

University Council

MINUTES

OCTOBER 14, 2025

3:00 – 3:43 PM

LH 208 AND TEAMS

MEETING CALLED BY	Tonia Ferrell, chair
TYPE OF MEETING	Monthly Meeting
PRESIDER	Tonia Ferrell, chair
NOTE TAKER	Heather Loughney
ATTENDEES	Members: Marilia Antunez, Stacia Biddle (SES chair), Stephanie Davis-Dieringer (TDHR chair), Karima Elgarroussi (IT chair), Tracie Epner (UCEC), Ed Evans (UCEC), Blair Everett (UCEC), Tonia Ferrell (chair), Dan Friesner, Maria Hamdani, John Huss (IA chair), Kris Kraft (secretary, CW chair), Nate Meeker (vice chair), Gwen Price (ex-officio), Faii Sangganjanavanich, Madilyn Shaw, Ally Temsey, Amy Trunko, Sonya Wagner Members Absent with notice: Members Absent without notice: Other attendees: Matthew Akers, Alex Bailey, Michelle Banis, Suzanne Bausch, Katy Brennan, Eric Brisker, Dominic Cardarelli, Lisa Craig, Jennifer Davis, Aimee DeChambeau, Megan DeLong-Borick, Jared Deeds, Asoke Dey, Scott Dilling, Lauren Fisher, Akua Folk, Lauren Folk, Dana Frase, Evi Gorogianni, Jessica Greene, Becky Handley, Patti Huth, Brian Humm, Walter Jevack, Matt Juravich, Judith Juvancic-Heltzel, Ken Kugler, Willy Kollman, Wendy Lampner, Steve McKellips, Erin Makarius, Meredith Merry, John Messina, Patricia Miller, Susie Muetzel, Debmalya Mukherjee, R.J. Nemer, Daniel Reichert, Scott Roberts, Lisa Sabol, Linda Saliga, Tiffany Schmidt, Christin Seher, Michelle Smith, Mark Soucek, Jennifer Stanley, Mark Stasitis, Michael Trivisonno, Scotland Uhl, Ann Usher, Misty Villers, Heather Walter, Nick Weber, Kelly Weir, Gerry Wells, Jessica Whitehill, Mia Yaniko AA – appointed administrators BOT – Board of Trustee member UCEC – members of the University Council Executive Committee
CALL TO ORDER TONIA FERRELL	
	- The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. - The chair shared the following changes to the agenda; due to illness, Fedearia would not be in attendance, and the guest speaker was canceled. The chair will be presenting an overview of University Council. The agenda was approved as amended. - The minutes of the September 9, 2025 meeting 2025-9-9-minutes-university-council-final.pdf were approved as distributed.
PRESIDENT’S REMARKS	

Thank you, Chair Ferrell. Good afternoon, everyone. It's good to be with you in person today to give some brief remarks. As I'm sure many of you can relate, this has been a very busy two weeks at the University of Akron. So far, October has been full of celebration and reflection. At the beginning of the month, we paid tribute to 50 years of honors education at the University of Akron.

Homecoming Week and Family Weekend included a football win and the energy on campus feeling electric and a strong tailgating scene. Thanks in part to cooperative weather, on campus events have been well attended and the increase in enrollment is not only reflected in our census, but it's also evident in the liveliness of campus. As we reach the midpoint of another fall semester, I had the opportunity to give my State of the University address last week. To summarize the speech, things are looking good at the university, and we strongly believe our opportunities outweigh our challenges. Thank you to all of the UC members who are joining in on the celebratory momentum of the semester so far.

I'm so excited to see more references to our institutional brand popping up. The world needs more. Yes, at the University of Akron, we're creating those positive moments for our students. In the coming weeks, finalist candidates for the Chief Planning and Facilities Officer position will visit campus. As I'll reiterate in just a moment, facilities upgrades are an integral component to our campus revitalization. As we find an outstanding candidate to stabilize our Planning and Facilities division, we'll be counting on all of you to inform us of how we can improve your working areas and our student's learning environment. Chief Brand Officer Katie Brennan officially started at the end of last month. She's already making important decisions to strengthen the management of our marketing efforts, brand and reputation, as I alluded to in the State of the University address, the name of the University Communications.

The name of University Communications and Marketing will be changing over to University Brand Organization to focus the efforts of the department on the bigger picture. The Browns Partnership continues to thrive and provide new opportunities for students.

This semester, there is a sport and technology class in partnership with the Cleveland Browns. Students at the undergraduate and graduate levels are learning from Brown's personnel and a faculty member in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Earlier this month, a group of students traveled to London for a global leadership program, and they even had the opportunity to attend the Browns Viking game at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

On the UA Athletics front, nationally ranked men's soccer won its 200th game under the leadership of coach Jared Embick. Along with men's soccer, women's golf and volleyball, as well as cross country are all the way this week, representing UA throughout the Midwest football will face Ball State this coming Saturday.

