# School of Arts and Sciences
*SUNY Buffalo State*

Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2025 ♦ 3:00 pm ♦ BULG 423

Pre-meeting slideshow of upcoming events

I.      Call to order – Meeting called to order at 3:05pm
Announcement that Friday April 19th is the next scheduled SAS meeting

II.      Presentation of the Agenda – presented – move to accept main agenda, seconded. The agenda is adopted.

III.      Presentation of minutes from the November 15, 2024 meeting – any substantive corrections? The minutes are adopted without objection.

IV.      Approval of the Consent Agenda (See Appendix A for the motions)

- Consent Agenda items: SC-01, SC-02, SC-03, SC-04, SC-05, SC-06, SC-07, SC-08, SC-09 (see Appendix A)

Presented each of the items listed above in turn (see Appendix A). No requests to remove any of the technical motions from the Consent Agenda. Motions to accept the Consent Agenda. Seconded. Motion to accept the Consent Agenda passed without objection.  (SC-01, SC-02, SC-03, SC-04, SC-05, SC-06, SC-07, SC-08, SC-09 all pass, and the SAS Bylaws will be amended accordingly.)

V.      Remarks of the Speaker

Will hold remarks until item X. SETs update (Student Surveys)

VI.      Report from the Dean

Please see the attached pdf file (SAS faculty meeting 02212025.pdf)

Dean's office website – Atta Ceesay and Tony Chase remain in their positions. Gina Puntoriero has been added as an Admin 1 assisting Atta with student success. If you have HR questions, contact Kathy Fortune; for Budget contact Teresa LoGalbo; grade change forms, as well as other student forms, should be emailed to both Atta and Gina.

New SAS website
https://artsandsciences.buffalostate.edu/
Nice looking please visit – forward any mistakes/issues to Tony Chase

Reorganization Sp 25 changes
Government, Planning and Philosophy Department now exists in Cassity as a new department
Public Administration programs and faculty have moved into the Economics and Finance

Department

Personnel Updates - 4 promotions to full professor (see attachment) – congratulations to all of you
2025 – 2026 Sabbaticals
Total of 24 applications received campus wide, 10 funded – (see attachment) - congratulations

E.O. Smith Arts and Humanities Faculty Development Fund
Description of the award – through Tony Chase
Four people have received them recently – all from the English department – congratulations.
Would like to promote this award more

SUNY Pilot Framework for Enhancing Academic Programs (earlier presentation by Provost Wall)
PowerPoint from presentation is posted (https://academicaffairs.buffalostate.edu/presentations-and-communications)
Charge from SUNY to partner with Buffalo State with dedicated SUNY staff assigned to us – identifying and assessing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that will guide our assessment of effectiveness of programs.
List of KPI from SUNY
  - Enrollment Trends and Course demand
  - Comparison with Peer Institutions
  - Student Outcomes and Learning Experience
  - Labor Market Demand
  - Institutional Identity and Community Benefit
  - Financial Performance and Resource Allocation
SUNY wants us to run ALL of our programs through this **by April 15th**

Collected feedback from Chairs on this Framework at the Chairs meeting – will continue to do more. Thinks SUNY is focusing more on quantitative data that is readily available.

Question from floor - How do we measure community benefit?

Answer Dean Frothingham - Task force is working on ways to measure community benefits. Part of our Institutional Identity as an anchor institution that is community engaged, and we do extremely well at service learning. Ideas also include counts of research projects and service-learning projects.

Whatever we do right now can change as we get more feedback and hear how other institutions are approaching this.

Question from the floor: Any sense when KPI are established – are these going to be weighed equally at all SUNY institutions – is this to help us grow and get better or to look for weaknesses?

Answer Dean Frothingham - Correspondents from SUNY said this is a pilot and it is going to get bigger. However yesterday SUNY acknowledged that KPIs will certainly vary from campus to campus. In regards to the second question, we are doing this to look at our programs to look for room for growth and new programs, neutral investment in programs holding their own, and a group of programs that we will disinvest in.

