

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2026

Session 1

Via MS Teams & Morris Library Room 754/752

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order: Khalid Meksem

The April meeting was called to order by President Khalid Meksem.

II. Roll Call: John Farrish

Present: Nwamaka Anaza, Erica Blumenstock, Lingguo Bu, Lavern Byfield, Christopher Chiasson, Kwangho Choi, John Farrish, Laurel Fredrickson, Erin Hascup, Ghassan Ishak, Jenna Jamieson, David M. Johnson, Seung-Hee Lee, Jia Liu, Khalid Meksem, Katie Moore, Cinzia Padovani, Shelly Page, Kaitlyn Poirier, Jun Qin, Jonathan Remo, Mohtashim Shamsi, Jennifer Sherry, Angela Shultz, Cassie Wagner, Jennifer Walker, Haibo Wang, Christopher Wienke, Geoffrey Young

Absent: Gary Apgar, Randall Auxier, Timothy Hurley, Nicole Roberts, Kang Sun, Ahmed Torky

Guests: Richard Beach, Julie Dunston, Morgan Evans, Diedra Hopes, Jenny Huang, Shelly Gehrke, Steven Goetz, Sharif Islam, Vjollca Konjufca, Duda Kvitsiani, Melissa Laake, Rebecca Pursley, Julia Rendleman, Brittainy Spears, Sheryl Tucker, Juliane Wallace, Ashley Yoch, Andrew Youpa

III. Approval of Minutes from April 14, 2026

Motion: S. Page

Second: J. Jamieson

A vote commenced: 29 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 Abstentions. The minutes from April 14, 2026, were approved as presented.

IV. President's Report: Khalid Meksem

I would like to report about two major things that came to the Faculty Senate in the last two weeks. One of them is actually a serious concern about our International Education Office here at SIU. We're still trying to learn more about what's going on there. There are some accusations of unprofessional behavior by some people, and we are trying to follow on that. The second thing is there was a lot of, I would say, tension about the (interim) Provost search position. As you know, the original committee resigned. They do have reasons why they have resigned; I'm not going to discuss them today. Our colleague here, Jennifer Sherry, was the Chair of the committee, and she was the one nominated by the Senate. I would like to mention one very important thing. I have no doubt about her competence, neither about her integrity. At the Senate, I would like to remember everybody of one thing, we are all for diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. And this is a call, that's why I want it to stay in the record. When our upper administration removed the language of diversity, anti-racism, and inclusion from all the job descriptions that were posted on the SIU website and that was advertised, none of the other constituencies on this campus talked about it or made an effort to have it back on the job description on our websites; it was the Faculty Senate. So, that just shows you how we really care about things. We're proud of our Senate, I'm proud of our Senators, and I'm very proud of the work we have done. We have achieved a lot of things in the Senate last year. Of course, some of it ended with resolutions. And you know, resolutions are a good way to keep track of what the Senate has done. It's a good record that could be used anytime. I hope that in the next year we will work in a collaboration mode with our upper administrators so that we can try to avoid conflicts and resolutions for the best interest of the Senate. So, the other thing that raised a concern for me is actually the CBIZ study. We had meetings about the CBIZ study, and thank God we really have some excellent faculties on campus. And with the help of those faculty - and I should say thank you to Senator Shamsi for the effort that he has done - we were able to discover that each one of you at SIU is paid far, far lower than what you are supposed to be paid. And that's even using a list of universities that do not compare to us. Even with that list, it still shows that you are paid far less. And this is a call to all of you that are in the Faculty Association. I know some of you are in the Faculty Association. Please get engaged in the

negotiations. Get engaged more and more to get all of us the right salaries that we deserve. We work hard. We do our best. We serve our students to the best. So, we deserve the best treatment. And I'm sure you will be surprised today when Dr. Shamsi will present some of the findings through a survey that we have run.

V. Vice President's Report: Jennifer Sherry

A. Big thanks to Melissa Laake, FSEC, and outgoing Senators

J. Sherry stated I just like to take some time to thank Melissa Laake for all of her hard work and dedication to the Faculty Senate this year, and also the Faculty Senate Executive Council and the outgoing Senators. I appreciate your hard work and diligence this year. Thank you so much.

