

MINUTES OF
FULL FACULTY SENATE MEETING
March 25, 2025

Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences Aaron Beedle, Faculty Senate chair, called the fourth Faculty Senate meeting of the 2024-2025 academic year to order at 11:47 a.m.

1. Minutes

Minutes from the February 11, 2025, meeting were approved.

2. Obituary notices

Chair Beedle informed the body that Emeritus Professor Mary Burgess, Voice, and Emerita Professor Ellyn Uram Kaschak, Founder of Kaschak Institute for Social Justice, had passed away. After speaking about our colleagues, Chair Beedle requested a moment of silence in their memory.

3. Curriculum Items (PRC)

Chair Beedle announced the Biomanufacturing Project Management Advanced Certificate for the Senate's consideration, as it is a new advanced certificate and requires SUNY approval. The Program Review Committee, the Budget Review Committee, and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee approved this certificate. The new graduate advanced certificate proposal is a collaboration between Watson College and the School of Management. It is a business education program comprising 16 credits over a 24-week period. The description of the certificate program reflects effective program management and the goal of guiding a diverse team and fostering innovation in biomanufacturing. The training encompasses biomanufacturing and project management and is part of a workforce development initiative. The entire proposal has been included in the agenda on the Faculty Senate webpage.

Prof. Scott Craver, Program Review Committee chair, provided the following comments about the certificate proposal:

- The certificate program would be offered during the summer and fall terms.
- Consists of online courses, a four-week term
- The Program Review Committee confirmed with the administration that it would not interfere with the other courses, the academic calendar, or financial aid.

Chair Beedle provided the following comments by the Diversity Committee about the certificate proposal:

- Types of barriers to the design of this particular program
- More specifics concerning the diversity components
- Defining the student populations that might be expected

- Whether or not statistics could be provided for diversity metrics

Chair Beedle added that the comments and questions were shared with the program, and with the short turnaround, they have provided several responses to the raised comments.

Prof. John Starks, MEAMS, requested that Chair Beedle review the changes and comments made in response to the Diversity Committee's feedback on the proposal.

Chair Beedle explained that the proposal had not been changed, and then she reviewed the following responses:

- Regarding the barriers, their focus is on removing obstacles for people from economically disadvantaged communities to access technology jobs. These barriers include limited job opportunities in technology and access to workforce training programs.
- The modular design offers flexibility, enabling students to select training modules that best suit their needs.
- The curricular design and the curriculum of the program were developed with industry input to increase student awareness of these kinds of opportunities.
- Regarding the Diversity Committee's request for more information about using a listserv to distribute materials about the promotion courses, they responded that they are working in part with the NSF REU program (Research Experiences for Undergraduates).
- The HBCU alliance, which is another method to reach underrepresented communities.
- Education Research alliance with six historically black colleges and universities.
- Regarding recruitment, NSF REU program, along with the other sources already mentioned.
- Concerning the student populations expected in the program, the response was that it had been designed for students, veterans, entry-level workers, and those entering the bio-industry workforce.
- Concerning the statistics, they analyzed other biotech training-related programs.
- Concerning faculty recruitment, there is no plan to recruit more faculty because it is expected to run with the existing faculty; therefore, no metrics on faculty recruitment were included in the proposal.

With no further questions, a motion was made and seconded, resulting in the unanimous approval of the Biomanufacturing Project Management Advanced Certificate, with one abstention and no opposition.

4. Reports

Chair Beedle announced that the Faculty Senate Executive election for the 2025-2027 term has been completed. She congratulated the following elected FSEC members:

- Prof. Manual Smeu, Physics
- Prof. Adam Mathews, Geography
- Prof. Jodi Sutherland, Nursing
- Librarian Elise Ferer, Libraries
- Prof. Debi Mishra, SOM

- Prof. Emily Leppien, Pharmacy Practice

She thanked them for their willingness to serve beginning on September 1, 2025.

