

JSU Faculty Senate Meeting

January 12, 2026, B01 Merrill Hall

Minutes

Senators Present: Allen Gilbert, Allison Boswell, Ashley Rattner, Barbie Norvell, Brianna Turgeon, Chris Clark, Chris Hosmer, Courtney Peppers, David Thornton, Gorgin Mansourian, Jeffrey Zanzig, Jody Long, Kathryn Catlin, Kazi Rahman, Kimberly Southwick-Thompson, Lance Ingwersen (Ryan Burns), Laura Barrow, Leah Simmons, Maureen McGuire, Patrick McGrail, Randal Blades, Stacy Mikel, Wendy Key, Yajun Lu

Senators Absent: Andres Crawley, Diane Best, Eddie Walker, Mike Burns, Noureddine Bekhouche, Shellie Beeman, Stacey Gill

Ex Officio Members Present: Provost Christie Shelton, President Heidi Dempsey, Vice President David Dempsey, Faculty Commons Director Mica Mecham

Ex Officio Members Absent: Online@JSU Rep Shelena Cofield, Staff Council President, Department Head Council representative, SGA President

Guests:

Agenda Items

1. Approval of Minutes (December 8, 2025) – **motion made by Ryan Burns, seconded by Chris Clark, approved.**
2. Shared Governance Items
 - a. Dr. Shelton, Provost/EVPAA, to discuss shared governance processes and expectations
 - i. Provost Shelton emphasized the need for the Senate to decide whether to adopt a collaborative or adversarial approach in interactions with administration, highlighting the importance of information gathering before forming positions and encouraging open discussion among Senate members to determine their preferred method.
 - ii. The group reviewed the history and current process for Senate resolutions, noting that resolutions were previously forbidden by administration but now are sent to the board, and discussed whether all positions or only serious resolutions should be forwarded, with Provost Shelton suggesting the need for Senate-led discussion on this matter.
 - iii. The Provost informed Faculty Senate that she was going to archive her TEAMS channels and encourage faculty to participate in shared governance by bringing questions to their Faculty Senators, rather than directly to her (although she noted that she would continue to be available via email for any faculty member).
 - iv. Provost Shelton also provided an update on two recent cases of fake and fraudulent students, detailing the methods used to detect identity theft and

the university's response, with input from Jessica Wiggins and Skip Clark. Senate discussed the use of Honorlock and other verification methods to comply with accreditation requirements and prevent future incidents, noting that such fraud is more prevalent in online courses.

- v. Another Senator brought up salary concerns, especially with rising costs. Provost Shelton described how lowering dual enrollment tuition increased student numbers but did not increase revenue, as the lower price offset the enrollment gains, and highlighted the importance of matriculation rates for future revenue. She also explained that salary increases are not announced by October 1 because the university does not know net tuition revenue until later, and Dr. Harmon's conservative approach is to wait for more complete financial data before making decisions. Finally, Provost Shelton discussed anticipated substantial increases in insurance costs, the university's efforts to avoid passing costs to employees, and the need for more information before making further financial commitments. Dr. Clayton suggested improving faculty education on the value of benefits versus salary increases, and Dr. Shelton noted that Dr. Harmon is working on a new approach to benefit statements.
- vi. Dr. Shelton also addressed concerns about the Servpro article in the *Chanticleer* and noted that the article was published before University Counsel was able to provide feedback and it was not picked up by other news outlets due to inaccuracies. She also explained the university's decision not to respond publicly due to legal advice.
- vii. Provost Shelton then exited the meeting so the Faculty Senate could continue discussion.

b. Discussion regarding the three-step Faculty Senate Issue Resolution Process proposal, including the new formal request for information step

- i. The Senate reviewed the proposed three-step Issue Resolution Process, including the introduction of a formal Request for Information as an intermediate step between informal inquiry and formal resolutions. In response to the Provost's question regarding shared governance posture, the Senate expressed support for a collaborative approach with administration that emphasizes information-gathering and graduated escalation before formal action. Participants affirmed the value of documented procedures to promote transparency, continuity across leadership transitions, and consistent communication with administration.
- ii. **Faculty Concerns Intake and Tracking** - The Senate clarified the process for faculty concerns to move from individual faculty members to Senate consideration. Faculty are encouraged to raise concerns through their Senate representatives, who forward them to Senate Leadership for logging and coordination. The Senate discussed maintaining structured tracking through

logs to ensure transparency and continuity. Leadership described plans for internal documentation and summary reporting to Executive Committee and the Full Senate, emphasizing that intake and tracking are intended to support coordination rather than replace existing departmental or administrative channels.