Question from the floor–will SUNY be the ones to make the final decisions about this?

Answer Dean Frothingham – They are saying it will be collaborative. This is something SUNY is making us do. Similar to our President's plan for Academic Optimization. There have been some changes – deactivating minors, program revisions, but was at our own pace. This is more difficult and far reaching.

VII.    SAS Standing Committee reports (submitted in writing; see Appendix B)

Standing committee reports submitted in writing (excluding BYLE committee). Called everyone's attention to the SAS curriculum committee schedule. If you want to submit something – pay attention to schedule – no new programs and no new courses right now.

Any questions for any of our standing committee chairs? None raised.

VIII.    SAS Senate Liaison reports (submitted over email; see Appendix C)

SAS Senate Liaison report – forwarded by SAS Secretary earlier this week

Liaison Dave Ettestad – please read the Senate Bylaws and Elections Committee (BEC) preliminary proposal for changing seat allocation in the Senate (see page after February 14 meeting report).

Question from the floor - For the At-large 5 Senate seats that would be shifting over? Would they usually be held by faculty or staff?

Answer – it varies. There is a SUNY requirement that the Buffalo State Senate has a faculty majority. New proposal maintains a 1-member faculty majority.

Liaison Dave Ettestad – would like to see some numbers behind this – how many people would each senator be representing?  # faculty in each school?

Reducing terms to 1 year would possibly incentivize people to run –

Comment – getting folks even less engaged would make it even likelier that Senate won't achieve quorum.

Comment from member of Senate BEC: the discussions are still very preliminary. Also noted that At-large seats are open to contingent faculty.

Question from floor? Is there a history of conflict between professional staff and faculty?

Comment from the floor:  not really. Voiced-opposition to the idea of 1-year terms – too much of the work continues year to year.

Comment from the floor– successful At-Large Senators tended to be people who have been here for a long time, have name recognition across campus and represent the whole campus. Suggested change seems to devalue the role of the At-large Senators.

Comment from the floor– this is just a preliminary discussion – this is a chance to really throw out existing structure and to create something new that better represents current state of campus.

SAS Speaker: the SAS Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee will be presenting something at the next SAS meeting concerning representation from contingent faculty. Also questioned whether, with the drastic decline in enrollment, students are currently overrepresented in the Senate. Finally, faculty have tenure unlike other members of campus, so they may more freely advocate for students and push back on bad policy, etc.

Question from SAS Speaker about new resolution for dual-credit high-school/college credit: It has been practice that approval goes through departments – will this continue?

Answer - Yes – it will still go through departments.

IX.     BYLE discussion about SAS divisions

Jason Grinnell and Julie Wieczkowski took the floor (See attached SAS Bylaws and Elections Committee Report)

Bylaws & Elections Chair Jason Grinnell - The motion to amend the SAS Bylaws to allow the Bylaws & Elections Committee to make non-substantive corrections and changes without following the general amendment process (but still give notice and allow for objection) amendment last semester passed with a 97% yea vote.

SAS Bylaws discussion regarding SAS Bylaws language referencing SAS School "Divisions." Currently, SAS has 4 divisions and each department self-identifies as to division. Seats in committees, Senate etc. are to be allocated evenly among the divisions. However, we have already had several changes to our department structures and more are coming up. These changes have and will continue to create inequities in numbers.

B&E Committee suggests that categories may no longer be necessary.  We still care about breadth of representation, but divisions may not be the correct way to achieve it.

Presents one idea – replace committee voting based on divisions with entirely "at-large" elections. This will eliminate vacancies and reluctant candidates. Can do same thing with senate seats – we currently have three per division.

Comment from the floor the floor: I think you both identified a problem and also opened a door to suggesting solution. There is a small cohort of people who seem to be on everything. We have been through and are still in a very strange time with respect to governance. There have been tensions (interims and votes of no confidence), and we are looking for stability and to reclaim some of the governance roles the Senate used to have.

