

**Salisbury University
Consortium Coordinating Committee meeting
March 28, 2025, 3:30 p.m.
President's Conference Room**

Minutes

Present: Joe Benyish, Chair (Chair, Staff Senate); Joerg Tuske (President, Faculty Senate); Olivia Ingrao (President, SGA); Tim Robinson (Chair, Adjunct Faculty Caucus); Abigail Isaacson (President, Graduate Student Council); President Lepre; Eli Modlin (Chief of Staff and Vice President of Public Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, President's Office); and Gina Boobar (President's Office)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the February 24, 2025 meeting were approved with amendments.

Updates from the President's Office – President Lepre and Eli Modlin

a. State Budget/Legislative Update

- For the FY26 budget, the State is currently requiring the System to cut their budget by \$100M; SU's share of this is \$5M. SU is also expecting an additional \$5M in cuts from the State. This amount requires base budget cuts, not one-time cuts. Identifying areas of the budget to cut is made worse by cost escalation – utility costs are rising and the cost of anything plant-related is rising. Plus, operating budgets are already tight after years of cuts. The budget situation is not expected to improve in FY27. A variety of options are being looked at to make up SU's required budget cuts. Also, in spite of the cuts, State employees may receive a COLA next year.
- Eli added that a special legislative session may be called in May due to the fact that the budget amount that needs cut has increased significantly from January until now. On the plus side, the legislature did not put much on the table that would require funding.
- President Lepre explained that the University is putting together opportunities to assist federal workers who are being laid off, such as offering them a scholarship to enroll in our graduate programs. Federal workers being laid off could impact SU's enrollment. This would be a way to help our enrollment and assist the community.

b. Rescheduling of Town Halls

- President Lepre thanked Staff Senate for being willing to reschedule their town hall. They are looking at dates at the end of April/early May for the Staff Town Hall and a Faculty Town Hall.

c. VPSA Departure – Next Steps

- President Lepre said that Vice President of Student Affairs Dane Foust is retiring after this semester. His last day is in July. She is considering if there is a way to combine Student Affairs with other divisions without needing to fill the VPSA position in order to save money but would not compromise student services.

d. Other

- President Lepre said they need to get the message out that participants in the Commencement ceremony at the stadium are not permitted to wear spiked-heeled shoes. If anyone is wearing spiked-heeled shoes, they will be given a pair of socks to wear instead. Lacrosse will be in the middle of the post-season, and the turf needs to be protected. She asked Olivia if SGA would help get the word out.
- Joe asked if the President's Advisory Team (PAT) still exists. The President responded that it does still exist but will not meet as often. They are trying to amend it to make it more beneficial. Also, there is now an extended group of people sitting on Cabinet. Tim added that PAT meetings seemed primarily informational; information can be sent out in an email. For instance, the President's Tuesday Report is a great source of information.

Old Business

Consortium Committees

- Joerg said he discussed the proposed idea with the Faculty Senate officers. They do not see the point of having the proposed group in addition to this Consortium Coordinating Committee.
- Olivia added that students do want to be involved in meeting with faculty and staff.

New Business

a. Support for International Students, Faculty and Staff

- Joerg asked if there is any advice or support the University can offer faculty, staff and students on visas and green cards. Should we tell those faculty not to travel? Offer them a telephone number? President Lepre replied that she will ask about this on the weekly USM leadership call next week. Also, the Assistant Attorney General is providing information for the USM institutions to post on our websites.

b. Campus Visit by Student Regent Dhruvak Mirani, May 5

- Gina reported that USM Student Regent Dhruvak Mirani will be visiting campus on Monday, May 5th. He will be visiting all USM institutions this spring. He has requested time with President Lepre and Cabinet, a tour of campus, meetings with the SGA and the GSC, and an open student forum.

Governance Body Reports

Report from Faculty Senate – Joerg Tuske

- Motions were passed recently as a result of the Faculty Financial Oversight Committee. They will work with Staff Senate to resolve any concerns that arose in response to the motions.

Report from Staff Senate – Joe Benyish

- Staff Senate has almost completed all outreach sessions. They have learned a lot from the staff they have met with. The main concerns from staff seem to be employee recognition and professional development. They will share out some of the general themes when the Staff Town Hall is rescheduled.
- They are working to come up with new ideas for staff morale, including working with Michael Taggart in HR regarding employee recognition. This is especially important in these difficult budget times.

- This morning, he sent a letter to Faculty Senate from Staff Senate expressing Staff Senate's concerns regarding a recent Faculty Senate motion. They will work this out with Faculty Senate.
- Staff Senate will again be submitting a proposal for summer hours.

Report from Adjunct Faculty Caucus – Tim Robinson

- There is some concern among adjunct faculty that classes will be combined and fewer adjuncts will be needed, as a result of the required budget cuts.
- The proposed solution to the door access issue by the administration at a recent consortium meeting is not a viable solution. There needs to be a better solution for returning adjunct faculty than turning off their Gull Cards between contracts. Eli replied that they are working on a solution. The University is also currently beta testing a buzzer system in some of the campus buildings.

Report from Student Government Association (SGA) – Olivia Ingrao

- SGA recently passed legislation to work with Faculty Senate to ensure that faculty members include AI policies in their syllabus.
- In the wake of the pepper spray incident, students have had a lot of questions regarding pepper spray. Eli added that according to the current Student Code of Conduct, weapons are prohibited, and pepper spray is considered a weapon. Possibly SGA would want to advocate to have that language amended. President Lepre suggested that Olivia reach out to Eli for language to respond to any questions she receives.

Report from Graduate Student Council (GSC) – Abigail Isaacson

- Graduate students had some concerns with the planned Commencement ceremony as well as the ceremony for satellite students. They met with Michelle Stokes and Jessica Scott to discuss what could be done to enhance the ceremonies.

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Recorder: Gina Boobar