

Sul Ross State University – Faculty Senate

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, February 20, 2026

Time: 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Microsoft Teams (Webinar Format)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Jennifer Miller-Ray, Ph.D., Faculty Senate President.

The meeting was recorded in compliance with transparency requirements.

2. Attendance and Quorum

Faculty Senate Members Present:

1. Jennifer Miller-Ray
2. Jessica Velasco
3. Ferhat Ozturk
4. Jose Mora
5. Minerva Gonzales
6. Billy Jack Ray
7. Melissa Wesney
8. Oguzhan Basibuyuk
9. Wesley Wynne
10. James Cho

Guests Present:

Provost: Dr. Bernie Cantens

Faculty observers (non-voting)

Quorum:

✓ Yes — Quorum (83%) was established at 3:30 PM and maintained throughout the meeting.

3. President's Report

Presenter: Jennifer Miller-Ray

Key Points:

- Review of key Faculty Senate focus areas for Spring 2026
- Continued emphasis on shared governance and faculty engagement
- Identification of Faculty Handbook items for structured review under Old and New Business

Faculty Handbook sections identified for discussion:

- **2.04** – Professors of Practice, Distinguished Professor of Practice, Clinical Ranks (including remote faculty considerations)
- **2.08** – Faculty Tracks
- **2.11** – Simplification of the faculty evaluation process
- **2.21** – Post-Tenure Review
- **2.29** – Remote Faculty policy

A request was made for a round-up report process to ensure councils and committees provide timely updates to the Senate.

4. Vice President's Report

Presenter: Jessica Velasco

Key Points:

- Highlighted relevant sections of the Faculty Senate Constitution
 - Clarified staggered term structure for Senate continuity & asked current elected members to indicate willingness to have 1 year term to create staggers without election
 - Reminded Senate members that councils had been re-established, contacts will be made with members to make sure those at end of their 3 year term had rotated off and new members were added (even though many are just now being reactivated, sticking with the current list of term expirations will maintain necessary staggered terms for continuity)
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5. Secretary's Report

Presenter: Ferhat Ozturk

Summary:

- Minutes from the January 26, 2026 meeting were distributed in advance of the meeting.
- The Faculty Senate website continues to serve as the public repository for agendas, minutes, attendance, and governing documents.
- Meeting materials were posted in compliance with SB 37 requirements.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the January 26, 2026 minutes as presented.

The motion was seconded.

✓ Motion carried.

6. Council and Committee Reports

- **Research Council**
 - Update provided on Research Enhancement Grants.
 - Discussion of FAR (Faculty Annual Report) items emerging from the Fall 2025 End-of-Season Survey.
 - Specific survey items related to faculty workload, evaluation clarity, and institutional support were noted for possible Senate review.
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7. Old Business

2.04 – Faculty Tracks

Continued discussion regarding faculty track structures, including:

- Clarification of workload expectations across teaching, research, and service tracks
- Equity considerations across disciplines
- Alignment with accreditation requirements where applicable
- Implications for tenure and promotion pathways

The Senate agreed further structured review would continue under committee guidance.

8. New Business

Special Committees – Chairs / Members / Charges

Discussion centered on forming focused committees to review:

- Faculty Handbook revisions
- Evaluation process simplification (2.11)
- Post-Tenure Review (2.21)

The President requested volunteers and nominations for council and committee leadership.

Committee and council charges will be formalized and shared with the Senate.

Faculty Handbook Items: It was decided that the senate needed more time to review specific handbook needs.

Handbook item reviews were postponed with the suggestion of a Faculty Handbook Council to be considered as an addition to councils and committees.

9. Other Items

A motion was made to establish a permanent handbook council for reviewing handbook and policy changes. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by members present.

Additional Faculty Handbook sections (2.29 – Remote Faculty; 2.08 – Faculty Tracks) were noted for continued review in future meetings.

10. Announcements

- Reminder regarding ongoing Faculty Handbook review process
 - Open Access Symposium. Friday, April 24th
 - Encouragement for faculty to submit input through established channels
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11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Minutes Prepared By

Ferhat Ozturk, Ph.D.
Secretary, Faculty Senate
Sul Ross State University

Date Prepared: February 24, 2026