



University of Massachusetts Boston
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University Governance
Faculty Council

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

September 14th, 2026

Minutes for Monday, September 14, 2026, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Members Present: Cassandra Alexopoulos (CLA); Kathryn Archard (CM); Mehran Azimi (CM); Gonzalo Bacigalupe (CEHD); Lynne Benson (CLA); Christopher Contreras (CLA); Jose D'Incao (CSM); Lorena Estrada-Martinez (SFE); Dan Finn (CLA); Daniel Gascon (CLA); Isabel Gomez (CLA); Richard Hunter (CLA); Travis Johnston (CLA); Valerie Karr (CEHD); Marlene Kim (CLA); Nelson Lande (CLA); Peter Lert (CSM); Ana Lindsay (MCNHS); Lusa Lo (CEHD); Andre Maharaj (CEHD); Abdelkrim Mouhib (CLA); Timothy Oleksiak (CLA); Judith Pare (MCNHS); James Soldner (CEHD); Amy Todd (CLA); Gretchen Umholtz (CLA)

Members Absent: Nurul Aman (CLA); Todd Drogy (HC); Rishabh Kumar (CLA); Tongjian You (MCNHS); Leon Zurawicki (CM)

Representatives Present: Alexa MacPherson (CSU), Jason Rodriquez (FSU), Simone Trainor (USG)

I. Motion to approve or amend the agenda

Approved - unanimous

II. Motion to approve or amend the May 4, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Approved – 2 abstentions

III. Faculty Council Chair Announcement – Timothy Oleksiak (see [Appendix A](#))

- Full statement available here: [FC Chair Announcement – Timothy Oleksiak](#)
- Chair specifies vision of how council will function to facilitate shared governance, as guided by the [Wellman Document](#), the Faculty Council [Constitution](#) and [By-Laws](#), and Robert's Rules of Order

- Administrative reports will pivot to a Question & Answer format based on pre-circulated reports. Councilors are asked to read reports in advance and come prepared with questions for discussion.
- Reminder that work of Committees is vital to the functioning of the Council. Request for Committee Chairs to actively communicate with Executive Committee, and for Councilors to assist in recruiting colleagues to fill Committee vacancies.
- Chair will hold Faculty Council [Office Hours](#) once monthly via Zoom, open to all members of campus community to workshop ideas pertinent to the Council.
- In person attendance of Council meetings is encouraged. Zoom attendees are asked to remain engaged and keep cameras on when feasible. Those office hours are found at the bottom of [the main page of the Faculty Council website](#)

IV. Note from FC Parliamentarian – Gonzalo Bacigalupe

- Slide deck available here: [Notes from FC Parliamentarian](#)
- Robert's Rules exist to facilitate orderly discussion and equal opportunity for all viewpoints to be expressed, they guidelines intended to facilitate constructive dialogue rather than to rigidly control proceedings.
- Parliamentarian Gonzalo Bacigalupe is on leave for Fall 2026 Semester, Council will need to appoint interim Parliamentarian.

V. Discussions and questions regarding previously circulated administrative reports

a. Chancellor – Marcelo Suárez-Orozco

- Full report available here: [Chancellor Suárez-Orozco - September 2026 Report](#)
- Discussion of Chancellor's announced departure, effective February 1st. Chancellor Suárez-Orozco advises the Board of Trustees and Office of the President will oversee the process for identifying the next Chancellor, per codified and customary practices. Chancellor Suárez-Orozco has no influence over selection of his successor.
- Discussion of enrollment trends. Vice Chancellor John Drew advises that final count of enrollment trends will not be confirmed until after Add-Drop deadline on 9/15. Chancellor Suárez-Orozco advises that composition of student body is changing significantly, enrollment drops in some categories are being compensated by others such that enrollment overall is still largely holding steady. Chancellor Suárez-Orozco recognizes significant drop in international student enrollment, in keeping with national trends resulting from federal policy environment. Governor Maura Healey and Mayor Michelle Wu have shared messages welcoming international students to the state and city.

