



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE

April 13, 2026

APPROVED

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Ben Adams, Russell Backman, Elijah Barnes (ASG), Mary Ellen Brooks, Alexandra Doyle Bauer, William Dalrymple, Heather Elliott Pham, Kelly Falcone, Gene Gushansky, Jason Jarvinen, Scott Klinger Lawrence Lawson, Melissa Martinez, Vickie Mellos Michael Mufson, Beth Pearson, Russell Sheaffer, Tanessa Sanchez (Zoom – Just Cause -), Karl Seiler, Nina Shmorhun, Nicole Siminski, Alyssa Vafaei, Ashley Wolters, Anastasia Zavodny

ABSENT: Gene Gushansky

GUESTS: Matt Estes, Matt Grills, Sherehe Hollins, Bill Jahnel, Ben Mudgett, Krystal Rypien, Diane Studinka

All votes are presumed unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President, Elizabeth Pearson, in LRC-116 at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was also streamed live on ZOOM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

President Pearson began the meeting by reading the community agreements.

Bill Jahnel, co-chair of Economics, Global Studies, History and Political Science, expressed concerns regarding the ongoing debate over GE degree curriculum requirements, specifically the potential removal of American History and Institutions and Health and Fitness from the core curriculum. He noted that while curriculum co-chairs had presented to the ASG, he had later provided a more historical context to the students regarding the three-year process. Jahnel voiced concern over the framing of "vigorous dissent" as "bullying". He urged the Senate to view the current disagreement as healthy academic discourse.

Senator Lawrence Lawson shared information regarding the appointment of Justin Smiley as acting VPI, stating that Smiley told him in person he was never officially appointed to that role. Lawson expressed that

it is problematic for someone to lead meetings and sign documents in an official capacity without a formal appointment.

Dr. Ben Mudgett, Articulation Officer, spoke on behalf of the GE Subcommittee, strongly refuting claims that the subcommittee was "weaponizing shared governance". He asserted that the subcommittee's actions were designed to engage faculty and students and ensure transparency in development and recommendations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senator Mufson announced that there would be a preview of Herbert Sequenza's solo performance about Diego Rivera on April 21 at 4:00pm and is free for all Palomar students and employees.

Senator Mufson announced the opening of the theater department's production of *Dracula*, a "feminist revenge fantasy" featuring immersive sets and punk aesthetics, which opens on May 1st and runs for two weekends.

Senator Falcone announced that the current week is Regional AccessAbility Week, featuring workshops on math, email, and social media accessibility led by regional experts and Mark Pope, the creator of the Pope Tech accessibility tool.

Ben Mudgett announced details for the inaugural Lavender Recognition Ceremony to honor LGBTQ students and allies, scheduled for May 14th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in LRC-438.

President Pearson e noted that Earth Week begins with Earth Day on April 22nd, and she will personally be giving a talk on birds on Monday morning, April 20th, as part of the Sustainability Committee's events.

President Pearson announced that that documents regarding Title V language changes for academic renewal were attached to the meeting agenda for faculty review.

Dean Studinka announced an extensive update on the Palomar College Help Center, a new unified ticketing platform (help.palomar.edu) launching on April 15th to replace the Remedy system for facilities, information services, and academic technology. She noted that an instructional email would be sent to all employees and students on the morning of the 15th and that office hours would be available during the first week of the launch to assist with the transition.

Senator Siminski announced that a North County coalition is hosting a community patrol training on the Palomar campus on Friday, April 24th at 6:00 p.m.

Senator Siminski announced a reminder that the Solidarity Festival is scheduled for May 2nd.

AGENDA CHANGES

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MSC: Mufson/Sheaffer

Faculty Senate to approve the minutes for April 6, 2026.

The motion carried.

Abstentions: 1 – Senator Falcone

ACTION

A. Committees on Committees (Exhibit 1) – Zavodny

MSC: Zavodny/Mufson

Faculty Senate to approve the result of the ballot for the Manager of Athletics Head Football Coach Hiring Committee.

The Motion Carried.

**Manager of Athletics Head Football Coach Hiring Committee
Dan Early (Athletics), Faculty**

B. Nuventive Pilot and the Future of SLO Assessment – (Exhibit 2.1 & 2.2), Hathaway

MSC: Shmorhun/Doyle Bauer

Faculty Senate to approve the formation of the Learning Outcomes Task Force as amended.

The Motion Carried.

Amendments included:

Changing one role from Instructional Designer to Instructional Designer or Designee
The six divisional representatives to six faculty divisional representatives

C. Reassigned Time Positions (Exhibit 3) – Pearson

MSC: Adams/Lawson

Faculty Senate to confirm the uncontested volunteers for reassigned time positions.

The Motion Carried.

Equivalency Chair – Krystal Rypien
Phi Theta Kappa – Co-Advisor: Jennifer Backman
Phi Theta Kappa – Co-Advisor: Dana O'Callaghan
Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Co-Coordinator – Daniel Cameron Balaszek

INFORMATION

A. ASG Report, Miller

ASG Representative Naomi Miller reported that the student government is currently focused on elections for the next academic year. Candidate forums were held on the day of the meeting and scheduled for the following day, with campaigning to continue until the final week of the semester when voting occurs.

B. The GE Revamp: A History (Part 1) – (Exhibits 4, 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3) Jahnel

Bill Jahnel provided a historical overview of the attempts to revamp local general education requirements, focusing on the period from January to May 2024.

He argued that in 2023, changes were mandated for CalGETC, but a local push began to also remove American History and Institutions and Health and Fitness from local AA/AS degrees.

