University at Buffalo
Faculty Senate
University Shared Governance

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes DRAFT
22 September 2026
Jeannette Martin Room and via Zoom

Minutes Approved: 10/6/2026

Attendance: see attached attendance record.

Opening Business

Call to Order

Chair called meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. The Chair noted that the meeting is being recorded so that the Secretary may consult the recording and transcript in drafting the minutes, and that the recording will be deleted once the minutes have been approved by this body.

Agenda Approved

Motion to approve FSEC Agenda 22 Sept 2026 was made and seconded. The agenda was approved without objection and without amendment.

Actionable Items

- Minutes of the 8 September 2026 meeting were approved without objection and without correction.
- Provost Report was accepted.
- Chair's Report was accepted.
- FSEC approved, without objection, inviting the campus planning staff to report to the Senate on campus development at the 17 November meeting, in response to the request made at the 15 September Senate meeting.
- FSEC agreed, without objection, to a thirty-minute Provost presentation on enrollment at the December 15 Senate meeting and a thirty-minute presentation on student success at the February 16 Senate meeting, followed by question and answer time as the meeting allows.
- On the fall elections, a motion was made and seconded to authorize the Secretary, as Chair of the Elections Committee, and the Faculty Senate Chair to agree on an election process with the Professional Staff Senate. The agreed process will be circulated to FSEC members, who may raise objections before it is implemented, and a report will be brought to the 6 October meeting. The motion carried without objection.
- Report on the work of the University Police Advisory Committee was received.
- Report on the work of the Policy Review Group was received.

Other Business

I. Provost Report and Discussion of the Vehicle Surveillance Pilot

- The Provost attended to take questions rather than to deliver a prepared report. The discussion was given over almost entirely to the proposed pilot installation of license plate reader cameras at campus entrances and exits.
- The Provost said there is a perception that personal safety varies by campus, and that he has received many reports, particularly from deans and from people leaving after dark, that the environment on the South Campus is not felt to be conducive to personal safety. He said the concern is less prevalent on the North Campus, though incidents have occurred there. He stated that he was not present to advocate for or against the pilot, but to listen and to carry members' concerns back to those involved in the effort.
- A senator who teaches an evening studio course on the South Campus described walking there after dark and always remaining on the phone with someone while doing so. She said the two campuses are different situations with different adjacent communities, the North Campus being self-contained and the South Campus bordered by neighborhoods not connected to it, and that the medical campus is likewise an urban campus. She supported the cameras, noting that they record license plates rather than facial data, and said that planning for safety involves more than lighting but that the question before the body was specifically how members feel about cameras.
- A senator described a fatal stabbing in a residence hall in which the perpetrators were not found for a long period because there were no cameras and said that the level of crime is higher around the residence halls than elsewhere on the North Campus.
- A senator said the disagreement is not about whether safety is a real concern but about what the solution should be and raised the position of students who have been held in immigration detention and the university's readiness to support them on their return.
- A senator raised two concerns: the prospect of continuous observation and recording, and the cost of investing scarce resources where the need may not be demonstrated, particularly on the North Campus.
- A senator objected that language used in the discussion to describe urban and suburban spaces was racialized. She said that safety has historically been used as a justification for other agendas, that UB researchers have produced sound research on campus safety covering bystander intervention, lighting, emergency phones, and conversations with students, and that a letter now circulating sets out evidence and current litigation concerning these cameras. She noted that individual cameras can be compromised, that assurances about data sharing presuppose the continuation of current state policy, that other municipalities have scaled back their use after litigation, and that UB has not approached the question through a shared governance mechanism.
- A senator described a camera installed in her municipality by the county without the city's knowledge, which residents had removed following a vote of the common council, and cited a case of a wrongly issued citation where the vehicle and owner were demonstrably in another state.
- The Chair noted that the University Police Advisory Committee could play a role in deciding whether to run the pilot and setting the conditions under which any pilot proceeded.

II. Chair's Report

- The written Chair's Report was circulated in advance. The Chair highlighted several items and took questions.
- President Genco will attend the FSEC meetings of 6 October and 3 November in person, the 20 October Senate meeting by Zoom, and the 15 December Senate meeting in person. These dates are posted on the Senate website.

