



YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Academic Senate Meeting

Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2026

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on September 9, 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: Erin Shilling, Courtney Borruso).

The recording and written minutes from the previous senate meeting on 4/22/26 were approved by senate majority.

Senate Executive Committee Report

Dr. Martha Pallante presented the Executive Committee report and shared the following information:

- Mr. Mike Costurrell was introduced as the new Vice Chair of Academic Senate. He will be chairing the Governance Committee as part of his role. For all committee questions, please contact Mr. Costarell.
- Committee memberships and committee worksheets will be finalized during the fall semester (by 11/1). Committees are expected to complete annual worksheets outlining membership, goals, mission, and operational recommendations. Please make sure to complete all information on the committee worksheet.
- Faculty members serving at the Steubenville campus will be represented through their home academic departments and colleges under the current Senate structure. Question raised about whether the Steubenville senator could attend remotely or would have to attend in-person for meetings. Per Dr Pallante, all senators would have to be present in-person for voting. Part-time faculty at Steubenville would be considered for Part-time faculty senator pool. Questions regarding future participation and representation will continue to be reviewed as the Steubenville campus grows.
- The Executive Committee requested additional information from university administration regarding potential pursuit of Carnegie R2 (Research 2) classification and the possible implications for faculty, colleges, and university operations.
- The Executive Committee will undertake a comprehensive review of the Senate Charter and Bylaws. The documents have not undergone a thorough review since the 1970s. Areas identified for consideration include:
 - Senate membership size and representation.
 - Faculty, student, and administrative representation ratios. Structural changes needed to reflect the current size and composition of the university.

- Proposal for reduction in faculty senate numbers to reflect the decrease in faculty numbers across campus. Also includes a proportional drop in student and administrator senator representation. Question regarding potential drop in student senator representation given that student numbers on campus have been relatively consistent. Suggestion for maintaining or increasing student representation. Dr Pallante responded that Charter and Bylaws committee can look at this issue further, but there is a need to ensure that faculty still have the strongest representation in the senate.
- Senate Elections and Balloting Committee procedures for nominations of Senate Chair and Vice Chair were announced. Nominations opened at the meeting and will continue through the established election timeline.

This concluded the Executive Committee Report.

Senate Committee Reports

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Report

A report from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee was presented on behalf of Dr. Thomas Wakefield.

- The committee's initial meeting focused primarily on organizational and procedural matters for the academic year.
- The report was approved by majority vote.

General Education Committee Report

Dr. Jackie Mercer presented the General Education Committee report.

The committee highlighted several accomplishments completed during the previous academic year:

- Development of a General Education assessment plan.
- Preparation for implementation of the first General Education assessment pilot.
- Updates and corrections to catalog language related to General Education.
- Launch of a new General Education website to serve as a centralized information resource for students, faculty, and advisors (www.ysu.edu/general-education-program).

The committee also discussed priorities for the 2026-2027 academic year:

- Implementation of a General Education assessment pilot during the current academic year.
- Development of a formal philosophy statement defining General Education at YSU.
- Creation of procedures governing the addition and evaluation of General Education courses.
- Continued review of General Education microcredentials and expansion opportunities.

House Bill 96 and General Education Review

Dr. Mercer provided an overview of requirements associated with Ohio House Bill 96.

Key points included:

- The Board of Trustees must review the university's General Education curriculum according to state requirements.
- The state has identified four broad thematic areas for review, including areas related to artificial intelligence, STEM, workforce preparation, constitutional literacy, and civil discourse.
- Current guidance from the Ohio Department of Higher Education remains limited, and institutions across the state are still seeking clarification regarding implementation expectations.

- YSU is mapping existing General Education courses to the identified state themes rather than redesigning the entire General Education model.
- Artificial intelligence and computational thinking were identified as areas likely to receive increased attention during future curriculum discussions.
- Significant changes to General Education courses may be limited while the state review process is underway.

Discussion followed regarding assessment, General Education course limits, state expectations, and future curriculum planning.

General Education Assessment Pilot

Dr. Mercer reported that:

- Faculty are being invited to submit General Education courses for participation in the assessment pilot. Looking for 5 courses in each of the domains for pilot assessment. If faculty are interested in having their course be a part of the pilot assessment, contact your chair and let Dr. Mercer know.
- Pilot courses will be reviewed during the spring semester.
- Feedback from participating faculty will be used to refine assessment processes before broader implementation. Formalized assessment will begin next academic year.

General Education Microcredentials

The committee reported:

- Existing General Education microcredentials remain available to students.
- Communication regarding the microcredential process will be distributed to students and faculty.
- The subcommittee will begin to identify courses for the next set of microcredentials. Additional microcredentials may be developed, particularly in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence and computational thinking.

Old Business

New Business

Election and Balloting Committee Update

Dr. Bob Kramer presented an update from the Elections and Balloting Committee.

Highlights included:

- Appreciation was expressed to faculty and administrators who assisted with recent Senate elections.
- A representative from Williamson College is needed to serve on the Elections and Balloting Committee.
- Two additional faculty members are needed to serve on the Charter and Bylaws Committee.
- The nomination process for Senate Chair and Vice Chair was formally opened. Nominations will be taken by Dr Bob Kramer with a deadline of Wednesday (9/16) at 5 pm. Elections will then open for 1 week until Wednesday (9/23). The individual receiving a majority of votes will be elected as Chair with runner-up as Vice Chair. If there is no majority, there will be a run-off that will open until Wednesday (9/30). The term for Senate Chair and Vice Chair runs from January 1st, 2027, until December 31, 2027.
- Elections will be conducted electronically according to Senate procedures. All senators were strongly encouraged to participate in the voting process.

Nominations for Senate Chair were received from the floor. Both Mr. Mike Costarell and Dr Martha Pallante were nominated at the meeting. Candidates will post a short plan/vision for the senate before the election on 9/16.

Student Government Association Update

Student Government Association President Justin Tucker and Executive Vice President Mohammed Abdullariaz addressed the Senate.

The following information was shared:

- Student Government will continue assisting Senate committees with student appointments as needed.
- A public candidate forum is scheduled for September 17, 2026, in Ford Theater, Bliss Hall (4-6 pm).
- All candidates were invited equally, and the event will be conducted as a nonpartisan voter education initiative.
- Faculty were encouraged to share information about the event with students.

Ohio 250 Celebration

An announcement was made regarding an Ohio 250 bicentennial-related event:

- A vintage baseball exhibition will be held on September 19, 2026, at Mill Creek Park.
- Participants will play according to historical nineteenth-century baseball rules and customs.
- Faculty, staff, students, and community members were invited to attend.

No other business, Dr Pallante requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn approved.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert

Secretary, Academic Senate