PRESIDENT: TYLER HARVEY

MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 10, 2026 | Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: Strom Thurmond Institute Auditorium

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- The minutes of the October 6, 2026 Faculty Senate meeting were approved as distributed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

1) Lisa Benson, Professor Emerita, Class of '39 Award for Excellence
   - A video about the Class of '39 was played.
   - Benson, a member of the Class of '39, explained that the class created the Award for Excellence at its fiftieth reunion. A new member is added each year, making the class perpetual. She described the award as Clemson's highest faculty honor, with the recipient selected by faculty through their representation on Faculty Senate. She emphasized the high expectations for recipients of the award and the award's purpose of inspiring others.
2) Andrew Pyle, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Learning
   - Pyle, Associate Professor of Communication, began serving as Associate Dean of Undergraduate Learning in July, with a focus on general education and experiential learning. He said changes to SACSCOC accreditation standards related to general education were expected in December but were not yet final.
   - He emphasized that general education is a faculty-determined curriculum. The General Education Committee has been charged with a comprehensive review, with six working groups examining different areas. Preliminary reports have been drafted; FS President Harvey will share final drafts when they are ready. In the spring, the committee will develop a strategy for responding to technological and societal changes.
   - Pyle emphasized that Clemson is not eliminating general education or currently making comprehensive changes. Future changes will be strategic, deliberative, and faculty-driven.
   - Pyle described discussions at the Association for General and Liberal Studies meeting about financial pressures, leadership turnover, mergers, and rapid curriculum changes at other institutions. He acknowledged faculty frustration at Clemson and emphasized the importance of faculty working together on long-term solutions.
3) Welfare Committee Engagement Poll; Chair Cameron Bushnell

- Bushnell led a poll intended to open communication about faculty morale and shared governance. Senators responded to Likert-like questions and participated in a ten-minute discussion prompted by an open-ended question about communication. Additional thoughts should be sent to Bushnell.

REPORTS

1) Cole Smith, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost
   - Smith acknowledged the demands on faculty to change financial, research, regulatory, and instructional models and respond to technology. He said he stands with faculty and encouraged them to raise concerns when they feel otherwise. He has visited most home departments, with three visits remaining, and noted a culture of colleagues recognizing and supporting one another.
   - Smith discussed the recent funding for R-Initiatives and faculty travel provided by President Ayers and Vice President for Research Tanju Karanfil. He noted that he had been asked why the funding was being handled that way rather than allowing faculty to use their own incentive and discretionary funds and clarified that budgets were set before Ayers began in August. The money for the R-initiatives and travel funds is coming from gifts and from the President's own discretionary funds, with the goal of sustaining research activity.
   - Smith emphasized experiential learning and fundraising to make study abroad accessible to more students. Some departments cannot offer study abroad because upfront costs count against spending limits even when revenue will exceed expenses. The university is examining accounting changes that would remove this barrier without double-counting revenue.
   - Smith then took questions from Senators.
     - **Question**: Will incentive accounts open next year? **Response**: Smith said these are college-by-college decisions. Deans have generally viewed freezing incentive accounts as less damaging than losing personnel. Higher revenue and reduced need for financial reductions could allow deans to loosen restrictions. He distinguished budget cuts from the absence of budget increases.
     - **Question**: Could Smith comment on the $270 million in cash that appears to be present but unallocated? **Response**: Smith said this was the first he had heard of that figure and declined to speculate publicly. He noted that accounting figures can mean different things and deferred to financial professionals.
     - **Question**: How many people have accepted voluntary separation packages, and what is the restaffing plan when staffing shortages are preventing completion of grants? **Response**: Smith described the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP) as HR-led and governed by the state legislature. Some employees may be rehired for spring where needed; some positions will remain vacant because the roles are no longer needed; others may be filled at lower salaries. Released salary funds will support strategic needs. He said Clemson is not in poor financial condition but needs to reduce some higher salary costs to make strategic hires. He did not provide a participation count.
     - **Question**: What are the plans and announcement timeline for the Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees? **Response**: Smith said Associate Vice Provost Amy Lawton-Rauh is coordinating the process with the Board. He emphasized avoiding conflicting faculty voices from the representative and Faculty Senate and thought the process was fairly close to completion.
     - **Question**: How should Clemson revise its strategic thinking? **Response**: Smith said the three pillars of Clemson Elevate make sense as statements of priorities, but an

emphasis on volume as the sole measure of success can be a weakness. Metrics have a place but do not apply equally across the university and can distract from the mission. He encouraged a narrower focus on values, identity, and investment priorities, with less reliance on metrics that may not stand the test of time.