Question from the floor: Was any consideration given to just having Arts / Sciences? Bimodal choice?

Answer from Jason: we talked about lots of things, and it got very complicated very quickly. It can also be hard to categorize some departments in this bimodal way, given the overlap.

Vice Speaker reminds the body that we can't have two people from same department on committee which helps push toward breadth.

Comment from the floor – found it annoying to be designated in the wrong division for her actual field. Not a huge problem but was annoying.

Comment from Bylaws & Elections Chair Jason Grinnell – concerned of possible ripple effects: that someone could look at the GE courses and say, based on your division, you shouldn't be teaching courses in that GE category. There might be other ways to allocate divisions (e.g. small department vs large department).

Question/Comment from floor – what is the core issue? Might we revisit the number of people on committees?

Answer from Bylaws & Elections Chair Jason Grinnell: some committees are set at 5. One from each division plus an at-large seat.

Comment from Curriculum Chair Julie Wieczkowski: On SAS Curriculum Committee we have 9 members and divvy up into three groups without regard to division.

Comment from Bylaws & Elections Chair Jason Grinnell: it is the personnel committee that causes the most issues with needed breadth of representation. But there are mechanisms for ensuring disciplinary breadth on even this committee.

We have to have some resolution on this going into the next SAS election, so we will need to decide this soon. SAS Bylaws Committee will make a recommendation at the April SAS meeting.

Question from the floor: what are we doing about senators who are serving now but moving to a new school?

SAS Speaker: we are working on it. The Senators have a right to remain on the Senate until they move to a different School.


Bylaws & Elections Chair Jason Grinnell – one of our senators from the Humanities division has stepped down (ends spring 26) we need nominations for a replacement.

Barish Ali nominated Mary Beth Sullivan. She accepted.

Anyone else? SAS Bylaws & Elections will do an email call for further nominations with a deadline of Wednesday.

   X.     SETs update

Speaker David Ben-Merre -Still have some potentially outstanding business concerning Student Surveys – All questions, timeline of distribution, format/response rates, who has access, "holistic" sense of "teaching effectiveness."

Report from ad hoc committee last year – spoke to bias problems, best practices, and need for departments to have their own practices, because no universal rubric will do justice to what matters regarding teaching effectiveness in each discipline.

We have our SAS general questions, and departments can add their own questions.

Timeline of survey distribution is still out of alignment with the SAS committee recommendation, and response rates have dropped from ~90%+ down to 30-35%

Some departments have supplemented with paper forms and seen improved return rates.

Please let me know about your stories and concerns.

DOPs articulates that surveys are only one measure out of 5 that are supposed to measure teaching effectiveness. How are these other measures articulated?

The English department has instituted a checklist about teaching effectiveness (see attached English Department Teaching Effectiveness checklist) with examples including visiting a colleague's classroom and having a colleague visit yours, and then having a discussion about the visits, leading to pedagogical self-reflection.

This is not a prescription for SAS.  The Speaker is just sharing this example in case it might be helpful for other departments, and welcomes your feedback and wants to hear the processes that work for you.

    XI.     New Business

None.

    XII.    Adjournment


Adjourned at 4:23 pm

**Appendix A: Consent Agenda Motions to Amend the Bylaws**

SC-01: Advanced with a positive recommendation
Add clarifying language to Preamble 3f. (page 1):

"Qualified academic rank." Rank held by professional staff with the official title of lecturer or any of the titles specified in subsection 10 of the policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees preceded by the designation "visiting" or some similar designation.

*Note: (Simply informational) "subsection 10" refers to SUNY BoT policies.*

SC-02: Advanced with a positive recommendation
II 3bi. (Vice Speaker)

When so designated by the Speaker, the Vice Speaker may act in the Speaker's stead to carry out the Speaker's responsibilities.

SC-03: Advanced with a positive recommendation
II 3di. (Senate Liaison)

The School SAS members currently serving as Senators (see Article III) shall elect from among themselves one member to serve as Senate Liaison.