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

- Full report available here: [Provost Berger - September 2026 Report](#)
- Discussion of AI. Provost Berger advises American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) Institute on AI is opportunity to learn how other campuses are

approaching matters, and comments that UMass Boston aspires to be a leader in the ethical and responsible usage of AI. Provost Berger advises administration will be working with Office of Faculty Development, Center for Innovative Teaching, and Academic Technology Committee to develop policies and resources. Provost Berger advises aim is to infuse AI into curriculum and pedagogy across disciplines, catered to the particular needs of each field.

- Faculty member comments on inability to Opt Out of many AI features in University-mandated platforms (e.g. Copilot summaries in Outlook). Provost Berger recognizes this is precisely the type of issue that an AI governance framework is needed to address. Chair of Academic Technology Committee advises a governance document has been drafted in coordination with CIO David Albrecht, which will be circulated to Faculty Council in subsequent meeting.
- Discussion of Accelerated Masters Programs (AMPs). Provost Berger advises that further policy updates are being implemented to provide a clear pathway for students to utilize AMP options, including a waiver policy for students who have exceeded 30 credits but still wish to apply. Provost Berger commits to meeting with any Graduate Program Directors or relevant Committees to address concerns. Faculty member comments that policy effectively excluded transfer students from eligibility for AMPs due to provision dictating window of credits earned at UMass Boston. Associate Provost Amy Cook advises this provision is being reviewed to develop a waiver policy to mitigate these scenarios.

c. Vice Chancellor of Administration & Finance – Kathleen Kirleis

- Full report available here: [VC Kirleis - September 2026 Report](#)
- Discussion of \$1.9 million reduction of funding in State budget. Vice Chancellor Kirleis advises advocacy efforts are attempting to get these funds restored via a supplemental budget, which is yet to be finalized. Faculty members inquire about opportunities for campus unions or concerned individuals to support advocacy efforts. Vice Chancellor Kirleis advises Office of the President is leading these advocacy efforts. Provost Berger comments that additional advocacy from other parties is welcome and encouraged.
- Discussion of FY26 close-out report. Member of Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee notes that committee has not received report yet. Vice Chancellor Kirleis advises that report will be shared in first committee meeting of the semester, which hasn't occurred yet.

VI. Reports from union representatives

a. Classified Staff University Representative - Alexa MacPherson, CSU President

- Full report available here: [CSU Report September 2026](#)
- Locals across the UMass System are coordinating a reclassification initiative to obtain updated job descriptions for members, and to move responsibility for classification to the Board of Higher Education rather than Human Resources.

- CSU members express concern about impact of AI, and must be included in discussions of AI policies alongside faculty colleagues.
- Significant breakdown in communication with Human Resources. Labor Relations has advised CSU members to resign from positions in response to reported harassment and retaliation from supervisors, and has imposed required therapy as a condition of disciplinary procedures in these cases.

b. Faculty Staff Union Representative – Jason Rodriquez, FSU President

- FSU Newsletter: [The Point: What Does an R1 Library Actually Look Like?](#)
- Serious health and safety concerns about conditions in Healey Library. Elevators are 50 years old and routinely malfunctioning, causing over 30 documented entrapments since January. The HVAC system is failing, creating poor ventilation that causes health problems for workers and damage to books. Significant pest problems also present health risk and threaten to damage materials, particularly concerned about moths and carpet beetles in the archive areas. FSU is seeking expedited action to address these concerns, including complete replacement of the elevators rather than continuous repairs as has been the case. FSU also demands clear and transparent communication with staff about scheduled maintenance work, which has not been the case during recent repairs. FSU and CSU filed a joint-grievance regarding these issues, and is coordinating with Undergraduate Student Government (USG) on related concerns.
- Vice Chancellor Kirleis advises project to replace elevators in Healey Library and Campus Center is already underway, and commits to providing Council a timeline for the next stages of this project. Vice Chancellor Kirleis advises that the long term future of Healey Library building is addressed in the Campus Master Plan.

