



YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Academic Senate Meeting

Meeting Minutes – December 3, 2025

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on December 3, 2025, 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 Chet Cooper, Chair. Dr Chet Cooper certified that quorum was present (Excused absences: Joy Christiansen Erb).

The meeting began with a majority approval of today's agenda. The recording of minutes from the November 5th meeting and minutes were approved by the senate majority.

President Bill Johnson addressed the senate. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Approval given by the board to launch operations in Steubenville at the former Eastern Gateway Community College. The next step is getting the approved and accredited programs moved in.
- Try to synchronize registration and hiring.
- Identified the urgency to fill the building given the amount of available funds by the state. Need to move quickly but strategically.
- We are expecting \$20 million dollars from Norfolk Southern for the Fire Science and Safety Center being constructed in East Palestine. Waiting on location for the building to be built.
- Data collected shows 5% increased enrollment projection for Spring 2026 compared to Spring of 2025.

President Johnson took questions. A question was raised about starting of operations in Steubenville. President Johnson responded that if we could get to the 3,000-student mark by year 7 we could break even financially by year 3.

The meeting then shifted to a report from the Executive Committee by the chair, Dr Chet Cooper. Dr Cooper reported that there was nothing new to report at this time but shared a personal statement with the senate. This statement has been recorded and posted to the Senate Website under the 12-3-25 meeting information.

Senate Committee Reports

- Dr Thomas Wakefield submitted a report from the undergraduate curriculum committee. No Senate members objected to the report. The report was recommended for acceptance to forward to the Board of Trustees by majority consent.
- Dr Jackie Mercer submitted a report from the general education committee. Dr. Mercer provided updates on implementation of OT36, development of the Civics course required by SB1, work on micro-credentials, and establishment of a General Education assessment protocol. Further

discussions regarding the assessment protocol for general education will be initiated, with outreach to department chairs and program coordinators planned for the upcoming weeks.

- Dr Weaver presented a report from the Honors committee. New charge of the committee is to recommend and not approved honors courses. Another part of the charge is to review community engaged courses. Dr Weaver has found that faculty are doing community engagement in their courses and the courses may not be currently designated as community engaged. A total of 55 courses designated community engaged since Fall of 2022. Faculty are encouraged to submit their courses for community engagement designation and to reach out to Dr. Amy Weaver for assistance in this process.

Old Business

No old business was presented.

New Business

Syllabi Topic – Mr Mike Costarell

New business began with Mr Mike Costarell initiating a discussion on the importance of maintaining academic freedom and the integrity of course syllabi. Concerns were raised about transparency in syllabus content and potential impact on academic standards. Some questions raised:

If there are private versions of the syllabus at YSU, who will review them?

An example was provided of a facetious syllabi from which there may be potential for a faculty member to stray into their own personal views. Another syllabus example was shared from a history class from Kent State that highlighted one of the required textbooks as being a fictional, special-interest book. The main suggestions are to keep content true to class title with a focus on merits of hard work and academic integrity with public transparency on class content.

The floor was open to questions following the presentation. Dr Dawna Cerney delivered a response to the presentation. Dr Cerney highlighted that as Chair of the Academic Standards Committee, none of the concerns raised by Mr Costarell were brought up by the committee. Dr Cerney also expressed concern over the time needed to address public concerns over content. Dr Cerney suggested if there were concerns that the faculty member have an opportunity to convey why a particular course item was included instead of assuming a malicious intent. Dr Cerney felt that the likelihood of faculty using inappropriate content would be minimal given that the faculty member would most likely not want to be able to be grieved. Dr Cerney also highlighted the need for ensuring safety on campus and to not provide an easier roadmap to those who may wish to provide harm. Limiting information such as room number and course content is a way to serve as a safeguard. Mr Costarell responded with a recommendation that everything except meeting times and location should be made public.

Dr Donald Priour stated academic freedom when it comes to syllabi construction. Dr Priour reiterated his appreciation that Dr Pintar allowed for construction of a 2nd more detailed syllabi to augment the public one. Dr Priour highlighted the post-tenure process as another checkpoint for faculty performance oversight. The syllabus needs to be individually curated. Dr Costarell responded with not agreeing to give out personal information.

