

FACULTY SENATE MEETING

October 27, 2025

Members and Officers present: Janel Bloch (Budget), Jitana Benton-Lee, William Boyce, Andrea Brooks* (Gen Ed), Kinsey Bryant-Lees (Faculty Advocate), Carole Cangioni, Ronnie Chamberlain, Kimberly Clayton-Code, Josh Cooper, Joe Cress, Christine Curran (Senate Vice President), Megan Downing, Rebecca Elkins (Benefits), Jacqueline Emerine (Senate President), John Farrar, Richard Fox (UCC), Kathleen Fuegen* (Parliamentarian), Dorea Glance* (Grad Programs), Allyson Graf, Michael Guy, Jackie Herman, William Herzog, Boshra Karimi, Ken Katkin, Suk-hee Kim, Edward Kwon, Chris Lawrence* (TEEC), Mark Leeman, Peiwei Li, Zeel Maheshwari, Jennifer McLeod, Laryn O'Donnell Knudson, Michael Providenti (Secretary), Holly Riffe (PCC), Kelly Ritter, Nazmus Sadat, Robert Salyer, Gary Sczerbaniewicz, Kathleen Spada, Sandra Spataro* (Faculty Regent), Mehmet Sulu, Andrea Sutherland, Jessica Taylor, Monica Wakefield, Eileen Weisenbach-Keller, Dolores White, Kim Yates, Junxiu Zhou, Marcia Ziegler (an asterisk * indicates ex officio members)

Members and Officers absent: Jason Applegate, Stephen Johnson

Guests: Cady Short-Thompson (President), Diana McGill (Provost), Grace Hiles (Faculty Senate Office), Collin Jarrell (SGA), Terkerah Washington (Staff Congress), Terrance Anderson, Amanda Andrews, Brooke Buckley, Charlisa Daniels, Dick Durtsche, Yaw Frimpong-Mansoh, Amy Gellen, Kristi Hopfensperger, Teresa Hubert, Doug Hume, Kevin Kirby, Alar Lipping, Danielle McDonald, Alexis Miller, Karen O'Connell, Allison Parker, Allison Rank, Shauna Reilly, Peter Rinto, Denise Robertson, Jose Saavedra Torres, Steve Slone, Karen Vietz

Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Senate President Jacqueline Emerine at 1:03 pm with a quorum present. The agenda was adopted as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September 29, 2025 meeting were approved as amended.

The amendment is as follows: Under the Senate President's Report, under the first bullet regarding the Faculty Workload Workgroup update, it was noted that the faculty in Art and Design voted in opposition to the draft workload policies.

Guests

President (Cady Short-Thompson)

- There was an acknowledgement of the staff members who were RIFed and the 3 faculty members who had recently passed.
- Regarding the RIFs, all divisions took cuts except Legal and the President's Office. There was an effort to streamline and centralize. The cuts were delayed as long as possible. There was a \$71K surplus coming into the year but state funding came up short. There is an effort to build more of a surplus into future budgets which will be a challenge. The Board requires a balanced budget and positive cash flow.
- 10 different policies are under revision and review. The comment period extends to 10/31/25.
- Work is being done to change the Department of Revenue's decision which cut \$1M from NKU's budget.
- Questions:

- Any updates on policies? A: The biggest change is pulling back from the second-year residency requirement but will retain the 40-mile radius. Also, the language is being made clearer in the emergency closing policy that instructors will decide if a course would become remote in an emergency closing. The portion of the dress code policy that stated what not to wear has been removed. The flexible work arrangement policy remains at 2 remote days.
- Can the revisions be made available before the 10/31 deadline? A: Yes, if Legal says it is possible.

