



University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393

University Governance
Faculty Council

https://www.umb.edu/faculty_staff/faculty_council

November 10th, 2025

Minutes for Monday, November 10, 2025, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Members Present: Abdelkrim Mouhib (CLA); Amy Todd (CLA); Ana Lindsay (CNHS); Andre Maharaj (CEHD); Anthony Van DerMeer (CLA); Dan Finn (CLA); Gonzalo Bacigalupe (CEHD); Gretchen Umholtz (CLA); James Soldner (CEHD); Jose D’Incao (CSM); Judith Pare (CNHS); Kathryn Archard (CM); Leon Zurawicki (CM); Lorena Estrada-Martinez (SFE); Lynne Benson (CLA); Marlene Kim (CLA); Mehran Azimi (CM); Nelson Lande (CLA); Niya Sa (CSM); Peter Lert (CSM); Richard Hunter (CLA); Shaman Hatley (CLA); Timothy Oleksiak (CLA); Travis Johnston (CLA)

Members Absent: Larry Kaye (CLA); Lisa Heelan-Fancher (CNHS); Todd Drogy (HC); Tyler Hull (CM); Daniel Gascon (CLA - *on sabbatical Fall 2025*); Jeffrey Stokes (CNHS - *on sabbatical Fall 2025*); Lusa Lo (CEHD - *on sabbatical Fall 2025*)

Representatives Present: Caroline Coscia (FSU), Michael Mahan (PSU), Alexa MacPherson (CSU), Jonathan Vega Martinez (GEO)

I. Motion to Approve or Amend the Agenda

Motion Approved – unanimous

II. Motion to approve the September Meeting Minutes

- **Amendment to September Minutes (Item V.2: Changes to Graduate Assistantships’ Benefits):** Amend as follows (revisions indicated in *red*):
Prior to Fall 2025, all Graduate Assistantship packages included Tuition Waiver and Health Insurance. Chairs notified in late summer that effective this semester only Assistantships centrally *allocated funded* by Office of Graduate Students (OGS) would include these benefits. *Disability accommodations, grants, or Departments* offering Assistantships funded by Grants or *out of* General Operating Funds (GOFs) would be responsible for covering the costs of Tuition Waivers from own budgets.

Amendment Approved - unanimous
Motion Approved, as amended – unanimous

III. Motion to approve the October Meeting Minutes

Motion Approved – unanimous

IV. Motion to approve the General Education Committee and Subcommittee Membership (See [Appendix A](#))

- Friendly Amendment: update the college affiliation for Yijia Eddie Zhao from CSM to CM, to correct typo on original member list.

Motion Approved – unanimous

V. Motions from the Graduate Studies Committee (See [Appendix B](#))

Motion Approved – unanimous

VI. Motion to request information from administration on procedures for handling FOIA requests of faculty syllabi by external parties

Background: August 6, 2026: [Bean Town Times](#) (a partisan conservative media outlet) reported a FOIA request for faculty syllabus was submitted. Therefore,

BE IT MOVED that Administration present to the Faculty Council its procedures for the handling of FOIA requests of faculty syllabi by external parties;

BE IT FURTHER MOVED that Administration shares with the Faculty Council best practices for submitting syllabi to departments or other university systems such as Curriculog.

- Provost Berger advises the University will not provide course syllabi in response to FOIA requests. Per consultation with Office of General Counsel, University has determined that course syllabi constitute exempted scholarly works qualifying for ‘intellectual property’ statutory exemption to Massachusetts Public Records Law.
- Provost acknowledges that University has provided syllabi in response to FOIA requests in the past. In these instances, University coordinated with Faculty member to redact sensitive information and charged requestors for labor costs associated with compiling and redacting reports. Provost reaffirms that for current and future FOIA requests, statutory exemptions enable University to not provide course syllabi at all.
- Provost confirms that staff and faculty may still provide syllabi to prospective students and external colleagues (e.g. for determining course equivalencies with offerings at other institutions). Office of General Council’s guidance is not intended

to interfere in the good faith exchange of information amongst staff members conducting the affairs of the University.