- **Question**: What does the experiential-learning goal mean for colleges, such as Education, that already meet it? What guidance will faculty receive about J-term, and when? **Response**: Smith said accounting changes should make study abroad easier to manage. Faculty must define meaningful experiential learning rather than create a box-checking exercise; the goal was never intended to add to everything faculty already do. He did not provide a date for J-term guidance.

2) Standing Committees

a. Welfare Committee; Chair Cameron Bushnell

- The Welfare Committee report is attached. It addresses faculty mentoring; free speech and academic freedom; diversity; workload across faculty designations; morale, communication, and shared governance; proposed physical requirements for teaching in connection with faculty ADA requests; and well-being guidelines.

b. Finance Committee; Chair Raul Chavez-Negrete

- No report was presented.

c. Scholastic Policies Committee; Chair Jennifer Holland

- SPCR 2610 Academic Calendar Update and SPCR 2611 Online Undergraduate Degree Programs Update, are attached.
- The Committee moved adoption of Report 2610 and its recommendations. The Senate adopted the report by a majority vote, with one opposed. The report closes the agenda item and requests clear Provost's Office guidance on winter-term expectations, compensation, and workload, and attention by the Registrar's Office and Office of Undergraduate Learning to a fair and convenient final-examination schedule.
- The Committee moved adoption of Report 2611 and its recommendations. The Senate adopted the report unanimously. The report closes the agenda item following the pause in the centrally supported online undergraduate degree initiative and recommends that future online degree initiatives be proposed and led by faculty in the units offering the programs.

d. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Endeavors Committee; Chair Michael Sehorn

- Sehorn thanked Karanfil and others for information about the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Faculty were asked to send IRB concerns to Sehorn before his meeting with Karanfil the following week.
- Sehorn reported variation among colleges in Workday delegation practices. Support staff can be authorized to perform tasks they previously handled. Faculty were asked to share comments and examples with Sehorn for discussion with the Interim Chief Financial Officer.

e. Policy Committee; Chair Ellen Breazel

- The reports and resolutions listed on the agenda were not ready and were deferred to a future meeting.
- The Committee is also examining committee service, continuing appointments, alignment of tenure, promotion, and reappointment policies and procedures, and Faculty Manual revisions distinguishing HR policies from faculty-owned policies.

f. *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Future of Higher Education; Chair Sarah White

- No report was presented.

g. Alpha Committee; Chairs Tyler Harvey and Jace Garrett
    - No report was presented.

3) University Committees/Commissions
    a. Committee on Committees; Chair Jace Garrett
        - The Committee met that morning and approved three interdisciplinary committees.
        - The Committee discussed a proposed Creative Inquiry Advisory Board. It considered the board a valuable but significant addition warranting greater formalization than inclusion in the Faculty Manual and will forward the proposal to the appropriate committee.

4) Undergraduate Student Government; Representative Jameson Sheehy
    - The Student Government updates are included in the attached meeting slides. Sheehy was ill and unable to attend. In Sheehy's absence, President Harvey presented the main points.
        - Capital Improvement Applications are open through December 4. Faculty are asked to encourage students with proposals for physical improvements on campus to submit projects.
        - Undergraduate Student Government remains interested in adding the Undergraduate Senate's Chair of Academic Affairs to Academic Council as a voting member and welcomes questions and suggestions for moving the proposal forward.
        - The Undergraduate Senate passed a resolution to host Faculty and Staff Appreciation Week in the spring and invited Faculty Senate participation.