Chair Beedle then announced that today was the final day for nominations for the SUNY University Faculty Senator position, currently held by Prof. Melissa Zinkin, whose term ends this summer. This position has a three-year term from 2025 to 2028. We are also looking for alternates to serve if the position is vacated or the UFS senator is unable to attend a plenary. She added that there were nomination forms on the back table you could fill out today. She asked that the nomination form should include five nominators and be emailed to her. She reminded the Senate that the nomination period remains open until today, March 25, at 5:00 pm. The election will begin within the next couple of days. The position of SUNY University Faculty Senator would include them as a member of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Campus Governance Leaders, and attending SUNY plenaries.

Chair Beedle discussed three curricular revisions for Spanish, Hebrew, and German Studies. She added that the Faculty Executive Committee approved these and do not require approval by the Senate.

Chair Beedle reminded and encouraged the Senate to complete the COACHE survey, which seeks data on faculty experiences essential to identify strengths and areas for improvement. You can find the COACHE survey link on Dateline and or email message from coachefaculty@abtturvey.com. We are currently at 50%; our goal is to be at least 60%. This survey ends on April 7, 2025.

Chair Beedle highlighted an upcoming item that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) is currently drafting: a couple of amendments to the bylaws. She explained the amendment process, noting that there are specific requirements that must be met. The goal is to present these amendments to the Faculty Senate on May 6, 2025. Following that, an electronic ballot will be distributed to all voting faculty members, which will remain open for two weeks. Chair Beedle added that if the amendments are ready, you will receive a notification from either Kellie Hovancik or Chair Beedle by April 22 to prepare for discussion at the Faculty Senate meeting on May 6.

Prof. Olga Shvetsova, Chair of the Political Sciences and Bylaws Committee, inquired when these amendments would be provided to the Bylaws Committee.

Chair Beedle responded that she would transmit them to the bylaws committee by the end of this week.

Lastly, Chair Beedle reminded the Senate of the final meeting of the spring semester, scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, 2025. During this meeting, the Senate will vote to approve the candidates for both graduate and undergraduate degrees. Additionally, she noted that she, as Faculty Senate chair, Prof. Rodney Gabel, the Faculty Senate Vice Chair, and Librarian Heather Parks, who serves as the Faculty Senate Secretary, will be concluding their terms this year. A slate of nominees will be provided to the senate by the nominating committee 10 days before the May 6 meeting. The senate will vote on the nominees on

May 6. If anyone is interested or knows someone who would be interested in one of these officer roles, please let her know.

Librarian Erin Rushton, SUNY UFS, reported on the SUNY Plenary held in January. She noted the following.

The University Faculty Senate (UFS) held its Winter Plenary virtually from January 16 to 18, 2025. The event began with sector meetings, including the University Centre Sector. At this meeting, we discussed "reduced-credit bachelor's degrees" and whether this might be a future initiative by the Chancellor's office. Other key discussions included the status of DACA students and their vulnerabilities, ADA compliance, and the challenges posed by the new administration, including possible reductions in federal support for DEI.

SUNY Chancellor John B. King, Jr. delivered a report highlighting SUNY's successes, including increased student enrollment, expansion of the ASAP/ACE programs, recognition of prior learning, and progress on the recommendations of the Transfer Task Force. He discussed strategies for adapting to the changing political landscape, emphasizing the importance of building strong relationships with state legislators to protect funding and policies critical to SUNY. Dr. King also highlighted policy and funding priorities, including diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, federal funding, and green infrastructure. The Q&A with Dr. King raised a variety of concerns and issues, including enrollment, program evaluations, campus protest policies, the relationship between ESF and Syracuse University, Downstate Hospital, and the general preparedness of high school students for university.

Additionally, updates were provided on SUNY's academic affairs, including new AI investments and the development of digital transformation initiatives. Accessibility in education will be a major focus, with a new law requiring web content to comply with ADA standards by 2026.

The meeting concluded without new resolutions or business.

The next meeting will take place in Oneonta, April 24-26. At this meeting, we will be voting on a new UFS President as Keith Landa is finishing his term.

