with D2L

- i. *Moving away from Zoom in D2L, Teams integrated, working with IFE for faculty concerns and there are resources.*
- ii. *Q: Courseden download speed has been extremely slow, ticket submitted.*
 - 1. *A: This will involve network maintenance and troubleshooting. Some faulty equipment has already been replaced. Resolution should be found relatively quickly; recognizes it can be intermittent. Slowness has been noted since the semester started. Trying to resolve the issue, working with USG PeachNet and vendors.*
- iii. *Q: When looking in downloads during class, sensitive information from all OneDrive downloads is viewable. Is there a way to not view or auto populate?*
 - 1. *A: Unsure if that is something that can be restricted.*

8. Announcements

- A) *Will be sent over email. Chair McLean noted that robust discussion today was appreciated.*

9. Adjourn

Adjourned at 3:05pm by Chair McLean.

Respectfully submitted by Laura McCloskey Wolfe, Executive Secretary and Art Program faculty member.

Figure 1.

NEW TRACKS FOR RACS: CAGS, CATS, AND CALS

<u>CAO Advisory Groups (CAGs)</u> <u>No in-person meetings; virtual meetings as needed</u>					
Arts, Humanities, & Ethics	STEM	Social Sciences	Nursing & Health Professions	USG Collaboratives	USG Student Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Foreign Language • Arts & Sciences • Humanities • Philosophy & Religion • Fine & Applied Arts • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Science • Computing Disciplines • Engineering Pathways • Biological Sciences • Mathematical Subjects • Data Science • Physics & Astronomy • Chemistry • Geological Sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family & Consumer Science • Geography • Psychology • Criminal Justice • History • Political Science • Sociology • Anthropology • Social Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health • Kinesiology • Health Informatics • Nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia Film Academy • Financial Technology • International Education • USG Goes Global • Digital Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance Education • Honors Programs • Testing Professionals • USG Libraries • Public Libraries

<u>CAO Advisory Teams (CATs)</u> <u>Meet once a year in person (if needed); additional meetings virtual</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts, Humanities, & Ethics Advisory Council • STEM Advisory Council • Social Sciences Advisory Council • Education Professions Advisory Council • Business Professions Advisory Council • Nursing & Health Professions Advisory Council • USG Collaboratives Advisory Council • USG Student Success Advisory Council • Academic Advising Advisory Council • Effectiveness & Accreditation Advisory Council • Research Advisory Council • Institutional Research & Planning Advisory Council • Learning Support Advisory Council • Teaching & Learning Advisory Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Financial Aid Advisory Council • Student Accounts Advisory Council • Registrars & Admissions Directors Advisory Council • Adult Learning, Military Outreach, & Continuing Education Advisory Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students Advisory Council • Student Conduct Officers Advisory Council • Housing & Residential Life Advisory Council • Counseling Services Advisory Council • Health Services Advisory Council • Career Services Advisory Council • Accessibility & Disability Advisory Council • Student Life Advisory Council • Title IX Advisory Council

<u>CAO Advisory Leaders (CALS)</u> <u>Meet twice a year in person (if needed); additional meetings virtual</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CALAA (CAL for Academic Affairs) • CALEM (CAL for Enrollment Management) • CALSA (CAL for Student Affairs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USG Faculty Council • USG General Education Council • Student Advisory Council

* Any omission of existing groups is unintentional. If you have questions about a particular group, please reach out to AVC Melanie Largin (melanie.largin@usg.edu).

Figure 2.

UWG Faculty Senate Resolution of Appreciation for Interim President Monga

Whereas Dr. Ashwani Monga served as Interim President of the University of West Georgia from August 2024 through July 2025.

Whereas Dr. Monga immediately showed himself to be a humble servant leader who would walk alongside us as we transitioned to a more positive campus climate. Dr. Monga invested in relationships across campus that moved us in a more collaborative and constructive direction. The investments that Dr. Monga made in the University of West Georgia will continue to positively impact our culture in the years ahead.

It is therefore resolved that the University of West Georgia's Faculty Senate, on behalf of the faculty, acknowledges, recognizes, celebrates, and extends its profound appreciation to Dr. Ashwani Monga for his exceptional service as Interim President and his invaluable contributions to campus culture, improving the campus climate, and enhancing the nature of relationships between faculty and staff and the university's senior leaders.