

Polk State College Faculty Senate Agenda
Date: February 9, 2026
Time: 3:00 P.M.
Meeting Held via Zoom (recorded)
Steering Committee to Meet Following the Senate Meeting

Officers:

Anthony Cornett, President (present)
Greg Harris, Vice President for the Winter Haven Campus (present)
Jess Jones, Vice President for the Lakeland Campus (present)
Heather Childree, Secretary (present)
Michael Derry, Parliamentarian (present)

Others:

Chris Botelho, Senator at Large (present)
Amy Bratten, Administrative Liaison (present)

Attending Senators: Heather Childree, Lee Childree, Johnny Stewart, Andrea Hofeditz, Michael Derry, Greg Harris, John Barberet, Misty Sparling, Laura Brimer, Andrew Coombs, John Woodward, Niqui Young-Pringle-Brown, Dirk Valk, Gwyn Phillips, Gregory Johnson, Chris Botelho, Michelle Bessessar, and Jess Jones

Faculty Attendees: Matina Wagner, Susie Moerschbacher, Heena Park, Pam Jones, Kari Misa, LaTrice Moore, Amanda Hurtt, Bulmuo Maakuu, Jaqueline Gray, Ed Smith, Jennifer Shaw, Tiffany Messerschmidt, Fatin Morris Guirguis, Kim Hess, and Melissa Shapiro

Presenting Guests and Others:

Presenting: None

Non-Presenting: Cody Moyer (Learning Technology Director), Kim Manning (Academic Dean), Belkis Capeles (Workforce Dean), Beth Luckett (Health Sciences Dean), David Fugett (VP of HR), Tamara Sakagawa (VP of OCPA), and Christen Shea (Criminal Justice Program Director)

The meeting began at 3:03 p.m.

I. Approval of the Minutes from the January 2026 Senate Meeting

Misty Sparling motioned to approve the *January 2026 Faculty Senate Minutes*; Greg Harris seconded. The motion passed.

II. Approval of the February 2026 Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda

Greg Harris motioned to approve the *February 2026 Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda*; Lee Childree seconded. The motion passed.

III. Faculty Senate Officer and Administrative Liaison Reports

A. Faculty Senate President's Report (Anthony Cornett)

- Employee Satisfaction Survey: The Survey team is meeting Thursday. Anthony will provide more information after the meeting. The team has already discussed PACE's fixed-question banks, the optional questions that the College will include, and up to 20 additional questions in various other question areas. The final survey will be long (approximately 75 questions) and very detailed, with a Likert Scale.
- Electronic W2s: These are ready. The College's issues with managing employee's taxes may not have been fixed yet. Last year Anthony ended up owing \$2500. Jess and Amanda Jones would have owed \$10,000, but they got it amended. Anthony said he was mistakenly taxed at a rate of about 5.5 percent and anticipates owing \$8-10K this year. Faculty should check their withholdings again. Jess Jones said that the problems were caused by the College creating two paychecks for faculty. He and his wife were trying to hit a moving target regarding the proper withholdings, given the multiple paychecks (i.e., for regular and overload pay). The issue should be fixed in 2026 because the College is now issuing one paycheck instead of a separate check for overloads.
 - Amy Bratten asked faculty to check their pay stubs and contact HR if there are problems.
- Faculty Load and Compensation (FLAC) Acknowledgements: The Banner FLAC acknowledgement time period begins tomorrow (faculty accept a load and contracted coursework for the semester). Amy Bratten sent emails with instructions. FLAC includes overloads, so do not forget to scroll down to accept the second portion.
- Class Size Procedure: Anthony has received requests for the Senate to review Procedure 1003: *Determining Classroom Size*. Administration last updated this in 2015. The item is short but needs names and titles amended, and there are some grammatical errors. There are a couple of departments that are concerned with class sizes.
- Proposed Change to Overload Payments: At the President's Staff meeting, it was shared that overloads are calculated by hand for each individual, and the workload is heavy on the Dean's Office. Payroll runs three times per semester, so it is a lot of work just running payroll. In lieu of running payroll three times per semester, it has been proposed that it be run only twice a semester. It is currently run at the start of the 16-week/Fasttrack (FT) 1 Term, at the start of the 12-week Term, and then again at the start of the FT 2 Term. The proposal is to run payroll at the start of the 16-week/FT1 Term and again at FT2, as this would also catch the 12-week courses; however, a 12-week course instructor would not get overload pay for the first month of the course. This change is being proposed to increase accuracy.
 - Niqui Young-Pringle-Brown stated that there are skilled full-time employees who can run payroll and load calculations. Faculty can't wait 8 weeks until half the semester has passed to be paid. They have bills. While faculty can save, the College should not disrupt peoples' paychecks.
 - Anthony said it's not a payroll-calculation issue; it's that the Deans' offices have to do this load-calculation work. The proposal is a way to lighten their workload.

