

Faculty Affairs Committee

- **Date:** October 16
Time: (meeting start ~10:00 on recording)
Chair: Zack Zenko (FAC Chair)
- **Members/Guests Present**
Zack Zenko, Amber Stokes (Vice Chair), Kent Henderson, Najmeh Kamyabi, Sumita Sarma, David Gove, Debbie Boschini (AVP Faculty Affairs), Kristen Gallant, Dan Stockwell.
- **1) Call to Order**
- Chair Zenko opened the meeting and confirmed availability to review prior minutes and the agenda.
- **2) Approval of September 18 Minutes**
- **Motion:** Approve the September 18 minutes. **Mover:** Amber Stokes.
- **Outcome:** No second; action **deferred** to next meeting.
- **3) Announcements & Context**
- Recap of post-last-meeting events regarding a potential vote of no confidence:
 - Standing committees conducted informal temperature checks; no broad support to proceed; need for more information noted.
 - Executive Committee (EC) met immediately after the last FAC meeting; a campus town hall was held the following Friday and went generally well, with some exceptions.
 - At Academic Senate, the agenda **without** adding a no-confidence item was approved **17–4**; thus, no-confidence was not considered.
 - An investigation is likely to proceed (potentially via Chancellor's Office).
 - Emphasis on re-training/re-emphasizing shared governance with administration.
- Brief discussion: faculty sentiment includes interest in a public apology regarding a direct dean appointment without consultation.
- **4) Approval of Agenda**
- **Motion:** Approve the agenda. **Mover:** Amber Stokes. **Second:** Najmeh Kamyabi.
- **Vote:** Approved

- **5) New Business — Sabbatical Application Process & Handbook Revisions**
- **Referral:** Consider revisions to Handbook §307.2–307.3, ensure consistency with the CBA, and determine whether to develop a **standardized rubric** and feedback process.
- **5.1 Clarifications on Current Process (Q&A)**
 - **Eligibility:** *Credit toward tenure counts* toward the consecutive years for sabbatical eligibility (per CBA). (*Boschini*)
 - **Chair signature on cover sheet:** Signature **acknowledges review/routing**, not endorsement or approval; chair also provides scheduling/curricular impact comments. (*Boschini*)
 - **Application page limits:** None specified currently; suggestion to clarify expectations in the application materials (outside the Handbook).
 - **Difference-in-Pay (DIP) vs Sabbatical:** Processes are similar; eligibility and pay details differ, but **materials submitted are the same.** (*Boschini*)
- **5.2 Current FHAC Review Practice (as described)**
 - Step 1: Determine **meritorious vs. non-meritorious** (based on A/B/C criteria in §307).
 - Step 2: **Rank** meritorious applications; **ties not allowed** by instruction.
 - **Transparency/feedback concerns:** Some applicants received little or no feedback; request to standardize written feedback.
- **5.3 Budget, Volume & Data (context)**
 - Prior cycles approved everyone who applied in some years (even above the obligation); the most recent cycle had **significantly more applications than awards available**, leading to **denials despite merit**. About **10** denials noted this year due to limited awards. (*Boschini*)
- **5.4 Proposed Rubric & Feedback Framework (working draft)**
 - **Categories** (initially discussed, to be refined):
 - **Proposed Project** (originality/innovation/scholarly or creative merit)
 - **Professional Productivity & Preparation** (readiness; alignment with sabbatical purpose; potential for career development/advancement—ensure language does **not** disadvantage faculty near retirement)
 - **Benefits to the University** (tangible outcomes, program/course impacts, etc.)
 - **Teaching-focused projects:** Affirm equivalence with research/creative projects; rubric language will explicitly state **teaching projects are equally eligible and valued.**

- **Weighting:** Provisional consensus to **weight the Proposed Project and Benefits** higher than Preparation (example discussed: $\sim 150/150/100 = 400$ total). Exact weights to be finalized.
- **Granularity/Ties:**
 - Increase point granularity to reduce ties; consider moving from 3 levels to **broader point ranges** or a **Likert (e.g., 1–5) analytic rubric** with descriptors per level.
 - Concern raised about wide ranges (e.g., “91–150”); suggestion to **tighten bands** or add another performance level.
- **Seniority / Years Eligible (possible tiebreaker):**
 - Ideas discussed: consider **years eligible for sabbatical** (not general seniority) **only as a tie-breaker** between near-equal proposals.
 - CBA language emphasizes *quality of proposed project*; adding heavy seniority weighting risks long-term crowd-out. Proceed cautiously; if included, keep as **secondary tiebreaker** with limited effect.
- **Feedback to applicants:**
 - **Structured written feedback** for **all** applicants (meritorious and non-meritorious), tied to rubric criteria, including disclosure of **# of applications and # of awards** in that cycle.
 - **Application materials & forms (outside the Handbook):**
 - **Remove confusing duplicate checkboxes** on the cover sheet (sabbatical vs. “one semester/two semesters” sub-options). (*Boschini will fix*)
 - Consider **publishing page-length guidance** and earlier release of materials.
 - Consider a note that **final sabbatical reports** must be on file; failure to file may affect eligibility for subsequent sabbaticals (to be checked/worded appropriately).
- **5.5 Placement of the Rubric**
- Preference to **reference an “approved rubric” in the Handbook** and maintain the rubric as a **stand-alone, Senate-approved attachment** (with “Approved by Academic Senate – [date]” footer) so iterative improvements **don’t require Handbook amendment**.
- The application packet would then **include** the current approved rubric each cycle.
- **5.6 Next Steps on This Item**
- Chair Zenko will incorporate today’s feedback into the **draft Handbook changes + stand-alone rubric** and circulate by email.

- **Members to send additional comments by end of tomorrow** (especially on: point weights, performance levels/bands, tie-breaker language, and clear inclusion of teaching projects).
- If consensus is reached via email, FAC will **conduct an email vote** to send to Academic Senate for **first reading**; otherwise, item returns for further discussion next meeting.

- **6) Items Not Reached (Deferred)**

- **ASCSU Lecturer Representative election procedures** (deferred).
- **Unit RTP Committee election procedures** (update noted: feedback from URC Chair received; Chair Zenko will solicit department chair input Wednesday).
- **Teaching Modality referral** (in inbox; for a future agenda).

- **7) Action Items**

- **Zenko** — Revise **§307.2–307.3** draft language; produce **stand-alone rubric** (with explicit parity for teaching projects, refined weights/levels, and feedback requirements); **circulate by email** for comments and possible vote.
- **All Members** — Send written comments/specific rubric edits to Chair **by end of tomorrow**.
- **Boschini** —
 - Update **sabbatical cover sheet** to remove redundant/confusing checkboxes.
 - Consider adding **clarifications** (e.g., chair signature meaning, page guidance) to the annual instructions.
- **Zenko** — Continue gathering **department chair feedback** on Unit RTP committee election procedures; bring back a summary.

- **8) Adjournment**

- With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.