

University Council

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

3:00 – 4:23 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, 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), Linda Saliga (BF chair), Faii Sangganjanavanich, Madilyn Shaw, Amy Trunko, Sonya Wagner Members Absent with notice: Stacia Biddle (SES chair) Members Absent without notice: Ally Temsey Other attendees: Alex Bailey, Suzanne Bausch, Christine Boyd, Lisa Craig, Jared Deeds, Karima Elgarroussi, Dana Frase, Andrew Goodrich, Becky Handley, Patti Huth, Walter Jevack, Judith Juvancic-Heltzel, Matt Juravich, Sarah Kelly, Steve McKellips, Meredith Merry, John Messina, Patricia Miller, R.J. Nemer, Michelle Smith, Ursula Stacks, Mark Stasitis, Michael Trivisonno, Ann Usher, Nick Weber, 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 announced that the elections for Vice Chair would be held in October as there had been no notifications sent about the election. - The agenda was approved as distributed. - The minutes of the August 12, 2025 meeting 2025-8-12-minutes-university-council-final.pdf were approved as distributed.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT TONIA FERRELL	
	UCEC met on August 26. Topic submissions – one new submission on Part-Time Faculty Termination Policy; it was suggested to give longer contracts to Part-Time Faculty to avoid contracts timing out between semesters. The submission was forwarded to the

	Talent Development and Human Resources and also to the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate's Part-Time Workgroup chair. • UC restructuring plan – UCEC discussed and voted on three different options. One option was favored and that will be shared with the administrators and chairs of the committees next. • Guest Speakers – Kris Kraft to contact ASL student group, Akronauts will speak at September meeting, no guest speaker at October meeting as it will be full UC, November will be the Honors College celebrating their 50th birthday with Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval and December will be an Admissions update with Kim Gentile. • Discussion about March 10, 2026 UC meeting. It will be moved a week further out to avoid BOT meetings. • An NSSE follow up presentation will be requested, and campus communications were discussed.
PRESIDENT'S REMARKS	
	Good afternoon, everyone. • We've had great weather this year and it's great to see students hanging out on campus. Great feedback from faculty, staff and students on the weekend of welcome. Thanks to all those who joined in the Call to Celebrate. • The three-week census is complete; I won't steal Provost Price's thunder and let her give that report. • Thanks to those who worked during the summer to prepare campus, thanks as well to those who made our students feel welcome here. • Ask everyone to bear with the construction projects taking place across campus, Buchtel Commons is coming together and expect to open mid-October. You may have noticed that the Coleman Commons fountain is on, first time in 6 years or so. This is part of my ongoing efforts to improve campus facilities, when things are broken it should be fixed. Campus beautification projects are ongoing as well. • Our leadership is working with Interim Chief Planning and Facilities Officer, Larry Blake, to prioritize orders. If you submitted something during the previous leadership, you may want to turn it again. I'm learning slowly that some things were never reported. Creating a red/yellow/green priority system for items that need attention across campus. • Celebrating our Brand refresh to increase our visibility across target markets. It's not always a great thing to be a best-kept secret. Excited to bring Katie Brennan in as our Chief Brand Officer. I know that our new UA Branding department will develop consistent, dynamic ways to tell our stories. • We are now turning to the 2026 admission cycle; our teams have already started to recruit new students and all types to the university. We continue to create opportunities for student growth and community engagement.

	• Tomorrow night singer/songwriter Chase Bryant, a long time friend of mine, will give an evening concert on Coleman Commons and he will be speaking at our Mental Health Awareness Luncheon earlier that day. Looks like the weather will cooperate, please come out and join us for that. Chase has an incredible testimony to share from his own journey to mental health awareness and his community's role in helping him heal. • At the beginning of next month, we'll celebrate Homecoming 2025 and 50 years of Honor's College at The University of Akron. Attendance and participation at campus-wide events have been strong. Student life and social aspects seem to be continuously improving. So please come down and join some of these great events. Several of athletics teams are also off to a great start this fall, and we're excited about that. There were no questions for the President.
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PROVOST'S REMARKS

