COMMITTEE NAME: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF UNIVERSITY SENATE (ECUS)
MEETING DATE & TIME: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2025, 2:30-3:15 P.M.
MEETING LOCATION: PARKS HALL 301

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS	"P" denotes Present, "A" denotes Absent, "R" denotes Regrets
P	Alex Blazer (CoAS, ECUS Secretary)
R	Cathy Cox (University President)
R	Nicholas Creel (CoBT, ECUS Chair Emerita)
R	Holly Croft (Library, ECUS Member)
P	Stephanie Jett (CoAS, ECUS Chair)
P	Joyce Norris-Taylor (CoHS, ECUS Vice-Chair)
P	Holley Roberts (Provost)
P	Rob Sumowski (CoE, ECUS Member)
GUESTS	
Brad Fowler, Chair, Artificial Intelligence Policy Review Committee	

Legend
<mark>Highlighted text denotes follow-up.</mark>
Bold denotes action or recommendation.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:36 p.m. by Stephanie Jett (Chair).

II. Approval of Agenda: A **Motion** *to approve the agenda* was made and seconded. **The agenda was approved.**

III. Approval of Minutes: A draft of the 4 Apr 2025 minutes of the Executive Committee had been circulated to the meeting attendees via email. A **Motion** *to approve the minutes* was made and seconded. **The minutes were approved**.

IV. Reports

Presiding Officer Report — Stephanie Jett

1. **Faculty Evaluation Changes to the definition of "noteworthy" from 4s and 5s to 3s for IFRs, T&P, and PTR**
   a. It appears that the **USG has already modified their policy language regarding faculty evaluation, tenure and promotion, and PTR** to reflect that **"noteworthy"** does not have to mean 4s and 5s on the Likert scale, so the job of **FAPC** will be to bring our policies into alignment.
      i. See USG policies [here](#) and [here](#).
      ii. A quote from the Associate Vice Chancellor (Dr. Laura Lynch), "Now institutions have greater flexibility on interpreting what "noteworthy" means. **Institutions can still elect to have a 4 or 5 count as noteworthy,** but that is no longer a minimum requirement at the system level."

b. FAPC is reviewing all IFR, T&P, and PTR policies to bring in alignment with USG policy, but we still need to have larger conversation regarding what "noteworthy" means at GCSU.

2. **Public Syllabi Policy**
    a. See Provost's report, but hiccups are being worked out and timeline for Spring 2026 for CORE and all CoE syllabi = Oct 20th (week ahead of registration opening on Oct 27th)
    b. ALL courses for Summer 2026 and Fall 2026 = March timeframe (dates TBD based on Academic Calendar – one week prior to registration)
    c. Provost also shared that they received an update on the public **posting of CVs** before our meeting:
        i. Public CVs should include:
            1. All institutions attended and degrees or credentials earned
            2. Institutional directory information, such as office address, office phone number, institutional email, and the faculty member's institutional website, if applicable.
            3. Statement of teaching and research interests
            4. **Recent** publications or scholarly output
            5. Any additional institutional requirements
        ii. Institutions should establish a consistent method for listing teaching faculty and providing links to their public curriculum vitae.
        iii. Public CVs should not include personal information about the instructor, such as the home address or personal telephone number.
        iv. Must be implemented for **Spring 2026**
        v. Most of this information is already public via department webpages, but not all

3. **Merit Raises**
    a. Timeline
        i. President mentioned at last Senate meeting in April
        ii. Department managers got guidelines around June 12th then had until June 17th to nominate people to their division heads
        iii. Individuals who received the raises found out via hand delivered letters around Aug 20th to be effective Sept 1st
    b. Only 10% of eligible faculty and 10% eligible staff would get it
    c. President Cox and the HR director attempted to refuse the money, ask if they could spend it differently, etc., but were told no by the Chancellor.
    d. Executive Cabinet understood that this information would be problematic for our community and morale, so they made the decision to do it quietly without drawing too much attention so it would have the least amount of impact due to how few people would actually receive a raise.
        i. They acknowledged that their decision to not communicate anything caused an information vacuum that was and is being filled with misinformation, which is a problem.
        ii. They also acknowledged that they were aware that on a campus like ours, there were no good solutions to the problem caused by the USG (like so

many times) and they thought they were doing the best and most fair thing they could.

       iii. They made the decision to release the communication through Senate at the retreat to increase transparency. I think they also relied on department chairs to handle things the way they thought best for their departments…

       iv. To quote my chair, "I (and many others) are NOT happy with how this all unfolded from Atlanta. I can assure you that there was significant pushback and clarifications requested about this process, including concerns about how it was poorly named and how it deviated from the previous merit allocation. All to no avail."