Chair Beedle thanked Librarian Rushton for the plenary report.

Chair Beedle introduced Paula Russell, Electronic and Information Technology Officer (EITO), and Senior Director of CLT, Johann Fiore-Conte, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Chief Health and Wellness Officer, and Krista Poppe, Digital Presence and Accessibility Compliance Coordinator and ADA Title II Project Manager, ITS, to present the ADA Title II Campus Compliance. The presentation can be found here: [SALT+ Presentation.pdf](#).

Johann discussed how Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) addresses public services, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to services, programs, and activities provided by state and local governments.

Key provisions of Title II include:

1. **Non-discrimination:** State and local governments must not discriminate against people with disabilities. They must provide services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate.
2. **Accessibility:** Public entities must ensure that their programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities. This could mean physical access (e.g., ramps or elevators), communication access (e.g., providing sign language interpreters), or policy modifications.
3. **Effective Communication:** State and local governments must ensure effective communication with people with disabilities. This includes providing auxiliary aids and services when necessary to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in and benefit from programs and services.
4. **Employment:** Title II also covers employment within state and local government entities, prohibiting discrimination based on disability and requiring reasonable accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities.

In short, Title II aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities can participate in and benefit from all aspects of state and local government services, just like anyone else.

In **April 2024, the DOJ created a rule** regarding Title II of the ADA specifically addressing **accessibility for websites and mobile apps** provided by state and local governments.

The rule clarifies that **public entities must ensure that their digital services are accessible to people with disabilities**, just as their physical services are.

Key points related to websites and mobile apps in the rule include:

1. **Digital Accessibility:** Public entities must ensure that their websites, mobile apps, and other digital platforms are **accessible** to people with disabilities. This includes making sure that these online services can be navigated and used by individuals with various disabilities, such as visual, auditory, or mobility impairments.
 2. **Adherence to Standards:** While the rule doesn't prescribe specific technical standards, it emphasizes the need for compliance with commonly accepted accessibility guidelines, such as the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**. These guidelines help ensure that websites and apps are accessible to people with various disabilities (e.g., through features such as screen reader compatibility and keyboard navigation).
 3. **Effective Communication:** The rule requires public entities to provide effective communication on digital platforms, ensuring that individuals with hearing or vision impairments can fully access online information and services. For example, providing captioning for videos or screen reader-friendly content.
 4. **Timelines for Compliance:** The rule acknowledges that making websites and apps fully accessible can take time, but it also emphasizes that **public entities must take prompt and appropriate steps** to address accessibility barriers as soon as they are identified.
- In essence, the 2024 rule reinforces the expectation that state and local government websites and mobile applications must be accessible to people with

disabilities, aligning digital accessibility with the broader objectives of Title II of the ADA.

Applies to all state and local governments, as well as public colleges and universities. It applies to all of us on campus, including students and student organizations. The compliance deadline for us is April 2026.

TAAG is composed of faculty, student, and staff representatives from a variety of campus-wide organizations, including ITS, Communications and Marketing, the Center for Learning and Teaching, Student Affairs, and Libraries.

Per SUNY policy, each campus must have an Electronic Information Technology Officer (EITO), and Paula Russell is Binghamton's.

The mission of the Technology Access Advisory Group (TAAG) is: to help bring about:

- Most importantly, to create a more inclusive campus.
- Policy Development - There is a SUNY policy, and we have had a campus policy related to electronic information technology since 2020, which is reviewed at least annually. Digital accessibility on our campus is not new.
- Promoting awareness and educational efforts to support compliance with federal, state laws, and SUNY mandates.

ADA Title II compliance is an issue that is at the forefront of the TAAG, but it is a larger project than any one campus committee can successfully tackle.

Paula discussed the risks to the university's reputation, financial penalties, and liabilities. Research ADA Title II for the exact penalties for noncompliance.