VI. Reports

A. Executive Committee: Chair, Khalid Meksem

1. Update on Interim Provost Search Committee (FSEC vote on 4/15/26)

So, the update on the interim Provost Search Committee, as I told you before, the original committee resigned. There is another committee that's actually working today on the search for our next (interim) Provost. You all know we have three candidates, and I really encourage all of you to attend. We were given times where we should interview the candidates. So, the first one was done today from 9:15 - 10:00 a.m. And I would like to thank my colleagues who attended the first interview. It was very good. This is actually a reminder that we have another interview on Wednesday and the last one on Thursday. At the Senate, we should interview all the candidates without making any differences between them. We should use our integrity. This way, when we report what we think about any one of them, it should be done the right way. So, that's why we drafted questions that are the same questions that we'll be asking those candidates. And we are hoping through those questions to get to know what the candidates are thinking to do. Of course, you're welcome to ask your questions once the ones the Senate actually drafted, you're welcome to ask those questions and participate in the process. If you know you are coming and you are sure you are coming, we can share with you those questions. There are six questions and it would be good actually if every one of you, if there are six people in the room, every one of you will ask a question to the candidates. We have no preferences as to who is going to be the next interim, however, we should do our work to understand and to try to know the next person who's going to be in that role, how are they going to serve our faculty. Remember, you are a faculty member, and what concerns us is how that person, #1, is going to interact with us as faculty, and #2, how is that person going to actually bring something of a value to our university? So, please participate in the interview process, and please forward your review or what you think about the candidate to us in the Senate, but also directly to the search committee. It is my understanding that the search committee is the one that will be ranking the candidate and forwarding the reviews and everything to the Chancellor. And the Chancellor is going to be making his decision about who's going to be your next interim Provost. Do not forget that we need to work on the process to select our next Provost, and that's something that we have to start. I'm actually talking about this to the old Senators and also to the new Senators. So, we have to start thinking about that process and what's the best way to select a Provost that will serve SIU next.

2. Study Abroad Program Concerns

K. Meksem stated I mentioned briefly about the Study Abroad Program concerns. In the Senate, we created a committee because of a concern about international education, including study abroad. And there were a lot of concerns that were raised about the Study Abroad Program. Many of us here at SIU faculty would like to be more and more engaged in the Study Abroad Programs. We collaborate with a lot of universities overseas, and our students would like to have that experience going abroad. That experience has a huge impact on the lives of our students, and we should not deprive them of that right. We had a person who actually started now working very hard on getting things rolling. Unfortunately, that person was fired and nobody was consulted about how are we going to move forward until the person that I'm talking about contacted the Senate and told us, hey, you know what? I was fired. This raised a major concern. When you fire somebody and that person is providing services to the whole community before taking the decision to fire that person, it's actually professional standard, business standard, to announce that and to find a replacement for that person. So, before that, you should name somebody and send an email to everyone on campus telling them if you have anything that has to do

with the study abroad, contact this person. I mean, we have a faculty listserv. This information is very important, and the campus should know about it, because there were faculty that were actually working towards Study Abroad Programs and suddenly, they find themselves with nobody to talk to. So please, let's try to be more professional in the way we deal and the way we conduct business at SIU. So, name somebody as an interim, whatever you want to do, and then send that email, then everybody will know that that person is gone. And then there is a replacement for that person from day one. This way, people are actually not left in the dark without any information.

Provost Tucker stated as you know we cannot speak about personnel issues in advance. We have a very unusual situation where the director is on leave. We are working on it. We also have a hiring freeze. So as soon as we have information to share, we will share it. We believe Thomas Saville will be able to come back, temporarily. And we've discussed that the interim Provost should look at, I think, faculty leadership potentially in this office, because it's so faculty focused that that might be helpful. But right now, it was an office of one. The faculty piece of this is really important. We want faculty to engage and take our students abroad, but we also have to have proper training, etc.; things like that that have to happen. We're looking at some solutions. This is really going to be for the interim Provost to figure out how do we staff this office. So, under the hiring chill, the first chill before the freeze, we searched for this role three times. We had to beg HR to increase the salary, because anyone we were looking at that could move up was already making more money than our position here at SIU. So, we've had real challenges, and I think that one of the ways that we could be more effective with the office is to have a faculty member who has the director position or a part-time director position with the proper staffing underneath it. So, we are looking at it. We will let you know as soon as there is a solution, but right now there are lots of moving parts and a couple of things that we just could not have predicted. So, anyone that has issues, they can contact me. They can contact the Center for International Education. We have dealt with the immediate program that we had concerns with, and we are working through this. But there's no intent not to include you. We can't give you a heads up on personnel things like this.