	• Current enrollment stands at 15,318 students, up 4% from last year. This is a tremendous leap and that is a testament to a lot of work by a lot of people in admissions, enrollment management and actually all the way to faculty and department chairs, everyone. • All areas of interest are up; first-time students, transfers, CCP, and Master's degrees all saw an increase. • Our focus now shifts to retention and to recruiting the next class. Applications opened on August 1st, so future reports will focus on how we keep our momentum going. • Thank you to everyone who came to listen to Mia Yaniko, our General Counsel and I speak about SB1. We just completed five sessions and will continue to move forward with the necessary working groups as well as the policy. Please remember to use the SB1 resource page and submit questions there as needed. • Accessibility efforts are underway in terms of making all of digital documents accessible to everyone. Please be sure to get informed, attend training, and start converting materials. If you are not using something, archive it. To make this effort more enjoyable, the Office of Accessibility and Online Learning Services are sponsoring a campaign to foster involvement. There's a kickoff on September 15th in the Zip Assist lobby, so we're hoping you're able to attend. • Vice Provost Fedearia Nicholson-Sweval and I would like to congratulate the Office of Orientation and First-Year Programs led by Carly DeBord and Brandon Kreitz for a successful Convocation and New Roo Weekend. We had over 850 students at Convocation. We had 75 commuters attend the first annual Welcome Pit Stop in the Roo Lounge. Approximately 400 students attended the Welcome Back Carnival. And we have 933 students enrolled in First Year learning communities this fall. That is a 30% increase over last year. Kudos to Dan Reichert, Lisa Hunt and our academic advisors for all their hard work in that area. • As you know we have also been working hard to expand opportunities for students, faculty and alumni to gain knowledge and skills through short courses on Coursera.
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	Along with increased participation and great feedback from those taking advantage of those opportunities, UA has been recognized, nominated and selected as a regional winner for 2025 Coursera Outstanding Achievement Awards. We were recognized with the Learning Hero Award, which is a testament to our notable commitment to fostering an environment of learning and positive impact. Congratulations to Wendy Lampner and her team for opening those doors for us and earning national recognition. • Lastly, tonight is Academic Achievement Night at the soccer game. RJ and I will be there, along with many others, to celebrate the great work of our student athletes. Come join us to cheer on the Zips against Western Michigan and recognize our student's greatness on the field and in the classroom. So Go Zips! There were no questions for the Provost.
GUEST SPEAKER – AKRONAUTS	
	President of Akronauts; Jonathan Armbrust introduced members with him at meeting; Logan, Vice President; Matt, Chief Mechanical Engineer and Henry, Team Project Manager. Akronauts shared their presentation University Council Presentation.pptx General information about the Acronauts • The team consists of about 70 members, 22 leads, and a smaller group of managers and officers. • Members design, build, and fly high-power rockets, categorized into solid and liquid propulsion. • Their mission is to provide students with the experience needed to secure careers in the aerospace industry. • The group emphasizes the technical experience gained from hands-on work and fosters a strong team culture. Flagship projects for the year • Emergent 6: A solid propellant rocket and the sixth iteration of a series intended to reach the Kármán line, the boundary of space (330,000 feet). ○ Previous iterations have consistently achieved higher altitudes. ○ The 2025 version, Emergent 5, was a significant step, aiming to triple their highest altitude. ○ The team manufactures all components in-house, including the propellant, airframe, and flight computer. • Stinger liquid rocket: The team is working on a liquid rocket using their student-designed Stinger flight engine, which produces 2,000 pounds of thrust. ○ The goal is to fly the rocket to an altitude between 50,000 and 90,000 feet, which would be a collegiate world record. ○ The team has achieved prior firsts, such as the first collegiate liquid-fueled engine firing and launch in Ohio. • IREC 2026: A two-stage solid rocket for the International Rocket Engineering Competition. ○ The Acronauts have a history of success at this competition, including winning first place in the 45K multi-stage category in 2025.