We've been talking quite a bit about the university's revitalization plan, which is taking place in collaboration with our Board of Trustees. Last week, in my State of the University address, I shared some of my presidential goals for institutional growth. If you missed the speech, please feel free to look it up on the Office of the President website and continue contacting my office with ideas for growth. On Wednesday, October 29th, I'll be able to share these goals and how they relate to our community at an event hosted by the Akron Press Club. We plan to continue our upward trajectory and enrollment, as well as grow in financial confidence, university reputation, facilities, and colleague careers.

	I'm so thrilled that UC is here to walk alongside me and the rest of the leadership team as we strive for continuous improvement. That's all the remarks I have prepared for today. Questions: When the Chief Planning and Facility Officer finalists come to campus, will there be a public session? Nemer – That's a great question, Tonia. I'm not sure if there's a public session for that position or not. Sarah is on vacation but let me check with her. Let me find out. I'll e-mail you so you can share it with the group.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT TONIA FERRELL	
	UCEC met on September 23, and discussed the following: - Topic submissions – No new submissions. - Guest Speakers – discussed speakers for rest of fall and spring. Seeking ideas for speakers, please send ideas to EC. - UCEC March 2026 meeting will move to March 21st, to avoid spring break. - Discussion of voting software – Poll Everywhere, Teams. Investigating options for future voting needs. - Updates to procedural manual.
UC PRESENTATION TONIA FERRELL	
	Chair Ferrell gave a presentation outlining the structure and mission of the University Council. https://uazips-my.sharepoint.com/personal/hl_uakron_edu/Documents/University%20Council/UC%20meetings/2025-2026/10-14-2025/UC%20Overview%20Presentation%2010-2025.pptx
VICE CHAIR ELECTION TONIA FERRELL	
	Nominations were accepted for the position of vice chair, and current chair Nate Meeker was nominated and accepted. No other nominations were received. Nate Meeker was elected Vice Chair by acclamation.
PROVOST'S REMARKS	
	Good afternoon, everybody. Good to be here with you again today. Usually, I start with an enrollment update. It's a little bit early in the cycle to be doing an enrollment update. So, I'm going to do an application cycle update. We're at about 20% of our ultimate goal in terms of applications right now, but within the next six weeks we will be at about 80%. Of the total application pool for the year by the end of November, which is kind of when Steve told me that it makes the next six weeks really important for us. So, we'll again get a close look at how we're doing right around the corner and we have another, we had another great visit day last Friday, which gave a new sense of importance to that day. I thought

about that and so the upcoming days will be important for recruitment. We're really indebted to all those people who are working on those and for all of you who attend those and support those, we appreciate that.

Special thanks to the CHHS faculty and staff who hosted over 200 high school students for a Discovery Day this past Thursday. And I know all of the colleges are engaged in those kinds of events and so I just want to say thank you because that's that work is extremely important for the university. So that's all I have in terms of applications. Sorry, don't have any hard numbers for you.

SB1 continues to be a thing. We have lots of working groups out there doing a lot of different work. I want to say thank you to all those people who are persisting in those conversations. The one in particular I'd like to report on is about the syllabus. That seems to be of high importance to most people. I know that we have chosen Simple Syllabus as a platform. So, we have that. Thank you to the committee that did that work and worked with the IOC procurement to get us a good price on that. I know that there was a big team of people that came to that conclusion and now the implementation committee has been formed and we're working towards implementation of that. So again, more conversations to be had. Please be on the lookout for more information. And if you're interested, you're a faculty member and you're interested in Simple Syllabus, take a look at what that might look like for you.

Accessibility is the other big one. Our efforts to become an accessible campus in all ways, shapes and forms, especially in this particular case with electronic information, we're continuing down that path. There is a web page. I know not everybody has been there, but it's a really nice web page. It's the Keep CALM web page on the Office of Accessibility website for more information and the UDX course in Brightspace is there for you to be able to get started. I know most of you have and so thank you if you if you have, and I encourage you to do so if you haven't. I realize it's a ton of work. I just ask for your patience and your diligence in doing it. Prioritize the current inactive spring classes, archive inactive courses, or archive information you no longer use. The more you archive, the more you're able to archive, the less you'll have to fix. We are working towards that April 24th deadline and then so that's our that's our deadline is out there is April 24th seems like a long time away but when you take a look at your courses, I think you'll realize or and any other electronic information. So, it's not just course I keep saying that it's not just courses it's.