K. Meksem stated we do understand that we cannot discuss personnel matters and that's actually something that we do respect. We just want whoever the person that makes a decision to fire somebody to think also about solutions for short term like interim solutions to keep that business or office running until we figure out the next person.

Provost Tucker stated we are and we have been engaged in the last two weeks trying to get someone back on board. As you know, it just doesn't happen quickly. **K. Meksem** stated but I do agree with you that faculty should be the one actually involved there. That's how all universities are doing it. I don't know why we're not doing it at SIU. Hopefully, we can get things done the right way in the near future at SIU. **Provost Tucker** stated one comment on that, Dr. Meksem, this position, if you weren't aware, when the state came in, as my understanding, they looked at several positions in higher ed, and this position was changed from AP to Civil Service. We don't control that, but it has made it much more challenging to keep someone as well. It's just seen as a less desirable position relative to our peer institutions.

J. Jamieson stated I will take a group summer 2026 abroad, and this information that was not communicated by faculty or staff or anyone in study abroad or by administration which has caused a lot of frustration for my students that are going abroad and we are here for the students. So, that's one thing that I find very frustrating as a faculty member. This is the 4th year I've been working on study abroad, so I'm not new to it, and I think that the turnover and the chaos in study abroad and the lack of organization causes a major problem. I think President Meksem echoed that it's important; these are great opportunities for students, but we can't recruit students or support students or support faculty if we don't have some consistency within an office. My 4th year here and my 4th time taking study abroad program, I mean, there was zero communication. There's still zero communication that I've even received as a program that's going June 2026. On June 8th, I leave the country with six students, and I've had zero communication about what to do. And I even have sent emails. I've made phone calls. And I just think there could be better consistency and communication because you're asking me to put the lives of six students in another country and I have no support? And again, I'm still trying to teach out the

rest of this semester with four classes. And again, I know there's some things we can improve, but these are the conversations that should have taken place, I think, before someone was potentially terminated or what we were going to do because you have summer 2026 programs leaving with no organization to help as we try and wrap up the semester in finals.

S. Page stated if this person did not pose a, and I'm not HR, but if they didn't pose a physical danger to students, staff, or faculty, this is what lends to the low morale and the confusion and the chaos amongst faculty, because it looked like the person who was doing the job, who got fired, was doing a good job. He's done programming that has been revolutionary, at least here at the law school. We have another professor like Professor Jamieson, who's about to take a group of students out of the country, and there's been no communication at all. So, if he was fired for a reason other than safety to students, I think SIU has to do a better job in communicating and making these kinds of hiring decisions to just say we can't comment on personnel decisions. Well, it leaves us hanging in the air on what are we supposed to do, and it really just adds to confusion. And I think it's unnecessary confusion.

Provost Tucker stated yeah, I don't disagree. The Center for International Education, since I got here, has been sorely understaffed. So, the hiring chill wiped out four of their positions, which as you know, that's a lot. That's the majority of the people frontline with you. We have struggled between the chill and the freeze to be allowed to hire anyone. So, I welcome your committee, because I think there needs to be some recommendations from the faculty that says this is important, these should be strategic hires. We can't just keep limping along and bringing Thomas Saville. We keep bringing him back and bringing him back. That's why I was thinking about, I've been talking to other people recently about, could there be another model where it's a faculty member, so we have some stability. We still have to have staff associated with it, but can we have some stability by having a faculty member overseeing these endeavors, because the model we've got is not working. And it was, I hate to say downgrade, because I don't, it's just a different position, right? It's not less than, it's different from, but that's one of the reasons why the former director left. They felt like their position had been downgraded. And the way they had to report their time and effort and everything had changed. When we're not paying competitively, we can't get people to move and to come here in these types of positions where rarely we offer, we actually did provide a little bit of moving allowance in this position. But that's really unusual. And when you have a low salary and you're asking someone to move, it just doesn't work. And so, I think having Faculty Senate weigh in about what this should look like and is this a priority for the university, because we are not staffing this unit at the level it needs to be staffed. And I have not been able to be an effective advocate to get the staffing for this particular unit.

S. Page stated Provost Tucker that goes back to the point of if we have a person who is willing to come here, take the low salary, take all of the responsibilities, and then we see this person is doing a good job, an effective job, and then they're just fired. And we are not ... **Provost Tucker** stated what you see and what is also known, you have to understand, the university is not going to terminate someone lightly and not without a substantial reason for doing so. And so, yes, you just have to take that into account that there's a whole other side to the situation.

