

# **JSU Faculty Senate Meeting**

## **December 8, 2025, B01 Merrill Hall**

### **Minutes**

**Senators Present:** Allen Gilbert, Allison Boswell (Laura Pitts), Ashley Rattner, Barbie Norvell, Brianna Turgeon, Chris Clark, Courtney Peppers (Renee Renda), David Thornton, Diane Best, Jeffrey Zanzig, Jody Long, Kathryn Catlin, Kazi Rahman, Kimberly Southwick-Thompson, Lance Ingwersen, Leah Simmons, Maureen McGuire, Mike Burns, Patrick McGrail, Randal Blades (Mike Boynton), Stacey Gill, Stacy Mikel, Wendy Key

**Senators Absent:** Andres Crawley, Chris Hosmer, Eddie Walker, Gorgin Mansourian, Laura Barrow, Nouredine Bekhouche, Shellie Beeman, Yajun Lu

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

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

**Guests:** Jenna Ridlen

#### **Agenda Items**

1. Approval of Minutes (November 17, 2025) – **motion to approve was made by Kimberly Southwick-Thompson and seconded by Chris Clark; approved.**
2. Shared Governance Items
  - a. Faculty Handbook
    - i. 7.1.12 INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY – sent to all faculty, posted on Academic Policies page (linked to Canvas), updated in the Faculty Handbook
    - ii. 7.1.13 CLASS CONTINUITY POLICY FOR UNEXPECTED CAMPUS CLOSURE– sent to all faculty, posted on Academic Policies page (linked to Canvas), updated in the Faculty Handbook
    - iii. 3.2.4 Graduate Faculty – feedback by Jan 20 by all faculty
    - iv. 2.2.10 Copyright– feedback by Jan 20 by all faculty
    - v. 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
    - vi. Senior Instructor – Vice President David Dempsey and President Heidi Dempsey are meeting with Dr. Harmon on Jan 20 to discuss
3. President's Report
  - a. Executive Committee met with Khadish Franklin from EAB – he is working with Exec on how to work with the administration
  - b. Will reschedule Academic Freedom speaker for spring

- c. Provost's executive summary and detailed postmortem assessment of Servpro litigation
- i. **Servpro Litigation Report Distribution:** The Provost distributed an executive summary and detailed report on the tornado response, Servpro dispute, litigation outcomes, and subsequent reforms, which were vetted by senior administrators and uploaded to Canvas for Senate review.
  - ii. **Resolution Process and Administrative Perceptions:** President Heidi Dempsey explained the formal nature of Senate resolutions, their required reporting to the Board of Trustees, and the Provost's preference for informal requests before formal resolutions, noting that resolutions are perceived as serious and potentially adversarial by administration.
  - iii. **Evolution of Shared Governance:** President Heidi Dempsey described how shared governance has developed, with increased channels for communication between Senate and administration, and emphasized the importance of not undermining these relationships through hasty or adversarial actions.
  - iv. **Communication and Transparency Challenges:** Senators expressed frustration over delayed or unclear responses from administration, particularly regarding compensation, and discussed how the introduction of a resolution prompted a rapid administrative response, highlighting gaps in communication and differing expectations of transparency.
  - v. **Role of Senate Leadership:** The group considered the roles of the Senate president and vice president in managing contentious issues, acting as liaisons, and ensuring that sensitive matters are handled appropriately and with due consideration for timing and institutional context.
  - vi. **Balancing Advocacy and Relationships:** Participants acknowledged the need to advocate for faculty concerns while also protecting and enhancing the Senate's voice and relationships with administration, especially as shared governance structures are still new and evolving at the institution.
  - vii. **Clarifying Resolution and Request Procedures:** Members discussed the need to define what constitutes a proposed versus an official resolution, the appropriate channels for submitting resolutions, and the potential for a standardized formal request form to ensure consistency and clarity.
  - viii. **Development of a Formal Request Process:** The group agreed to pursue a new process for formal requests for information, to be documented in meeting minutes and funneled through the executive committee, with the aim of escalating issues only if responses are not received, and to clarify expectations for administrative responses and timelines.
  - ix. **Formal Request for Compensation Information:** The Senate will compile and submit a formal request for information about the compensation

plan, including specific unanswered questions, to be delivered to the Provost and administration for a documented response. **Motion to submit a formal request made by Stacy Mikel, seconded by Lance Ingwersen, approved.**

- x. **Administrative Briefings and Information Sessions:** Members discussed the value of inviting administrators, such as Skip Clark, to provide annual or periodic briefings to the Senate on topics like audits and financial matters, as recommended in recent reports.
- xi. **Action Items and Next Steps:** The executive committee will meet with the Provost on January 5th to discuss the formal request process, provide a compiled list of compensation-related questions, and work toward a framework for future information requests, with the possibility of codifying the process in Senate documentation.

#### 4. Committee Updates

- a. Executive Committee – President Heidi Dempsey, chair
- b. Advocacy Committee – Kathryn Catlin, chair
- 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: Barbie Norvell (Vice President/President-elect), Wendy Key (Secretary), Patrick McGrail (Historian). Please let Jeff know if you are interested in candidacy for any of these positions; nominations will also be taken from the floor at the next meeting
- f. Promotion and Tenure – Barbie Norvell, chair

#### 5. Updates from Faculty Commons

- a. **Faculty Awards Event Details:** Mica announced that the Faculty Awards will be held on April 9th with a Kentucky Derby theme, and encouraged everyone to RSVP and mark their calendars for the event, which will include food, drinks, and the awards ceremony.
- b. **New Award Introduction:** A new award will be introduced this year, with further information and rubrics to be posted on the website once updates are complete.
- c. **Call for Nominations and Survey:** The call for award nominations will be released on January 7th, and faculty are encouraged to fill out a Faculty Commons survey regarding preferred times, days, and formats for faculty development, as well as to suggest or volunteer for spring presentations.

**Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Lance Ingwersen and seconded by Stacy Mikel.**  
**Meeting was adjourned.**