5) Graduate Student Government: Matt Harrington, Graduate Student Senate President and Azrin Jamison, Director of Advocacy and Policy Affairs
    - Immediate Past President White's survey on the future of the university is being circulated for student feedback.
    - A graduate-student-only study and lounge space is open in Cooper Library, Room 212. Faculty were asked to inform their graduate students.
    - President Ayers addressed the Graduate Student Senate the previous week about graduate student priorities and his administration's research-centered direction. Graduate Student Government looks forward to hosting Harvey and Smith in the spring.
    - Graduate Student Government is seeking more consistent attention to graduate student evaluations across departments and evaluation processes that encourage two-way dialogue between students and principal investigators about their working relationship.
    - Graduate students share the concerns in SPCR 2610 Academic Calendar Update about the need for timely, comprehensive information on how academic-calendar changes affect graduate student and faculty contract terms.
    - Discussions are at a very early stage about a university database of research equipment that would extend beyond current iLab asset reporting. It could support equipment sharing and user fees to increase research output and efficiency. A graduate student version of Faculty Success has also been suggested to organize and highlight accomplishments.
    - Faculty may send feedback, questions, or collaboration inquiries to: gsgsen@clemson.edu or azrinj@clemson.edu.

6) Faculty Senate President; Tyler Harvey
    - Harvey offered remarks on Veterans Day and reported meetings with deans, sometimes accompanied by Lead Senators. He said the meetings had provided valuable insight and that deans recognize the difficulties faculty face and want to improve conditions.
    - Harvey encouraged faculty to use available avenues to voice concerns, including the Free Speech period and Open Forum, and emphasized faculty participation in strategic planning

and the university's vision.

- Faculty were encouraged to complete the *Our Clemson* survey, especially those who do not regularly read the publication.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- No unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Faculty Senate Bylaws Revisions
   - The proposed revisions were submitted in writing at the October meeting and posted in Teams. They address compliance with the Constitution of the Faculty of Clemson University, procedures for "Open Floor" periods (previously called "Free Speech"), and vacancies in Senate officer positions.
   - The Senate adopted the revisions unanimously.
2) Abrogation of Policy: College of Science
   - Dean Young requested permission to appoint an acting chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Genetics for 135 days, exceeding the Faculty Manual's 90-day limit. The department will cease to exist on May 16, 2027 with the creation of the School of Biology, Genetics, and Biomedicine. Without the abrogation, a search and screening committee would be needed for an interim chair serving only 45 days. The outgoing chair will complete all faculty evaluations and reappointment reviews, including rebuttals, before leaving the position.
   - The Senate approved forwarding the abrogation request to the Provost by a vote of 54–4, exceeding two-thirds in favor.
3) Abrogation of Policy: College of Business
   - Dean York requested an extension of the Lyceum department's acting chair appointment until an interim chair is appointed, no later than January 1, 2027. The department's acting chair appointment ends the following week; its two faculty members are newly hired lecturers, and it has no faculty advisory council to serve as a search committee.
   - The request also sought permission for the provisional tenure, promotion, and reappointment committee, composed of tenured faculty from adjacent departments, to serve as the interim-chair search and screening committee. It would solicit input from the two lecturers and faculty teaching in the Lyceum Program who will move into the department after its TPR guidelines are approved. The department is not expected to have enough tenured and tenure-track faculty to form a search committee even when fully constituted.
   - **Question**: Does the provisional TPR committee include the two lecturers? **Response**: No. They are new faculty but will be consulted during the process.
   - The Senate approved forwarding the abrogation request to the Provost by a vote of 53–7, exceeding two-thirds in favor.
4) Class of '39 Award for Excellence
   - The Senate voted on the candidates presented by the Selection Committee: Thompson Mefford, Kerry Smith, and Patrick Warren. The result is withheld pending announcement through official channels.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Senators accepting the VSP should submit a formal Senate resignation to Senate officers and their Lead Senator so that an election can be held to fill the seat.
- Nominations are being accepted for the Grievance Board. Nominees must be tenured faculty currently or previously serving on Faculty Senate. Self-nominations are welcome.
- Ally Driver is collecting donations for the Nook Pantry. Faculty may email or text Driver to arrange collection.
- A holiday social event is being planned.
- The Class of ’39 unveiling ceremony will be held December 8 at 4:30 p.m. in Carillon Garden, with a reception immediately afterward at the Owen Pavilion at the Madren Center. Reserved parking will be available at the pavilion, with shuttle service to and from the ceremony.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- November 17, 2026: Committee meetings.
- December 1, 2026: Joint Executive and Advisory Committee meeting.
- December 8, 2026: Full Faculty Senate meeting.

SIGNATURE



12 November 2026

Eliza Gallagher, PhD
Associate Professor
School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences
Secretary, Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate

November 11, 2026

Please grab an iClicker from the back of the auditorium if you are attending in person.