- Jennifer Shaw said no other industry consistently asks people to work for free for this length of time. All of her overloads are 12-week classes, and she depends on that money. No other industry would accept this.
- Anthony stated that faculty have been working for free this month because the College does not provide faculty overload pay this month. For comparison, payroll is typically run twice in the summer: at the start 12-week/first six-week class terms and at the start of the second six-week term. For those with eight-week summer classes, payroll would run at the start of summer.
- Jennifer asked: “What would incentivize people to teach 12-week courses under this system?”
- Michael Derry said that instead of four overload payments starting in September, faculty would get three starting at the end of October. By comparison, faculty complete the entire first term (unpaid) in summer before getting a paycheck.
- Tiffany Messerschmidt said that a lot of adjuncts live off their adjunct pay, and this change could be very problematic.
- Anthony said he is also worried about adjunct payments.
- Andrew Coombs said that overall, the College needs to figure out how to get adjuncts paid more quickly; this solution would move the College further away from solving the issue.
- LaTrice Moore asked if anyone [at the President’s Staff meeting] had considered how the adjuncts received their pay.
- Anthony indicated that since Provost Bratten has heard this feedback, he is sure this issue will come up at the next President’s Staff meeting to be discussed again.
- Fatin Morris Guirguis stated she has an issue with the recommendation, not just because of the delayed payment, but also because of reporting to the Florida Retirement System (FRS). The FRS cannot figure out how to fix her salary for reporting. The College needs to pause and wait for [the varied Banner payment and tax] issues to be fixed before making any changes.
- Construction Updates: The Winter Haven Science (WSC) Building’s second floor is completed and classes have resumed. The first-floor demolition begins by the end of January, with completion in summer 2026. The Lakeland Academic (LAC) building’s Phase-2 renovations begin in February and should be completed by December 2026. Phase 2 includes a new bookstore, classroom upgrades, Student Center upgrades, Collegiate High upgrades, and a new high school chemistry lab.

B. Lakeland Campus Vice President’s Report (Jess Jones)

- The Polk State Foundation student scholarship window is open from February 1-28.
- The FLAC acknowledgement window opens tomorrow. A tutorial and recording of last Friday’s meeting are available.
- Professional development opportunities are available on the Lakeland Campus on Friday, February 20. This includes a *Teaching and Learning with AI* presentation and a *Global Studies Program* presentation. Additionally, annual mentor training is being offered.
- The Polk State Baseball Team plays on the Winter Haven Campus on February 14, 17 and 21. The Men’s Basketball home games are on February 14, 18, and 25. The

Women's Softball Team has its home games on the Winter Haven Campus on February 10, 19, and 27.

President's Report (Greg Harris)

- The Occupational Therapist Assistant Program is open for applicants starting in March.
- Shana Kent-Smith's office is offering lunch-and-learn professional development sessions.

D. Parliamentarian's Report (Michael Derry) - none

E. Academic Liaison Report (Amy Bratten)

- Presidents' Day: Governor DeSantis recommended that all state colleges and universities close February 16 to recognize the holiday. The College sent an email Friday [Feb. 6] telling faculty that the College would close. It is not pleasant [to have this sprung on us], so treat it like a hurricane day. There's been a request to add a day at the end of the calendar to make up for this day.
 - Michael Derry said that we're losing a Monday, but based on the calendar, the College would have to add a Thursday--so that wouldn't help with Monday-meeting classes that lost the day.
 - John Barberet asked if we would refund the tuition students paid for Monday.
 - Jennifer Shaw said that with a hurricane day, we typically don't add a day to the end of the semester. It's unfair to students who've already made summer plans. Also, the additional day would affect the summer term.
 - Niqui Young-Pringle-Brown said that adding a day does not help the Monday-Wednesday class meeting schedule and impacts the summer schedule. And because it is an official holiday, faculty can't have any work due on that Monday.
 - Chris Botelho asked why, in the middle of the semester, the College is deciding to close for a holiday?
 - Amy said that the governor sent a memo and strongly recommended the holiday for the 250th anniversary of the United States. The College has not received guidance to say whether another recommendation would occur for future Presidents' Day observances.
 - Chris said that if it's just a recommendation, this could be left to faculty to determine.
 - Amy said it was an all-or-nothing decision to celebrate the day [the decision has already been made].
 - Michael Derry asked if we could treat it like the November 11 (Veterans Day) holiday where the College closes on a different day.
 - Amy said that the College was able to celebrate Veterans Day on a different day because the College worked this into the calendar with advanced notice. There was little advanced notice for this decision.

[Note: The Governor's public announcement was Jan. 30.]