- iii. **Formal Request for Information Process** - The Senate discussed the purpose of a formal Request for Information as a mechanism to obtain documented responses from administration when informal inquiry is insufficient but a resolution is premature. The process includes submission through Senate Leadership, routing through the Provost, and reporting back to the Senate. This step was affirmed as a way to strengthen shared governance by ensuring the Senate has accurate information before taking formal positions or advancing resolutions.
- iv. **Committee and Leadership Roles** - The Senate reaffirmed that committees act at the direction of Senate Leadership and the Executive Committee, consistent with the Senate's governing documents. Leadership is responsible for formal communication with administration, while the Full Senate retains authority to escalate issues or take formal action when needed.
- v. **Documentation and Continuity** - The Senate agreed on the importance of maintaining operating procedures, logs, and written records to ensure transparency, consistency, and institutional memory. Plans were discussed to publish Senate operating procedures in an Operations Manual and on the Faculty Senate website.
- vi. **Motion** that the Faculty Senate adopt the "*Faculty Senate Issue Resolution Process (Three-Step Pathway)*" as an operating procedure of the Faculty Senate, to be included in the Senate's Operating Procedures Manual and published on the Faculty Senate website. This adoption does not amend the Faculty Senate Constitution or Bylaws and may be reviewed or revised by majority vote of the Senate. This operating procedure guides how the Senate prefers to exercise its authority; it does not change that authority. **Motion made by Leah Simmons, seconded by Kimberly Southwick-Thompson, approved.**
- vii. Compensation – formal request for information
 1. This was sent to the Faculty Advocacy Committee to compile information and draft a version to send to Executive Committee

c. Faculty Handbook

- i. 3.2.4 Graduate Faculty – feedback by Jan 20 by all faculty
- ii. 2.2.10 Copyright – feedback by Jan 20 by all faculty
- iii. 6.1 (Separation) and 6.2 (Discipline & Dismissal) – **Jan 21 1:00-2:30** (Merrill 110/TEAMS) overview of Section 6.2 by Emily Davey for Faculty Senate, Deans, and Department Heads; feedback by Feb 13

- iv. Senior Instructor – David and Heidi meeting with Dr. Harmon on Jan 20 to discuss
- 3. President's Report
 - a. President Dempsey provided updates on upcoming Senate elections, committee assignments, and the scheduling of academic freedom speakers, encouraging participation and communication among faculty.
 - b. She announced the current slate of officer candidates for the upcoming Senate election, with nominations to be finalized at the next meeting.
 - c. Faculty were encouraged to complete committee interest forms, and the schedule for academic freedom speakers and related committee meetings was shared.
- 4. Committee Updates
 - a. Executive Committee – Heidi Dempsey, chair
 - b. Advocacy Committee – Kathryn Catlin, chair
 - i. Faculty reported that the bookstore had switched some courses to digital textbooks without consulting instructors, leading to confusion and student dissatisfaction, and agreed to address the issue through the informal request for information process.
 - c. Student Retention Committee – Courtney Peppers, chair
 - d. Policies and Campus Planning – Mike Burns, chair
 - e. Elections – Jeff Zanzig, chair
 - i. Officer elections will happen at the next Senate meeting – January 26 – please ensure your department is represented in the vote for officers
 - ii. The following people have indicated they are running thus far: Allen Gilbert (Vice President/President-elect), Wendy Key (Secretary), Patrick McGrail (Historian). Nominations will also be taken from the floor
 - f. Promotion and Tenure – Barbie Norvell, chair
- 5. New Business

Motion to adjourn by Allen Gilbert, seconded by Kathryn Catlin.