Provost (Diana McGill)

- The Provost met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee about ideas related to faculty and budget. Also sat in the Board's Finance and Budget Subcommittee.
- The FY '27 budget process has not started yet. Some projections include an increase of \$1.7M for benefits and other contracts and \$3.9M for a 3% raise. The Board has asked for a \$3M surplus next year and state appropriation will likely be reduced (modeling a \$1.5M reduction). The model has an increase in tuition and fees at \$4.8M. Taken together, there is a projected deficit of \$5.3M that needs to be made up. Some has been made up already. Looking to find \$3.3M.
- There were 3 ideas to consider:
 - 1) A faculty voluntary separation incentive for tenured faculty. It is not unusual for universities to do something like this every 3-5 years. This would not be a retirement incentive as it has nothing to do with age. To move forward, the Board would need to approve a plan in November.
 - Discussion:
 - Is there a review of the last incentive offer? A: The last time this happened, most positions were replaced with part-time funds. Some tenured positions were replaced with CTP (Clinical, Teaching, and Professors of Practice) faculty. Between FY '23 and '24 the savings were about \$1.4M. There is a one-time cost and an ongoing savings. The separation offer was 80% of salary up to \$100K and \$10K to aid in health insurance costs.
 - There was concern about losing faculty with experience. Did the metrics look at how the loss of faculty would affect the culture of the university? A: The last time this was assessed on a financial basis. Deans also had to approve. Whenever faculty leave, that is a loss that cannot be replaced.
 - Was there any thought given to limiting the number who could take the incentive from each department, or requiring a minimum of years of employment? A: The deans and cabinet were opposed to offering the incentive to tenure-track faculty. They did not consider a years-of-employment option.
 - There was concern about losing tenured faculty, who have the job security to speak up, being replaced by CTP faculty who don't have that security. A: The Provost advocates for a mix of faculty including tenure-track lines.
 - Could a smaller buyout be offered to CTP faculty? A: No, CTP positions can be removed for a budgetary reason without incentives.
 - Suggestions to frame the discussion in terms of what we are trying to accomplish over a set number of years as an investment in the future. A: If people take the incentive this year, it is expensed this year with savings next year.
 - Acknowledgement that in the past, the administration would have held back the cost-of-living increase, which is still in the budget, to balance the budget.
 - 2) For people on sabbatical this year or next, the Provost could waive the requirement that they owe the university a full year after the sabbatical. This would not require Board

approval.

- 3) Phased retirement could have a three year option. There are some benefits to faculty in phased retirement that are not in part-time tenure. This is a small number of faculty: this year there are 4 phased retirements, 4 part-time, and 6 permanent part-time. With phased retirement, faculty get dental, life, short- and long-term disability, legal, tuition waiver. Part-time faculty do not get those benefits.

Faculty Regent (Sandra Spataro)

- There was a meeting of the budget and finance committee. Chris Calvert reported on the closeout of the year, final audit, and schedule for future budgeting.
- The RIF and possible budget savings plans were not discussed.
- There was not a discussion about requiring a \$3M surplus or positive cash flow. The understanding is that was discussed by the executive committee and a commissioner at dinner. These things were not formally voted on by the Board.
- Questions:
 - Has there been a report from athletics about meeting their revenue goals? A: That will be evaluated when the 3-year time is up. There was a discussion about ways to reduce or slim down the athletics budget.
 - The report that will be given is only for the 6 new sports. Has there been a review of all existing sports? A: Efforts to have that conversation with the Board have been unsuccessful so far.

Staff Congress (Terkerah Washington)

- The Benevolent Chili Cookoff will be 11/5/25 in the UC Ballroom.
- The Holiday Market is coming back. Donations are \$5 or 5 hours of vacation or sick time.
- Chili and dessert donations are needed as well as volunteers to judge the event. You can send recipes or bring them in crock pots.
- FUEL NKU will host a produce pop-up Tuesday 10/28/25.
- The Faculty Staff Holiday Party will be 11/13/25, 3-5pm, SU Ballroom. Please RSVP.
- Please comment on policies under review. The Advocacy Group is doing work concerning the Flexible Work Arrangement policy.

SGA (Collin Jarrell)

- No report.

