



YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Academic Senate Meeting

Meeting Minutes – April 1, 2026

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on April 1, 2026, in Debartolo Hall Rm 132. Attendance at the meeting has been logged separately from these recorded minutes. This meeting was video recorded and will be made available, along with supporting documentation for presentations made during the senate meeting separately.

The meeting was called to order by Dr Martha Pallante, Chair. Dr Martha Pallante certified that quorum was present (Excused absences: Loren Lease, Annie Tapp, Chet Cooper, Ali Aleliaw).

The agenda was approved by senate majority. The recording and written minutes from the previous senate meeting on 3/11/26 were approved by senate majority.

President Bill Johnson

President Johnson addressed the senate. The following information was shared to the senate:

- President Bill Johnson discussed growth in the Steubenville operation, with 76 student registrations so far (goal of 200). The belief is that the 200 student goal will be eclipsed after the open house.
- Open house is on 4/25 for the Steubenville location.
- In the design phase for public safety training and fire science center in East Palestine (\$20 million given by the state). Plan is to use half to build the facility and the other half into an interest-bearing account for maintenance of operations. Will be able to provide training/certifications for individuals throughout the state.
- Starting a program to showcase our students at meetings of the Board of Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber. These students are graduation-ready and will be able to introduce themselves to the Board to start making connections with local business leaders.
- July 10th and 11th is the Y-live summer concert series. Same weekend as Festival of the Arts. Expecting about 40-50,000 individuals on campus during that time. Tickets available.

President Johnson took questions from the senate. No questions presented at this time.

Senate Executive Committee Report

Dr. Martha Pallante presented the report from the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met last Wednesday. Dr Pallante shared the following information with the senate as part of her report:

- The committee reported on upcoming elections for executive committee and departmental senators in April. Notices have been sent to Dean's on vacancies on the Executive Committee. Looking forward to having full membership this month.
- Dr Bob Kramer will look to call a meeting of Elections and Balloting to identify Departmental Senator vacancies and to ensure elections are run to fill the vacancies. Dr Pallante clarified the term limits

for department (2-year) vs at-large senators (1-year). Elections will be run for at-large positions once faculty numbers can be verified by Human Resources.

- Elections and Balloting Committee are looking for a WCBA representative. Contact Dr Kramer or Dr Pallante if interested.
- No governance committee report at this time.
- Dr Pallante reported that Dr Cooper will be leaving the senate on 4/22/26 (resignation date). Dr Pallante will be looking to fill the vacancy. Dr Pallante shared the Charter and Bylaws related to the process for replacing the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair term will run through Summer and Fall of this year. Once the procedure is determined by Elections and Balloting, further communication will be provided. The Elections and Balloting Committee will address this procedure at the next meeting.
- Dr Pallante reported on 3 options related to the ATS degree:
- (1) New unapproved programs may be submitted as ATS programs rather than AAS programs, (2) Individual AAS programs may be deleted and then re-submitted as ATS programs (no fast track), (3) Change the requirement all applied associate of science degrees which must be done at Dean's level and then through senate committees and then to the senate body for recommendation with final approval by the Board of Trustees. No questions from the Senate body.

This concluded the Executive Committee Report.

Senate Committee Reports

- Dr Thomas Wakefield submitted a report from the undergraduate curriculum committee. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Dr David Asch submitted a report from the Academic Programs Committee. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Dr Nicolette Powe presented a report from the first year committee (informational). The PowerPoint of the presentation is available on the senate website ([PowerPoint for FYE Report](#)). Highlights included:
 - The First Year Experience committee highlighted the importance of student engagement and support for retention efforts.
 - Centralize course design with flexible delivery to enhance student engagement and learning investment.
 - Strengthen peer student leader roles through clear expectations and training for better coordination.
 - Focus on relationship-centered learning to drive student success and address implementation gaps.

Questions were taken. Question of where the data is that FYE was successful in student retention. Dr Powe stated that the data for that question is not yet available. No further questions.

Dr Pallante reminded everyone to make sure they had a paper sheet of the Digital Accessibility resources that were provided at the meeting. Dr Pallante asked that senators share the information with their department/college. The resource sheet contained several QR codes with links to resources.

Old Business

Proposed Student Feedback Items

Finalized Course Feedback Questions was revisited this senate session by Assistant Provost Hillary Fuhrman and Dr Cary Wecht. Dr Fuhrman re-iterated the reduction in course evaluation questions. Feedback has been mostly positive to date. Intent is to move forward with the ten evaluation questions which will begin in Summer of 2026. Question was asked from the senate body regarding a neutral response with respect to the STEM rubric which may require a majority of responses to be “agree”. Dr Fuhrman reported that the ten questions that are kept were heavily skewed in the “agree” range across multiple faculty. A second senator recommended that there be a “NA” option for the questions instead of removing the neutral response. This suggestion will be taken back to the committee for review. This was an informational topic.

New Business

Digital Accessibility

Assistant Provost Hillary Fuhrman and Ms. Rosalyn Donaldson presented on this topic. Wanted to re-iterate preparation for accessibility requirements for Summer and beyond. The IT Training services and YSU online were given recognition for their work on this project. Two websites were shared with resources:

1. <https://ysu.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2000/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=107113>
2. <https://ysu.edu/accessibility/desktop-tool-s-accessibility-features>

Not looking at this semester, looking forward to Summer and Fall that faculty are preparing classes for accessibility. Major resources all in one place for faculty progressing towards accessibility. Looking for progress made and what will be done in the future. If creating new documents, make sure you know what is needed to make them accessible. There are consultation links as well for assistance. There are also remediation services available for unusual materials or situations. Dr Kramer requested that the resource list be made in a digital format (email) vs paper.

Item B under new business was withdrawn by the presenter. Dr Pallante officially closed the meeting following a motion with a second.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert

Secretary, Academic Senate