*Note: Clarifies that any of our Senators (including At-large Senators) can serve as our Senate Liaison.*

SC-04: Advanced with a positive recommendation
III 1a. (Senators)

Senate representation shall be apportioned equally among the four School Divisions (Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences), with any remainder elected without regard to division allocated to at-large seats.

*Note: The "remainder" stipulation was originally added because we did not know how many SAS (school-specific) Senate seats we would have, and it was possible that we would not have been able to divide them equally among the divisions. But the phrasing can lead to terminological confusion because (lower-case) "at-large" here does not refer to the Senate's "At-Large" seats.*

SC-05: Advanced with a positive recommendation
III 1d. (Senators)

School Senators shall report to the School annually at a Regular Meeting.

*Note: This clause is redundant with II 3d ii. (Senate Liaison), which states that "The Senate Liaison and/or other Senators shall provide a report at every Regular Meeting of the School (see Article V)."*

V 4.  (Meetings)

Special Meetings may occur and must be called within one month when requested by any of the following: the President of the College, the Provost, the Dean of the School, the Speaker of the Steering Council, the Elections and Bylaws Committee, or 25% of the Voting Members. The Speaker shall be responsible for calling the Special Meeting

VI 2b.  (Committees)

This committee shall supervise all elections ~~or~~ and voting that are required for the School of Arts & Sciences.

VI 6.

There are two clauses numbered "6."  This will simply change the numbering of "External Committees" to "7."

VIII 1b.  (Review of the Dean)

The committee shall consist of five Voting Members with continuing and permanent appointment (faculty or professional employees), elected by the Voting Members, one from the Arts, one from the Humanities, one from the Natural Sciences, ~~and~~ one from the Social Sciences, and one at-large member.

*Note:  adds a comma and delates a superfluous "and"*

**Appendix B:  SAS Standing Committee Reports**


**SAS Bylaws and Elections Committee (Jason Grinnell, chair)**

Report will be delivered at the SAS meeting.


**SAS Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee (Roy Bakos, chair)**

The Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee is drafting a resolution advocating for contingent faculty College Senate representation and hopes to share the resolution at the April SAS meeting.


**SAS Curriculum Committee (Julie Wieczkowski, chair)**

| SAS Submissions By: | SAS Committee Reviews: | CSCC Review Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| Winter submissions | January 30 - February 5 | Likely to be reviewed Spring 2025 |
| February 12 | February 13 - February 19 | Likely to be reviewed Spring 2025 |
| February 26 | February 27 - March 5 | Likely to be reviewed Spring 2025 |
| March 12 | March 13 - March 19 | Might be reviewed Spring 2025 |
| April 2 | April 3 - April 9 | Likely to only be reviewed Fall 2025 |
| April 16 | April 17 - April 23 | Likely to only be reviewed Fall 2025 |
| April 30 | May 1 - May 7 | Likely to only be reviewed Fall 2025 |

Spring 2025 SAS Curriculum Committee Review Schedule – start on Thursday, end on Wednesday, 2-week cycle.

NB: April 1, 2025 is the last deadline for the Senate Curriculum Committee for proposals to be reviewed Spring semester. This pertains to everything (new course proposals, course revisions, Gen Ed, program proposals, deactivations).


**SAS Personnel Committee (Jennifer Ryan-Bryant, chair)**

The Personnel Committee is reviewing four dossiers from candidates applying for promotion to associate.

**Appendix C:  SAS Senate Liaison reports**

Buffalo State Senate Meeting Summary

December 13, 2024

The president gave her report first. She stated she and several others from Buffalo State had just come back from a Middle States meeting in Philadelphia. They were told that Middle States is not worried about the disbanding of the Department of Education just yet. Undocumented students and border issues will likely be a key priority of the incoming administration, and Middle States will focus on that. Buffalo State has a number of undocumented students on campus. Artificial Intelligence was also a big topic at the conference.