Discussion on Viewpoint Neutrality (Dr. Allison Rank)

- Dr. Rank is the Director of the Center for Social Education at the University of Northern Iowa.
- There will be Lunch and Learns on 10/28/25 and 10/29/25.
- This is not about getting politics in the classroom. It is about how civics is an approach to pedagogy for a range of different conversations in classes. It is about the intentional incorporation of discipline appropriate Civic pedagogy to create that space for viewpoints relevant to a particular field connected to your discipline, specific skills, and distinct from contemporary US partisanship.

Discussion on staff, benefit increases and the status of Tri-Health negotiations (Amy Gellen)

- RIFs: The plan was to conduct all RIFs in one day but that was not possible. Everyone was offered severance, paid out terminal vacations, and benefits continue to the end of the month. There were instructions on filing for unemployment. The RIFs were timed to provide time to enter the employment market before the holidays. Everyone got a document stating this was about the

budget, not employee performance.

- DISCUSSION:
 - Suggestion about the term impacted: there were people who were fired and people who were impacted but not fired.
 - The abrupt loss of email and contacts is difficult for those who need to start over.
 - Were the decisions made in departments or higher up? What was the strategy? A: Each division had a certain amount that needed to be cut and the division determined which positions would be cut.
 - The last time there were cuts there were conversations and town halls so people knew what was coming. This happened pretty quickly.
 - It didn't feel like there was a sense of urgency in the last Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty hear a lot of budget numbers and we need to know when the message needs to break through the noise.
 - NKU used to have mid-year cuts or self-corrections. In more recent years, that stopped happening.
- Tri-Health: Tri-Health sent out letters saying they were dropping UMR. UMR set up a portal (<https://www.trihealth.com/patients-and-visitors/billing-and-insurance/insurance/uhc>) so people can see where the negotiations are. UMR hopes to reach an agreement.
 - There are options if UMR and Tri-Health do not reach an agreement:
 - You can choose to select a new in-network provider.
 - You can choose to keep your provider with out-of-network rates.
 - There is a continuation of care option application form for people in the middle of treatment which will allow you to stay with your current provider at in-network rates for 90 days.
 - Medical premiums are going up 12%.
 - What is the aggregate healthcare spending by NKU? A: About \$20M.
 - For 2026, the spousal surcharge (if your spouse has access to coverage) is increasing from \$35 to \$70 per month.
 - Details of plans were shared in the Benefits Bulletin.
 - Be sure to enroll before 11/10/25.
 - There were concerns about the current cost and access to physicians with waits up to six months to get an appointment. A: The costs NKU users pay are below benchmark costs.

New Business

- None at this time.

Officer Reports

President (Jacqueline Emerine)

- There was acknowledgement of the 18 staff members who were RIFed and the 3 faculty members, Chrystal Brinkman, Steve Newman, and Jeff Smith, who recently passed. The acknowledgements are appended here:

Chrystal joined the Department of Mathematics & Statistics in 2008 in what is now a Visiting Teaching Professor position. She supported many of our service-level mathematics and statistics courses and did so with great understanding and empathy. Her students consistently appreciated the thoughtful structure and intentional care she brought to her teaching. Chrystal's faith was inspirational. Despite battling cancer multiple times, I only ever saw her respond with optimism and peace. With courage and compassion, she was passionate about sharing her journey with

cancer to help and inspire others.

Steve, he was an NKU founder who joined the faculty in 1972. In every sense, he lived the quote that is outside Founders Hall – “what we have loved, others will love, and we will teach them how.” He taught students a love and appreciation of mathematics. He taught his colleagues a love of NKU and its regional mission. I learned many things from Steve, but the 3 that top the list are: 1) Be present; 2) Learn new things; and 3) Be generous. Steve’s generosity was immeasurable, and it was a quiet generosity. He didn’t want or need celebrations and accolades – he saw good work happening, and he set about finding ways to offer his support. He often said his life motto was “Find a good rut and stay in it.” How fortunate were we that he found his way to Highland Heights 53 years ago.