Penalties for Universities:

1. Litigation and Lawsuits:

- Universities may face lawsuits initiated by individuals, advocacy groups, or the Department of Justice (DOJ) for failing to provide equal access.
- Legal actions can result in costly settlements or court-ordered remedies to address noncompliance.

2. Fines and Financial Penalties:

- The DOJ may impose significant fines for violations, depending on the severity and duration of noncompliance.
- Additional costs may arise from compensatory damages to affected individuals.

3. Loss of Federal Funding:

- Noncompliance could lead to the suspension or withdrawal of federal financial assistance, including grants and funding tied to educational programs.

4. Damage to Reputation:

- Negative publicity from lawsuits and complaints can tarnish the institution's reputation, reducing student enrollment and donor contributions.

5. Administrative Costs for Corrective Actions:

- Universities may face substantial expenses for retrofitting inaccessible digital platforms and retraining staff to meet compliance standards.

Penalties for Individuals:**1. Professional Accountability:**

- Faculty or staff responsible for creating non-compliant content may face disciplinary action, including warnings, loss of privileges, or termination.

2. Personal Liability:

- In some instances, individuals may be held personally accountable for intentional or egregious violations.

3. Impact on Career:

- Failure to adhere to accessibility policies can hinder professional growth and opportunities within the institution or the broader academic field.

Johann explained that we have a significant project ahead of us as we strive to achieve B-Accessibility. Accessibility is a campus value that should be included in SP3. As campus leaders, we wanted to bring to your attention the scope of work that needs to be done and our collective responsibility to complete it.

There will be assistance through technology and human resources to support, but we need all stakeholders to engage and take responsibility for ensuring their contributions are in compliance. The efforts you can specifically provide in that regard are critical to our success.

After the presentation, Chair Beedle asked the Senate if they had any questions.

Prof. Jessie Reeder, English, inquired about a timeline specific to the department, with concrete instructions on what needs to be done. She provided some examples of what each applies to.

Paula expressed her appreciation for the question and concern, mentioning that they will hold office hours and individual consultations. She also noted that if anyone is interested in training specific to their department, they should reach out to her. Additionally, they are in the process of assembling a team of digital accessibility assistants who will provide one-on-one support to achieve compliance by 2026. She reiterated that faculty should remove items in their course content that do not meet ADA accessibility and are no longer being used from public access by deleting or moving to electronic storage that is not accessible to the public.

Chair Beedle asked about a closed course in Brightspace that is no longer active for students. She assumes that we don't need to do anything with it.

Paula confirmed that was correct as long as no one can access it.

Prof. Meg Leja, History, explained that faculty had several unanswered questions following their departmental discussion about the training. She highlighted the need for disciplinary-specific and concrete information. For example, she emphasized the importance of archival sources, which are crucial for her discipline but may not be readily available through other programs and may not be accessible in the same way.

Paula explained that the tools within Brightspace have been vetted to be accessible.

Prof. Leja requested clarification on how they can continue to teach this crucial material at their discipline levels to meet these standards and make it accessible to students.

Krista explained that, regarding accessibility checkers, all major programs (Word, Google Docs, PDF, etc.) now have accessibility checkers, and many of them are guided. Regarding images, if it is a decorative item, there is a checkmark in the upper right corner of the dialog box that you need to select. A decorative-only image does not need Alt text

Prof. Reeder suggested a handbook with specific instructions to address all program accessibility questions.

Prof. Leja made a point that faculty members are often maxed out with time, and there is a willingness to provide them with the tools they need to help them.

Krista explained that, regarding the provided PDF example, it is recommended not to fix accessibility in a PDF file but rather to make the change in the source program (e.g. Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets) to make it accessible. She added that they are hiring students to help those who need individual assistance, but there are budget and time issues due to the deadline.

Prof. Matt Gallagher from the Libraries inquired about all the platforms being utilized by the Libraries. He wants to know who will audit the content across these platforms and who will decide if the content meets the accepted standards. Additionally, he is interested in identifying the third-party providers involved in the licensing process.