- Provost advises that governance documents are public record, information within such documents pertaining to specific course materials could still be redacted (e.g. Faculty Council Minutes are public record, but any references to specific course materials within them would qualify for redactions).
- **Motion to Withdraw Motion:** Given that Provost's responses have adequately addressed the concerns raised in the original motion, Faculty Council withdraws this request for more information.

Motion to Withdraw Motion - Approved, unanimous

Questions regarding obligations and responsibilities pertaining to FOIA requests and information sharing should be directed to Matthew Fenlon (Assistant Chancellor Government Relations, Special Assistant to the Chancellor) Matthew.Fenlon@umb.edu and Megan Sullivan (Vice Chancellor Marketing & Engagement) Megan.Sullivan@umb.edu

VII. Motion to form an ad hoc UMass Boston Faculty Council First Amendment Defense Committee

BE IT MOVED that Faculty Council create an ad hoc Faculty Council First Amendment Defense Committee.

- Colleagues wanting to see where these ideas emerged from can look to: <https://facultyfirstresponders.com/>
- Proposal is to establish a committee to support and assist Faculty members facing threats and harassment based on course content that is politically scrutinized, particularly regarding concerns around publicly circulating 'Professor Watchlists'. Beyond the purview of the strictly legalistic defense tactics that the University and Office of General Counsel are equipped to provide, this proposal strives to establish a community of care within the institutional setting.
- Faculty Council By-Laws (Art. 10, Sec. B.2) specify procedures for establishing new Ad-Hoc Committees, including details of committee's purpose and composition.
- **Motion to Table Discussion:** Given that current motion lacks sufficient details necessary to proceed with establishing an Ad-Hoc committee, there will instead be a Working Group convened to review relevant By-Law provisions and revise motion as needed to bring a formal proposal for an Ad-Hoc Committee for consideration at subsequent Faculty Council meeting. Timothy Oleksiak agrees to serve as convener of Working Group.

Motion to Table Discussion of Motion - Approved, unanimous

VIII. Motion to Discuss the Acceptable Use Policy, Revised May 2025

- Concerns with AUP Policy raised during April 2025 Faculty Council Meeting. See supporting documents: [Information Security Policies, Acceptable Use Policy Documents](#)
- AUP has been revised to address concerns raised, through consultative process between Garrett Smith (Deputy Chancellor), Wil Khouri (Assistant Vice Chancellor, Information Security Officer), and FC Academic Technology Committee. Revised AUP available here: [UMB-AUP-ISOPOL04-25-R2-Acceptable Use Policy.docx](#)
- Academic Technology Committee requests feedback from Faculty Councilors by Monday, November 24th. Feedback may be submitted directly on draft document or sent to Travis.Johnston@umb.edu.
- AUP will be placed on agenda for December meeting for further discussion.

IX. Motion Opposing the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education" (Amy Todd) (see Appendix C below)

- Motion is adapted from a motion endorsed by the UMass Amherst Faculty Senate
- Provost Berger advises the UMass Boston has not received a direction invitation to join Compact. Discussion of aligned values and agreement between Administration and Faculty.

Motion Approved – 17 in favor, 1 abstained, 1 opposed

X. Discussion of previously circulated reports from union representatives:

- Reports posted: [6. Reports from Representatives to Faculty Council](#)

A. Classified Staff Union – Alexa MacPherson (CSU President)

- No discussion.

B. Professional Staff Union – Michael Mahan (PSU Representative)

- Contract Negotiations have now surpassed 500 days. University has declared impasse. Department of Labor hearing on November 17th to determine if impasse case will be accepted, or sent back for continued bargaining.

C. Faculty Staff Union – Caroline Coscia (FSU President)

- Anti-Racism Grant applications due December 3rd. FSU is seeking members to sit on application review committee.
- NTT Professional Development Funds were secured in recent contract. Information on accessing those funds being shared with week.

D. Graduate Employee Organization – Jonathan Vega Martinez (GEO Representative)

- Scholarly Support Funds were doubled in most recent contract. Funds have already been fully disbursed within hours of application opening.
- Provost Berger responses to question about memo clarifying definition of Graduate Assistants, advises it will be released within a week.

XI. Discussion of previously circulated reports from administrators:

- Reports posted: [5. Administrators' Reports](#)

A. Chancellor - Marcelo Suárez-Orozco

B. Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs – Joseph Berger

C. Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance – Kathleen Kirleis

XII. Discussion of previously circulated reports from student government:

- No discussion, no reports posted.