VII. Discussion of Faculty Council vacancies (see [Appendix B](#))

- a. Board of Trustees (BoT) representative to serve until the spring 2027 elections**
- b. An alternate faculty representative to the BoT to assist BoT representative to serve until the spring 2027 elections.**
- c. Two CLA representatives to serve until spring 2027 elections**
- d. One CSM representative to serve until spring 2027 elections**
 - Discussion of incentive structure as significant factor adversely impacting vacancies. Faculty members with limited bandwidth are often reluctant to contribute time and energy to forms of service that are not institutionally valued or compensated; yet faculty participation is also critical to effective shared governance and intellectually rewarding.
 - Discussion of recruitment strategies. Deans and Chairs of unrepresented units have been contacted, Councilors are encouraged to discuss with colleagues. Suggestion to inquire further with Deans and Chairs to assess specific reasons for underrepresentation in order to more effectively strategize. Smaller departments are often underrepresented because of limited bandwidth among fewer faculty, whereas larger departments are often reluctant to volunteer more representatives to avoid generating overrepresentation. Election Committee clarifies that

vacancies in seats officially designated to particular Colleges doesn't necessary correlate to actual lack of representation on Council, when At-Large Seats are accounted for representation is fairly equal.

- Discussion of BoT Representative position's duties. Representative attends all BoT and Committee meetings, but can only participate in discussion upon request. All meetings are currently held over Zoom. Suggestion for BoT Representative and Alternative Representative divide up which meetings to attend in order to divide amount of labor required of these roles. Suggestion for FC Committee Chairs to attend relevant BoT Committee meetings. Clarification that any faculty member is allowed to attend BoT meetings as a spectator, access is not limited solely to the official BoT representative. Discussion of By-Laws governing implications of a current Councilor filling the role of the BoT Representative, this would be a separate FC Seat from the one they were elected to serve. Two faculty members express interest in serving as BoT Representative, Motion to approve will be made in October meeting, pending review of By-Laws.

VIII. Discussion of Standing Committee vacancies (see [Appendix B](#))

- a. FC Joint Discipline and Grievance Committee members**
- b. Academic Technology Committee (ATC) is currently without an IT liaison for ATC after Apurva Mehta's retirement.**
- c. Financial Aid, Admissions, and Records (FAAR) committee requests two members to serve**
- d. Two member of FC needed to serve as members of ExCom**

- No further discussion.

IX. Motion to approve members of Faculty Council Standing Committees

- a. Approve Members of the Financial Aid, Admissions and Records (FAAR) Committee (all current members who wish to serve another term)**
 - Richard Hung, SFE
 - Mona Abo-Zena, CEHD
 - Serra Acar, CEHD
 - Cuf Ferguson, CLA
 - Werner Kunz, CM

Approved - unanimous

X. Motions from Graduate Studies Committee – Andre Maharaj (see [Appendix C](#))

Approved – 1 abstention

XI. Arising from open meeting of May 2026: Updates on “top-off” for faculty receiving financial grants, awards, etc.

- Provost Berger clarifies meaning of ‘top-off’. If a faculty member obtains a prestigious fellowship that requires taking leave and the fellowship pays less than their standard salary, the university may pay the difference via ‘top-off’ funding. There is a list of pre-approved fellowships this policy automatically applies to, but faculty are welcome to request top-off funds for any fellowship.
- Provost Berger advises that process is being streamlined to integrate top-off funding application into existing sabbatical application, whereas historically these have been two separate processes. Details of this revised process are still be refined.

XII. Arising from open meeting of May 2026: Discussion of Canvas hacking incident and its long-term effects and new questions (as of 9/2/26) regarding [Digital Accessibility Policies](#) email (sent via David Albrecht to campus community on 9/2/26)

- Supporting documents available here: [XII. Memos from CIO David Albrecht](#)
- Discussion of Digital Accessibility Policies. Federal Deadline for new guidelines was originally April 2026, but was postponed to April 2027 by Trump administration. UMB Policy was drafted in preparation for original deadline, new plan is to aim for compliance by start of Spring 2027 semester. An [FAQ](#) has been posted to website.
- Discussion of who bears burden of responsibility for compliance with policy requirements, the institution or individual faculty members. Concerns expressed that if individual faculty members are liable for ensuring compliance of their materials then they may simply opt to remove materials all together, therefore reducing overall access to course content. Concerns expressed about individual liability effectively constituting a new job requirement, thus breaching existing FSU contractual agreements. Acknowledgement that individual faculty should be making good faith effort to bring materials into compliance using available resources, while still asserting ultimate responsibility lies with institution.
- Provost Berger advises Canvas has built-in accessibility checking tools, and additional resources are available via [Learning Design](#). Provost Berger advises that the library is still working towards bringing its materials into compliance. ATC Chair Travis Johnston advises that 68% of Canvas course materials have already been assessed as compliant, per CIO David Albrecht.