It's faculty, it's staff, it's everything electronic that the institution is sharing. So you know, all of our offices need to be working on that. And I realized that when I tried to send a newsletter out last month. OK, so I know I'm trying to do the same. The UDX Accessibility Bowl is officially underway and the response has been tremendous. This is from Wendy, and I wanted to put that out there. We already have 192 faculty, adjuncts and staff participating, which is amazing. Thank you everyone who has joined the challenge so far. We have tons of prizes actually that have been identified from parking passes, gift cards and professional development monies. I guess I will just say I understand that doesn't take the stress away, but we're hoping that working in teams alleviates the pressures and the prizes are at least a recognition that of the work that we know you're all doing. This week's winners, by the way, staff Valerie Wolfe, Program Assistant Learning Support Services at William College. Part-time faculty is Dr. Dudley Turner and Senior Lecturer in Communication, and the faculty winner was Dr. Eric Sotnik, Associate Professor in Philosophy.

It's happening. They're actually getting out there, so I appreciate it. I also wanted to give a

	special shout out to Tom Quick in Geo Sciences. His dean let me know that he has proven that the possibilities are there. He has 100% compliance for his spring courses. Which is amazing. We know that isn't going to be possible for everyone, but I just wanted to recognize Tom for his proactive efforts. So, thank you, Tom. I wanted to list a few other points of pride. I have a bunch. I asked my deans for some, and I actually had to cut them back. Congratulations and appreciation go out to I'm going to say this wrong, Doctor Heather Katafiasz and Dr. Faii for being appointed to the boards of their respective accrediting bodies in their field, the Student Society for Human Resource Management Leadership Team won first place in the 2025 Ohio HR Games this past weekend, so congratulations to them. The Meyers School of Art students are currently someplace I'd love to be. The Meyers School of Arts Students and some faculty are currently studying in the Iberian Peninsula for the next 8 days, and this trip was made possible through the John and Barbara Gillette Study of the Arts Abroad Fund. And we appreciate the generosity of our donors that make these unique experiences possible for our students. Speaking internationally, the School of Law signed an MOU with a Universidad. They really made this hard for me today. Anyway, the Catholic University of Santa Maria in Peru to create an LLM in international business. Law featuring faculty exchanges with plans for a future center in Latin American and US legal studies. So just some amazing things that are happening across our campus in all of our colleges. I also will throw in here that. The president and I were in an excellent exit meeting with the accreditors in the College of Engineering today. So, nothing official there, but I will say congratulations to all people who are involved in that effort. I know how much how much work went into those studies. And finally, I look forward to meeting with the PSAC at their meeting on the 20th. Thank you for the invitation and I look forward to seeing the professional staff next Monday. That's all I have. Questions: • Just one question on the application percentage. I know it was not a pardon fast number, but the 80% that you mentioned, is that the calendar year or is that the full cycle for the year? Provost Price - It's the application cycle. So, by the end of November, we should be at 80% of our applications for the upcoming year.
	COMMITTEE REPORTS TONIA FERRELL
	• Budget & Finance – committee met, did goals for next year and progress from past year. Working on chair appointment. • Campus Wellness – met last month, finalized giveaways for RooFit and other opportunities on campus. • Communication – new Chief Brand Officer, Katy Brennan, has been appointed as the administrator for the committee.

	• Information Technology - Met October 2, discussion was focused on the LMS selection, Wi-Fi upgrades and mobile applications. So for the LMS selection committee, the Faculty Senate has finalized the faculty members. Now we are confirming the administrative representatives, and we will select the student members during the November meeting. Wi-Fi access has been a recurring concern in previous semesters. So, over the summer the university completed a full network replacement. And because some buildings were closed, part of the work extended into the start of the fall term. So that's why some days you had some problems with the Wi-Fi and also the committee discussed the improvements to the university mobile applications to improve their usability. Then for the printing system we have switched to a new vendor that cost the university less money and offers improved reliability, lower cost and also allows the students to print directly from their phone. • Institutional Advancement – met September 19 with Pat Roberts for first time. Focus on aligning goals with President Nemer's goals and put together goals to vote on at next meeting. In past we've focused on work of IA but will be reaching out to university to look at ways to articulate goals. Kim Gentile to meet with us. If you have ways to effectively articulate our work, reach out to Pat or me to dialogue. • Physical Environment – we received a space request and will meet Thursday • Student Engagement and Success – the committee met, and Stacia Biddle was re-elected chair. Discussed goals and accessibility training and will meet again on October 29. • Talent Development and Human Resources – met last week and welcomed six new committee members. Worked on goals for the year. Outstanding items to work on are employee editing of timecards, working with Kristine Cassidy on Workday. Also reviewing a possible part-time contract extension from 12-month termination to 19-month termination. Sarah Kelly to work with us on that. • Ad hoc Social Engagement – we were in limbo for a while but we are having our 3rd Halloween party on October 29 from 11 am-2 pm. We will be collecting canned goods for the Campus Cupboard and ZipAssist. There will be raffle prizes, dress up and enjoy food. Gives us a chance to socialize and get out of our departments. Would like to encourage deans and directors to encourage staff and employees to attend, give them the time to do that.
CONSTITUTENCY REPORTS	
	TONIA FERRELL
	• GSG – don't have a ton of news, met as a team to solidify goals; meeting grad student needs and make them feel part of university, hard to do for grad students. Met with USG to discuss collaboration. Met with Pres Nemer and talked about a lot of things. Branding – GSG is in favor of cute Zippy shirts. Work being done to beautify campus, working on survey for grad students, operating at about ½ of budget. A lot of students traveling. Planning events for grad students in the future. Doing a lot of mental health events too. Large event with Zippy in works. SB1 information sessions being aimed at teaching grad students. Having event Thursday in Simmons at 10 am.

