Wharton County Junior College

Faculty Council Meeting Minutes

Details	
Date	September 1, 2026
Time	3:00 p.m.
Location	CDC, Wharton Library and Zoom

I. Attendance

ATTENDEES						
Chair	Sandra McCarstle					
Vice Chair	Grady Smith					
Note Taker	Gina Wilson					
Attendance	**Member**	**Present**	**Absent**	**Member**	**Present**	**Absent**
	Jessi Snider	✓		Holly Merta	√	
	Julie Rodriguez	✓		David Woods	√	
	Ken Grubb	✓		Matthew Bennett	√	
	David Voulgaris	✓		Melissa Moore	✓	
	Bracha Silverstone	✓		Sharla Walker	✓	
	Stacie Ringleb-Krutilek	√		Jeff Tix	✓	
	Gabriel Escobedo,	✓		Bay Potila	√	
	Varun Gupta	√		Darlene Giesalhart	✓	
	Ranya Ali	√		Sean Valdez	√	
Others Present	Peter Anderson; Lacey Gann, Wendy Wood, Yvonne Smith					

Call to Order

1. Faculty Senate President Sandra McCarstle called the meeting to order.

2. The President reviewed Robert's Rules of Order and meeting expectations for new and returning members. The review included quorum requirements, member roles, motions, seconds, discussion, voting, courtesy, and staying on topic.

3. A quorum was confirmed. The President noted that there was no unfinished old business and proceeded to the nine agenda items.

II. Old Business

DISCUSSION

1. No unfinished old business was reported.

III. New Business

DISCUSSION

1. Sugar Land Lease. Peter Anderson requested clarification from administration regarding the status and future plan for the Sugar Land lease. Members discussed the importance of knowing whether the lease will be renewed and what plans would be in place if it is not. Grady Smith made Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Inquire with administration regarding the status of the Sugar Land lease. Motion passed.

2. Facilities Renovations. Peter Anderson introduced, and senate members discussed whether planned facilities renovations and master planning would be addressed equitably across campuses, divisions, departments, and programs. Jessi Snider noted that facilities working-group meetings with the architectural firm were upcoming and could provide additional information. Motion to table the item until after those meetings. Grady Smith made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion tabled until after scheduled facilities meeting.

3. Sugar Land Bookstore. Peter Anderson introduced, and senate members discussed whether a bookstore could be restored at Sugar Land, particularly now that WCJC and UH use Follett. Discussion included bookstore pop-ups, the increasing use of OER materials, and the need for students to access basic supplies such as Scantrons, pens, and pencils. David Voulgaris made a motion, Ken Grubb seconded. Motion: Ask administration about the status of bookstore services at Sugar Land and access to materials students need. Motion passed.

4. Salary Transparency. Peter Anderson introduced, and senate members discussed questions about the new salary structure, how individual salary increases were determined, differences among degree and experience levels, the reduced detail in published salary information, and why contracts were being signed before final salary amounts were known to employees. Grady Smith made a motion, Gina Wilson seconded. Motion: Request a conversation with administration regarding salary transparency, published pay scales, how salaries are determined, and the timing of salary information relative to signing contracts. Motion passed.

5. Bookstore Concerns, Wharton and Richmond. Grady Smith introduced on behalf of constituents, and senate members discussed concerns were raised about delayed textbook orders, students being unable to obtain required books, limited bookstore hours at Richmond, and the need for evening and summer access. David Voulgaris made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Bring concerns about bookstore operations at Wharton and Richmond to administration, including textbook availability and operating hours. Motion passed.

6. Financial Aid Student Concerns. Grady Smith introduced, and senate members discussed summer financial-aid staffing, long student wait times, and confusion when the office location changed. The discussion emphasized the need for adequate staffing and clear communication so students can receive timely assistance including during summer terms when students are still in school for programs that extend or begin during non-traditional semesters. David Voulgaris made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Bring concerns about financial-aid staffing and location changes to administration. Motion passed.

7. Long-Term Disability Benefit Changes. Grady Smith introduced on behalf of constituents, and senate members discussed the removal of college-funded long-term disability coverage, concerns about how the change was communicated, the effect on employees who may no longer qualify for individual coverage, and whether replacement options are being considered. Concern was expressed that the insurance benefit had been included as part of the employee benefits package at the time of hire and was later removed without a replacement benefit being provided. Faculty discussed the impact of this change and the concern that a benefit originally presented as part of the overall compensation package was eliminated without an alternative being offered. Gina Wilson made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Request explanation, transparency, and justification from administration regarding the disability benefit change, communication surrounding the change, and possible replacement options. Motion passed.

8. Brightspace Attendance. Julie Rodriguez raised concerns and senate members discussed the Brightspace attendance tool, including the amount of manual setup required and the lack of integration with the gradebook. Members noted that other learning-management systems provide more automated attendance functions. Grady Smith made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Bring concerns about Brightspace attendance functionality and gradebook integration to administration. It was also noted that these concerns had previously been brought to the attention of the Distance Education (DE) department. Motion passed.

9. Off-Contract and Summer Work Compensation. The President temporarily transferred the chair to Vice President Grady Smith to present concerns raised by faculty. Sandra McCarstle presented on behalf of constituents, and senate members discussed work performed during the summer by 9-month and 10.5-month employees. Particular concern was expressed regarding department heads and program directors who continue to perform required duties and responsibilities throughout the summer and during periods when they are off contract. Members noted that these employees continue working and fulfilling department head and program director responsibilities during the summer without receiving compensation for that work. Gina Wilson made a motion, Sharla Walker seconded. Motion: Discuss work duties by faculty, department heads/program directors that are 9 or 10.5 month contract that continue to work and carry on with WCJC business over the summer months with no compensation. Motion passes.

IV. Announcements

DISCUSSION
1. Members were encouraged to bring faculty concerns forward so items can be placed on a future agenda.
2. The next regular Faculty Senate meeting is expected the following month.

V. Other Items

DISCUSSION

1. No additional items were brought forward.

VI. Action Items

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING		OWNER	DUE
1.	Follow up with administration on approved motions from the meeting.	Sandra McCarstle	Before next meeting
2.	Revisit facilities-renovation concerns after facilities working-group meetings.	Faculty Senate	Next meeting, if needed
3.	Report administration responses/status updates back to Faculty Senate members.	Sandra McCarstle	Next meeting
4.	Continue collecting faculty concerns for future agendas.	All Senate members	Ongoing

VII. Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT	
1. The meeting adjourned at:	Approximately 4:05 p.m.; Grady Smith moved to adjourn, Sharla Walker seconded
2. Signature Approval:	Gina Wilson