K. Meksem stated I agree with you, Provost Tucker, that this issue actually really has to be number one priority for the Senate, because, and I wish this could be priority number one also for Graduate Council. We are an R1 institution that relies heavily on international students in the graduate programs. So, with more than 1,500 students enrolled at the university, and they are actually international students, those students are enrolled in credit hours. They generate revenue for the university, and the model should be actually established on how to fund the International Education Office based on tuition and revenue that those students bring to the university. Plus, we know today every university in the US is investing in international recruitment, in international students. We all know the cliff that we will be facing in three to four years down the road. And everybody is aware of it. I don't know why we are not doing the effort. We have forwarded recommendations. It seems like we have to work in different ways to make our upper administration aware of how important our international education is to our campus. Thank you.

Provost Tucker stated yes. And I just want to let you know, I absolutely agree. Peter has looked at funding models. You're right. A lot of institutions, it is partly revenue driven. And we just, again, haven't been able to get any traction and attention. And this unit has almost no budget.

G. Young stated I just wanted to echo the importance of study abroad and international education. I'm a member of the Global Engagement Ad Hoc Committee, and we spoke about this at length when we met. And I do want to highlight the study abroad symposium for faculty and advisors. That was in February. Provost Tucker, I remember that you gave the opening remarks for that. And I think that was movement in the right direction for us as an institution. And I'd like to see that continuing. I just wanted to echo that and highlight specifically that symposium, because I'm looking around, I know a lot of my Faculty Senate colleagues also attended that. I found it to be very helpful and enlightening, so thank you.

B. Election Committee: Chair, Jennifer Sherry

1. **UPDATE: Carissa Scroggins (new Senator) stepped down from Senate as of 4/15/26. Geoffrey Young was next in line to serve due to the votes during the SP26 Election. G. Young accepted the 3-year NTT term on 4/15/26.**
2. **Special thanks to the Elections Committee (Irene Miller, Justin Sextro, & Moira Fiscus), AVC Nick Wortman's Office, & Melissa Laake**
3. **Welcome new Senators!**

J. Sherry stated we had Carissa Scroggins, who was supposed to be a new senator that stepped down from the Senate as of April 15, 2026. Geoffrey Young was actually next in votes and has agreed to serve a three-year NTT term on 4-15-26. A special thanks to the election committee, Irene Miller, Justin Sextro, and Moira Fiscus, AVC Nick Workman's office, and Melissa Laake. As I've mentioned several times, this whole election committee was a very interesting process, and I look forward to refining it as we move along. I'd also like to preemptively welcome the new senators, which I will probably do at the next session.

C. Undergraduate Education Policy Committee: Chair Jonathan Remo

1. **Continue tabled discussion from last meeting:**
 - a. **Resolution Supporting the New UCC Course Requirements - effective FALL 2026 (request for resolution from APAP Dunston) - - *NOTE: A vote did not take place during this meeting.***

J. Remo stated originally, I had intended to bring back the new UCC course requirements, however, after discussions with the UCC Office yesterday, they have done some adjustments to their requirements to address faculty requests that were brought up during the last meeting. As such, I think it is best practice here to take that resolution back to the committee to consider the new changes and then bring it forward in the new Senate. The committee has been asked to bring this forth during the May 15th meeting. So, we will probably have to meet one more time if we can get ourselves together by that point.

D. Budget Committee: Chair, David M. Johnson

D. M. Johnson stated the budget committee has approved a final report, which I submitted to Melissa approximately 33 minutes ago. I thank her for her help. She did some copy editing there, corrected some blunders and formatting and other things. Very briefly, we looked at three different issues. One was we started out by looking at the student to faculty ratio compared to our peers, something that was mentioned in this Senate kind of early in this year's Senate. We confirmed it. We do have quite a few faculty, given the size of our student body compared to our peers, but we also have quite a few employees in other categories compared to our peers, when you correct for the size of the student body. So, the moral of that particular story is that if we're going to look at number of faculty and be concerned that by some measure, we have too many, then we need to look throughout the employee base. We also looked at athletics. Our athletics program is subsidized about as much as our peers are. So, about every \$100 spent on athletics, \$70 comes from outside athletics. That's true of us; it's also true of our peers. Our athletics budget, however, it's much larger than that of our peers, again, given the size of our student body. A couple of ways to see that, our student fees for athletics, this discussion about raising them, they're already higher than that of our average peer. There's about \$700 a year compared to about \$500 a year for our peers. There's also a large deficit in athletics, accumulated cash deficit of some \$92 million as of last