4. **Return to Work Policy**
   a. Modified summer schedule has staff leaving at 12:30 on Fridays.
   b. USG Return to Work policy mandates someone be in the office until 5 pm every work day.
      i. Who was responsible for staying determined by department/unit and not universally equitable or fair.
      ii. Staff Council feel it would be a good idea to revise the modified schedule policy because it also doesn't save on energy costs as it was originally marketed.

5. **Mission/Vision Revision**
   a. Pressure after one school (Valdosta) was forced to read theirs out loud as an example in a USG meeting to remove all "DEI" language from our mission and vision.
   b. Strategic Planning Committee is working on the issue.

6. **Bobcat Code** I found out through Jennifer Graham and Desaree Henriquez that the **Bobcat Code** had to get a facelift in a rather tight time frame before the start of the semester
   a. USG changes (will send with report) and had to be in a downloadable format (not just as a webpage)
   b. Mostly conduct hearing and sexual misconduct procedural changes, but major overhaul to the hazing policy as a result of the Max Gruver Act and Stop Campus Hazing Act
   c. Had to create an entirely new hazing policy that was directly sent through the USG so no room for shared gov conversations, but letting SAPC know

7. **Cost of Living Adjustments and Pay Scale**
   a. Our current pay scales have not been adjusted to accommodate the 3 or 4 COLAs that have been implemented by the Governor.
   b. Need to be adjusted as we currently have employees that received all and are not at top of their pay scale or even being compensated at the next pay grade up from their offer letter.
      i. When/If they leave, the directive from HR is to go back to original budget, pay grade, and to not give over the mid.
      ii. That position salary offer can potentially be 5k++ less than the person that held the position previously.
      iii. I do not see where this makes sense when it was a COLA adjustment in the first place and signed in to order because the positions were being paid

too little in comparison to the cost of living. Why would the salaries ever go in reverse?

   c. Conversation with Susan Allen regarding a **salary study**

      i. Was not approved by USG, so conducting an **"aging study."** What does it mean to "age salary survey data"?

         1. "Aging salary data is the practice of adjusting pay data from previous years' salary surveys and using it to reflect the current market conditions.

         2. Aging salary data is the process of "time adjusting" or "trending" compensation survey data by applying a percentage increase to reflect current market conditions and bring older data to a common, up-to-date point in time.

         3. This is done by multiplying the original salary data by an annual aging or movement factor, often based on sources like the Employment Cost Index (ECI), to estimate wage changes and maintain competitiveness in compensation planning.

8. **Auxiliary Services** The role of shared governance in **Auxiliary Services**

   a. Conversation with Susan Allen regarding distinguishing between policy and procedures on their end. Policies need shared governance input, but procedures don't always.

9. **Constituent Concern** "Upcoming **new health insurance** premiums and USG's decrease in HSA matching funds. Would be nice to receive some direct communication from GCSU administration as well as understanding about the changes. Yes, I can search for information on my own, but **hearing from local voices is helpful.**" Info released on Aug 22.

   a. Summary of changes:

      i. Increases in deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, co-insurance and/or co-pays across all USG health care plans.

      ii. Increases in monthly employee premiums between $7-$54 per month, depending on the plan and coverage tier.

      iii. The well-being program will continue, and an incentive of up to $100 for employees and covered spouses will be available for completing designated health promotion activities through the health care provider (Anthem or Kaiser).

      iv. A weight loss support program will be available through Weight Watchers for employees and spouses enrolled in Anthem health care plans. Omada weight management programs will be available for those enrolled in Kaiser plans.

      v. For employees enrolled in the Consumer Choice HSA plan, the university's matching contribution to the employee's Health Savings Account will be reduced from $375 to $325 for employee-only coverage and from $750 to $650 for family coverage. The in-network individual out-of-pocket maximum for family tiers increases from $9,200 to $10,000.

      vi. Dental premiums are set to increase between $2-$7 per month based on plan and tier level. There is no change to vision insurance premiums or life insurance premiums for 2026.