XIII. Arising from open meeting of May 2026: Discussion of impacts of accelerated master’s program (AMP) policies.

- Discussed previously during Provost’s report (see [Agenda Item V.B](#)).
- Provost Berger reiterates that GPDs of impacted programs are encouraged to set up a consultation. FC Executive Committee requests GPDs to report outcomes of such conversations back to the Council.

XIV. Arising from open meeting of May 2026: Motion to create a working group to review and report on tracking outcomes of motions passed by Faculty Council.

WHEREAS faculty council members have expressed curiosity regarding the number of accepted proposals

WHEREAS there is currently no single repository for approved FC proposals and administrative responses outside minutes and reports

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Council constitute an ad hoc committee with the following description and charges:

Name: Ad Hoc Faculty Council Motion Review Committee (MRC)

Charge: The MRC is charged with developing a systematic review of motions passed by Faculty Council from Fall 2020-Spring 2028 as well as written responses from administration, if any, to these motions. The review will exclude motions from the General Education Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee. The MRC will create an archive of motions and response for Faculty Council by May 21, 2028.

Membership: Faculty Council shall appoint Amy Todd to chair this committee and entrust her to find and select up to four additional members. No more than 2 members should be from any one college.

Dissolving of Committee: The MRC shall be dissolved after submission of their findings or by May 21, 2028, which ever happens sooner.

- Discussion of appropriateness of imposing workload burden upon faculty members, versus having such an audit performed by a paid member of administration. Provost Berger advises that his staff is ready and willing to cooperate with this initiative, but will take its guidance from the Committee.

Approved – 1 abstention

XV. Arising from open meeting of May 2026: Discussion of increased surveillance on campus

a. Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police – Stacey Lloyd (invited on 9/1)

MOTION: Move discussion to top of Agenda for October Meeting.

Approved - unanimous

XVI. New Business

- No discussion

XVII. Motion to Adjourn

Approved - unanimous

Appendix A – Note from Faculty Council Chair

Greetings, administrators, union leaders, student representatives, faculty, and welcomed guests. I wanted to take a moment at the start of a new academic year to lay out a vision for the work ahead and to share with you a few changes that I hope will make our work a more positive experience.

As I understand it, Faculty Council's primary role is to advise and consult with administration on a host of matters relating to shared governance. These responsibilities and roles are enumerated in several governing documents: The Wellman Report/Document (BoT Doc: T73-098), our Constitution, and our Bylaws. Our operating procedures are governed by Robert's Rules of Order. We should not seek mastery of the procedures and policies herein. But our reach and our power come in large part from these documents.

I believe Faculty Council's greatest power is the good-faith sharing of information so that, when appropriate, we can create and pass motions. Some motions help us do our work better and are guided at FC as a body. The most important motions, again our clearest sense of power in shared governance, are those directed at administration and those that compel action. Administration must respond to motions discussed, nuanced, and passed by this body.

I have asked the Chancellor and the Provost to shift from delivering administrator's reports each month to adopting a question-and-answer format. They have agreed, and I hope we begin to see the kinds of good faith exchanges we want to see take place during this time. In order to do this well, I have asked the Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Chancellor to submit their reports before the agenda circulates. I am committed to including these reports in our agenda, so you have time to read them and come prepared with questions. When we come prepared and with relevant information, shared governance is intellectually satisfying and materially consequential.

A primary responsibility as your Chair is to develop an agenda in consultation with my excellent, kind, and engaged colleagues on the Executive Committee and to run a good and fair meeting each month. Councilors can propose motions just as Standing Committees can propose motions. Getting these proposed motions by the deadlines (which are auto-emailed to councilors) is important. Simply bringing information to my attention is necessary, but what is also helpful is if that can be framed in the form of a motion or at least come with a request for action. When you reach out to me, please let me know what you are asking me to do.