- FLAC System: There is a FLAC calendar item. She is "in trouble" because she wrote in the meeting invite to "finish the task as soon as possible." She will work on rewording her calendar invites.

The College processes overloads three times a semester (nine times a year), each with two days of work. She's trying to find a way to reduce the workload. The College

- thought Banner would make this easier, but it didn't. Administrative assistants aren't allowed to see some information, so this task is done by the deans and Amy. The training she and the deans had was how they should actually enter the data. The FLAC acknowledgement window opens tomorrow and closes Friday at 5:00 p.m. Amy encourages faculty to complete this soon so the deans can make any needed corrections.
- **Dr. Falconetti:** She wanted to attend this Senate meeting, but she is with SALO student representatives and some trustees in Washington D.C. for an educational trip.

IV. Committee Reports and Updates

A. Distance Learning Committee (DLC)

Dirk Valk said the DLC has formed an Exam-Proctoring Options Work Group. Dirk is the chair, and if anyone is interested in participating let him know.

B. Biology Screening Committee

Jess Jones said he is chairing a committee to hire three Anatomy and Physiology professors. The process is going quickly.

V. Old Business - None

VI. New Business - None

VII. New Business from the Floor

- **Academic Quality Council (AQC):** Jennifer Shaw asked about the lack of distribution, notice, and publication of AQC meeting agendas, curriculum, and information. This was previously sent to all faculty as required but has not been sent for months.
 - Amy Bratten said that this is her responsibility, and she will check to see what is going on.
- **Humanities Speaker Series:** John Barberet announced the spring event for the Winter Haven Campus. In the fall, a *Fire and Water* themed event was offered on the Lakeland Campus. The spring event's theme is *Earth and Air*. Andrew Coombs, Tom Witek, and Mary Ann Murdoch are participating. He thanked Cate Igo for her help as well.
- **Student Lab Assistants—Request for Clarification:** Gregory Johnson said that some time ago during a Senate meeting, he asked Administration about student workers and a seemingly new policy related to their viewing of certain information. He was told that the issue would be reviewed, and he would be contacted, but he hasn't heard anything. [Note: Gregory sent the following to the Faculty Senate Secretary for Administrative clarification after the meeting: *Digital Media Teaching Lab Assistants provide direct support to all DMT students in our lab. To do so, they need to know which students have accommodations so these students can be given extra time or special support. Additionally, our lab staff must review completed labs to determine whether they were completed accurately and at what level of proficiency. This requires access to grades. Our Teaching Lab Assistants are at C13/C15 [pay levels] and must abide by the same*

confidentiality rules as any other employee at Polk State. We have been using lab assistants for over a decade and have never had an issue hiring from within. The enforcement of these restrictions against students is new. Other advertised positions do not have this restriction.]

- Amy Bratten said she has no updates because things have been “kooky.” The issue has not been forgotten and is on the list of things to present to the interim president.
- Gregory said that his department has been approved to hire one Teaching Lab Assistant, so there is a time constraint for posting the job. This has been an ongoing question/issue for quite some time. Is there a way to expedite this, as the same policy [Lab Assistants and the ability to view confidential information] does not apply to any other open lab assistant positions [despite the similarity in role]?
- Amy said she doesn’t know when the interim president will be here and doesn’t know what her calendar looks like. She will ask David Fuggett’s [Executive Vice President, Human Resources & Legal Affairs] office to see if he can make a decision before Dr. Kerr gets here.
- Gregory said he submitted questions on at least two other occasions about these restrictions applied to state workers. Has anyone looked at that information? The sister colleges and universities hire for these very specific positions and have no restrictions against student workers. Polk State seems to be an outlier.
- **Faculty Load Calculations:** John Woodward asked if underpopulated classes contribute to “faculty load” calculations. Do two classes with five students each equal the same as one class with 10 students?
 - Amy said there has not been anything in writing. Dr. Clark has been saying that SACS doesn’t care if the class meets the load minimum and it is part of the load. Amy said she’s not changing anything that is being done now; we currently do not count low-enrollment classes toward load.
- **Online Course Accessibility Concerns:** Laura Brimer said that the online course accessibility compliance measures are overwhelming. Are there any trainings planned and ways to manage the workload given the upcoming due date?
 - Amy said that the deadline is in April. She doesn’t have any trainings planned, but Cody Moyer may have trainings. She said to reach out to him.
 - Cody said there is an accessibility workshop this Friday.
 - The accessibility workshop link is:
https://www.canva.com/design/DAGsyLRHrEM/ZwgQLObBVplKh07oIuQCgA/view?utm_content=DAGsyLRHrEM&utm_ca
 - The accessibility slide deck is offered at:
https://www.canva.com/design/DAGrXIQX8Jk/Q0NC0eVkGvMylaymH2V4mA/view?utm_content=DAGrXIQX8Jk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=h03325302a3#1

