



# ACADEMIC SENATE

The primary voice of the faculty in academic and professional matters at Santa Rosa Junior College.

## MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2026, 3:15 p.m. Santa Rosa:  
Senate Chambers, Doyle Library 145  
Petaluma: Room 690  
Richard Call Bldg.  
ZOOM ID: 958 4627 3808

**PRESENT** M. Anderman, L. Aspinall, A. Atilgan Relyea, S. Avasthi, L. Branen-Ahumada, J. Bush, J. Davis, K. Fortunati, K. Frindell Teuscher, G. Garcia, V. Hamilton (Petaluma), T. Jacobson, J. Kremer, D. Lemmer, L. D. Lukas, S. McGregor-Gordon, T. Melvin, G. Morre, J. Nieto, M. Ohkubo, A. Oliver, M. Papa, N. Perrone, N. Persons, T. Ruiz (Petaluma), E. Schmidt, I. Tircuit

**ABSENT** S. Rosen (proxy N. Perrone)

**GUESTS** M. Senecal (proxy J. Barrett), R. Holcomb

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order by President Stover at 3:15 p.m.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT** The land acknowledgement statement was read by Senator N. Persons.

*We acknowledge that we gather at Santa Rosa Junior College on the territorial traditional land of the Pomo People in Santa Rosa and the Coast Miwok People in Petaluma, past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.*

### OPEN FORUM

1. **J. Van Gorp**, yielded his time to S. Kessler.
2. **S. Kessler**, concerns were expressed on behalf of a group of concerned counselors. Claims were made that a contract Counseling faculty hiring process was failed after qualified candidates were recommended, raising concerns about the disregard of faculty judgment, lack of explanation, and possible deviations from established hiring procedures. Issues with communication and transparency that may affect candidate interest, faculty morale, and trust in shared governance were also raised. Implications for institutional credibility and the effectiveness of faculty-led hiring were also outlined.
3. **I. Tircuit**, stated that the halted hiring effort in one department may affect faculty morale and perceptions of respect across the institution. The adequacy of the explanation given for not proceeding with recommended candidates was questioned, and it was suggested that any concerns should have been addressed more directly and transparently. The speaker called for open discussion of the issue and its broader implications for hiring integrity and faculty trust.

[The full text of all available open forum statements can be viewed here.](#)

**JUST CAUSE FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION** None.

### MINUTES

**Minutes of December 3, 2025** (corrected)

**Minutes of January 21, 2026**

Senator Lukas moved to approve both sets of minutes. Seconded. The motion passed with 27 yes votes and one abstention.

|                   |     |                    |     |                          |     |
|-------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| M. Anderman       | yes | V. Hamilton        | yes | M. Ohkubo                | yes |
| L. Aspinall       | yes | T. Jacobson        | yes | A. Oliver                | yes |
| A. Atilgan Relyea | yes | J. Kremer          | yes | M. Papa                  | yes |
| S. Avasthi        | yes | D. Lemmer          | yes | N. Perrone               | yes |
| L. Branen-Ahumada | yes | D. Lukas           | yes | N. Persons               | yes |
| J. Bush           | yes | S. McGregor-Gordon | yes | S. Rosen (proxy Perrone) | yes |

|                      |     |           |         |            |     |
|----------------------|-----|-----------|---------|------------|-----|
| J. Davis             | yes | T. Melvin | yes     | E. Schmidt | yes |
| K. Fortunati         | yes | G. Morre  | abstain | T. Ruiz    | yes |
| K. Frindell-Teuscher | yes | J. Nieto  | yes     | I. Tircuit | yes |
| G. Garcia            | yes |           |         |            |     |

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA** None.

**REPORTS**

1. **President’s Report** J. Stover

The report included updates on recent Senate activities such as the completion of the spring retreat and the planned use of a structured pro-con debate format to broaden participation. Information was shared regarding commencement timing, spring plenary plans, and continued coordination with the District and other groups, including a review of shared governance responsibilities. The report also conveyed District guidance on contract faculty hiring, clarifying that screening committees provide recommendations while final hiring authority rests with District leadership, and concluded with appreciation for faculty engagement and participation.