Approval of Minutes

Special Orders

Class of ‘39

Video Presentation

Andrew Pyle

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Learning

Welfare Engagement Poll

Reports

J. Cole Smith

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

Welfare Committee

Chair: Cameron Bushnell

- Report Update

Finance and Infrastructure Committee

Chair: Chavez-Negrete

Scholastic Policies Committee

Chair: Jennifer Holland

- SPCR 2610 Academic Calendar Update
- SPCR 2611 Online Undergraduate Degree Programs Update

Research, Scholarship and Creative Endeavors Committee

Chair: Michael Sehorn

Policy Committee

Chair: Ellen Breazel

- Committee Report Update

Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Higher Education

Chair: Sarah White

Alpha Committee

Chairs: Jace Garrett and Tyler Harvey

Committee on Committees

Chair: Jace Garrett

Student Body Government Update

- Capital Improvement Applications are open through December 4th. If you know students who want to create PHYSICAL change on campus, please have them submit a project.
- There is still interest in adding the Undergraduate Senate's Chair of Academic Affairs to Academic Council as a voting member. If anyone has questions or ways to move forward, please reach out.
- In the spring, look out for Faculty and Staff Appreciation Week! The Undergraduate Senate just passed a resolution to host one this coming spring, and we would love to have Faculty Senate participate.

Graduate Student Body Government Update

Tyler Harvey

Faculty Senate President

New Business

Faculty Senate By-Laws Revision

Faculty Senate Bylaws

The Policy Committee Recommends the following changes to the Faculty Senate Bylaws:

- Article III Membership Section 1. Membership– New Text from Constitutional Change
- Article III Membership Section 4. Senate Seat Allocation – New Text from Constitutional Change
- **Article IV Meetings Section 6. Open Floor– Provisions for Open Floor**
- **Article V Officers Section 6. Faculty Senate President Vacancy – new section**
- Article VI College Delegation Section 1. Membership – New Text from Constitutional Change
- Article VIII Convention of Delegates – Remove due to Constitutional Change (FSR 202201)
- Article X Committees Section 1 and 2 – New Text from Constitutional Change

Faculty Senate Bylaws
Article IV Meetings Section 6. Open Floor

Section 6. Open Floor. **The Secretary shall place on the agenda, prior to "Call to Order", any requests submitted[WE3.1] by a member. It shall be made clear that views presented during "Open Floor" presentations do not necessarily represent those of the Clemson University Faculty Senate. Requests and presentations are subject to the following provisions:**

a. No more than 2 presentation requests may be honored for each meeting. Each speaker shall have a maximum of three minutes for delivery.

b. Requests from nonmembers of the faculty shall be subject to approval of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

c. All requests to present shall be submitted to the Faculty Senate (senate@clemson.edu) no later than 7 calendar days prior to the meeting and shall include the speaker and the title of the presentation. Requests not meeting this provision shall be scheduled for the next available meeting.

Faculty Senate Bylaws
Article IV Meetings Section 6. Open Floor

d. To be published on the Faculty Senate website and recorded in the minutes, the presentation must be written and submitted with the request.

e. To begin every presentation, the faculty member shall introduce themselves and state the department and college of appointment.

f. Slanderous commentary, personal attacks, and the use of names shall not be permitted.

g. An opportunity for rebuttal and/or questions shall be provided by the speaker to the members of the Faculty Senate.

h. Deviations from these provisions shall result in the interruption or termination of the presentation. The Faculty Senate Parliamentarian and/or the Faculty Senate President will determine appropriate actions.

i. The Open Floor Period shall occur before the Faculty Senate meeting is called to order, starting at 2:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

Faculty Senate Bylaws
Article V Officers Section 6.
Faculty Senate President Vacancy

Section 6. Officer Vacancies. **If the office of Faculty Senate President becomes vacant** due to resignation, death, or incapacity, the Vice-President shall immediately and automatically succeed to the office of the President for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the vacancy occurs **after October 1, the new President shall thereafter be eligible to serve the full presidential term for which they were elected.** If the vacancy occurs **on or before October 1, the new President's service as President shall constitute a full term of office.**

If the office of Faculty Senate Vice-President becomes vacant due to resignation, death, incapacity, or succession to the office of Faculty Senate President, an election for the position will occur at the next regular meeting of the Faculty Senate. If the vacancy occurs **after October 1, the elected individual shall serve only as Vice-President for the remainder of the term** and an election for Vice-President/President-Elect shall be conducted as normal during the next March meeting. If the vacancy occurs **on or before October 1, the elected individual shall serve as both Vice-President and President-Elect** and shall assume the office of President the following April.

If the office of Faculty Senate Secretary becomes vacant due to resignation, death, or incapacity, an election for the position will occur at the next regular meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Abrogation of Policy : College of Science

Abrogation of Policy : College of Business

BALLOT: Class of ‘39 Award for Excellence

A. Dr. Thompson Mefford
B. Dr. Kerry Smith
C. Dr. Patick Warren

Announcements



Class of '39 Unveiling Ceremony and Reception

December 8th

Ceremony: Carillion Garden at 4:30 pm

Reception: Owen Pavillion at the Madren Center immediately following the ceremony

- Reserved Parking at the Owen Pavillion
- Shuttles will be running to take you to and from the parking

Adjourn

WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT

Cameron Bushnell, Chair

November 2, 2026

Agenda **2628 NTT Faculty Mentoring**. Welfare Committee invited as Special Order Amy Lawton-Rauh, Senior Associate Provost and Paige Thomsen and received an update on the current university level mentoring efforts. These include the organization of faculty writing workshops and accountability groups. Additionally, Tom Kealy noted that new awards for mentoring will soon be announced; there will be awards for both T/TT and NTT faculty. Finally, Amy Lawton-Rauh urged committee members to survey the Associate Deans for each college, given that the majority of college mentorship is overseen by these offices.

Agenda **2622 Free Speech and Academic Freedom**

Agenda **2513_Diversity_Welfare_Committee_OUTLINE_Linked.docx**

Welfare had a lengthy discussion on these two agenda items regarding the collection of information from faculty on potential violations of their free speech or academic freedom. It was noted that faculty would likely be reticent to publicly share information via a survey. Small group forums were discussed as an alternative. The Committee also discussed combining the two agenda items but discovered in discussion that the agenda items had distinct aims and subsuming one under the other might prevent on one hand, a strong statement of support for diversity as a core value, and on the other hand, a list of recommended guidelines that might, with FS agreement, be added to the *Faculty Manual* as an appendix.

Agenda **2625 Faculty Workload Across Designations**. Welfare received an update from Megan Pate on her conversations with Melissa Welborn and Stacey Altman. They recommended surveying department chairs and to encourage better mentoring for faculty who take on too much service in annual reviews.

Agenda **2624 Faculty Morale, Communication, and Shared Governance**. Welfare discussed at length a series of questions to prompt discussion among Senators at the November 2026 Faculty Senate meeting.

Agenda 26XX: Welfare discussed as new business the Proposed Physical Requirements for Teaching at Clemson for faculty ADA requests.

Welfare Committee received an update on Clemson **Well-being Guidelines** from Megan Pate, FS Wellbeing Committee Representative. The well-being guidelines have been approved; the committee wanted to not these guidelines are not policy. The Well-being committee is establishing a Wellbeing Resource hub and will entertain ideas on how the guidelines might be put into action.

SCHOLASTIC POLICIES COMMITTEE
CHAIR: Jennifer Holland

SCHOLASTIC POLICIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Standing Agenda Item 2610: Academic Calendar Update

Background

This agenda item was committed to the Scholastic Policies Committee by Faculty Senate President Tyler Harvey during the Executive Committee meeting on April 7, 2026. The committee was charged with providing a periodic report detailing the development and implementation of a change to the academic calendar and providing broad faculty input to Enrollment Management on the project as needed.

Findings

At the April 2026 meeting of the Scholastic Policies Committee, Senator Jason Brown volunteered to maintain contact with Enrollment Management staff to receive updates on new developments related to the academic calendar. Brown provided various updates to the committee from April through August.

In late August 2026, Senior Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management David Kuskowski provided the Senate with a final version of the academic calendar for the 2027-2028 academic year and a summary of changes. (These documents are attached to this report.)

Changes to the academic calendar were communicated to the university community in the following ways:

- The updated calendar was shared with the Deans and the Provost and then posted to the Registrar's website on August 21.
- There was a discussion of changes to the academic calendar at the August Organization of Academic Department Chairs retreat, and the final calendar was shared with this group on August 26. President Harvey attended the meeting and spoke to the unit heads, encouraging them to communicate the calendar changes to their faculty.