• The 20 October Senate meeting will be held downtown at the Clinical and Translational Research Center. The staff assistant will circulate detailed directions and arrangements for validated parking in an adjacent structure. Members noted that the Metro Rail serves the medical campus directly from the South Campus, with a shuttle connection from the North Campus, and that the Blue Line bus also runs hourly from the South Campus.

• Two faculty members who had volunteered for committee service have left UB: one from the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility and one from the Committee on Equity and Diversity. There may be others.

• On Shared Governance Day, the Chair reported that the proposed speaker is a friend of a UB colleague, who endorsed the invitation but is unable to assist with planning. The Chair asked whether the event is worth pursuing and sought volunteers for a planning committee, which would also seek members from the student leadership and from the Professional Staff Senate.

• Members discussed whether the event would draw a sufficient audience to justify the effort, and suggested it might work better as the launch of a theme carried through the academic year. A member questioned whether the name Shared Governance Day conveys anything to those not already involved in governance, and it was noted that the term is well established within SUNY and that the President has spoken in support of shared governance. It was noted that an in-person event was held two years ago and a Zoom event last year.

• A member suggested that, rather than a single speaker, the day might be used as a panel or symposium drawing on UB faculty who work on the political and fiscal environment, given that academic freedom and shared governance are under pressure nationally. The Chair noted a day-long symposium on academic freedom in the context of UB's own history is scheduled for mid-October at the Center for Tomorrow.

III. Fall Elections

• The Secretary reported that he will meet with his counterpart at the Professional Staff Senate to settle the next steps for the fall elections, and the Chair set out the options under consideration.

• The Professional Staff Senate's original proposal was to hold an election now to fill the remainder of the term of the senator who resigned, so that the person elected would attend the winter and spring plenaries. The Chair proposed holding elections this fall for three positions, one to begin in 2026 (with the senator elected attending the winter and fall plenaries) and two to begin in July 2027.

• An alternative was raised: that the alternate, who is already attending the October plenary in that capacity, serve out the remainder of the term, and that one of the two non-health sciences positions elected this fall be exceptionally a one-year term in order to stagger the delegation.

• The Chair reported that the approach she proposed had been put to the SUNY University Faculty Senate Parliamentarian, who indicated it would be acceptable, and expected the alternative approach would be acceptable also; SUNY's concern is that UB be represented, and the detail of how positions are filled is left largely to the campus.

• It was clarified that the alternate was elected to that role, and that allowing her to serve is the purpose for which alternates exist. It was noted that under SUNY rules alternates are themselves required to win a majority of the vote, which would require a separate election for alternates, and that this has not been current practice.

• A member asked what would happen if no candidate were willing to take up a seat immediately, and it was agreed that if the Chair's approach is adopted the call for nominations must make clear that whoever stands for that position must be able to begin at once.

- The Chair noted that last year the call for nominations did not go out until late October, which is later than the guidelines provide.

IV. Report on the Work of the University Police Advisory Committee

- The Faculty Senate's representative on the committee reported, using slides circulated before the meeting. Only three of the committee's members are faculty, though the membership represents a broad cross-section of the university.
- Most of the committee's time so far has been taken by presentations from the police. One slide showed that more than 2,500 surveillance cameras are already installed across the three campuses, against approximately 1,000 two years ago.
- The representative characterized the disagreement as one about whether extensive surveillance protects people or threatens civil liberties, and said that in her view the police have so far been defensive and not receptive to other perspectives on the committee. She noted that her own research concerns the establishment of totalitarian regimes and the oppression of women, and that mechanisms of oppression typically use protection as their justification.
- She reported that a colleague at another institution had moved most courses online because students were afraid to come to campus, and that a UB colleague had recently left the university citing concerns for his personal safety.
- On the difference between the existing cameras and those proposed, it was explained that most current cameras are internal to UB, whereas the proposed system connects to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and to a national database. Instances were cited of police officers accused of using such databases to track individuals, and of a school district using them to surveil families and exclude children without due process.
- It was noted that UB police already use handheld license plate readers during traffic stops, and that the difference lies in scanning every vehicle entering campus and in the sharing of data with the vendor.
- The Graduate Student Association representative said the characterization of the committee meeting matched her own, and that members had been told that adverse media reporting about the vendor of the proposed license-plate reader system was untrue, which she found unnerving. She reported that a GSA survey had received 93 responses, an unusually high number, of which only two favored the cameras, and expected widespread resistance from graduate students.
- A member cautioned that although the proposal is described as a trial, the cameras would be difficult to remove once installed; that the vendor has been pushed out of municipalities and is targeting universities as a new market; that a further product tracks individual movement on foot; and that the vendor has a partnership with the federal government under the 287(g) program, which would allow law enforcement elsewhere to access the data. She noted that New York State Executive Orders 170 and 170.1 currently prohibit state law enforcement from coordinating with federal immigration authorities, but that this depends on those orders remaining in force.
- The representative offered to send the circulating letter to any member who requests it.
- The Chair observed that the University Police Advisory Committee appears to be experiencing a clash of perspectives and expressed the hope that more equal sharing of views would follow.