Paula noted that these types of things have been discussed at our meetings at the SUNY level. In terms of licensing, there are already guidelines in place. If there are vendor tools that are not accessible, we reach out to those vendors.

Prof. Matt Gallagher asked who would be auditing these things.

Paula noted that we will be starting the automated auditing shortly, which will replace the manual audits. Krista has been doing a lot of work with this with additional resources.

Prof. Kim Jaussi, SOM, inquired about research with stakeholders. She asked if Qualtrics can be accessible and what about lab data and communications with external collaborators?

Paula expressed again that all digital content must be accessible. Anything that is created and sent out must be accessible. The materials that are coming in are from all institutions. Krista explained that there is a checker in Qualtrics, but will check to make sure.

Prof. Robyn Cope, Romance Languages, inquired about videos for foreign languages in English and vice-versa. Also, are instructors responsible for training and moderating student presentations to follow these guidelines?

Paula explained that they are also responsible for training the students. Any material you use, whether brand new or old and public-facing, must be accessible.

Prof. Colin Lyons, Art & Design, asked if they are expected to go through every image slide that they show and create an all-text and would there be a guideline for this?

Paula noted that there is an AI tool available for that purpose. She reiterated that any content that you are not using or do not intend to use should be put in an area that is not public. She understands the challenge, and they would be working very hard to support everyone through the process.

Prof. Claudia Marques, Biological Sciences, also expressed with the need detailed instructions and recommended that they reach out to the departments because each department has different needs.

Prof. Olga Shvetsova from Political Science emphasized the need for guidance on the process. The integration of the AI platform into this process is long overdue. She highlighted the significance of incorporating these priorities.

Paula thanked the faculty for their suggestions and feedback. She added that they are here for support and guidance. They will continue to work on the resources provided and will develop further as we move forward.

Chair Beedle thanked the presenters and asked for any senators who have good processes in place or who are interested in assisting with the rollout of this training to contact her.

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Present: Meaghan Altman, Ming An, Nathanael Andrade, Aaron Beedle, Lina Begdache, Megan Benson, Ramaesh Bhagirat, Jeremy Blackburn, Peter Borgesen, Paul Chiarot, Sungdai Cho, Kenneth Chiu, Robyn Cope, Weiying Dai, Sidney Dement, Tara Dhakal, Marvin Diaz, Mateo Duque, Gregory Evans, Mikhail Filippov, Anthony Fiumera, Rodney Gabel, Matt Gallagher, Donald Hall, Melissa Hardesty, Laura Fine Hawkes, Nora Henry, Kimberly Jaussi, Gladys Jimenez-Munoz, Barry Jones, Rebecca Kissling, Michael Lawler, Meg Leja, Colin Lyons, Andre Mathis, Marcin Mazur, Tom McDonough, Debi Mishra, Vladimir Nikulin, Nkiru Nzegwu, Thomas O'Brien, Julien Panetier, Heather Parks, Sabina Perrino, Siyuan Rao, James Rea, Erin Rushton, Anton Schick, Tarek Shamma, Olga Shvetsova, John Starks, Harvey Stenger, Jennifer Stoever, Jodi Sutherland, Sofia Theodore-Pierce, Cyma Van Petten, Melvin Whitehead, Melissa Zinkin

Excused: Nancy Abashian, Laura Anderson, Mackenzie Cooper, Leon Cosler, Sean Dunwoody, Ahyeon Koh, Wei-Cheng Lee, Anthony Meder, Bogum Yoon

Absent: Christina Balderrama-Durbin, Michael Buck, David Campbell, Luca Cassidy, Laura Cook, Tiffany Keller Hansbrough, John Havard, Joseph

Keith, Adriane Lam, Shuxia Lu, Jeffrey Lum, Andreas Pape, Mark Poliks,
Anjani Praneet Meruvu, Kirsten Prior, Shay Rabineau, Gail Rattinger,
Timothy Singler, Bridget Whearty, Marguerite Wilson