

**Georgia Southwestern State University**  
**Faculty Senate Agenda**

Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 11:30 am  
Carter 2 Room 236

Attendees: MacLennan, Carter, Hart, LeJeune, Crosby, Ghosh, Gosa, Kaus, McKie, Meador, Parkinson, Ross, Stovall, Wynn, Johnston (Ex Officio), Abbott (Ex Officio),

Guests: Royce Hackett, Nedialka Iordanov, Tim Tolbert, Courtney Ross

Absent: Berggren, Cook, Wynn

Meeting called to order at 11:34 am by MacLennan

**1. Call to Order**

a. Approval of Agenda - Motion: Meador, Second: Carter

**2. Minutes**

a. November 17, 2025

Minutes approved Motion: Carter, Second: Meador

**3. Senate Activity Updates**

a. President's Cabinet Meeting Report – Jonathan Carter

- Cabinet met in January and February
- President Johnston will discuss reforms to Human Resources regarding staff evaluations
- A reminder that ADA compliance is due on April 24, 2026
- Campus email is for university business only.
- If a browser needed for work is blocked, contact Royce Hackett.
- Turnover in athletics
- Freedom of expression policy updated, most specifically around the hiring process

a. USGFC report – Michael Crosby

- Council meets monthly, next meeting in late April
- There is a need for faculty evaluation clarity, especially around the five-pillar scoring. In the November meeting, Gov. Purdue committed to clarifying the evaluation criteria and providing evaluation training.
- There is an ongoing frustration regarding the lack of raises for faculty and staff. The FY26 Merit Pay Package Program, which allows merit increases (up to 15% for full-time faculty and staff), was noted as inequitable and demotivating.
- Competitive compensation is a top priority to attract and retain quality faculty.
- USG is hiring consultants to explore a system-wide pay scale.

- Carter questions:
  - Will a statement be made as to whether UGS institutions have a choice to change accreditation bodies from SACSCOC to CPHE? Johnston says there is no current directive to change accreditation bodies.
  - Salary: There is a pay inversion on campus for new hires.
- a. Faculty Evaluation Task Force – Jamie MacLennan – no report

#### 4. Public Address

Nedialka Iordanova reports a shared concern among colleagues about the lack of accessibility and responsiveness with administrators. Faculty voices are not heard, and issues are often delayed or unsolved.

#### 5. University Updates and Q+A

- a. President Michelle Johnston
  - Noted concerns in the public address and will discuss further.
  - Strategic plan – working groups established, first meeting March 5
    - Bryan Davis will send an email that myGSW has a section in faculty staff resources, which has a copy of the 2026-2031 plan and working groups.
    - Co-chairs will present the plan to the President’s Cabinet on April 21
    - More details will be shared at the May 1 Table Talk
  - Master planning - invite faculty to share thoughts, will be another forum on March 31 at 3:00 pm
  - Enrolment – up 9%, another semester of growth, CPHE standard documents are still being reviewed and revised
  - Budget –
    - Met Feb. 23 – One major topic was the Dreams Scholarship Program, a needs-based aid initiative similar to HOPE.
    - The proposed FY26 budget includes \$325 million for this program. A group has finalized the framework, and the Governor now has time to sign it.
    - Campus discussions will take place regarding eligibility criteria, with additional updates expected.
    - The FY2026 budget includes \$2,000 in funding for full-time state employees.
    - Additional funding has been allocated to the University System of Georgia (USG) for major repairs and renovations, including HVAC systems and roof replacements. An additional \$33.5 million was added beyond what was included in this year’s budget. While the Governor has reviewed this portion, it has not yet fully cleared the House and Senate.
    - The budget also includes full funding for enrollment growth, though details are still forthcoming regarding how that will translate into GSW’s institutional budget.
    - Two Business and Finance Committee meetings are scheduled for March and April to continue budget discussions and provide further updates.
    - Compensation – GSW will have its own study, but was asked to pause to allow the system to consider conducting a system-wide study. Inversion and compression will be examined

- Summary of GSW Performance Evaluation Survey from Fall 25
  - The meeting with the Chancellor included a summary of key highlights and areas for improvement, with campus climate themes discussed and quantitative data available in the President's Office. Discussion also acknowledged the realities of being a small institution without traditional ladder opportunities and emphasized exploring ways to build advancement pathways.