June, which the administration wasn't able to give a particularly clear answer for just where that deficit resides. That's a lot of money. Just one particularly startling figure - that just startled me at any rate - is that we spend over \$70k per athlete. So, there are many faculty who we spend less on than we spend on the average student athlete. SIU needs to think about whether we can afford to keep punching above our weight, to use a sports metaphor, with a much larger athletic program than peers of a similar size hat. Finally, we looked at Risepoint and tried to figure out whether Risepoint is breaking even or not. It's difficult. It covers direct instructional costs, it would seem Risepoint does, even once you give Risepoint half the tuition money. But there are other costs. And when you factor in those other costs, our best guess is that it's the current Risepoint programs are losing money. We try in the course of the report to provide data and to spell in our analysis in prose and encourage people to take a look at the report and to find stakes in it and to propose better methodology for trying to address these questions. So, I encourage you to read the real page turner, the Budget Committee's Final Report.

E. Committee on Committees: Co-Chairs, Cheryl (Shelly) Page & Jonathan Remo

S. Page stated Dr. Remo really does the work. He just lets me ride on his coattails with him. But we did submit the report to Melissa about four days ago. And we work nonstop getting people to serve on various committees. We are the busiest committee there, and we are happy to share the report. If anybody has any questions, please feel free to let us know.

K. Meksem stated maybe the first thing that the Senate will have to do is look at our operating paper, because I found it really brutal that we are given two weeks in April to vote, put people in place, do everything when we have the semester that's ending, we have all other things that we have to do. So maybe the first thing is we have to look at our operating paper and try to make it more faculty friendly.

F. Faculty Status and Welfare Committee: Chair, Mohtashim Shamsi

1. Report on working conditions & morale of faculty from recent survey (Faculty Survey Regarding CBIZ Compensation Study)

(A PowerPoint presentation was shared on the screen.) I just want to thank Dr. Meksem to recognize Faculty Welfare Committee's work. It's teamwork, that's why I would like to thank all of my committee members, because everybody worked hard to analyze the subjective side of the survey we did. And that survey was about the salary compression study and try to figure out how can we compare what the actual salaries are with the CBIZ study. Slide #2 is where I have my first table which talks about what are the challenges that our faculty is facing while doing research at SIU. It wasn't very easy to convert that subjective response into some numerical number to basically understand and digest the sentiments. So, 73% of the faculty are saying they have time constraints and over workload, basically. I mean, we all are here for work, but the thing is, what kind of work? Are we actually doing the research work that we will talk about in the next slide? But right now, what you can see is that they feel like they are overworked and then they are burdened with the work that they are not supposed to do, which is not their responsibility, basically. And that affects their effort to get funding, and that limits their funding to do the research. They have some administrative constraints, lack of personnel in their departments and their schools. And also, it's hard to travel and go for conferences because not only the funding is an issue, but also getting reimbursement is a problem because there's a lot of paperwork to be done. They have to do all of that, a lot of that paperwork, which is not what they are supposed to do, right? And then there are also some infrastructure problems that has to be fixed, because for doing research, you need facilities to run the equipment and maintain those equipment. Slide #3 talks about what kind of non-faculty work university faculty has to do. You can see the topmost is that they have to do a lot of clerical paperwork and administrative work. I can recall when I joined SIU, we had like 5 people in our main office to run all of those administrative work. Right now, we barely have only two people, and they are also all loaded with work, and the rest of the work has to be done by the faculty themselves. Out of that clerical work, most of that work is basically financial and accounting tasks. And that's not the faculty's job. So they, because of the lack of staff, have to do most of that accounting task. They have to go out of their way to recruit students, because it's really hard to attract good students to do the research because it's not only about money, but also about the students who are going to actually do the research, right? There are also complaints about the equipment and lab facilities. Although the faculty is getting money to purchase new equipment, maintaining those equipment is again become faculty