V. Report on the Work of the Policy Review Group

- The Faculty Senate's liaison to the Policy Review Group reported, having circulated a written report before the meeting.

• The report concerns changes to Title IX complaint procedures. Several SUNY campuses had not had their procedures in order; UB's procedures, in place for about ten years, were used as the model rolled out to the rest of the system. Because the change was mandated from above, the Senate did not weigh in on it.

• Members with questions about the changes were directed to Sharon Nolan-Weiss, director of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, who is available to discuss them.

VI. Continuing Business: Goals and Priorities for the Year

• The Chair reported on the results of the priorities survey circulated to FSEC members. Seventeen of approximately twenty-five members responded. Almost all of the listed issues were marked important, and several were marked as needing to be addressed this year.

• Artificial intelligence emerged as the leading concern. The Chair noted that the Senate expects to have a role, possibly the principal role, in securing faculty representation on university bodies addressing AI, and will ask those working on training faculty to teach about and use AI to report to a future meeting.

• It was noted that UB now has seven approved joint degree programs linking AI to other disciplines, taught by faculty in those disciplines rather than by computer science, and that the AI and Society department is mapping faculty across the university who work in this area.

• A member asked whether the various strands of AI work across campus had been broken down and mapped, distinguishing teaching, academic use, intellectual property, and environmental effects.

• A member expressed disappointment that discussion has centred on teaching rather than on the future of the university as a whole, and noted two recent reports, one issued by MIT in August on the impact of AI on universities and education, and one issued by Cornell on the future of the American university.

• The chair of the Academic Planning and Assessment Committee said that considering the future of the university is one of his committee's charges, that the committee has not yet concluded what it wishes to take up, and that he would take the suggestion back to it.

• A member said that the discussion had addressed the impact of AI on the university and on teaching but not its impact on students and on the value of the degrees they pay for, and argued that educators have an ethical responsibility to address this. The Chair responded that the Teaching and Learning Committee is already considering these questions and will bring suggestions to the FSEC.

• It was noted that the curricular dimension extends beyond the classroom, and that other institutions have introduced AI competency requirements for graduation, which raises questions for the committees responsible for academic planning and curricular oversight.

• On international students and scholars, the Chair will invite the Vice Provost for International Education to an upcoming meeting.

• On tenure and promotion, the chair of the Committee on Appointments, Tenure, Promotion and Privileges reported that his committee expects to meet within about a week and a half to set priorities, and that the issues include the effect of AI on productivity and on the assessment of what constitutes scholarship. Members wishing the committee to consider particular aspects were invited to raise them.

• On the state of shared governance at unit level, the Chair reported hearing numerous complaints about governance within units over the past year, and proposed forming a subcommittee to administer a survey created by the SUNY University Faculty Senate for campuses to use, allowing unit bodies to conduct a self-study. She sits on

the SUNY governance committee that created the instrument. A formal proposal will be brought to a future meeting, with the survey likely administered in early spring, timed to avoid conflicting with other surveys.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Enoch Azasu,

School of Social Work
Faculty Senate Secretary