Since the work of Faculty Council is done largely through Standing Committees, it is imperative that ExCom, as the Committee on Committees, begin to organize and regularize information sharing. The job of Chair is made easier when I have reports, meeting agenda,

and minutes from our Standing Committees as soon as they are made available. I will be emailing Standing Committee chairs requesting information about this work.

The work of Standing Committees is made easier when seats on those committees are full of representatives throughout the colleges. As faculty, we should be concerned when a Standing Committee is shorted of members. The fewer the committee members, the more work each individual member must do. This leads to burn out, a feeling like the work isn't valued, and potential for missing important aspects of the work increases. If your committee isn't working or it's not working how you'd like, speak up about it in the spirit of congeniality. But I ask faculty writ large to learn about the Standing Committees and engage with them on the work that you find meaningful and intellectually satisfying. If this requires us to update the website to include better and more useful descriptions of this work, let's make that a focus. These changes can often be done outside of monthly meetings and then voted on when the work is ready for FC review.

To facilitate information sharing, I will be holding office hours each month for any student, faculty, staff, or administrator that would like to share information with me. This time can also be used by councilors to help refine or craft motions or to help formulate questions for administrators. These office hours are not only for those who have it figured out but can also be a brave space for councilors to get help on how to do the work better or as spaces for faculty who want to know how to get involved. These office hours and a zoom link are now or will very shortly be on our Faculty Council webpage. If you cannot meet during this time, please email me anyway with requests for meetings. We know a 5-minute zoom can do much more work than 20 email exchanges.

To make things as easy as possible, I will strive to put every relevant document for our monthly meetings in the agenda proper. I will attend to usability and readability so that you can move through the document with intention. This will mean longer agenda documents, but it also means that councilors ideally only need to open 1 file to have all the information they need as they prepare for our meetings. We will still continue to use the normal filing system for archival purposes and for those who wish to look through documents apart from the agenda. Please still review all folders until the kinks in this process are smoothed out.

Being together in a room where it happens is intellectually satisfying personally rewarding, and food and coffee is often provided. I ask each councilor to commit to joining us in person for at least 1 meeting each semester. The Open Meetings at the end of each fall/spring semester that are just for faculty are especially important to simply check in with each other and prepare for the first meeting following semester. That having been said, hybrid meetings allow for greater care giving or to have disability access needs met. There will be no judgmental attitudes against councilors who choose virtual options. If you are joining us from zoom, I ask that you keep your camera on and remain focused on the work of the meeting.

Finally, my default to you will always be generosity and kindness unless I am given material evidence that such an approach is no longer warranted. Our Standing Committees are working hard at honoring our charges and making FC intellectually rewarding experiences for those involved. Let's keep track of how to do that adequately and sufficiently so that the work is consequential and supportive of our colleagues.

With respect and admiration for each of you and the work ahead,

Timothy Oleksiak, Faculty Council Chair

CHANGES REVIEW

- Updated website with Wellman Document and FC Chair Office Hours.
- Administrator's Reports will now be Discussion and Questions Regarding Previously Circulated Administrator's Reports.
- Standing Committee Chairs should create and submit meeting agenda/minutes to Faculty.Council@umb.edu as soon as this information is available to Standing Committee members.

Appendix B – Short Description of Roles and Responsibilities

Below are short descriptions of vacant positions on the Faculty Council. You can learn more about the charges of each Standing Committee and the general responsibilities of councilors in our [Bylaws](#).

Board of Trustee Representative and Alternate

The faculty representative to the Board of Trustees (BoT) attends (virtually or in-person as wanted) the BoT meeting and reports back to the Faculty Council ExCom. This person meets with the Intercollegiate Faculty Council group which usually meets directly after each BoT meeting and reports back to FC ExCom. Will propose agenda items, as needed and in consultation with the FCExCom, for larger FC discussion.

The alternate faculty representative to the BoT representative coordinates with the representative.