My general recollection is that Jeff skillfully represented the interests of the faculty during his 2001-2002 term as president of the Faculty Senate. In my mind, the top leadership qualities that Jeff brought to bear on the job include: (1) his ability to work cooperatively with NKU administrators on policies that improved NKU’s institutional effectiveness in education, research, and community outreach; (2) his ability to communicate clearly and forcefully for the needs and interests of faculty on issues as diverse as the budget, benefits, curriculum, professional concerns, and others represented by the senate’s standing committees; and (3) his ability to establish a competent executive team which worked diligently to reach task deadlines on time. Jeff was proud of his Faculty Senate service, and he would have been deeply appreciative of your recognition of his past contributions today.

Vice President (Christine Curran)

- No report.

Secretary (Michael Providenti)

- No report.

Parliamentarian (Kathleen Fuegen)

- No report.

Graduate Council Chair (Dorea Glance)

- No report.

Committee Reports

University Curriculum Committee (Richard Fox)

- We continue to work on the college curriculum committee and UCC bylaws. All college committee bylaws have been written and approved through their colleges. One question arose as to the role of the librarian on each college committee and UCC. Should this person be a voting member of the committee or ex-officio? Different colleges have different thoughts on this. We have asked the librarians to weigh in. We hope to have the revised UCC bylaws for senate approval in November.

Budget Committee (Janel Bloch)

- The Budget Committee is planning to establish committees to work on salary issues, the budget survey, updating the summer compensation policy, and establishing items to be reported on by the CFO each meeting. If anyone would like their dept. rep. to be on any of these committees or

has an additional topic they would like the Budget Committee to work on, please let Janel or your rep know.

Benefits Committee (Becky Elkins)

- **Tuition/Parking Task Force Update:**
 - Tiered parking proposal is still in the works and has been modified since last meeting.
 - Focus now shifting to tuition waiver reform
- **Faculty Development Awards**
 - Faculty Development Awards – Over 80 applications
 - Sabbatical Leaves (20 available) - 22 applications (1 late – sent via email)
 - Summer Fellowships (10 available) – 25 applications (1 late – sent via email; 2 ineligible)
 - Project Grants (10 available @ \$60,000) - 36 applications (2 late – sent email)
 - All 4 “late” submission NOT accepted (rejected) for current evaluation cycle
 - Email notification sent to each “late” applicant and their chair(s) & dean as appropriate
 - The 2 ineligible applicants were notified via email communication
 - Chair/Director & Dean Forms
 - Some confusion surrounding the continued need to email proposal(s) to chairs / deans despite being proactive in communication. A handful of faculty thought that Chairs & Deans would have access to Canvas.
 - Proactive Communication:
 - FS Benefits Updates voted on and shared with individual departments/schools during Spring 2025
 - Council of Chairs Meetings – Met with Chairs/Directors Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 x 2 about new process;
 - Workshops – 4 total with Q & A opportunities
 - Canvas Communication – Directions provided within Canvas site
 - Email communication – all faculty emails from Grace
 - To address confusion, the following happened:
 - Email announcement sent out through FDA Canvas site to remind all applicants they must send proposal via email to Chairs/Directors and Dean
 - Email communication sent to all Chairs/Directors to make them aware of the possible confusion and request that they accept applicant proposal for review and support form completion; acceptance of applicant proposal and completion of support forms at chair/director and dean discretion
 - FDA Subcommittees –
 - Non-voting members will not partake in evaluation process
- **FS Benefits Chair Held a FDA Scoring/Evaluation Workshop**
 - Power Point,
 - Notes
 - Example Excel Sheet
 - Email sent to all FS Benefits Members to review scoring procedures
 - Applicant proposals loaded and under review
 - Scoring should be complete by Nov. 5th meeting – no later than November 12th

