
Detailed Notes on the ECS Meeting November 21, 2025

Chair's Report

- *On Inviting UAS Members to this ECS Meeting:* UAS members were invited, but not required, to attend this ECS meeting as guests who could participate in the conversations, but not vote. The only votes taken were for approval of the agenda and minutes. The hope was for UAS members to have more opportunity to participate in discussions.
- *On the Teach-In:* This year 1,375 participants attended the 34 Teach-In sessions. Last year 1,274 participants attended the 39 sessions.
- *On Reach Higher Together Commitments:* Chair Karasinski shared the Reach Higher Together Commitments, which were shown at the Reach Higher Collaborative Leadership Network meeting. Chair Karasinski and some UAS members expressed gratitude for the broad engagement and multiple opportunities for faculty and other stakeholders to provide input. Some UAS members shared that their input has been incorporated into the final commitments. For example, academic excellence was not in the commitments. It was noted that divisional plans will add more specificity to the plan. UAS will vote on endorsement of these commitments and the Academic Affairs Strategic Framework at its December 5 meeting.

Provost's Report

- *On the Budget Exercise:* The Academic Affairs budget is complex. The budget exercise, which is a regular practice across organizations, was for each division to identify reallocation opportunities. The goals of Academic Affairs are intentional and thoughtful planning in case of budgetary restrictions and reallocation of resources to support the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan and Reach Higher Together. Initiatives to support include the Corewell and Kirkhof College of Nursing partnership, academic advising, the Structured Learning Assistance program, starting new and transforming existing academic programs, expanding support for digital and AI literacy and experiential learning, and expanding the infrastructure and support for scholarship. The process was collaborative, intentional, and values-driven.

Student Senate Report—none given this week**New Business**

- *On the Discussion on Planning Faculty Fora:* Chair Karasinski had not discussed planning faculty fora during this fall semester, given the multiple University-wide conversations in which faculty have been participating (e.g., Reach Higher Together, the Academic Affairs Strategic Framework, PhD programs). At the last ECS meeting, a suggestion was made for a forum around the budget. The body discussed this suggestion and potential foci were proposed, including discussing shared leadership in the context of budget, that is, UAS can and should contribute to budget conversations. It was recalled that budget reports were given at UAS in the past, the last one was in February 2023; these can be re-initiated. A group of ECS members agreed to draft an outline for faculty fora to be held in the Winter semester.
- *On the Discussion on the Time and Ratio of ECS to UAS Meetings:* At its meeting on December 5, UAS will vote whether or not to change the meeting times of ECS and UAS from 3:00-5:00 pm Fridays to 2:00-4:00 pm on Fridays. Pros of the change were stated as being more inclusive for faculty whose religious practices or family responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care) made staying until 5:00 challenging. Cons of the change were stated as more overlap with class times, which would make it difficult for faculty who have Friday afternoon courses to be UAS or ECS members. On the ratio of ECS to UAS meetings, the [SG 1.01.6.1](#) states that the UAS will meet at least once per semester and [SG 1.01.7.1](#) states that ECS will schedule at least 8 meetings per semester. However, some members of UAS have indicated a desire for more discussions, and a desire for more interaction with University leadership has been stated. This leads to longer agendas, and extending time is not optimal. Having a UAS chat in the Teams and beginning to use timed agendas are ways UAS is trying to improve efficiency. Discussions on what it means for ECS to be the agenda-setting body for UAS were also held. [BOT 3.1.4](#) states, "The Executive Committee of the Senate (ECS) serves as the clearing house for matters to be presented to the UAS. Such matters are discussed by ECS before its recommendations are made to the Senate." Members discussed whether this means a full discussion should be held on each matter by the ECS prior to an agenda item going to UAS. Duplicative conversations are held at times at ECS and UAS. A question was raised about whether the ECS discussion should center on whether an item is ready for discussion at UAS, rather than on the merits of an item. It was decided that the May ECS retreat will be a retreat of the full UAS, and the topic of the ratio of ECS to UAS meetings will be a large part of the agenda.
- *On the Update on Conversations around PhD Programs at GVSU:* Provost Drake reported that three sessions were held, and 130 people RSVPed that they were attending. Participants exhibited a deep level of care and candid

conversations were held. Points raised during these conversations included GVSU's identity of being an excellent institution for undergraduate learning, how PhD programs fit into the teacher-scholar model, and resourcing graduate programs and students. The slides and feedback form from these discussions are available on the [Provost's Office website](#) and the feedback form is open until December 5. After Thanksgiving next steps will be discussed.