

Academic Senate

April 13, 2026

Cowan Hall #310

Meeting Minutes

Membership: Valerie Guyant, Mark Seiffert, Laura Gomez, Karyn Billmayer, Kasthuri Udayakumar, Grant Olson, Randy Bachmeier, Anna Bowker, Aaron Riggin, Curtis Smeby

Members Present: Valerie Guyant, Anna Bowker, Kasthuri Udayakumar, Grant Olson, Randy Bachmeier, Curtis Smeby, Aaron Riggin,

Guests: Jennifer Brown, Casey Donovan, Scott Guyant

Recorder: Jodi Kueffler

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order by Valerie Guyant at 4:01 p.m.

Agenda:

- Motion was made by Aaron Riggin to approve the agenda.
- The second was made by Anna Bowker.
- Question.
- Approved.

Minutes:

- Motion was made by Curtis Smeby to approve the minutes from March 10, 2026.
- The second was made by Aaron Riggin.
- Question.
- Approved.

Chancellor/Provost Updates:

- Scholarship Award Ceremony is this Friday with over \$700,000 in scholarships to be handed out to our students.
- End of the year party will be held the day before graduation with Jenny's Kitchen and a bar. Looking for ideas for activities during the party such as corn hole.
- Student evaluations are about to go out. OTLE has worked on having the evaluations through Canvas.
- ADA compliance deadline is April 24, 2026.
- Faculty searches are going well with a Biology/Ecology faculty hired for fall.
- Attended the Montana SkillsUSA State Competition in Great Falls last Friday to hand out tuition waivers to winners.
- Program review with Deans and Chairs still in process.

External Committee Reports:

- NWCCU
 - There are no updates at this time.
- UAC
 - Committee met last month and two policies were tabled for further review.

Senate Committee Reports:

- Admissions and Standards
 - There are no updates at this time.
- Curriculum
 - The committee met earlier this month to review several new proposals.
- Financial Aid
 - There are no updates at this time.
- General Education
 - The committee finished scoring half of the artifacts.
- Graduate Council
 - Receiving graduate applications.

- The committee will meet again next Wednesday.
- Instruction, Research, Faculty Development & Cultural Programming
 - The committee continues to work on faculty distinction awards. This year's theme is excellence. Faculty only need to submit a faculty member's name for the recommendation and the committee will follow up on the submission.
- Library & Instructional Technology
 - The committee has not met.
 - Scott Guyant, Instruction and Reference Librarian, reported the new Agent AI is coming out and once given a goal it can find the best path to the end result on its own.

Proposals:

- 25-32; Major Program Revision - A.A.S. Plumbing Technology.
- 25-33; Course Name Change - PLUM 100 Introduction to the Plumbing Trades, Level One (formerly known as Introduction to the Plumbing Trades)
- 25-34; Course Name Change - PLUM 120 Mathematics for Plumbers and Pipefitting (formerly known as Introduction to the Plumbing Trades)
- 25-35; Course Name Change - PLUM 125 Introduction to the Plumbing Trades, Level Two (formerly known as Plumbing Fixtures)
- 25-36; Course Revision - PLUM 170 Uniform Plumbing Codes
- 25-37; New Course Proposal - PLUM 1XX Introduction to Sheet Metal
- 25-38; Course Name Change - PLUM 200 Plumbing 200, Plumbing Level Three (formerly known as Plumbing 200, Hydronic Heating & Cooling)
- 25-39; Course Name Change - PLUM 230, Plumbing Level Four (formerly known as Plumbing 230, Hangers, Supports & Field Testing)
- 25-40; Course Name Change - PLUM 270 Journeyman Plumbers Exam Prep (formerly known as Plumbing 270, Hydronic Heating & Cooling)
- 25-41; New Course Proposal - PLUM 2XX Introduction to Heating, Ventilating & Refrigeration Air Conditioning
- 25-62; Course Name Change - PLUM 250 Journey Plumbers Exam Prep (formerly known as Intro to Special Piping)
 - Motion was made by Grant Olson to batch proposals 25-32; 25-33; 25-34; 25-35; 25-36; 25-37; 25-38; 25-39; 25-40; 25-41; and 25-62.
 - The second was made by Aaron Riggin.