Constituent questions:

The president responded to several constituent questions:

When asked about student safety training, she said there was nothing done yet, but UPD has some officers trained in that and the topic will be looked into more.  A senator from the School of Education said they have been working with UPD and other local police agencies to provide active shooter training to students in the SOE.

In response to a question about new courses not getting in the catalog yet, Provost Wall indicated most of those issues have been resolved.

There was a constituent question about interim positions on campus. Some are kept as interim, some have been made permanent, and one is being searched.  What led to these decisions?

Dr. Durand responded.  First, she talked about the Interim Vice President for student Affairs. They needed someone right away, so they got someone through a registry and hired Dr. Brumfield.  He is on a six-month renewable contract and is still interim.  In general, she said she has been getting a lot of comments from people (including the Senate), that it does not look attractive if all of our top leaders are interim.  She worked with SUNY on a lot of these interims, and they have gone through a vetting process with many of them and now a lot of the interims are permanent.   It would have taken a lot longer to do searches for all these people and they didn't want to get involved with ancillary searches while trying to set up the search for the president.

As far as the vice president for Finance and Research, they had divided that job between two people for a while since we didn't have one person with the necessary background.  They now hope to get one person who can handle the entire job and get hired in time to learn the ropes before the new president comes in.

Committee Reports

Several committees together worked on and presented a DOPS revision about prior learning credit (like from military service, AP tests, etc.).  The revision mostly simplified the language. It passed.

The Bylaws and Elections Committee (BEC) had to have a special election for a student senator on the agenda committee. Since one of the two students running dropped out, the other was named as the winner.

The BEC also reported that the proposed name change from "College Senate" to "Buffalo State Senate", which passed the senate last month, was almost unanimously approved by the entire faculty and thus takes effect.

The Student Welfare Committee (SWC) said they are discussing student emergency preparedness and hope to have a resolution for the February meeting. They are also preparing a survey about advising for students as well as professional and faculty advisors to get feedback. Finally, they are discussing issues about student accessibility and campus construction.

The Academic Plan Committee will send out a survey on Institutional Learning Outcomes to students on Bengal Buzz when they return from winter break.

Respectfully submitted by Senator Dave Ettestad

Interim president Bonita Durand gave her remarks first. She reminded everyone about the comments she made in her recent school talk about new incentives for retirement for eligible people. She also mentioned that the leader for Enrollment Management is leaving February 18, and they are in the process of searching for a new leader.

She also talked about the article in the Buffalo News about the possibility of Buffalo State losing its accreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education because the graduation rate of the incoming freshmen class of 2017 dropped below 40%. She commented she hoped we were not surprised by that since, for several months, she has been talking about the extra things the Middle States has been requiring. We still have accreditation until 2030, so we have plenty of time to address the problem. Additionally, on the Middle States web site there is a link to a list of all the other schools that are in the same situation we are in.

Committee reports:

The Standards for Students Committee submitted a resolution for a new policy for Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment. This is where high school students taking approved high school classes can get both high school and college credit. The policy outlines the standards high school courses must meet to be approved. Buffalo State has been increasing the number of students receiving dual credit recently, from around 25 a few years ago to several hundred this past year. The resolution passed.

The Budget Staff and Allocations Committee stated a Presentation on Financial Sustainability Plan Update will be coming out shortly. In short, there have been lots of retirements lately while the enrollment has not been doing as well. Specifically, the retirement goal was 100 by May 2025, and 90 have already retired by December 2024. The enrollment did not meet its target, resulting in lost revenue of about $4M. To help offset this they will eliminate further Institutional Grants ($2M per year) since they didn't produce enough bang for the buck.

The presented several updates to the Senate Handbook and College Faculty Bylaws. Most of these were minor changes such as changing "College Senate" to "Buffalo State Senate" everywhere it occurred.

BEC also presented, for preliminary discussion, two proposals for the re-alignment of senate seats because of the merger of School of Education and School of Professions, which will officially occur in September of 2026.  See the attached handout they presented.