      vii. Tobacco and working spouse surcharges will continue at $150 per month. Certification of status is required each enrollment year, or the surcharge will apply. Certification must be done during Open Enrollment in OneUSG Connect – Benefits system.

    b. Relevant sources of information
      i. https://news.uga.edu/board-of-regents-approves-2026-usg-health-care-plans-premiums/
      ii. https://benefits.usg.edu/

    c. I recommended to Provost that she ask **HR to send out information regarding the changes prior to open enrollment period**

10. <u>**Governance Calendar**</u> Procedures for modifying the **Governance Calendar**

    a. Adding a calendar revision procedure stating that changes to University Senate governance dates must be approved by ECUS while changes to university and academic events made by the President's and Provost's Offices can be made to the calendar with just PO approval, under the rationale that university and academic events are advertised by University Senate on the governance calendar and this be an easier process. Requests just need to come from the President and/or Provost's office.

11. <u>**Budget Updates**</u>

    a. **State Account: $3,977.00**
      i. Spent $790 on facility for retreat
      ii. What do we want to do with this money? (Will discuss more in Oct)
      iii. Can't be used for food or swag.
      iv. Can be used to purchase books or other professional development options.
      v. Could shoot for a mid-year or end-of-semester retreat?

    b. **Foundation Account: $TBD** (Foundation budget hasn't been approved by the trustees yet)
      i. Spent $1278.33 on food for retreat

12. <u>**ECUS Discussion**</u>

    a. <u>**Return to Work Policy**</u>
      i. Comment: We might not be able to maintain the Modified Summer Schedule.

    b. <u>**University Senate Meeting Structure**</u> ECUS discussed the structure of University Senate meetings. To highlight staff and student issues, the committee decided to add a Staff Council report and move the SGA report from SAPC to after the President's and Provost's Reports. A USGFC report can be added when necessary. The committee discussed limiting non-administrator report times to 5 minutes focusing on highlights. The committee discussed moving open discussion to between administrator reports and standing committee reports. Additionally, to speed up the flow of information to the campus community, not only the President's and Provost's reports, but all University Senate reports will be posted to FrontPage.

Presiding Officer Elect Report — Joyce Norris-Taylor

1. <u>**Revised Slate of Nominees**</u> will be voted on by SCoN/ECUS-SCC.

2. **Corps of Instruction** The 2025-2026 Corps of Instruction was received from Neil Jones. The list will be sent to deans for review.

V. Unfinished Business

1. There was no unfinished business.

VI. New Business

1. **Operating Procedures** ECUS reviewed its operating procedures.
    a. **ECUS Action** A **Motion** *to approve the operating procedures* was made and seconded. **The operating procedures were approved**.
2. **Governance Calendar** During the summer, ECUS streamlined the calendar revision process, which was unanimously approved by email vote. Adding a calendar revision procedure stating that changes to University Senate governance dates must be approved by ECUS while changes to university and academic events made by the President's and Provost's Offices can be made to the calendar with just PO approval, under the rationale that university and academic events are advertised by University Senate on the governance calendar and this be an easier process. Requests need to originate from the President's or Provost's Office.
3. **University Senate Handbook** Recent practice has been that the Past Presiding Officer reviews and updates the University Senate Handbook. Follow Up: Nicholas Creel will review the document.
4. **Artificial Intelligence Policy** Brad Fowler, Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Review Policy, discussed the committee's creation and refinement of the AI Policy over the summer, which is based on USG guidelines. One component involves taking an AI inventory. Each semester, faculty using AI will complete a required form that will be sent to IT, and IT will compile an annual report to be shared with RPIPC. A second component involves ethical principles and guidelines that follow standard, established practices within the academic disciplines. AI was recently added to the Bobcat Code. A third component involves guidelines for professional development. Training will be offered for faculty and staff while Student Life will workshop AI ethics (responsible use and risk) with students. The policy deadline established by the USG is October 1.
    a. **ECUS Discussion**
        i. Question: The policy says that the University President will create an AI officer role. What does that mean?
        ii. Answer (Chair): The President will appoint someone to take the lead on AI at our university. That person could be Legal Counsel, a faculty member, or an administrator.
    b. **ECUS Action** The committee's interpretation of the University Senate bylaws is twofold. First, policy recommendations originating within committees must come from standing committees; second, AIPRC reports to ECUS. Therefore, ECUS must approve AIPRC's policy recommendation. A **Motion** *to approve the policy recommendation* was made and seconded. **The policy recommendation was approved**.

5. **Commission for Public Higher Education** Stephanie Jett drafted a response from University Senate to the Commission for Public Higher Education's request for feedback on accreditation standards. The standing committees are also reviewing the document during their meetings and will provide feedback to Dr. Jett for the finalized response.
6. **XXX** YYY
   a. **XXX** YYY

VII. Open Discussion

1. There was no open discussion.

VIII. Next Meeting

1. **Calendar**
   a. University Senate Meeting – Friday, September 19, 3:30 p.m., Arts & Sciences 272
   b. ECUS Meeting – Friday, October 3, 2:00 p.m., Parks Hall 301
   c. ECUS+SCC Meeting – Friday, October 3, 3:30 p.m., Parks Hall 301
   d. University Senate Meeting – Friday, October 17, 3:30 p.m., Arts & Sciences 272
2. **Tentative Agenda**: Some of the deliberation today may have generated tentative agenda items for ECUS and ECUS-SCC meetings. Stephanie Jett will ensure that such items (if any) are added to the agenda of a future meeting of ECUS or ECUS-SCC.

IX. Adjournment

1. As there was no further business to consider, a **Motion** *to adjourn the meeting* was made and seconded. **The motion to adjourn was approved and the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.**

X. Supporting Documents

1. There are seven supporting documents.
   a. *Supporting_ECUSReport_BORPolicyManualRevisedPolicieswithMarkup_2025-08-12.pdf* BOR Policy Manual Revisions mentioned in the Presiding Officer report, Mission/Vision Revision section.
   b. *Supporting_ECUSReport_CPHEDraftAccreditationStandardsRequestsforComments_2025-08-19.pdf* Commission for Public Higher Education request for comments mentioned in New Business.
   c. *Supporting_ECUSReport_CPHEUniversitySenateResponse_Draft_2025-09-05.pdf* University Senate draft response to Commission for Public Higher Education request for comments mentioned in New Business.
   d. *Supplement_ECUSReport_FY2026TopPerformerGuidelines&Timeline_2025-08-11.pdf* Merit Raises guidelines mentioned in the Presiding Officer Report, Merit Raises section.
   e. *Supplement_ECUSReport_SACSCOCPrinciplesofAccreditation_2024.pdf* SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation in support of the Commission for Public Higher Education request for comments in New Business.

f. *Supplement_ECUSReport_Section2.8PostingofPublicSyllabiandCV.pdf* USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook Policy mentioned in the Presiding Officer Report, Public Syllabi.

g. *Supplement_ECUSReport_USGPolicyAnnouncements_2025-08-12.pdf* BOR Discipline of Students Policy mentioned in the Presiding Officer Report, Bobcat Code.

Distribution: First, these minutes will be sent to committee members for review; second, they will be posted to the Senate website.

COMMITTEE NAME: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE (ECUS)
COMMITTEE OFFICERS: STEPHANIE JETT (CHAIR), JOYCE NORRIS-TAYLOR (VICE-CHAIR), ALEX BLAZER (SECRETARY)
ACADEMIC YEAR: 2025-2026

AGGREGATE MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR:
"P" denotes Present, "R" denotes Regrets, "A" denotes Absent

Acronyms		EFS = Elected Faculty Senator CoAS = College of Arts and Sciences; CoB = College of Business; CoE = College of Education; CoHS = College of Health Sciences									
Meeting Dates	9/5	10/3	10/31	1/9	2/13	3/6	4/3	P	R	A	
Alex Blazer *EFS, CoAS* *ECUS Secretary*	P							1	0	0	
Cathy Cox *University President*	R							0	1	0	
Nicholas Creel *EFS, CoBT* *ECUS Chair Emerita*	R							0	1	0	
Holly Croft *EFS, Library* *ECUS Member*	R							0	1	0	
Stephanie Jett *EFS, CoAS* *ECUS Chair*	P							1	0	0	
Joyce Norris-Taylor *EFS, CoHS* *ECUS Vice-Chair*	P							1	0	0	
Holley Roberts *Provost*	P							1	0	0	
Rob Sumowski *EFS, CoE* *ECUS Member*	P							1	0	0	