- Question.
- Approved.
- Revising the program and course names to align with Apprenticeship Education Program courses.
- Course objectives are broad, as each textbook chapter includes numerous detailed objectives that collectively shape the scope of the course.
- New proposed courses were created to allow students to specialize in either Sheetmetal or HVAC.
- Discussion on whether courses should be renamed or create brand-new courses. Provost will check with Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) to determine if the courses can be renamed.
- Motion was made by Kasthuri Udayakumar to approve the above batch contingent on findings from OCHE.
- The second was made by Curtis Smeby.
- Question.
- Approved.
- After voted on initially, 25-32 had further proposed changes including adding DDSN 113 Tech Drawing and HPE 234 First Aid to the curriculum. Also, 25-35; 25-38; 25-39; and 25-40 would change from 4 credits to 3 credits.
- These changes were sent out for review and approval by electronic vote on April 30, 2026. The proposal was approved.
- 25-42 Course Revision - CNSL 502 Professional Ethics
- 25-43 Course Name Change - CNSL 506 K-12 Sch Cnsl Prog Dev & Adm (formerly known as K-12 Counslng Progrm Dev & Adm)
- 25-44 Course Revision - CNSL 508 Theories of Counseling
- 25-45 Course Name Change - CNSL 517 Counseling Skills and Practice (formerly known as Counseling Skills & Practice)
- 25-46 Course Name Change - CNSL 522 Group Dynamics and Counseling (Group Dynamics & Counseling)
- 25-47 Course Revision - CNSL 525 Child & Adolescent Counseling
- 25-48 Course Name Change - CNSL 530 Lifespan Development (formerly known as Life Span Dev & Adjustment)

- 25-49 Course Name Change - CNSL 549 Research Methods in Counseling (formerly known as Research Methods in Counselor)
- 25-50 Course Name Change - CNSL 551 Testing and Assessment in Cnsl (formerly known as Educational & Psychological Ap)
- 25-51 Course Name Change - CNSL 558 Career Counseling and Development (formerly known as Career Counseling and Information Systems)
- 25-52 Course Name Change - CNSL 560 Crisis Intervention Counseling (formerly known as Crisis Intervention Counsel)
- 25-53 Course Revision - CNSL 563 Multicultural Counseling
- 25-54 Course Revision - CNSL 564 Diagnosis & Treatment in Cnsl
- 25-55 Course Name Change - CNSL 565 Marriage, Couple & Family Cnsl (formerly known as Marriage & Family Counseling)
- 25-56 Course Name Change - CNSL 567 Comm & Agency Consultation (formerly known as Community & Agency Counseling)
- 25-57 Course Revision - CNLS 571 Counseling Practicum
- 25-58 Course Name Change - CNSL 594 Sch Counseling Internship I (School Counseling Internship I)
- 25-59 Course Name Change - CNSL 595 Clinical MH Internship I (formerly known as Com/Agncy Counseling Intern)
- 25-60 Course Name Change - CNSL 596 Sch Counseling Internship II (formerly known as School Counseling Intern II)
- 25-61 Course Name Change -CNSL 597 Clinical MH Internship II (formerly known as Comm/Agency Cnsl Intern II)
 - Motion was made by Curtis Smeby to batch proposals 25-42; 25-43; 25-44; 25-45; 25-46; 25-47; 25-48; 25-49; 25-50; 25-51; 25-52; 25-53; 25-54; 25-55; 25-56; 25-57; 25-58; 25-59; 25-60; and 25-61.
 - The second was made by Anna Bowker.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
 - We are currently not accredited by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as we need at least three full-time professors teaching. These course revisions do meet CACREP standards if in the future we meet the qualifications.

- Current Counselor Education program is accredited through Office of Public Instruction (OPI), which aligns with CACREP.
 - Motion was made by Aaron Riggin to approve the batch.
 - The second was made by Anna Bowker.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
- 25-63 Course Revision - IT 105 Industry Foundation
 - Changing course from 4 credits to 3 credits to make it easier for scheduling.
 - All current programs requiring this course are not affected by this credit hour change.
 - Motion was made by Grant Olson to approve.
 - The second was made by Kasthuri Udayakumar.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
- 25-64 New Program Proposal - Associates of Science in Integrated Health Sciences
 - Program created in partnership with Northern Montana Medical Center.
 - Program allows students to find jobs upon completion.
 - Good entrance program if transferring for more in depth health science program.
 - Similar program offered at Miles Community College and UM-Western.
 - Not anticipating any new costs other than hiring an adjunct.
 - Motion was made by Curtis Smeby to approve.
 - The second was made by Aaron Riggin.
 - Question.
 - Approved.
- 25-65 New Course Proposal - KIN 201 Basic Exercise Prescription
- 25-66 New Course Proposal - KIN 221 Health Anatomy and Physiology
- 25-67 New Course Proposal - AHMS 270 Medical Ethics
 - Motion was made by Grant Olson to batch proposals 25-65; 25-66; and 25-67.
 - The second was made by Anna Bowker.
 - Question.

- Approved.
- New courses to fit into the proposed Associates of Science in Integrated Health Sciences.
- Courses can also be taken for the Bachelor of Science program.
- Courses are part of the MUS Common Core Numbering.
- Motion was made by Kasthuri Udayakumar to approve the batch.
- The second was made by Curtis Smeby.
- Question.
- Approved.

