

Thank you, President Mason

Hello, and welcome everyone...We have ALMOST made it!

As we wind down from an amazing academic year, I wanted to give an “annual report” on Senate work concerning the academic year. I am incredibly proud of the Senate’s work, and it would not have been possible without a hard-working body combined with communication, conversation, and shared governance.

What did we accomplish?

Academic Affairs -

This year, Ginger Loggins and the Academic Affairs Standing Committee worked with Angela Pool-Funai, Kim Chappell in the Graduate Council, and Brad Will with the Gen Ed. Committees create a system of approving courses and programs so that all parties can access each committee’s work and create one communication stream. I appreciate the Senate faculty members who comprise the Academic Affairs Standing Committee because it is a heavy lift and is a true “working” committee. Your time, input, and dedication this year to peer review and ensure quality courses across campus do not go unnoticed.

Partnerships and Technology (ad hoc Awards Committee) -

This year, the Partnerships and Technology Standing Committee gets the award for the “most flex” as they pivoted to become a needed Ad Hoc Committee. As a Senate body, we needed a committee to operationalize the KBOR Faculty of the Year Committee. Under the leadership of Dr. Brooke Moore, the committee worked together in a very swift and diligent manner regarding the award criteria, nominations, and selections of one tenure and one tenure-track faculty from FHSU. The committee will share their selections with the full Senate at the May 7 Meeting. The two faculty members will also be recognized at a KBOR Meeting this fall. Thank you, Brooke and Committee members.

Strategic Planning and Improvement -

The Strategic Planning and Improvement Standing Committee, under the leadership of Vinod Srivastava, worked to address the Bylaws and Standing Rules through both the Executive Committee and then through the full Senate body. Although there is still work to be done to iron out senate representation next year, amending the Bylaws and Standing Rules will be voted on at the May 7 meeting and, if passed, will need to be ratified by all faculty between May 8 and 15, so please watch your email for that possibility. Vinod, I appreciate your thoughtful work and communication this year!

As a side note, when I use words like “amend” and “ratify,” it is only because I had an amazing peer and Faculty Senate Parliamentarian to keep me between the lines this year. In his role as Parliamentarian, Cole Engle was a true guide on the side, and I am thankful for his knowledge, guidance, and insight. Thank you, Cole!

Student Affairs -

The Student Affairs Committee, led by Lori Kniffin, tackled an SGA resolution and addressed and supported various initiatives across campus. Lori and the committee worked with SGA President Ella Burrows to co-author a resolution regarding Career-related Absences. The resolution passed in March, and the policy language surrounding student absences will be updated this summer.

Campus safety was a topic that I felt incredibly strongly about, and with the committee’s work, there is ongoing research regarding campus safety with committee member Morgan Steele and his undergraduates. Additionally, we have worked closely with UPD and the General Council to pilot door magnets to secure classrooms.

Lastly, food insecurity is a theme heard from all SGA Presidents and campuses at KBOR meetings this year. The Student Affairs Committee was able to work with and share more accessibility, awareness, and support for the Tiger Pantry.

University Affairs -

The University Affairs Committee, led by Christopher Olds, tackled some incredibly important issues this year. They researched and collected feedback across campus as they drafted a resolution regarding support for ongoing conversations around Remote Faculty Work. Additionally, the committee drafted a Staff Compensation Resolution to support ongoing communication regarding compensation between leadership and staff. Thank you, Chris and the committee, for doing a lot of leg work and bringing to light important issues on our campus.

Anita Walters, thank you for your solid work as the Faculty Senate Secretary. Your insight and perspectives supported your work as a valued Executive Committee member. Moreover, congratulations on your professional accomplishments this year, Dr. Walters!

Shane Schartz, thank you for allowing me to create an open sense of teamwork and being a true partner this year as we created a space for communication, sharing, talking through and understanding. I appreciate all the dedication and time you gave to the Senate as a very active VP - beyond what the “Bylaw” said!! I am excited about your journey as you lead the Senate next year.

Kevin Splichal, to the colleague next door, who I am sure wanted to shut his door a few times...I appreciate all your wisdom as a past faculty senate president and for helping me with the tacit knowledge needed this year. Thank you, truly, my friend!

Shared Governance -

Lastly, I leave you with a bit about my observations and reflections as I exit my role as Faculty Senate President.

Often, people tout the construct of shared governance - or rather, they “talk” about it, but they don’t “walk” in the same manner. Having been part of shared governance in some capacity for two years through the Faculty Senate and working closely with faculty counterparts at other KBOR institutions over this academic year, I can tell you that FHSU is profoundly set apart. The level of access, transparency, and trust between members of shared governance happens, and it’s been refreshing to be a part of it at FHSU.

With that, I want to express my deepest appreciation to President Mason, Provost Arensdorf, Staff Senate President Nicole Frank, FHSU AAUP President Janette Naylor-Tincknell, and SGA President Ella Burrow for their grace, guidance, and support this year! Words can not express this year’s significant impact on me personally and professionally.

Thank you!