- **FDA Sabbatical Handbook Subcommittee.**
 - Goal: Initiate updates to handbook regarding postponement/deferment
 - Reaching out to Chad & Danielle to get their input and impact of updates
- **Benefits Updates from Patty Burke**
 - As previously communicated, we are staying with UMR and Humana Dental. There will be no carrier changes this year.
 - OPEN ENROLLMENT for plan year 1-1-2026.
 - Open Enrollment dates: Started October 23 and will run through November 10, 2025.
 - OE informational sessions – 1 left
 - In person session Thursday, October 30; 10:30-12:00 in the University Center Ballroom. (UC 375) Vendors will be available to answer questions.
 - Vendors attending will be: UMR, Humana Dental, Chard Snyder (FSA, HSA) Know Your Rx (Pharmacy) and TIAA (retirement.)
 - No vendor changes for 2026.
 - Medical premiums were increased by 12% at all levels for all plans.
 - HDHP – out of pocket max raised very slightly to \$3500 / \$7000
 - HDHP – coinsurance raised slightly from 15% to 20%.
 - Spousal charge increases monthly charge from \$35 to \$70. This is still well below market benchmarks of \$150
 - Employer contributes \$20 million annually – so total increase was 12% of that
 - Enrollment will be done via MYNKU as in prior years. The open enrollment module should have opened October 23 at 9am
 - All employees should review their 2025 benefit elections and make their choices for the plan year effective 1-1-2026.
 - Humana Dental: Trying to be good partners
 - Humana Dental provided funds which were split between the Employee Picnic in August and for the Employee Appreciation event in April, 2026.
 - They also provided toothbrushes and floss to give out at the picnic. (Any leftover toothbrushes/floss were donated to FUEL.)
 - Express Scripts (pharmacy) Reminder:
 - Kroger Pharmacy is back in the Express Scripts network effective 8-4-25!
 - If you wish to transfer a prescription from your current pharmacy to a Kroger pharmacy, please visit the Kroger pharmacy you wish to use and let them know you would like to transfer a current prescription to them. You will need to supply them with the name of the medication, Rx number (from your current medicine bottle), current pharmacy name and phone number. If you need assistance or have specific questions, please contact the Know your Rx coalition at: 1-855-218-5979 or www.kyrx.org
 - Medicare presentation
 - There was a Social Security and Medicare informational session on Wednesday, Sept 10 in Student Union Rm 109 presented by Hub/Horan insurance specialists. This session was recorded and the link is available on the HR webpage or via the link below.
https://nku.zoom.us/rec/share/_C0fLEYk4VemkY02p9oRVFvXI-d6wkPdXs4K3TNF6CBypVBf9_N49CS5DGJhy-QA.EGnCcgogR0tmmuZp
 - Social Security numbers for enrolled dependents.

- Patty has sent two email notices to employees for whom we do not have SS numbers of their enrolled (in benefits) dependents. NKU is required to report these Social Security numbers to CMS (Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services) or face possible monetary penalties.
 - We'd like to remind employees to submit their dependents SSN if they haven't done so. A reminder email will be sent again in the next couple weeks.
 - Here is language from my July 25 email as an FYI;
 - The Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (MMSEA), Section 111, requires employers who offer group health plans to report specific information to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This includes the Social Security Numbers (SSNs) of all covered individuals, including dependents. CMS began monitoring for omissions in this reporting in late 2024.
 - Contact Susann Schulte or Kaylah McFarland in HR for assistance if needed.
- Side Note on Workday:
 - We've been working very hard on the Workday project. We're very excited about the positive impact Workday will have for employees from a benefits perspective. WD will make it easier to navigate benefits enrollment, access information, and manage your choices with greater ease and convenience.
 - **Amy Gellen & Kim Baker sent an InfoGraphic for Mental Health & Wellness benefits and opportunities that will be shared with FS Benefit Committee members to share with each department/school.
- **Other UPDATES - Amy Gellen**
 - TriHealth sent a letter to patients stating that they were dropping UMR effective 1.1.2026.
 - We have reached out to UMR. Evidently TriHealth asked for a \$190M increase in negotiated rates.
 - UMR is still in active negotiations with TriHealth and trying to come to a reasonable agreement on negotiated rates. They are optimistic that they will come to an agreement prior to 1.1.2026.
 - If the contract is not renewed, there are several options available to you:
 1. Find another provider within UHC's broad national network of in-network hospitals and physicians. (visit <https://www.umr.com/find-a-provider> to search for other in-network providers outside the TriHealth system.)
 2. Continue with your TriHealth provider as an out-of-network option (which may result in higher out-of-pocket costs.) UMR and NKU HR can assist you in estimating out of network costs should the need arise.
 3. For those receiving ongoing care and/or treatment, submit a Continuity of Care form to UMR if you or a covered dependent are receiving ongoing treatment. This may allow your care with a TriHealth provider to continue at in-network rates for at least 90 days. United Health Care has established a microsite with updates on the negotiations. Network Negotiations with TriHealth | UnitedHealthcare
 - We will continue to monitor the situation closely and share updates as they become available.
 - Thank you for your understanding as UHC/UMR work toward an agreement with