Jahnel noted that a Spring 2024 presentation by Senate and Curriculum leadership seemed biased, listing seven benefits to removing requirements but zero benefits for keeping them. He presented data from a spring 2024 student survey where no students mentioned History or Health as a barrier to completion, and noted that a faculty survey showed a two-thirds supermajority in favor of keeping the requirements.

Jahnel emphasized that the Senate had voted on May 20, 2024, to keep district requirements, and he expressed concern that the current proposal to remove them contradicts that vote and the collected data. In response to clarifying questions, Jahnel stated he stopped attending GE Subcommittee meetings after concerns were raised that his presence might "intimidate" members.

C. ASCCC Report – (Exhibit 5), Shmorhun

Senator Shmorhun provided an overview update on her recent role as Palomar's delegate at the ASCCC plenary held in Santa Rosa .

She noted that while the final resolution packet is still undergoing edits and will be released in a few weeks, nearly all resolutions passed, with the exception of three specific items.

A major highlight of the report was a session on Shaping AI in the California Community Colleges. During this session, the Chancellor's Office emphasized that solutions for authentic learning in the age of AI must be discipline-specific, with their first official response being a request for "grace" while faculty do the work of coming together to solve these issues.

The report also covered a session on the legislative and budget landscape, which provided insights into the direction of the upcoming state budget.

Shmorhun noted a controversial session regarding reclaiming assessment and trust in the AI era, though she noted there was very little time for comments despite the fact that concerns were shared by almost every school in attendance.

Regarding the voting process, she invited senators to review a spreadsheet of her votes, which she based on the recommendations of her Palomar colleagues, discourse with other delegates, and her own best judgment.

During the subsequent clarifying questions, Senator Lawson requested clarification on the Pearson Learning Studio pilot involving "Agentic AI" for instructor-led teaching. Shmorhun explained that certain schools have already opted into this pilot, where AI is used to teach in specific disciplines.

Shmorhun expressed shock at the Chancellor's Office's hands-off approach, noting that they told faculty "you all must figure it out" and admitted they partnered with Google simply because Google was the company that said yes.

Shmorhun noted a resolution regarding part-time faculty, which passed with approximately 68% of the vote. Senator Dalrymple added that, according to the resolution's author, the primary debate was not necessarily about the proposal's value, but rather whether it fell within the official purview of the Senate to be involved in the matter.

DISCUSSION

A. GE Subcommittee Progress Report, (Exhibit 6), Mellos, Mudgett

Ben Mudgett and Vickie Mellos, co-chairs of the General Education (GE) Subcommittee, presented a progress report on the ongoing effort to look at Palomar GE requirements.

Mudgett began by clarifying that their work is centered on the breadth and depth of a liberal arts education, specifically for students pursuing local terminal degrees (such as welding or automotive technology) rather than those on a transfer path. He emphasized that the subcommittee is not "weaponizing shared governance" but is instead striving for transparency by gathering feedback from the Curriculum Committee, the Senate, and the Associated Student Government (ASG).

Mudgett further stressed that they are not yet ready for a full town hall but intend to host one once more specific details and rubrics are finalized.

A significant portion of the report addressed what Mudgett described as "misunderstandings" regarding the potential removal of American History and Institutions and Health and Fitness. He clarified that these courses would not be "erased", as they would still be offered for majors and other accreditation requirements; however, the proposal would change their status as mandatory district GE requirements.

Mudgett highlighted the issue of double counting. Currently, according to student services, approximately 99% of students use History or Political Science courses to satisfy both the district requirement and the Social and Behavioral Sciences area. Mudgett argued that this prevents students from exploring a true breadth of perspectives because they are incentivized to take courses limited to a narrow set of outcomes (American History and Institution courses). He noted that if the college simply stopped allowing double counting without changing requirements, it would add 10 units to the GE package, making the local degree nearly as long as the transfer-oriented CalGETC pattern and potentially driving students away from local degrees.

The proposed solution presented was the creation of GE Area 7: Lifelong Learning and Self-Development, which would replace the specific district requirements with a broader area focusing on the internal self, external self, and navigating society.

Senator Mellos shared that feedback from the ASG was mixed; while some students favored the flexibility of Area 7 to include topics like financial literacy, nutrition, and meal prepping, others argued that college should remain "academically oriented" and felt that subjects like History should be prioritized over information that is readily available online.

Discussion Points Included:

One senator asked if Area 7 would move away from discipline-specific mandates, and it was clarified that courses need to meet the outcomes to be included in Area 7.

A senator requested that future presentations show a side-by-side "student perspective" (Path A vs. Path B) to clearly illustrate how these changes affect a student's educational plan and graduation timeline.

A strong personal concern was shared, arguing that in the current political climate, a solid understanding of American institutions is important.

One senator noted the perspective that the proposal appeared to do the "opposite" of the Senate's May 2024 vote to maintain district requirements, expressing concern that a "winner" (Area 7) had been selected by the subcommittee before collecting broader feedback. Mudgett countered that Area 7 was just one of the options considered and that the subcommittee was acting on a specific charge from the Curriculum Committee to flush out what that would look like.

The evident confusion regarding the May 2024 vote was noted and it was suggested that the conversation should continue, ultimately agreeing that a town hall is necessary for broader discussion and feedback.

B. DE : Third Party Publisher Resolution – (Exhibit 7.1 & 7.2), Sanchez

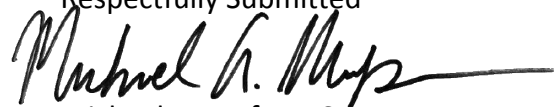
Tabled.

C. Faculty Senate Discussion Regarding Change in Eligibility for Senate Council – (Exhibit 7), Shmorhun

Tabled.

ADJONRNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Michael A. Mufson, Secretary