

Faculty Senate Update

November 2021

Greetings MSU,

Welcome to the new term for academic governance. My name is Dr. Karen Kelly-Blake, and I am the new chairperson of the Faculty Senate and University Steering Committee.

Thank you to the outgoing Faculty Senate/Steering Committee chairperson, Dr. Jennifer Johnson. Dr. Johnson was instrumental in helping update, overhaul, and streamline academic governance processes. She continues to help us in a volunteer consultant role as we complete our manual of operating procedures. We thank her for her continued willingness to engage in the work of academic governance.

What is Faculty Senate?

The Faculty Senate is the deliberative, representative, and legislative body for Michigan State University faculty. The goal of the Faculty Senate is to facilitate action and meaningful dialogue among faculty members and between faculty members and university administrators. Faculty Senate is comprised of the faculty and academic staff representing each MSU college, as well as five at-large members and the chairs of the seven university-level standing committees. The membership of the Faculty Senate can be found [here](#). Minutes and recordings of meetings can be found [on the Academic Governance website](#). Microsoft Word versions of the faculty governance newsletters [are also available](#).

Your Role

We encourage you to reach out to [your faculty senators](#) with questions, issues, suggestions, and—most importantly—solutions to those issues you identify that you would like Faculty Senate or another academic governance body to discuss. To do so, either contact your faculty senators or send issues to the Steering Committee directly using [this form](#).

Upcoming Faculty Senate & University Council Meetings

Faculty Senate meets tomorrow at 3:15 p.m. You are invited to watch via the livestream at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/livestream>. The agenda is available at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/faculty-senate/agendas/november-16-2021>. Highlights include:

- An update on the Discipline Policy and Sanction Review Task Force's recommendations;
- A resolution on hiring an employee to support undocumented students;
- A discussion of the state of academic freedom in relation to teaching about race and racism at MSU; and
- An opportunity for senators to share their perspectives on many other issues involving faculty and academic staff.

University Council—which is chaired by President Samuel L. Stanley Jr., M.D. and made up of the Faculty Senate, undergraduate and graduate students, all of the deans, and administration representatives—meets on Tuesday, November 23 at 5:00 p.m. Again, you can watch the livestream at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/livestream>. The agenda is available at <https://acadgov.msu.edu/university-council/agendas/november-23-2021>. Highlights include:

- Remarks from the president, Provost Teresa K. Woodruff, Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Norman J. Beauchamp Jr., and me;
- A presentation on undergraduate enrollment and student success from Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Mark Largent;
- A presentation from Senior Vice President for Student Life and Engagement Vennie Gore on the newly created Division of Student Life and Engagement; and

- A resolution urging the Board of Trustees to create a task force (with faculty among its membership) to explore investment strategies that align with MSU’s social, economic, and environmental values.

If you can’t watch either meeting live, a video of each will be posted on the [Faculty Senate](#) and [University Council](#) meeting pages the night of the meeting. Transcripts will be available in the same place within two days after each meeting.

Academic Governance So Far This Semester

Faculty Senate and University Council have both been hard at work this semester.

Faculty Senate

- On September 21, the Faculty Senate [passed a COVID-related resolution](#) urging the administration to 1) restore the notification of instructors who are informal contacts of known COVID-19 cases, 2) maintain a full masking policy for faculty, staff, and students working indoors, and 3) collect uploaded copies of COVID-19 vaccination cards. It also voted to form [an ad hoc committee](#) to consider alternatives to the term “regular faculty.”
- On October 12, the Senate discussed ways to support junior faculty with Interim Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Development Marilyn Amey.

University Council

- On September 28, the University Council received a report from the Academic Calendar Task Force. The task force’s recommendations included making the length of Fall Semester and Spring Semester the same (14 weeks) and establishing a permanent two-day Fall Break, among others. Read the full report [here](#).
- On October 19, the University Council heard from Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Lisa Frace and Chief Investment Officer Philip Zecher, who presented on the university’s investments.

Videos, transcripts, and minutes of these meetings are available on the [Faculty Senate](#) and [University Council](#) meeting pages.

Additionally, both Faculty Senate and University Council voted to hold their meetings remotely this year, so bookmark the livestream link (<https://acadgov.msu.edu/livestream>) and note the [meeting dates for the rest of the year](#).

Final Thoughts

Academic governance is a verb—it is what we do. Let’s do the work.

Please email acadgov@msu.edu if you have any academic governance-related questions.

Wishing you a safe and well remainder of the semester.

Best regards,

Karen

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