TriHealth.

Professional Concerns Committee (Holly Riffe)

- Amy Gellen met with faculty and discussed the reduction in force procedures, benefits, and dress code policy. From the draft minutes: "Some faculty report being told to fill out Flexible Work Arrangement forms. A: The policy and forms do not apply to faculty. The situation with advisors should have been resolved. The Provost will think about how this affects librarians since it would be a problem if all librarians decided to work from home. If the workload specifies duties that require librarians to be present on campus, they would need to be present for those duties. An additional comment was that under the Handbook, policies should be applied equally to faculty."

TEEC (Chris Lawrence)

- TEEC has reached out to chairs and school directors to identify academic programs that may be uniquely impacted by a potential change to a shorter semester. The committee's members are now communicating with the program directors and collecting their concerns..

General Education Committee (Andrea Brooks)

- One course has been submitted (a philosophy course) for potential inclusion in the gen ed program; I would like to remind departments that any new course proposals for gen ed do have to be through Curriculum and at the GEC level by the end of the semester - this is a slightly revised timeline from last year!

Old Business

- None at this time.

New Business

- None at this time.

Announcements

- None at this time.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Providenti
Faculty Senate Secretary

Again, thank you all for staying in our lengthy Faculty Senate Meeting this past Monday, October 27th. Below you will find committee reports to pass onto faculty in your departments/schools. As always, thank you for your time and feedback.

Jacqueline

UCC-We continue to work on the college curriculum committee and UCC bylaws. All college committee bylaws have been written and approved through their colleges. One question arose as to the role of the librarian on each college committee and UCC. Should this person be a voting member of the committee or ex-officio? Different colleges have different thoughts on this. We have asked the librarians to weigh in. We hope to have the revised UCC bylaws for senate approval in November.

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From the draft minutes:

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- TriHealth sent a letter to patients stating that they were dropping UMR effective 1.1.2026.
 - We have reached out to UMR. Evidently TriHealth asked for a \$190M increase in negotiated rates.
 - UMR is still in active negotiations with TriHealth and trying to come to a reasonable agreement on negotiated rates. They are optimistic that they will come to an agreement prior to 1.1.2026.

If the contract is not renewed, there are several options available to you:

1. Find another provider within UHC's broad national network of in-network hospitals and physicians. (visit <https://www.umr.com/find-a-provider> to search for other in-network providers outside the TriHealth system.)
2. Continue with your TriHealth provider as an out-of-network option (which may result in higher out-of-pocket costs.) UMR and NKU HR can assist you in estimating out of network costs should the need arise.

3. For those receiving ongoing care and/or treatment, submit a Continuity of Care form to UMR if you or a covered dependent are receiving ongoing treatment. This may allow your care with a TriHealth provider to continue at in-network rates for at least 90 days. United Health Care has established a microsite with updates on the negotiations. [Network Negotiations with TriHealth | UnitedHealthcare](#)

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and share updates as they become available.

Thank you for your understanding as UHC/UMR work toward an agreement with TriHealth.