

October 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
Approved at the 11/7/2023 Regular Senate Meeting

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Curris Center Barkley Room

Public Access Zoom link: <https://murraystate.zoom.us/j/83844364068>

Senators in attendance: Oliver Beckers, Michael Bordieri, Abbie Morris proxy for Brian Bourke, Michael Busby, Whitney Cassidy-Caywood, Melissa Chapman, Paul Foote, Stephanie Ford, Nikki Gaylord, Eran Guse,

possible revision to the definitions that would include instructor and senior instructor in the definition of ranked faculty. Senators discussed some additional challenges with the possible revision.

V. Senator Spotlight

President Roach explained that each month the senate will spotlight a senator. Dr. Faris Sahawneh introduced

Senator Post noted that most of their business was previously discussed during President Roach's introductory remarks. He noted that the committee is discussing how frequently they would like to update the handbook, and that annual updates seems like a good target.

Rules, Elections and Bylaws – Faculty Senate Vice President, Heidi Ortega

Vice President Ortega shared that the committee is planning for a busy spring election season.

Executive – Faculty Senate President, David Roach

No business

VIII. Other University Committee

Insurance and Benefits

Senator David Pizzo updated the senate regarding the recent decision to increase benefit premiums. Senator Pizzo stated that exploring tiered premium is a priority for him, as the approved increases will disproportionately burden lower paid faculty and staff. Senator Pizzo also noted that he believes that this health care cost increase should be a priority when discussing possible cost of living adjustments in next year's budget. Senator Pizzo explained the rationale for choosing the premium rate increase option (A), noting that option (B) would have only been a partial solution, would have disproportionately impacted employees with dependents, and would have possibly created a disincentive to seeking care (which could increase cost in the long term). Senator Beckers asked about the wellness pledge and raised concerns regarding how the program is designed. Senator Pizzo indicated that the committee will explore these concerns.

IX. Old Business

Senator Reeves noted that the handbook still states that when the university is closed for inclement weather classes are cancelled. She indicated that there is a discrepancy between that wording and current policy and that the senate should address it. President Roach noted that the current policy was designed to give faculty flexibility in how to operate during weather closures. Senator Post noted that section 2.6 of the handbook (University Closure) is of relevance to this discussion. Senator Reeves expressed that she believes that the faculty should be able to choose.

X. New Business

President Roach proposed that the faculty should socialize more. He proposed that we should organize a social engagement that we announce to all faculty on behalf of the faculty senate. He noted that the activities should be simple and inexpensive. Senator Henry noted that he has laser tag sets that he would be willing to loan for this purpose. President Roach noted that the activity should be accessible to all and proposed the following ideas: coffee hour, walk a mile, a bike ride, a basketball game, volunteering at a food bank, knitting, and kayaking. Several senators offered several additional ideas.

President Roach announced a f