University Senate Meeting Minutes

September 29, 2026
Convocation Hall, Room 208
3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Attendance

Present

Voting: Jodie Guest (president), Jehu Hanciles (president-elect), Noelle McAfee (immediate past president), Carlos Moreno (secretary), Javarius Chandler, Tina Chang, Janet DeForest, Sarah Fankhauser, Caroline Fohlin, Molly Gassman, Joanna Green, Arielle Gomberg, Alette HahnHansen, Aminah Hasan-Birdwell, Morieka Johnson, Dieter Jaeger, Nirmal Kumar, Jeffrey Lichtman, Michael Martin, Sean Meighoo, Naomi Nelson, Giacomo Negro, Jen Ngetich, Martha Pacini, Chris Palazzolo, Tim Ray, Matthew Reyna, Jeannie Rodriguez, Hannah Rogers, Tracie Rosser, Alex Romantz, Tatenda Tagutanazvo, Opal Taylor, Terez Whately-White, Joshua Wallenstein, Stacy Westerman, Daniel Weissman, David Wilkerson, Melissa Williams, Victoria Wright, Chris Young

University Administration (Ex-officio, Non-Voting): Badia Ahad, Chris Augostini, Adam Marcus, Kevin Moody, Mathew Pinson, Keiko Price-Carter, Alison Short, Brad Slutsky, Lisa Parker (Senate administrator)

Invited Guests (Non-Voting): Becky Culyba, Stella Jean Clarke-Dubose, Greg Esper, Branden Grimmett, David Payne, Jonathan Poole, Mindy Simon

Present via Zoom: Pearl Dowe(nv), Jane Gatewood(v), and Annabel Olivo(v)

Absent

Voting: Malachi Alexander, Chris Blake, Tiffany Boller, David Borthwick, Jovan Brockett, Valeda Dent, Cierra Hickson, VonYetta Hunter, Kimberly Jacob Arriola, Anna Jiang, Jolene Morales, Michael Owens, Roy Simpson

University Administration (Ex-officio, Non-Voting): Allison Dykes, Joon Lee, Robin Morey, Melanie Lawrence, Joshua Newton, Pim Thukral

Invited Guests (Non-Voting): Melissa Daly, Ciannat Howett, Michele Hempfling, Cameron Taylor

Vacancies: Three Senate seats were vacant at the time of the meeting.

A quorum was present.

More than **300 members of the university community attended via the webinar platform.**

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Call to Order

Senate President **Jodie Guest** called the first University Senate meeting of the academic year to order and welcomed senators, university leadership, and members of the university community. She emphasized the Senate's commitment to listening, communication, transparency, and engagement with constituents across Emory.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Items

The Senate approved the agenda, consent agenda, and committee rosters for the academic year.

University President's Address

Emory University President **Chris Augostini** addressed the Senate and discussed priorities for the university. He emphasized the importance of rebuilding trust, engagement, and institutional stability and identified the following strategic focus areas:

- Academic competitiveness
- Faculty excellence and engagement
- Student experience and success
- Campus master planning

During discussion, President Augostini noted the importance of communicating Emory's strengths and impact more effectively and ensuring that the university's contributions to research, education, healthcare, and service are broadly recognized.

Introduction of Academic Deans

The Senate welcomed several academic deans and leaders, who provided brief introductions and updates regarding their schools and priorities. The Senate heard remarks from **James Nagy, Dean of Emory College of Arts and Sciences; Molly McGehee, Dean of Oxford College; Saby Mitra, John H. Harland Dean of Goizueta Business School; Richard D. Freer, Dean of Emory University School of Law; Sean Clarke, Dean of the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing; Terrence Johnson, Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean of Candler School of Theology; and Jeff Staton representing Kimberly Jacob Arriola, Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies who was traveling.**

The deans discussed priorities and initiatives within their respective schools, including academic excellence, student success, strategic planning, faculty support and development, interdisciplinary collaboration, alumni engagement, and graduate and professional education. Members were encouraged to engage with their schools' leadership and participate in ongoing university initiatives.

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Human Resources and Benefits Update

Kevin Moody, Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer provided updates regarding employee benefits

and compensation initiatives.

Dr. Greg Esper, President of the Emory Health Plan, presented changes to the 2027 Emory Health Benefits.

Key updates included:

- HSA, POS, and Kaiser options remain.
- Transition to the Anthem provider network with AmeriBen as the third-party administrator.
- Transition to Prime Therapeutics as pharmacy benefit manager.
- Maintaining CVS pharmacy option plus expanded pharmacy choices, including Amazon Pharmacy home delivery.
- New virtual care offerings. Ameriben Engage wellness platform will replace Sharecare.
- Continued coverage of GLP-1 medications for weight management with a higher member cost share.
- Continued wellness and care management programs.
- A unified digital experience for health and wellness benefits.

Members were informed that approximately 98% of providers will remain in-network and that most current benefits will remain unchanged.

Discussion included healthcare costs, telemedicine services, prescription coverage, premium increases, and support services available to employees and families.

Campus Safety Report

Chief of Police **Bert Buchtinec** and **Sam Shartar**, Assistant Vice President for Critical Event Preparedness and Response, provided an update on campus safety and emergency preparedness efforts.

Topics discussed included:

- Public safety infrastructure investments
- Emergency preparedness planning
- Threat assessment and behavioral intervention teams
- Community engagement initiatives
- Enhanced officer training and response capabilities

- Emergency Operations Center capabilities
- Use of the EmorySafe application and emergency communications systems
- Removal of Flock cameras

Members were encouraged to review emergency preparedness resources, download the EmorySafe application, and report concerns promptly through established channels.

The presenters also reviewed university procedures for interactions involving outside law enforcement agencies and reinforced existing reporting protocols.

Staff Council Report

Morieka Johnson, President of Staff Council, presented an overview of Staff Council priorities for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Staff Council's strategic focus areas are:

- Support
- Engage
- Advocate

Recent accomplishments included streamlining the Emory Hardship Fund application process and expanding opportunities for staff engagement across the university.

University Senate Bylaws Review

Jodie Guest presented proposed bylaw revisions intended to improve consistency with university policies and governance practices.

Proposed revisions included:

- Editorial and language updates
- Clarification of committee membership and appointment timelines
- Addition of observer provisions
- Administrative updates to improve governance processes

Members discussed the proposed changes and agreed to vote via email following the meeting.

Senate Communications and Constituent Engagement

Members discussed strategies for improving communication between senators and their constituent groups.

The Senate also reviewed plans for a new Senate newsletter designed to:

- Increase awareness of Senate activities
- Improve information sharing across the university
- Strengthen communication between representatives and their constituencies

Members were encouraged to share Senate updates broadly and seek feedback from the communities they represent.

Adjournment

The Senate adjourned into executive session, and the public meeting concluded at 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos S. Moreno, PhD
Secretary, University Senate