Old Business:

- Academic Calendar
 - Grant is looking at how financial aid would be affected by shortening the semester.
 - Curtis provided the attached worksheet with information on alternate calendars for review.
 - Additional 10 minutes in each class could shorten the semester enough to allow for a J-Term.
 - 4-day would be nice for non-traditional students, but could cause issues for COTS and Nursing.
 - Need to meet with the Registrar and Director of Financial Aid.
 - Would like to discuss at all faculty meeting in the fall.
- Meeting with Administration
 - No update at this time
- Study Abroad Sub-Committee.
 - Will discuss at a later meeting.
- Dual Enrollment.
 - Will discuss at a later meeting.

New Business:

- Appeals
 - The promotion and tenure process in Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) allows faculty to appeal a recommendation by the Provost.
 - Academic Senate needs to identify three tenured faculty members to be on the committee.

- There is more than one faculty member appealing their recommendation.
- The CBA does not specify if each appeal should have a separate committee or if the same committee can be used.
- There are not a lot of tenured faculty to choose from.
- Ideally, would like to have one at least one representative from each college.
- Following discussion, the committee members were finalized.

Adjournment:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Kasthuri Udayakumar.
- The second was made by Aaron Riggin.
- Question.
- Approved.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Jodi Kueffler

Alternate Calendars

Alternative academic calendars allow universities to move from the traditional two-semester model to better serve specific student populations, maximize campus facilities, or offer accelerated degree pathways.

- **Trimesters:** Divides the year into three equal terms (Fall, Winter, and Spring) lasting 8 to 12 weeks each.
- **Quarters:** The year is broken into four seasonal terms (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer), each lasting about 10 to 12 weeks.
- **Block Plan:** Students focus on one intensive course at a time for a few weeks rather than multiple courses simultaneously.
- **4-1-4 or 4-4-1 Calendar:** Follows a standard semester schedule but adds a short, often optional, "J-Term" (January term) or May term for intensive study or travel.
- **Year-Round / Continuous:** Breaks are shortened and distributed more evenly throughout the year to minimize learning loss and allow for faster graduation.
- **Modular Sessions:** Breaking standard 16-week semesters into multiple 5-week or 8-week accelerated sessions.

Impact and Benefits

- **Time-to-Degree:** Year-round or block models often improve graduation rates by providing more frequent opportunities to earn credits.
- **Resource Management:** Alternative schedules can maximize the use of campus facilities during traditional summer "downtime".
- **Pedagogical Flexibility:** Short, intensive terms (like J-Terms) are ideal for study abroad, internships, or highly focused research projects.
- **Faculty Workload:** Some alternative calendars require additional human resources to manage year-round operations.

Institutional planning for alternative academic calendars is a complex undertaking that requires balancing student outcomes, faculty workload, and operational efficiency. When universities shift from traditional models, they often do so to improve **graduation rates**, maximize **facility usage**, or better align with **industry demands**.

Key Strategic Objectives for Planning

- **Improving Completion Pathways:** Successful institutions use "pathway planning" to predict course needs. Instead of term-by-term planning, an **annual overview** ensures that prerequisite courses are followed by sufficient sections of sequential courses.
- **Addressing Workforce Alignment:** Running multiple calendars simultaneously allows for industry-specific certifications and micro credentials to be embedded outside traditional windows.
- **Operational Resilience:** Modernized calendars can enhance financial sustainability by attracting new student populations and enabling more efficient resource use. For example, shifting to 8-week mini-semesters can allow students to finish faster and enter the workforce sooner.

Operational & Infrastructure Considerations:

Transitioning to an alternative system is not purely pedagogical; it deeply impacts campus operations:

- **Facility Management:** Moving to year-round or shortened terms reduces the number of available hours a classroom is free each day because sessions are often longer. This necessitates careful coordination of **routine repairs** and equipment maintenance.
- **Administrative Load:** Systems like the trimester or quarter system may increase the frequency of administrative tasks—such as calculating academic progress and processing financial aid—unless they are unified across campus.
- **Resource Software:** Many institutions are moving away from manual methods to **cloud-based scheduling platforms** to manage faculty availability and avoid room conflicts.

Faculty & Student Impact

Research indicates that "temporary chaos" from an administrative change is less of a long-term risk than the inherent constraints of the calendar itself:

- **Graduation Rates:** Some studies have found that moving from quarters to semesters can actually **decrease on-time graduation rates** by nearly 3% because classes are offered less frequently.
- **Faculty Workload:** Non-traditional calendars may lead to higher turnover if teachers are required to share classrooms or work additional days. However, some models, like a 4-day workweek with frequent breaks, have been shown to **boost teacher morale**.
- **Intensive Learning:** While shorter, intense sessions (like 8-week blocks) can be exhausting for both faculty and students, they force a critical re-evaluation of course goals: "What really matters in this course?".

Note: AI search was utilized to generate the bullet points presented, which I reviewed and edited.