XIII. New Business

- No discussion.

XIV. Motion to Adjourn

Motion Approved – unanimous

Appendix A

General Education Committee and Subcommittee Membership Academic Year 2026

All appointments are for one year (unless indicated as ex officio) and renewable.

Subcommittee chairs are pending election unless indicated.

Serra Acar, CEHD (Early Childhood Education and Care)
Cassandra Alexopoulos, CLA (Communication)
Hadi Banat, Director, CLA (English) Director, English as a Second Language Program
Lynne Benson, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Faculty Councilor
Lynne LeBlanc, CLA (Classics and Religious Studies)
Lauren Bowen, CLA (English), Director, Composition Program
Shawna Butler, Manning College (Nursing)
Neal Bruss, CLA (English), Coordinator, First-Year Seminars
Rachel Drew, Manning College (Exercise and Health Science) Spring 2026 only
Karla Schallies, CSM (Biology)
Lauren Sullivan, Coordinator, Intermediate Seminars, CLA (Anthropology)
Elizabeth S. Sweet, CLA (Anthropology), Chair (2025), Quantitative Reasoning Subcommittee
Yijia Eddie Zhao, CM (Accounting and Finance)

Ex officio

Tim Blackman, Director, Undergraduate Studies
Betsabe Gomez, Associate Director, Writing Proficiency, Undergraduate Studies
Lynnell Thomas, Associate Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence, Undergraduate Studies

Distribution Subcommittee

Neal Bruss, CLA (English)
Ting Chen, CM (Accounting and Finance)
Shuai Jin, CLA (Political Science)
Nino Keadze, CLA (Latin American and Iberian Studies)
Sheldon Kovitz CSM (Mathematics)
Lisa Rivera, CLA (Philosophy)
Barbara Worley CLA (Anthropology)
Aimee D'Avignon, CEHD, Director, Office of Student Success, ex officio

Diversity Subcommittee

Sowmya Balachandran, School for the Environment
Miguel Montalva Barba, CLA (Sociology)
Neal Bruss, CLA (English)
Samantha E. Erskine, CM (Management)
Phil Gona, Manning College (Urban Public Health)
Karen Grayson, CLA (English)
Azizah Jor'Dan, Manning School (Exercise and Health Sciences)

Marcelle Mentor, CEHD (Curriculum and Instruction)
Suisui Wang, CLA (Women's and Gender Studies)
Aimee D'Avignon, CEHD, Director, Student Success Center, ex officio

Quantitative Reasoning Subcommittee

Neal Bruss, CLA (English)
Jie Chen, University Senior Statistician
Chris Contreras, CLA (Sociology)
Karen Crounse, CSM (Mathematics) Math 114G Coordinator Joao de Souza, CLA (Economics) Spring 2026 only.
Arthur Eisenkraft, CSM (Physics), CEHD, and Honors College
Eric Grinberg, CSM (Mathematics)
Albert Kao, CSM (Biology)
Georgia Mavrommati, School for the Environment Fall 2026 only
Reed Reynolds, CLA (Communication)
Sung Park, MCHS (Gerontology)
Elizabeth S. Sweet, CLA (Anthropology) Chair (2025)
Laurel Wainwright, CLA (Psychology)

Seminars Assessment Subcommittee

Neal Bruss, CLA (English), Coordinator, First-Year Seminars, Convener
Meredith Gunning, CLA (Philosophy)
Virginia Karlis, CLA (English)
Meesh McCarthy, Center for Academic Excellence
Michael Motia, CLA (Classics and Religious Studies)
Lauren Sullivan, Coordinator, Intermediate Seminars, CLA (Anthropology)

Writing Proficiency Subcommittee

Hadi Banat, CLA (English), Director of English as a Second Language, Academic Support Programs
Lauren Bowen, Director, First-Year Composition, CLA (English)
Neal Bruss, CLA Coordinator, First-Year Seminars (English)
Deborah Budden CLA (English)
Maria Carvajal Regidor, Director, University Writing Center
John Hess, CLA (English)
Lauren Sullivan, Coordinator, Intermediate Seminars, CLA, (Anthropology)
Bryan Williams, Center for Academic Excellence
Raul Ybarra, (English) CLA