responsibility, and there is no support available from the university itself to keep up those instruments up and running. Now, all of this is affecting the health of the faculty. Slide #4 talks about the impact on health – it is alarming because 62% of faculty is saying the work they have to do, which is they are not supposed to do, is impacting their health negatively. Only 10% are saying their condition is good enough to affect their health positively. The rest of them are just 17 and 11% about their mixed response. And out of that 62% negative health response, a lot of them are talking about their mental health. And we can see in our own faculty and meeting our colleagues how cranky they have become over the years, how difficult they are finding to work at SIU. Slide #5 categorizes the overall sentiments in five different categories. Number one is the financial strain and inequity. And I'm just giving verbatim from that survey that faculty thinks we are grossly underpaid and reported that yearly raises failed to keep pace with the inflation. And that has to be solved immediately. And that's a main problem which leads to declining the morale. Some people say, okay, their school is broken, there's no support available, there's a lack of transparency and misalignment of the values of the administration with the actual core values of the institute itself. And because of the workload and lack of resources, there is lack of core facilities which can help them to drive the research, because if they are not able to access the facilities they need for their research, they won't be able to publish in a good journal. And then, they won't be able to actually get funding, which is actually a cycle - funding publications, funding publications, and all of that requires good resources. I mean, #4 is a big flag. Basically, retention is a big concern. A lot of faculty are thinking and are actively looking for other positions due to low and insufficient support. So, this significant flight risk, I mean, this has been there like for the last 10 years since I have joined SIU. And my own sentiment, if you allow me to actually add that here, that those who are working at SIU, either they love SIU or they didn't find a job anywhere else, or they are afraid to move somewhere else and settle down a new place, because settling down a new place is a challenge itself. So, there's administrative friction as well. Processes are viewed as outdated and laid back, which actually fails all the effort made by the faculty. And that is taking a lot of significant time and energy from the faculty itself. So, this is all about that sentiment survey of the faculty. And I hope you will, I mean, it is depressing. I'm still hopeful, but let's see how can we address that.

G. Governance Committee: Co-Chairs, Randall Auxier & Jun Qin

J. Qin stated our committee has submitted the final report this morning. I just want to thank every committee member for their hard work. We passed six resolutions in the last year. The governance committee, my personal view, is very important function of the Faculty Senate. We can guarantee the sharing governance in this SIU.

VII. Old Business

A. Final Reports from Chairs/Co-Chairs of standing committees are due April 30, 2026, to Melissa Laake.

VIII. New Business

- **Recognition of outgoing Senators – Thank you for your service!**

Angela Shultz, Christopher Wienke, Frances T. Lee, Gary Apgar, Ghassan Ishak, Jennifer Walker, Kang Sun, Laurel Fredrickson, Lingguo Bu, Nwamaka Anza, and Randall Auxier.

K. Meksem stated I would like to thank the senators that served with us last year in the Senate. We did a great job, as my colleagues actually mentioned. We had six resolutions just come in from the Governance Committee. We had many other things come in and it shows how, number one, our Senators are engaged. Number two, that we care. So, for the time that we are here, let's be together, one voice. Let's actually raise our voices, because if you don't raise your voice, you're not going to be heard. And even if you are heard, maybe 70% of the time, nothing is going to change. So, at least raise your voices. I would like to thank you very much for your services to the Senate, and who knows, maybe in the next round we meet again in the Senate.

IX. Adjournment

Motion: J. Remo

Second: J. Jamieson

Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2026

SESSION 2

Via MS Teams & Morris Library Room 754/752

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order: Khalid Meksem

II. Roll Call: John Farrish (*Melissa Laake*)

Present: Erica Blumenstock, Lavern Byfield, Christopher Chiasson, Kwangho Choi, Steven Goetz, Erin Hascup, Diedra Hopes, Jenny Huang, Sharif Islam, Jenna Jamieson, David M. Johnson, Duda Kvitsiani, Seung-Hee Lee, Vjollca Konjufca, Khalid Meksem, Irene Miller, Cinzia Padovani, Shelly Page, Kaitlyn Poirier, Jun Qin, Jonathan Remo, Julia Rendleman, Mohtashim Shamsi, Jennifer Sherry, Brittainy Spears, Chris Stantis, Cassie Wagner, Haibo Wang, Andrew Youpa

Absent: John Farrish, Timothy Hurley, Jia Liu (Proxy Jale Tezcan), Katie Moore, Nicole Roberts, Ahmed Torky, Geoffrey Young

Guests: Richard Beach, Julie Dunston, Morgan Evans, Shelly Gehrke, Melissa Laake, Juliane Wallace