## Questions/Answers

- LeJeune raised concerns about the clarity of GSW's core mission. Johnston reaffirmed that learning is the nucleus of the institution, while also acknowledging faculty perspectives and concerns. The discussion also addressed commitment to experiential learning opportunities, including study-abroad funding levels (e.g., Nepal, Europe, the Jimmy Carter program, China) and support through study-aways and the SAG fund.
- Crosby – Will GSW return to SAT and ACT scoring? Are more institutions going back to testing options (beyond just ACT and SAT)? GSW will consider this option.
- Kaus – Will we have reading tutors? Abbott noted the Momentum Plan will address bringing in more resources.
- MacLennan – Expresses a need for a clear understanding as to why decisions are made: faculty in the dark about Fall 25 and three-day-a-week policy, chairs being evaluated separately – where policies exist, if they have been written down or a process, what is the process of how decisions are made, why was the faculty not involved? How do policies vary between programs?
  - Johnston's response – The purpose of the department chair evaluation is to provide support and identify areas of improvement. While the discussions highlighted questions and concerns, no formal policy changes have been made.
  - Abbott's response - The Spring Table Talks provided an open forum for faculty to discuss campus policies, with deans sharing expectations relevant to their areas. Faculty Handbook guidelines outline these expectations, which vary by department. Depending on department and teaching load, office hours are typically 5–7 hours.
- LeJeune asked for clarification on the distinction between employment expectations and formal policy. LeJeune emphasized that anything subject to reprimand should be documented, that the President's expectations should be clearly communicated by the deans.

### a. Provost Rachel Abbott

- Aspire – rescheduled for March 13
- NISS updates – NISS updates for January and February focused on advising and establishing a standard of care, developing templates, strategies, and identifying metrics to move forward. Moving forward, NISS will shift focus in April, May, and June to work with the DWF committee.
- Accreditation - At the Provost meeting with Dr. Monga, the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, it was confirmed that no decisions have been made regarding changes to accreditation bodies for USG units. Columbus State and Georgia Southern are currently piloting the CPHE program, and initial feedback has been positive.
- AI Taskforce
  - Submitted a draft with positive feedback.

- Met on Monday, Feb. 23 to discuss next steps:
  - Draft policy will be submitted to the President's Cabinet and Dean's Counsel for review.
  - Review is due April 1
  - Elements of the policy will need to be added to summer courses.
- Review AI Policy - Professional communication will be removed from Part C2 bullet point five, as it would be cumbersome and difficult to enforce in email AI usage.
- Evaluations – draft documents will be reviewed at the March Dean's Council meeting
- Budget request – A request was made on October 25 to include funding for a Center for Teaching and Learning. This will be addressed in the GSW Master Plan, including a line item to fund the Director of the Center of Teaching and Learning position.

## 6. Committee Recommendations

### A. Academic Affairs

#### 1. Revision to GSW Academic Integrity Policy –

- Under Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)
  - Remove the word generative and GenAI from the document
  - Remove the first sentence.
  - Amend the second sentence to remove the phrase “a general rule of thumb” and start with the use of AI tools. The sentence should now read: “The use of AI tools should be acknowledged to avoid appearing to represent the product of AI as your own work.”
  - Approved: Motion: Carter, Second: Hart

#### 2. Proposal to Edit the Policy on Double Majors –

- Bullet points 1 and 4 appear to conflict.
- The proposal will be referred back to the committee for clarification and to address alignment on terminology (upper-division courses) and requirements.
- Motion: Carter, Second: Gosa

1. Research Applications and Methods – Certificate revision – approved - Motion: Meador, Second: Carter

### 2. Announcements

Carter asked members to review the Faculty Senate Policy in the Faculty Handbook.

## 8. Adjourn

MacLennan adjourns at 1:39

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Hart