Faculty Senate President's Report

Highlights from Jan 8, 2026 Cabinet Meeting

- Driver registration and required training must be completed to meet **insurance requirements**.
 - Applies to **all drivers**, including those using **personal vehicles** and submitting mileage.
 - A **communication** will be sent outlining requirements and expectations.
- Working on clearer communication for students regarding the **refund process**.
- **S&P and Moody's credit rating meetings** expected within the coming weeks.
- **Budget development materials for FY 2027 will be released soon.**
- **Fake / Fraudulent Students**

- Growing national issue; some institutions purchasing software to combat it.
- JSU has identified two cases, with another identified since.
- Tactics include:
 - Stealing identities of former students.
 - Creating new student numbers to access Pell funds.
- University of Missouri shared best practices, including hiring a **full-time position** dedicated to this work.
- Vinson to follow up with **Charlotte on possible software options**.
- Recommendation: **use Honor Lock with tests and require identity verification** to ensure work is completed by the enrolled student. These issues are occurring in online classes.
- **Admitted Student Days:**
 - Jan. 30 – 280 registered.
 - Feb. 16.
 - March 5 (largest event).
- **Student Success Summit:**
 - February 10–11.
- Units encouraged to share success stories with Josh Underwood.
 - Plan to launch initiative to capture positive JSU experiences by faculty/staff.
- Leadership in Action micro-credential developed by Dr. Robinson and Dr. Stone.
- Chief Barton developing a debrief meeting following the Brown University active shooter incident:
 - Reviewing JSU policies.
- Meeting held regarding freestanding emergency department; interiors selected for both JSU and RMC sides.
- Fire station construction progressing on schedule.
- TAP project on Highway 24 nearing completion.
- Ballers and Chains path extending to UREC.
- Concrete being poured for Jax State signage.
- Contractor correcting rumble strip issues.
- **West Village Phase I:** electricity on.
- **Red Tie Event – February 5**
- Bowl game win.
- Athletics GPA: 3.418 overall.
 - 13 teams \geq 3.5.
 - 4 teams \geq 3.81.
 - Bowling leads with 3.91.
- Spring Football Game: **April 16** (same day as shrimp boil).
- Fall football schedule almost finalized. Here is what we know:
 - Home: Sept. 5 & 19.
 - Away: Sept. 12 & 26.
 - Midweek game in October.

- Six home games total. Two in September, two in October, and two in November. Homecoming likely to be in November.
- Public release of final schedule expected by end of January.
- BOT meeting: **February 2–3.**

Faculty Advocacy Committee Report to Faculty Senate, 12 Jan. 2026

If you have questions, feel that your department's concerns are not being adequately addressed, or if you have additional concerns to bring up, please reach out to the Advocacy chair, Dr. Kathryn Catlin (kcatlin@jsu.edu).

- Please continue to send Kat ideas from faculty regarding ways to improve transparency between faculty and the administration. I'd like to have these by the first week of February.
- Please send Kat specific information about faculty concerns regarding salaries to aid in the development of the inform the formal request for information. Please send this within two weeks (by Jan 21).
 - This cannot be about individual faculty salaries (e.g., why am I getting paid a certain amount?) because I know Dr. Harmon will not discuss that with us.
 - It can be things such as, "There are amounts on the salary tables that appear to be obvious errors for my discipline (e.g., the minimums for associate professor are lower than assistant professor), and we are concerned these have not been updated."
 - We would like clarification regarding whether, when COLA adjustments are made, it will be announced at the beginning of the year, after the BOT meeting in October, or will simply take place as part of the yearly salary table adjustments and not announced separately.
 - Or, if faculty have not received a response from the compensation@jsu.edu, this could be noted.
 - Dr. Shelton did investigate this, after our Executive Committee meeting with her last Monday and Dr. Harmon said that there are only two emails in the compensation@jsu.edu which have not received a reply and one is a broken link notification — so we probably need some specifics because perhaps there is a missing email somewhere.
- See the deferred maintenance plan that Heidi circulated, and let EC know if there are questions about it.
- Kat has not received information from any department about policies re: student alcohol use on trips. I assume this means no department has such a policy. I will be reaching out to Staci Stone and Josh Robinson this week about the issue.
- Advocacy is continuing to work on Academic/Athletic relations, Study Away policies, program coordinator compensations, and other issues raised via our informal survey last fall. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is something we need to address.