Faculty Council Member (CLA and CSM representatives)

Members of faculty council (FC) represent various faculty groups on campus during FC business. They read agenda, minutes, and relevant reports to prepare questions and discussions at monthly FC meetings from September – May each academic year and emergency or special meetings of FC as needed. They can propose and vote on motions. FC members are strongly encouraged to participate as members of FC Standing Committees as well.

Joint Discipline and Grievance Committee (Sarah Hamblin, Chair)

Members of this committee receive and adjudicate formal disciplinary actions or filed grievances that students or teachers make on a host of issues from violations of codes of conduct to academic dishonesty. This committee meets when there are cases to adjudicate. Some years there are as few as 2 cases; other years there are many. This work may also be conducted over the summer.

Appendix C – Motions from Graduate Studies Committee

Motion #1

From: MGS

Request for a program change to the Public Administration (MPA) - General Track, to make PUBADM 612 a required course and PUBADM 601 an elective course in the MPA program. PUBADM 612 Urban Politics & Policy is currently an elective course and PUBADM 601 New England Political Environment is currently a required course.

Rationale: The MPA curriculum in general is increasingly offering a broader view of global society and the program is increasingly attracting students from regions outside of New England. Swapping the more general course to be required and the more narrow course to be an elective is consistent with this approach. PUBADM 601 New England Political Environment is a course specific to New England. PUBADM 612 Urban Politics & Policy is a course that considers U.S. contexts outside of New England as well as international contexts.

Motion #2

From: SGISD

Request for a course change, to cross-list GISD 601 Current and Historical Perspectives on Global Inclusion and Social Development into the Public Policy graduate program as PPOL-G 601L. The GISD program team has voted to approve this change, as has the GPD of the public policy program. This Curriculog proposal is to formalize that cross-listing.

Description: There has been a growing interest in recent decades in ensuring that people and populations are included and that society is supportive of the equality of its members and the chance for prosperity for all. This course focuses on social inclusion and social development in a global context. The term "social inclusion" has been conceptualized as a process, a state of being included, and a method for integrating those excluded or at risk of being excluded due to disability or other reasons and conditions into society. In development studies, the term "social development" captures the idea of improving people's well-being and quality of life, and is often defined in reference to particular social problems. Globalization is the process of interaction and integration among economies, societies, and cultures across the globe through forces such as international trade and transport and advances in communication technology. Students will examine definitions, current and historical perspectives on and approaches to these concepts, and their implications for policy and practice. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to apply these concepts to particular policy areas including disability, health, labor market, and economic policy affecting particular communities, countries, or regions.

Rationale: There is meaningful resonance between GISD courses and the public policy program, and historically students from public policy have taken GISD 601. GISD courses add an additional focus on inclusion, development, and applied knowledge. The GISD 601 course is a core class that orients students towards the global foundations of concepts of inclusion and development, and is highly relevant for students of public policy.

Motion #3**From: SGISD**

Request for a course change, to cross-list GISD 615 State, Sovereignty and Governance for Inclusion and Social Development in the public policy graduate program as PPOL-G 615L. This decision has been voted upon and unanimously approved by the GISD program committee, approved by its GPD, and by the GPD of the public policy program. As there are many students from Public Policy that take this course, this cross-listing formalizes something that's already occurring.

Description: State and governance regimes of various sorts design, implement, as well as comprise crucial context for any work within global inclusion and social development. This course familiarizes students with theories, research and practice regarding the role of the state and governance as it pertains to inclusion and development. The course examines the emergence of the state, including pre- and non-Westphalian state contexts, specifically experiences of colonization and the development, and the near-universal inheritance of the modern state. We explore contemporary forms of the state, and pressures emerging and surrounding it, including those of the market, civil society and democracy. The course then moves to the recent transformation of statehood and the shift to new modes of governance, specifically the role of non-state actors across scale--from local to global--and investigates how various institutions, corporate power and political society shift the role of states.

Rationale: GISD courses add an additional focus on inclusion, development, and applied knowledge. The GISD 615 course is a core elective that familiarizes students with theories, research and practice regarding the role of the state and governance as it pertains to inclusion and development. Students in GISD programs are exposed to leadership training and curriculum that promotes cultural competency and community capacity building, and that employs research as a means for shaping both policy and practice.