As stated in the handout, one simple possibility is to give the combined school the twelve (6+6) seats they already have and leave everything else the same.  The other possibility includes several changes besides this.  Specially, in the other proposal the Professional Staff Caucus (PSC) would get 12 seats instead of the 6 it now gets.  The 5 at-large seats for either professional or faculty would be eliminated.  The number of academic at-large seats would increase from 2 to 3.  In this format each of the two academic schools, PSC, and students would all get 12 seats each.   Also, the academic at-large seats would be for one-year terms and open to contingent faculty.

A lot of discussion followed. Some people liked the one-year at large terms for people that only wanted to serve a year. At least two senators stated they thought at large senators should have a three-year term like other senators for continuity and commitment reasons. Some wondered why the PSC should get a significant increase in seats. We were reminded this was just a preliminary discussion and there will be months before we make a final decision.


John Draeger gave a report on the most recent University Faculty Senate Meeting. One important thing he mentioned was that all SUNY schools must comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act by April 2026.  A key component of this is to make sure all online materials are accessible to everyone.


Respectfully submitted by Senator Dave Ettestad

7. e. ii. Preliminary re-alignment discussion starter

"The academic staff of the University shall be the majority membership of the Buffalo State Senate" (College Faculty Bylaws Article III, C.)

> This is what dictates the "academic" at large ("enough of these senators must be academic staff to ensure compliance with the first clause of this Section")

When schools merge, what does this look like for senate representation?

> Do we want to ensure this is effective for fall 2026 when new structure is supposed to launch?
>
> > If so, we would need to make proposals and get approval by end of Fall 2025 so elections could run in Spring 2026 appropriately for senators to be seated for Fall 2026

Easiest route would be to make the new school have 12 (6+6) and nothing changes

Another idea is to make 12 SAS, 12 new school, 12 PSC, 2 UFS, 12 students (10 ug, 2 grad) 1 librarian, 1 classified, 3 academic at large (on one-year terms – and open to contingent academics[1], if you have an appointment by April 15th)

| Current | Proposed |
|---|---|
| SAS 12 | SAS 12 |
| ED 6 | NEW School (SOP SOE combined) 12 |
| SOP 6 | |
| PSC 6 | PSC 12 |
| Academic at-large 2 | Acad at-large 3 |
| At-large 5 (can be either professional or fac) | |
| 1 Libarian (counts as faculty) | 1 Librarian (counts as faculty) |
| 1 classified | 1 classified |
| 2 UFS (can be either professional or fac) | 2 UFS (can be either professional or fac) |
| 12 students (10 ug, 2 grad) | 12 students (10 ug, 2 grad) |
| 53 total seats (27 must be faculty) | 55 total seats (28 must be faculty) |

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[1] The UUP Constitution defines contingent academics as "those persons appointed to any academic position which does not prescribe eligibility for continuing appointment [tenure]."

English Department Teaching Effectiveness checklist

Name: _____          Academic Year:_____


Check all the boxes that apply.  (Please elaborate as you see fit in your departmental annual report.)

☐  Have you visited a colleague's class during the 2024-25 academic year?

   Colleague & date:  _____

☐  Has a colleague visited your class during the 2024-25 academic year?

   Colleague & date:  _____

☐  Did you and your colleague have a conversation about your experiences during your classroom visits?

☐  Did you and your colleague have a conversation about your general pedagogical approaches?

☐  Have you attended a department, school, university, or discipline's instructional workshop or program?

   Workshop name, location, & date: _____

☐  Did you review the courses that you taught in the Fall 2024 semester?

☐  Did you review the student responses to student surveys/evaluations/opinion forms sent out by either the college or the English department for your Fall 2024 courses?

☐  Did you review the courses that you taught in the Spring 2025 semester?

☐  Did you review the student responses to student surveys/evaluations/opinion forms sent out by either the college or the English department for your Spring 2025 courses?

☐  Did you perform an overall pedagogical self-reflection in the 2024-25 academic year?

☐  Have you considered how your current scholarly and/or creative pursuits might contribute to classroom experiences?