**INFORMATION**

- **2025 Commencement Timing Updates** M. Senecal (proxy J. Barrett)
  - A proposal was presented to move the commencement start time from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. to reduce health and safety risks related to heat, following incidents of overheating during the last year’s commencement.
  - Improvements to student check-in procedures were described, which significantly reduced delays, though an early check-in time was retained as a buffer to manage unforeseen issues.
  - Faculty raised questions about whether the earlier start time could create barriers for students and families, affect participation, or be mitigated through alternative options such as different check-in times, locations, dates, or evening ceremonies.
  - It was noted that broader changes to commencement structure or scheduling would require further discussion beyond the scope of the current proposal, and all questions and concerns were forwarded for follow-up by the appropriate administrative office.
- **Academic Affairs Report** R. Holcomb
  - An Academic Affairs report was presented outlining key priorities and horizon issues, including enrollment, budget conditions, accreditation, textbook affordability, and implementation of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP).
  - Clarification was provided on data sources used for identifying high-demand instructional areas, with acknowledgment of potential discrepancies and plans to review and update strategies through an upcoming SEMP retreat.
  - Faculty raised concerns about scheduling practices, under-enrolled sections, late identification of high-demand courses, staffing shortages, and the impact of these issues on student advising, completion, and financial aid stability.
  - Questions addressed program viability and growth in areas such as theater, dual enrollment, radiology, and nursing, with responses emphasizing comprehensive analysis, potential use of categorical funding, and coordination to address space, staffing, and equipment constraints.
  - Additional discussion focused on faculty hiring, professional development, and support structures, highlighting the need for clearer long-term planning to maintain academic quality, equity goals, institutional mission amid retirements, and enrollment pressures.

## CONSENT

- 1. Academic Senate Workgroup to Develop Spring Plenary Resolutions.** *Does the Academic Senate wish to create a senator-based workgroup for developing state-level resolutions on Common Course Numbering (CCN) and/or AB1705 reform?* [Practices and Guidelines for Forming Academic Senate Work Groups are outlined here.](#) Additional resources include the [ASCCC Resolution Handbook](#) and [the timeline for Spring Resolution Development.](#)

The consent item passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

## ACTION

- 1. AP7120A: Addressing Final Concerns (including updated AP7102A document)** M. Ohkubo. The Academic Senate will review the changes approved by the body in Fall 2025, and address final questions and concerns in support of finalizing our mutual collaboration with the District.
  - Revisions to AP 2410 were discussed, focusing on recently approved changes related to hiring procedures, including optional ranking of candidates, mandatory student participation on committees, mandatory student interaction demonstrations, and optional inclusion of outside faculty members.
  - Questions and concerns were raised about reference-check procedures, student representation on hiring committees, and the clarity of language describing how student members are selected, particularly the balance of authority between academic departments and the Student Government Association (SGA).
  - Senators emphasized the importance of ensuring that student representatives have appropriate disciplinary relevance while maintaining equity, transparency, and alignment with SGA processes.
  - The discussion concluded with agreement to gather additional information on SGA procedures for selecting students for hiring committees and on the District’s position regarding consistent language for student selection across job classifications, to clarify the relevant language, and to incorporate responses from both the District and SGA before returning the revised procedure as an action item at a future meeting.

## BREAK

- 2. Correcting the Bylaws.** *Does the Academic Senate wish to approve a correction to the Bylaws as based on [consent item four \(see agenda here\)](#) as passed on [7 May 2025 \(see minutes here\)](#) entitled [Adoption of Faculty Professional Development Senate Subcommittee Revitalization Recommendations](#)? [Support document available here](#) and any approved change would be made in adherence with our Bylaws, ARTICLE IX: CHANGES TO BYLAWS ([go to end of document online here](#)).*

A correction to the Bylaws was considered, to align the language with prior recommendations, ensuring consistency between the adopted procedures and what was previously recommended. The correction involved striking language as needed to bring the Bylaws into alignment.

Senator Bush made a motion to approve the correction to the Bylaws. Seconded. The motion passed with 27 yes votes and one abstention.

|                      |     |                    |         |                          |     |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------|---------|--------------------------|-----|
| M. Anderman          | yes | V. Hamilton        | yes     | M. Ohkubo                | yes |
| L. Aspinall          | yes | T. Jacobson        | yes     | A. Oliver                | yes |
| A. Atilgan Relyea    | yes | J. Kremer          | yes     | M. Papa                  | yes |
| S. Avasthi           | yes | D. Lemmer          | yes     | N. Perrone               | yes |
| L. Branen-Ahumada    | yes | D. Lukas           | yes     | N. Persons               | yes |
| J. Bush              | yes | S. McGregor-Gordon | yes     | S. Rosen (proxy Perrone) | yes |
| J. Davis             | yes | T. Melvin          | yes     | E. Schmidt               | yes |
| K. Fortunati         | yes | G. Morre           | yes     | T. Ruiz                  | yes |
| K. Frindell-Teuscher | yes | J. Nieto           | abstain | I. Tircuit               | yes |
| G. Garcia            | yes |                    |         |                          |     |