Prior to the release of the new schedule, Enrollment Management, Undergraduate Learning, and the Registrar's Office held town hall meetings with approximately two dozen constituent groups on campus (e.g., Student Government, Faculty Senate, registration coordinators). Approximately 600 members of the campus community also completed a survey to provide feedback on proposed changes to the calendar during the discussion and input period.

Discussion

The Scholastic Policies Committee discussed the changes to the academic calendar at a meeting on September 15 and solicited feedback from the broader Senate at the October 6 full Senate meeting.

The major changes to the academic calendar include later start dates for the fall and spring semesters and the addition of a winter term. While the Scholastic Policies Committee finds that later start dates for the semesters can provide flexibility for faculty developing courses, time for meetings and retreats, and uninterrupted time blocks for research activities, the committee has a few concerns (listed below) involving the roll-out of the new calendar, the newly added winter term, and the new split-week final exam schedule.

1. *Communication of Changes*—Although students and faculty were given multiple opportunities to provide feedback on the various academic calendar models presented during the discussion and input stage of the planning process, official academic calendar changes (as a single model) were rolled out with little or no opportunity for these important stakeholders to provide input and share concerns. The Scholastic Policies Committee notes that much of the planning information was shared with academic administrators (e.g., Deans, chairs) and that important calendar change information may not have been conveyed to all faculty members uniformly. The Undergraduate Student Government echoed a similar concern at the September Senate meeting.
2. *Winter Term Dates*—The newly introduced winter term is a two-week semester during the winter holiday break starting in the 2027-2028 academic year. Courses during this semester will begin on December 22, a couple of days before the break, to ensure time for registration and payment processing before staff leave. The Scholastic Policies Committee recommended to Registrar Rock McCaskill that the online academic calendar be adjusted to indicate that in-person classes do not actually begin during these first few days but will start in earnest (and in-person) after the first of the year (January 4, 2028). (The updated calendar also notes that travel for study abroad and experiential opportunities may start as early as December 26.) The Registrar's Office has adjusted the online calendar to provide clarity regarding the timing of the start dates for the winter term.

3. *Workload and Pay Concerns for the Winter Term*—It has been widely expressed that the winter term is primarily intended to provide enrichment and travel opportunities and chances to offer abbreviated classes rather than traditional three-credit courses. The winter term may also be utilized for remediation for students who perform poorly in their fall semester classes. Winter term remediation could be used to prepare students to take a course again or to provide a condensed course format to allow students to retake their exercises and exams. Although the Scholastic Policies Committee feels that remediation could be an effective use for the winter term, the committee is concerned that faculty (especially non-tenure track faculty) may be pressured to teach these courses as part of their regular duties—(they are technically on contract during this period)—without adequate compensation or the ability to opt out without repercussion. The committee feels that it is important for clear guidelines to be developed to outline faculty obligations and pay structure during the winter term. (Common questions that we have heard include: Will any faculty be required to teach during the winter term, or will this opportunity always be voluntary? Will extra pay be offered for 12-month faculty who teach during the winter term? Will there be a cap on the amount that faculty may earn for teaching across the winter and summer terms? How will TA's be compensated if they teach during the winter term?)
4. *Final Examination Schedule*—The new calendar introduces a split-week final exam schedule in which the examination period is spread out over two weeks (in both the regular fall and spring semesters). The committee is concerned that, under this new schedule, faculty may be pressured to move their final exams from the second week into the first (contrary to the official schedule). This action may create conflicts for both students and faculty who may be compelled to condense the final exam schedule into the first week. The committee has shared these concerns with both the Registrar's Office and the Office of Undergraduate Learning.

Recommendations

As the new academic calendar has been released, the Scholastic Policies Committee considers this agenda item to be closed. We do have two recommendations for offices on campus as we move forward with the new calendar:

1) The committee requests that the Provost's Office provide clear guidance on expectations of faculty during the winter term. Faculty need to know if and how responsibilities during this period will be compensated, as well as how duties during this time will factor into workload calculations.
2) The committee urges the Registrar's Office and the Office of Undergraduate Learning to consider ways to ensure that the exam schedule remains fair and convenient for students and faculty.