III. Orientation: Khalid Meksem

A. Recognition of New Senators: Vjollca Konjufca, Brittainy Spears, Diedra Hopes, Qian (Jenny) Huang, Julia Rendleman, Md Shariful (Sharif) Islam, Steven Goetz, Irene Miller, Andrew Youpa, Chris Stantis, Duda Kvitsiani, & (returning Senators) Khalid Meksem and Geoffrey Young

B. 2026-2027 Orientation Packet

1. Role of a Senator & Faculty Senate

2. Roles of Faculty Senate Officers

3. Roles of Standing Committees

K. Meksem stated everyone should have received an orientation packet and a letter before coming to the Senate to welcome you. Coming to the Senate means that you will be giving some of your hours to the Senate. All of you, including myself, will be receiving our assignments this week and next week from our school directors. So, when you are looking at your assignment, try to claim the service hours that you are providing to the Senate within that assignment. That was the reason why I sent that letter, and I hope whoever is going to come next (as FS President) will continue on that tradition of sending letters to all our Senators. This way, when you are discussing your assignments with your school directors, they can actually recognize that and give you the time to pursue your activities within the Senate. When your colleagues voted for you and they sent you to the Senate, they trust you. They trust that you will represent them very well, that you will bring their concerns to the Senate, that it can be discussed here, and we can bring the right administrator to the Senate to answer those concerns. At the Senate, we do another role, which is we approve everything that has to do with academics (undergraduate). The Undergraduate Education Policy Committee (UEPC) does a lot of work to approve programs, certificates, the whole thing. And my colleague, Jonathan Remo, really did an excellent job last year. We approved 22 RMEs, 1 NUI, and 10 resolutions. To me, it seems like it's the record that was done in one Senate. We're going to go through program reviews, other programs that are restructuring - there will be a lot of work that will come to the UEPC.

Having said that, other committees are also doing an excellent job. The Budget Committee does an excellent job looking at the budget - what the university is spending. And it's surprising when we talk about faculty, most of the time there is no money for you to do anything. Colleges are told not to go over their budget, you know, hire, freeze, whatever you want to call it. There is always a new name that has been used. So, there is no money for academics. Well, we have seen from the report that my colleague, Dr. David Johnson, presented, there is always more and more money for athletics. I'm not saying that we should ignore one versus the other one. I'm saying that academics plays a major role and students are here because they care about having a degree. And the one that helped them to achieve that is our faculty. So, all what we are asking for is actually to be paid the right amount of pay, but also to be treated with respect

and to be engaged in the process of shared governance, starting from your school, your colleges to the whole university. Universities that understood that you can see them moving successfully, being ranked high, and every student would like to go there. So, if we do that, then I'm sure that SIU will attract again more and more students. I'm not going to keep talking. I will see you discovering your life at the Senate. And I will move to the next which is the election of Faculty Senate officers.

IV. Election of Faculty Senate Officers: Khalid Meksem

A. Election for the following seats took place via electronic vote (MS Forms) prior to the meeting date.

Only one candidate ran for each officer seat. There was a total of 20 votes and the candidates shown below were approved as presented.

1. **President** – Khalid Meksem (2nd term as President)
2. **Vice President** – Jennifer Sherry (2nd term as Vice President)
3. **Secretary** – Jenna Jamieson

K. Meksem suggested updating the Senate operating paper. He stated a lot of things are dumped on the Senate for almost 2 weeks. We have to organize votes, bring new Senators, then we have to organize another vote for president, vice president and secretary. Then we have to organize ourselves in committees. And this is all expected to be done in less than a week, plus one hour that we have today. So that's why we have to look at our operating paper.

V. Committee on Committees (CoC): Jonathan Remo

A. The seven members of the Committee on Committees shall be elected by and from the Faculty Senate. Members of the Committee on Committees shall serve two-year terms, with approximately half of the committee being elected each year. <https://policies.siu.edu/employees-handbook/chapter11/operating-paper-faculty.php>

B. Members *continuing to serve on CoC* (will finish their 2-yr. term): Cheryl (Shelly) Page, Seung-Hee Lee, Jonathan Remo, & Mohtashim Shamsi

C. Election for (3) open Committee on Committees seats

1. Julia Rendleman, Vjollca Konjufca, and Jenny Huang volunteered to serve on COC.

J. Remo stated the Committee on Committees issued a call for Faculty Senators to volunteer to serve on the COC to replace the three members whose terms are concluded with the adjournment of the Fall 2025-Spring 2026 Senate. The committee received three volunteers: Julia Rendleman, Vjollca Konjufca, and Jenny Huang.