Lauren Burgess stated that she has been in classes with controversial readings and feels that if it were made public that there could be some public repercussions. Dr Costarell responded that he is not against having controversial readings on the syllabi. It's how the instructor comes across by presenting the topic and whether they are an independent advocate.

Ms. Katherine Garlick brought forth the question: Is there any rule that prevents you from putting your syllabus out for full public access? She stated that there is administrative review of all her syllabus material from administration.

Discussion ended.

Common Syllabus Template Revision for SB1 – Associate Provost Hillary Fuhrman

The next topic was a presentation of the syllabi template. Ms. Hillary Fuhrman presented the syllabi template. Ms. Fuhrman stated the common syllabus templates were reviewed, with adjustments made based on feedback received. Ms. Fuhrman shared the individual feedback comments on the document. Required and recommended readings must be included in syllabi; videos are not mandatory for public posting. Ms. Fuhrman took questions from the senate body. There are 3 options for an AI policy to be included in the syllabi. Ms. Khavari stated a concern that some topics may last longer than on the tentative schedule. If you are not adding topics, it is ok if certain topics on the schedule run longer. The vendor designation is the company that the syllabus information will go through to be made public. There will be trainings on how to use the program in the Spring of 2026. All the green sections of the template must be made public in the system where this information will be entered. Dr Rogers had a question of the implications of the course schedule without videos. In the past the syllabi is viewed as a contract and students will use it as a guide for the course.

What's required for Spring? Ms. Fuhrman stated that: must use word version of template and get familiar with the headings. Is there a grace period for a new faculty member? Ms. Fuhrman responded with that in the Spring there won't be scrutiny, but in Fall they will be required to put together a tentative schedule. Dr Ken Learman asked if putting student learning outcomes in table form would be a problem. Ms. Fuhrman stated that she will make sure accreditation needs are met. Dr Amy Weaver stated that when stuff emerges there is a need to add new topics. Ms. Fuhrman stated there needs to be some language to the effect of new topics as information emerges versus just adding a new topic randomly that has nothing to do with the semester. Dr Theresa Peck stated that if the syllabus is grieved, which version is the one that is grieved (the public one or the blackboard one). Ms. Fuhrman stated that she thinks the blackboard one would be.

Discussion ended.

"Impact of new HIST course on programs" – Dr David Asch/Associate Provost Kevin Ball

Dr Asch and Dr Ball presented on the new history course for programs. The course will be integrated into all bachelor's programs, requiring curriculum updates. The history course will be put into the arts and humanities category. Change should be put in as a change to the Bachelor's program and not as an editorial change. Communicate to departments about the need to revise curriculum sheets to include the new history course. The deadline for changes is by February 1st. There was a comment from the body that they feel the course should be a Social Science and not fall under Arts and Humanities. Dr Pallante stated that the course has been approved at the state level as "Arts and Humanities" and so it cannot be changed. The rules could be changed in the future, but as if now it is placed where it was approved at.

Discussion ended.

“General Education Micro-Credentials” and “Academic Integrity Violations – forthcoming revisions to the Student Code of Conduct” – Associate Provost Kristine Still

Dr Kristine Still presented on the microcredential badges. There are 24 course badges built into the microcredentials. Completing 3 course badges results in the issuing of a microcredential. Micro credential badges for general education courses will launch in fall 2025, enhancing student credentials. Faculty roles in the badging system will primarily involve marking assignments as passed after final grades are posted. Blackboard will integrate student instructions and communicate with Canvas credentials for badge issuance in spring 2026. Faculty must mark the credentialing assignment as passed to trigger automatic badge creation after final grades are submitted. Dr Kristine Still also presented a brief update on revisions to the Academic Integrity policy. Review and provide feedback on proposed changes to Article Six of the student Code of Conduct. Planning to give an update on revisions by January or February meeting to go before the board by March.

Dr Cooper asked the body if there were any other business that needed to be attended to. None was present. A motion to adjourn was received with a 2nd. Dr Cooper officially adjourned the meeting following a majority consent.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert

Secretary, Academic Senate