



YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 Tressel Way, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Academic Senate Meeting

Meeting Minutes – October 7, 2026

The Academic Senate met at 4:00 PM on October 7, 2026. 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. Quorum was confirmed.

The agenda was approved by majority vote following a motion by Katherine Garlick and a second by Matt O'mansky.

The recording of the September 9, 2026, Senate meeting, available on the Senate website, was approved as the minutes of that meeting following a motion by Bob Kramer and a second by Suzanne Smith.

University President's Report

President Bill Johnson addressed the Senate and provided university updates.

- Fall enrollment headcount was reported to be up. The President noted that student retention, particularly among first-time undergraduate students, remains an area of focus.
- The President emphasized the importance of faculty-student relationships in the classroom and thanked faculty for their role in student engagement and retention. The university is working to improve data analytics to identify students who may need additional support.
- The Steubenville campus is continuing to develop, with early interest in spring enrollment. Retention of currently enrolled students remains a priority.
- A university town hall with President Johnson and Provost Adams is scheduled for October 20 at 10 am. Faculty were encouraged to submit questions in advance.
- The President shared updates on the football team and announced Homecoming activities, including a pep rally and parade.

Provost's Report

Provost Jennifer Adams addressed the Senate regarding the university's research goals and other institutional initiatives.

Carnegie R2 Classification

- The Provost reviewed Carnegie research classifications and explained that R2 institutions must meet specified research expenditure and doctoral graduate thresholds. YSU's 2025 data included approximately \$3.2 million in research expenditures and 16 doctoral graduates.
- The university is reviewing how research expenditures are categorized, including grant activity, sabbaticals, research professorships, and reassigned time. Aligning accounting practices and expanding research activity are intended to help YSU meet R2 criteria.
- The earliest potential year for R2 classification is 2031, based on the need for three years of reported data. The university intends to increase external funding, strengthen research opportunities for faculty and students, and support promising doctoral programs.

- Faculty were encouraged to identify research interests and opportunities and to include relevant goals and action steps in departmental pitch statements. The Provost emphasized that support should be developed in partnership with departments.
- Discussion addressed whether endowment-supported activities and clinical doctoral programs could count toward R2 criteria. Eligibility depends on the purpose of the funding and the applicable classification criteria.

East Palestine Initiative

- The Provost described a conceptual, five-phase proposal related to a potential \$20 million Norfolk Southern grant involving YSU and East Palestine. The funding was described as not yet secured, and the proposal remains conceptual.
- The preliminary concept includes virtual emergency-response training environments, disaster-response training areas, a drone field, and an innovation building to connect university expertise with companies and community needs.
- The initiative would involve multiple university departments and could support training for local fire and EMS personnel as well as participants from outside the region. The project must be located within East Palestine, and further planning and funding would be required.

Enrollment and Legislative Updates

- Fall 2026 enrollment at the Steubenville campus was reported as 98 students from an initial 102 who had planned to attend. For Spring 2027, 30 students had applied and 14 were fully admitted at the time of the meeting.
- The Provost discussed Ohio Senate Bill 460 and concerns about provisions that could give Ohio civics centers authority to approve courses. YSU is working with Senator Cirino's office on proposed substitute language; the office has received the university's suggestions and is considering them.

Commencement Speakers

- The Provost noted that the Senate Events Committee does not currently have a chair, making it difficult to coordinate commencement speaker selection. The Senate's approved speaker list needs to be reviewed and updated in a timely manner because speakers require advance notice and availability is not guaranteed.

Podium Education and Work-Based Learning

- Dr. David Graham introduced Podium Education and the proposed YSU Career Accelerator course, which would provide students with virtual, project-based experiences working with companies.
- House Bill 96 establishes a goal for at least 75% of graduating students to have a work-based learning experience. Approximately 50% of YSU students who graduated the previous year were reported to have had such an experience.
- Examples of work-based learning include internships, co-ops, undergraduate research, and capstone projects. The proposed course is intended to expand available opportunities and was planned for launch in the following semester. A broader campus communication campaign was anticipated.

Senate Executive Committee Report

Dr. Martha Pallante presented the Executive Committee report.

- The Senate is undertaking a review of committee memberships and committee worksheets. Committee chairs were encouraged to review committee needs and identify vacancies, including student representation.
- The Charter and Bylaws Committee is preparing for a substantial revision of the Senate Charter and Bylaws. Senators were encouraged to review the committee information and submit proposed modifications.

- The Governance Committee (presented by chair Mr. Mike Costarell) identified a need for a representative from the Williamson College of Business and additional committee participation. The committee will also consider whether provisions regarding committees that have been inactive for three years should be removed or revised as part of the broader review.
- The Executive Committee announced a YSU faculty concert at West Side Bowl on October 18 at 4:00 PM. Admission is \$10, with proceeds supporting a scholarship fund.

This concluded the Executive Committee Report.

New Business

Senate Chair Election Results

- Dr. Bob Kramer reported that 62 senators voted in the Senate Chair election. Dr. Martha Pallante received 36 votes and Mr. Michael Costarell received 26 votes. Dr. Pallante was elected Senate Chair and Mr. Mike Costarell as Senate Vice Chair.
- Dr. Pallante expressed appreciation for the cooperative working relationship with Mr. Costarell and looked forward to working together for the benefit of the Senate and university.

Charter and Bylaws Committee Interpretation

- Dr. Bob Kramer reported the committee's interpretation that academic department chairs may serve as department senators, provided they are not serving as members of the appointed administrator senator group.
- The interpretation was based on Articles 2.5 and 3.2(b) of the Senate Charter and Bylaws and was consistent with past precedent.

Senate Committee Reports – Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

- Dr. Thomas Wakefield's report noted that the committee is beginning to accept course edits, additions, and deletions for the next academic catalog. Proposals must reach the University Curriculum Committee by December 1.
- The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee report was recommended for approval by the Senate.

Old Business

Addressing the Accountability Gap

- Dr. Dawna Cerney presented an informational discussion about accountability and communication among faculty, students, and academic advisors, particularly in relation to DFW outcomes and early-alert referrals.
- The discussion identified gaps in available data and transparency regarding whether students receive and respond to advisor outreach, participate in advising, and complete agreed-upon intervention steps. Participants noted the need to respect student privacy and FERPA requirements.
- Potential next steps include developing standardized intervention protocols, improving tracking through the university's advising/CRM systems, and collecting data to better understand the relationship among early alerts, advising interventions, and student outcomes.
- Dr. Cerney proposed establishing a joint administrative task force to conduct data-driven analysis and invited interested faculty and administrators to participate. No vote was taken.

Announcements

- A campus symposium on frontiers and colonialism will be held October 12 at 6:00 PM at the Steel Museum. The event is free and includes food and beverages. Additional symposiums are planned for later in the academic year.
- An orientation for the upcoming student bus trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., will take place October 8 at 5:00 PM. The orientation will include an exhibit and video created by students in collaboration with the Jewish Community Center of Youngstown.

Hearing no further business, Dr. Pallante requested a motion to adjourn.

Minutes submitted by:

Edmund Ickert
Secretary, Academic Senate