Ex Officio

Kathryn Archard, Director, Writing Programs, College of Management
Robin Babcock, Manager, Writing Center, Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Betsabe Gomez, Associate Director, Writing Proficiency, Undergraduate Studies
Tim Blackman, Director, Undergraduate Studies

Appendix B

GSC Motions for November 10, 2025 FC Meeting

All materials available for review on Curriculog

Motion #1

From: CLA

Request for a course change, to change the description of APLING 891 Qualifying Paper Seminar, to add a prerequisite of no incompletes and a GPA of 3.0 or above, and to change the grading scheme to Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

Old description: This required 3-credit course supports students in the development of the Qualifying Paper, a required element in the APLING program. It considers common issues such as finding a researchable question, designing and conducting a literature review, beginning a conceptual framework, and making a timeline for work on the QP. Some classes will be structured.

New description: This required 3-credit course supports students in the development of the Qualifying Paper, a required element in the APLING Ph.D. program. It considers common issues such as finding a researchable question, designing and conducting a literature review, establishing a conceptual framework, and making a timeline for work on the dissertation. Through readings about style, writing, applied linguistics research areas, and presentations for peer and instructor feedback, students create and refine their qualifying paper for departmental review.

Rationale: The catalog description has been amended to provide a clear and concise public-facing description of the course content and to rectify grammatical inconsistencies and typographical errors in the previous description. The internally enforced departmental policy that students have no incompletes and a GPA of 3.0 or above in order to enroll in this first Ph.D. benchmark course should be added to the course catalog for the purpose of transparency. Assigning a grade of S/U is a better reflective of the formative and summative assessments than assigning a traditional letter grade.

Motion #2

From: CLA

Request for a course change, to change the maximum number of credits for ECON 698 Mentored Research Project from five to six. ECON 698 is a required course for the MA in Applied Economics. This course change is also related to a program change for the MA in Applied Economics (still in governance).

Description: Economics 698 is a course designed to facilitate completion of the capstone project (or thesis), a critical requirement for the MA degree in Applied Economics. All students taking the course will be required to design and complete a comprehensive

research project that includes the relevant literature, description of methods and data used, analysis of the findings and implications of the research.

Rationale: Students take the course for multiple semesters. During the first semester they take the class, students identify a research question and plan their research proposal. During the second semester, students complete their analysis, present their results in an oral presentation, and write up a capstone/thesis paper. This change in total credits better captures the work and effort students put into their capstone.

Appendix C

Resolution Opposing the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education"

Background: The United States Secretary of Education requested on 10/1/25 that nine universities in the United States agree to a compact with the federal government entitled the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education" (hereafter, "Compact"). The Compact asserts that federal benefits will be jeopardized if an institution of higher education does not sacrifice elements of its institutional autonomy, including academic freedom, freedom of speech, shared governance, lawful admissions practices, and lawful employment practices.

Resolution:

WHEREAS the Trump Administration, on October 1, 2025, presented a Compact containing ten conditions on federal funding to nine national universities, conditions that among other things:

- threaten interference in admission decisions;
- entail the surveillance of community members' personal views;
- demand changes in universities' governance structures and the closure of units deemed ideologically suspect;
- require that institutions commit to the use of force against campus protest and to the enforcement of specific definitions of gender;
- create unacceptable constraints on students' programs of study;
- limit international student enrollments; and
- essentially commit to an annual performance of loyalty to receive federal funding, and

WHEREAS the Compact contains provisions antithetical to the mission and traditions of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, and

WHEREAS the Compact contains provisions which endanger the independence, excellence, and integrity of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, and

WHEREAS the Compact likely violates state and federal law, and infringes upon the constitutional rights of members of the University of Massachusetts-Boston community, and

WHEREAS the University of Massachusetts-Boston exemplifies American academic values of the highest standard, including universal right to free speech and the cultivation of academic freedom; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Council of the University of Massachusetts-Boston firmly opposes this Compact as written and calls upon Chancellor Suárez-Orozco, President Marty Meehan, and the Board of Trustees to also reject this Compact outright as well as

any similar proposal compromising the mission, values, and independence of the University of Massachusetts-Boston.