SCHOLASTIC POLICIES COMMITTEE
CHAIR: Jennifer Holland

SCHOLASTIC POLICIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Standing Agenda Item 2611: Online Undergraduate Degree Programs Update

Background

This agenda item was committed to the Scholastic Policies Committee by Faculty Senate President Tyler Harvey during the Executive Committee meeting on April 7, 2026. The committee was charged with providing a periodic report detailing the development and implementation of online undergraduate degree programs and providing broad faculty input on the project as needed.

Findings

Provost Bob Jones first announced at the August 2025 Faculty Senate meeting that the university was exploring the creation of online undergraduate degree programs in an effort to increase enrollment and revenue. He explained that the Board of Trustees hoped to roll out the first online programs in Fall 2026 and identified four programs (the RN to BSN program, Special Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Capital Education) that were slated to be offered online at that time.

An Online Undergraduate Degrees Steering Committee was created and first met in November 2025. The committee was chaired by Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Learning Sean Brittain and included several faculty members (including then Faculty Senate Vice President Tyler Harvey), as well as representatives from Clemson Online, Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Finance and Operations, Athletics, Institutional Research, and Marketing and Communications. According to Harvey, Provost Jones charged the committee with high-level strategic planning for this initiative and presented them with an overview of a feasibility study that had already been conducted and a description of the target student demographic and preliminary metrics for program success. The initial projections for the initiative included an enrollment of 5000 students in ten to fifteen degree programs within ten years.

In June 2026, the Board of Trustees was provided with an update on the progress toward offering online undergraduate degrees. They were informed that financial modeling had been completed and that processes and policies were being developed to support these programs. The update indicated that Clemson would launch three programs (Human Capital Education, Early Childhood and Special Education, and the RN to BS in Nursing) in Fall 2027, with four more programs (Criminal Justice, Artificial Intelligence, Construction Science Management, and Athletic Leadership) to be further evaluated for launch.

The Online Undergraduate Degrees Steering Committee met a couple more times and identified potential challenges and opportunities related to the creation of online undergraduate degree programs. The committee had its final meeting on September 8, 2026. At this meeting, the committee was updated on the progress of the initiative, including an announcement that a one-year contract had been signed with EAB to handle initial recruitment, marketing, and communications with the goal of opening the application portal in Spring of 2027, pending approval from the administration and Board of Trustees. At this same meeting, concerns were raised related to high start-up costs, uncertainties surrounding potential upcoming changes to SACS-COC accreditation standards, and increased scrutiny from CHE regarding enrollment and salary outcomes for graduates. There were also concerns regarding enrollment projections, as well as faculty workload issues and the timing of the rollout.

In early October 2026, it was announced that the university would pause consideration of online undergraduate degree programs in light of recent changes in the higher education landscape, market competition, and limited revenue potential.

Discussion

At the April 2026 meeting of the Scholastic Policies Committee, Senator Jason Brown had volunteered to maintain contact with Undergraduate Learning staff to receive updates on new developments related to the online undergraduate degrees initiative. Brown provided various updates to the committee from April through September, and the committee discussed the initiative more fully at its October 20 meeting.

The committee drew two major conclusions based upon this discussion:

1) The pause on the development of online undergraduate degree programs does not preclude units from offering online courses or programs. Units are still free to pursue online programming; they will just be unable to rely on central support from the university for admissions, advising, and other operational functions. Although it would be challenging to provide a complete online program (especially general education coursework) without wider support, units that are interested in offering online programming can continue to pursue this option.

2) It is impractical to offer many suggestions for future online program initiatives since the higher education landscape is changing so rapidly. Between the proliferation of artificial intelligence, changes in enrollment trends, shifts in the funding environment, and many other changes, it is difficult to anticipate what online programming may look like in the future. Our major takeaway is that any future efforts to develop online programs should be faculty-driven. Whenever the online program initiative was announced in Fall 2025, it took many faculty—even some of those in the identified potential online programs—by surprise. There is strong consensus among the members of the Scholastic Policies Committee that any future efforts to offer online programming should be proposed and led by the faculty in the units offering the programs.

Recommendations

As the online undergraduate degree program initiative has been paused, the Scholastic Policies Committee considers this agenda item to be closed. Our one major recommendation is that any future efforts to offer degree programs online should be faculty-driven. As the faculty are the developers and keepers of the curriculum, decisions to move or offer programs online should be undertaken in response to proposals from faculty in the units offering the programs.