Motion: J. Remo

Second: J. Sherry

A vote commenced: 29 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 Abstentions. The three volunteers (listed above) to serve on Committee on Committees for 2026-2027 were approved as presented.

D. Committee on Committees announce their own Chair/Co-Chair for 2026-2027

1. Seung-Hee Lee and Mohtashim Shamsi volunteered to serve as Co-Chairs for COC 2026-2027.

COC voted during the meeting, and S.H. Lee and M. Shamsi were approved as presented to be Co-Chairs.

DI. CoC assign Senators to Standing Committees for 2026-2027 (Faculty Status & Welfare Committee, Governance Committee, Budget Committee, and Undergraduate Education Policy Committee)

J. Remo stated working with Dr. Page and Melissa Laake, we took all the Senate forms (Committee Preference Sheets 2026-2027) and we looked at the standing committees we have in Faculty Senate. We have four standing committees. We have budget, faculty status and welfare, governance, and undergraduate education policy. (*The recommended committee assignments document from COC was shared on the screen.*) Assignments were made based on first come first assigned approach. Once a committee had reached capacity, the second preference was used. In a small number of cases, the third

preference was considered. If you serve as president, vice president, or secretary, you are generally not included on these committees. But if you want to serve on these committees, please let us know. *(The COC voted during the meeting to approve the list of committee assignments. All approved with one abstention.)*

The standing committee assignments were approved by the new COC as presented:

Budget Committee: **Steven Goetz, Erin Hascup, Sharif Islam, David M. Johnson, Jenny Qian Huang, Vjollca Konjufca, Geoffrey Young**

Faculty Status & Welfare Committee: **Erica Blumenstock, Laven Byfield, John Farrish, Katie Moore, Shelly Page, Nicole Roberts, Mohtashim Shamsi, Cassie Wagner, Haibo Wang**

Governance Committee: **Timothy Hurley, Jun Qin, Seung-Hee Lee, Jia Liu, Irene Miller, Kaitlyn Poirier, Chris Stantis, Ahmed Torkey**

Undergraduate Education Policy Committee: **Christopher Chiasson, Kwangho Choi, Diedra Hopes, Duda Kvitsiani, *Cinzia Padovani, Jonathan Remo, Julia Rendleman, Brittainy Spears, Andrew Youpa** *(*Note: Cinzia Padovani's Proxy for Fall 2026 is Kevin Mercer. He will serve on C. Padovani's behalf. Also, Jenna Jamieson was approved by COC to join UEPC as of 5/6/26. Senate will need to approve on 5/12/26.)*

VI. Standing Committees for 2026-2027

A. Committee on Committees announce the Standing Committee assignments

1. Standing Committee members choose their Chair/Co-Chair for each committee

- a. Chairs/Co-Chairs will serve on the Faculty Senate Executive Council. This group meets on the *first Tuesday* of each month, except in January, June, or August.

2. Standing Committee Chair/Co-Chairs are announced for 2026-2027

The following Senators volunteered to serve as Co-Chairs for the standing committees:

Budget Committee Co-Chairs: **Vjollca Konjufca & Erin Hascup**

Faculty Status & Welfare Committee Co-Chairs: **Shelly Page & Mohtashim Shamsi**

Governance Committee Co-Chairs: **Kaitlyn Poirier & Jun Qin**

Undergraduate Education Policy Committee Co-Chairs: **Jonathan Remo & Brittainy Spears**

Cinzia Padovani stated that Kevin Mercer will be her Proxy for Fall 2026, so he will also serve on UEPC on her behalf. **K. Meksem** stated the committees have to meet once per month to discuss issues. Decide on what day of the month you will meet.

VII. Approve the Faculty Senate & Faculty Senate Executive Council Meeting Schedule for 2026-2027

The Senate discussed the dates and times of the meetings, but the proposed schedule remained as is.

Motion: J. Jamieson

Second: S. Page

A vote commenced: 29 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Abstention. The meeting schedule for Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Executive Council for 2026-2027 was approved as presented.

All Senators were told to mark their calendars and block off time from 1-3pm. Meeting invites will be sent just before the meeting date.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion: J. Jamieson

Second: J. Remo