- USG – so far undergraduate student government last from last university council meeting, we've been having a lot of constituent constituency conversations with meet and meetings with different departments and offices such as like UAkron Park, Residence Life and Housing, Student Conduct and Community Standards, etc. Just as an ongoing kind of touch base with them with advocacy work for that. We've been meeting with student groups as well, student groups and organizations such as GSG, Student Bar Association, The Black Excellence Commission, Zips Activities Board, and that's just to name a few. We have lots of members who are kind of touching different areas of campus. Additionally, to that, we have officially received our budget for this year as well. We are working internally to divide that into.

We also held an election for two first year senators, so we welcomed two new first years to our Senate this not this past week, but the week prior, meaning that we have a full Senate currently, which is very exciting.

Mid-September we had our Student Leadership Summit, which is a summit that we hold annually, inviting student organizations, their presidents, their treasurers to come and learn about different funding that we have to offer for both travel, non-travel and individual student enrichment grants. We did some networking there as well. The event went very well. We had a lot of different groups there, which is fantastic. We also participated in Zab's Mocktail event yesterday for the Alcohol Awareness Week and our theme was Hamilton, so we all got to dress up as Hamilton. It was very fun, but we had a great time, and we continue to support them with their Alcohol Awareness Week and all of the different programs they have there.

Quite a few upcoming events as well. So all of our branches within USG are having mid semester check-ins with all of their members, just kind of getting a touch base on where everybody is at. We have some safety walks with UAPD and Zip Assist on October 16th and November 13th. We have two more accessibility tours through our FAST committee within our Senate on October 17th and 21st. USG is also participating in Make a Difference Day on October 25th. We have about 10 to 12 members going. I believe we're also volunteering at Campus Cupboard, so right on campus with that. Also have a self-defense class with UAPD through our Ohio Department of Education Safety grant that we received that will be on October 28th. And then last event we have upcoming is the Night at the Akron Art Museum with the Akron Art Museum of course on November 5th, to get students downtown more, showcase their new exhibit that they have and just have a good time down there.

I also want to give a thanks again to President Nemer for coming to speak at our Senate meeting to all of our senators and we're looking forward to Provost Price coming at the beginning of November, we have these speakers at Senate to hopefully inform our members on different things that are present on campus especially this year. There's a lot of new senators, a lot of first year. So, getting them up to speed with some things that the university has to offer and hopefully inspire some projects and initiatives.

- PSAC – We met on Monday the 15th to discuss and finalize some of our committee replacements and continuations, set an agenda, goals for the year. We also had a guest speaker from Online Learning Services come in, talk a lot about the guidelines for electronic content communications, the website.

	Site that Provost Price mentioned as well, how it affects our professional staff members and their work as it affects a lot of them pretty heavily. • SEAC - We wrapped up our elections. We had our first meeting with our new members last month. It was nice to see so many new faces. We also had a huge surge in members of our body representing us on UC committees. So, we have a bunch of new faces. We have filled all but one UC committee vacancy, so that's really great news. We're looking to finalize some officer elections and set goals for the coming year at our meeting this Thursday. We are always looking for Ziptastic nominees for all UA employees. Everyone's eligible, so see our website. • Faculty Senate – Senate met on October 2nd. The meetings are very similar to this one in format and that we hear from Provost Price, President Nemer and other folks and get the updates on what's going on at the university. This past meeting, we had a conversation with our new athletic director, Andrew Goodrich, and we had a decent back and forth about the plans that he presented. And then we conducted our normal business approving 4 program proposals, 4 new course proposals. And then we also approved for recommendation to the President of course, some optional syllabus language on intellectual diversity that faculty and other instructors could put on their syllabi. • Chairs – no report. • Deans – no report.
GOOD OF THE ORDER TONIA FERRELL	
	• Gruich – did not thank President Nemer and Kim Cole with University Foundation for funding the Social Engagement Committee this year. The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm.