

Executive Committee (XC) Report to the University of Louisville Faculty Senate

April 2, 2025

Meeting(s) Report

The faculty senate executive committee met twice in February (Wednesday, 03.19 and 03.26) during our regularly scheduled meeting time from 3:00-5:00 PM. The meeting minutes from February 19 and 26, 2025, were unanimously approved at the meeting. The executive committee and standing committee reports were presented as information. Details are recorded in the meeting minutes. No motions for action were made.

Discussion & Guest Reports (March 19, 2025):

1. Delivery Change to Online Classes. Dr. Kelvin Thompson, Vice Provost for Online Strategy and Teaching Innovation, Delphi Center for Teaching & Learning, informed the executive committee that the Blackboard Class Collaborate will no longer be available after May 2, 2025. This function will be replaced by Microsoft Teams, which is integrated into Blackboard with similar features. There were no objections nor motions made. The questions raised by the XC, and responses (received via email on Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:38 PM) from VP Thompson are reprinted verbatim below:

- **Roughly what percentage of faculty are “on” Collaborate?**

Collaborate records indicate that approximately 1,500 instructors of courses at UofL used Collaborate in **some** way during calendar year 2024. If we consider the total number of instructors of record as being approximately 2,400, a number roughly equivalent to 62.% has used Collaborate in some way during the past year. (We do not think this is an accurate representation of regular, day-to-day usage, just a “wide net” allowing us to contact all who have engaged at all with the platform.)

- **How many faculty have “pushed back” so far on this change as our communications have gotten underway?**

Our team has noted anecdotes of a handful of faculty who have asked questions or expressed some concern about the move from Collaborate to Teams. However, once aware of training and support, concerns seemed to dissipate. Note: Training sessions are being offered weekly through the end of April. A new round will be offered in summer and again in fall. (Attendance has been low at the moment.)

- **A faculty member recalled “auto attendance-taking” from using Collaborate during the height of the emergency remote instruction era and asked about anything similar in Teams.**

Building on Gretchen Henry’s comment that she receives a report of attendees after each Teams meeting for Faculty Senate, our Delphi team has noted that the MS Teams attendance tracking for classes is quite similar to Collaborate *with the exception that* Collaborate (as a former Blackboard product) could push attendance into the Blackboard gradebook. The Teams attendance functionality was displayed to the Blackboard Advisory Board recently, including some Collaborate-using faculty with large class sizes, and the functionality was deemed close enough to Collaborate to not cause concerns.

- **A faculty member asked if Teams recordings counted against the file size quota in Blackboard.**

Our team has confirmed that Teams recordings do **not** count against Blackboard file size quotas as files are stored outside of Blackboard.

Additionally, the recommendation was put forth to ensure that CIO Karlis Kaugars is aware of the potential incremental increase in file storage in Microsoft tools. I did reach out to Dr. Kaugars. While he appreciated the thought, he confirmed that the university’s Microsoft file storage capacity per user is more than adequate to accommodate the likely increase.

2. Ad Hoc A&S Total Rewards Committee. Faculty Senator Natalie Polzer (A&S) presented four policy recommendations from the Arts & Sciences College Ad Hoc Total Rewards Committee related to Parental Leave Policy, Medical Leave Policy, Bereavement Leave, and the reinstatement of the Spousal Tuition Benefits. The XC requested to know the status on the first two policy recommendations. These were either adopted or stalled under a previous administration before sending to Faculty Senate.

3. Benefits Design Workgroup. Faculty Senator Pat Harris (SOM) presented the proposed 2026 plan designs from the BDW and HR Advisory Committee. Situated in a discussion on market trends and the UofL healthcare experiences, there will be necessary changes to the health care plans. Stay tuned.
4. Research Update. Dr. Jon Klein, the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation came to the executive committee to discuss the latest developments regarding grants and indirect costs. His message is all is well, at least for the next six months, due to injunctions. If there are major developments, he will return to give an update. Also, he stated that he will make the recommendation to sunset the University Scholars and Distinguished Scholars program due to unsustainable costs. A transition plan is being executed.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Sherri L. Wallace, Vice Chair