3. **Establishing an Honors Program at Santa Rosa Junior College. Following up on the Information item from 3 December 2025 (see agenda here), shall the Academic Senate recommend the establishment of a local Honors Program as drawing inspiration from **Saddleback Honor's Program Overview** and the **Honors Program Local Information Sheet**? And if so, do we wish to form a workgroup to develop a proposal? Practices and Guidelines for Forming Academic Senate Work Groups are outlined here.**

- Establishing a local Honors program was discussed.
- Guidelines and practices for forming an Academic Senate work group were provided.
- Faculty would be broadly invited to participate in the process.
- Clarification was requested regarding District approval and potential financial implications.
- It was noted that exploring the program does not commit the college to funding, and making a recommendation falls within the Senate's purview.

Senator Persons made a motion to establish an Honors program. Seconded. Questions arose about whether this implied forming a task force or simply approving a program.

Senator Persons sought permission from the body to withdraw and restate her motion. There was no opposition to the request to withdraw the motion, and the motion was withdrawn.

Senator Persons then moved to form a work group to bring a proposal back this semester to establish a local Honors program. Seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

4. **Creating Site-Specific Faculty Forums.** Does the Academic Senate wish to create the opportunity for site-specific faculty forums (*which are senate subcommittees and subject to the Brown Act*) at non-Santa Rosa district sites in support of the same privileges offered to Petaluma Faculty Forum as listed below (**and online in the Bylaws**, Article III, Section 6)?

Duties:

1. To promote the professional interests of the faculty of the Sonoma County Junior College District and to participate in the collegial governance of the college as it specifically concerns the Petaluma Campus.
  2. To promote communication and mutual understanding among the faculty on the Petaluma campus, to strengthen communication between the Petaluma and Santa Rosa campuses, and to facilitate and maintain communication between the PFF and the Academic Senate of the college.
  3. To promote the development and maintenance of teaching excellence within the framework of academic freedom and professional responsibilities and ethics, especially as this pertains to the Petaluma campus.
- Creating site-specific faculty forums at non-Santa Rosa district sites was discussed.
  - These forums would be subcommittees of the Senate and subject to the Brown Act, requiring public meetings and published agendas.
  - The intent is to offer the same privileges currently available to the Petaluma Faculty Forum.
  - Participation would be voluntary.
  - Interest at other sites has been expressed, and all faculty from each site would be eligible to participate.
  - Questions were raised about representation, including associate and contract faculty participation, and whether faculty must have an assignment at the site to join.
  - It was clarified that these forums would operate similarly to other Senate subcommittees, with college service credit but no reassigned time for members.
  - The proposal emphasizes providing the opportunity for forums, rather than requiring or pre-establishing them.

Senator Lemmer moved that the Academic Senate creates the opportunity for site specific faculty forums which are senate subcommittees and subject to the Brown Act at non-Santa Rosa district sites. Seconded. The motion passed with 27 yes votes and one absent.

|                      |     |                    |        |                          |     |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------|--------|--------------------------|-----|
| M. Anderman          | yes | V. Hamilton        | yes    | M. Ohkubo                | yes |
| L. Aspinall          | yes | T. Jacobson        | yes    | A. Oliver                | yes |
| A. Atilgan Relyea    | yes | J. Kremer          | yes    | M. Papa                  | yes |
| S. Avasthi           | yes | D. Lemmer          | yes    | N. Perrone               | yes |
| L. Branen-Ahumada    | yes | D. Lukas           | yes    | N. Persons               | yes |
| J. Bush              | yes | S. McGregor-Gordon | yes    | S. Rosen (proxy Perrone) | yes |
| J. Davis             | yes | T. Melvin          | absent | E. Schmidt               | yes |
| K. Fortunati         | yes | G. Morre           | yes    | T. Ruiz                  | yes |
| K. Frindell-Teuscher | yes | J. Nieto           | yes    | I. Tircuit               | yes |
| G. Garcia            | yes |                    |        |                          |     |

**DISCUSSION**      None.

**ADJOURNMENT**    5:00 p.m.

[LINK TO ZOOM RECORDING](#)

[LINK TO MEETING TRANSCRIPT](#)

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