- IREC offers team members a mini career fair with major aerospace companies.

Importance of the Acronauts program

- Technical experience: Students gain valuable, applicable skills by working on complex projects with real-world constraints.
- Industry opportunities: The experience and recognition from competitions, like IREC, help members stand out to major aerospace employers.
- Strong team culture: The time and effort invested in the projects help build camaraderie and "lifelong friendships" among members.

Questions:

How were you trying to help the children at I Promise?

-Our admin board was looking for new outreach events and opportunities. They reached out to the I Promise school and did a week program where they went in at the end of the school day and taught low-level rocketry stuff and build paper rockets with them and do aerospace-based activities. We took our competition rocket over there and they put their handprints all over it.

When you compete, is this a feature of the competition?

- we attended the AIAA Young Astronaut Day. It's Aerospace Institute of Astronautics and Aeronautics. They hold an event every year and they also hold smaller events throughout the year where they invite a bunch of school kids from different ages and have Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, and they have a young astronaut day where they have a speaker come to the event. They do a bunch of activities and the Akronauts always attend, and we do an activity with the kids. Typically, it's making paper rockets, and we turn it into a competition like who can make the best rocket go the farthest, go the highest, XYZ. And we've also made egg parachutes in the past. So that's kind of one of my favorite things that we've been doing. As far as other outreach that we do, we do a lot of stuff around the university, but that's mainly to other students, not typically to other schools.

This is a part of how you compete when you compete, is this a feature of the competition? In other words, do your outreach efforts count towards your prize or no prize?

-It depends on the competition. So, we used to do the NASA SLI competition which had a slightly larger focus on report writing and outreach was a part of that. The competition we do now, it's kind of just extra. We like to talk about the AIAA and other outreach we do. So, it's not an official scoring category, but the judges love to see outreach, and it's encouraged for your team.

In terms of fund funding for your program, where do most of the funds come from and do you have to do your own fundraising for your competitions?

- we get the majority of our funding from the College of Engineering, I don't know, probably about 60%. And then the rest of that will go out and talk to companies. Usually, co-ops will work for those companies, talk to their manager and we can find some way to get support. Usually it's not just money. Usually, it's outsourced machining or you know, aluminum stock

or some sort of material or even mentorship. So, we currently have a Blue Origin mentor working with our payload team trying to see what's a realistic payload that would be interesting to put in this rocket that would actually be useful to test? So yeah, probably like a 60/40 from College of Engineering. And then we do have to go out and look for our own funding from a lot of companies.

Can you guys talk a little bit about the membership of the team? Are there limitations in terms of who can join and if not, then can you talk a little bit about the diversity of the students in terms of their academic background on the team?

- there really is no limitation. If we can go back to the leader or the breakdown slide. So, the team is structured in the way that we have five different subsystems, and the subsystems cover the different kinds of overall parts of the rocket and they include all different types of disciplines of science and engineering. So, you don't have to be in engineering to be on the team. You don't even really have to be in STEM. We have marketing positions, an outreach position, and media position. All those things are equally as important, even if you're not touching the rocket, like doing events. Outreach like this is incredibly important and it's not, you know, solving for X. So we really don't dictate whether or not you can be in what position on the team. It's just really based on the amount of effort that you put in. So obviously we encourage engineers because we need those. But if you're just interested in aerospace and you're interested in solving the problem, then of course, you know, come to the meetings, join the team, we can find something for you to work on.

How much time would you say you invest in Akronauts compared to classes?

- To put a number on it is hard, but it's got to be near 30 hours a week, if not more, on top of classwork and everything. I'll be honest with you; I'm in my fifth year. I don't have senioritis yet, but I'm at the point where I really wish I could spend all my time doing this and just be done with the classes. It's we like to say you get out of it what you put into it. It's cliché, but I really do think that's true. We are open to everyone, but to get the most out of it. The people who get the most out of it are the people who are really invested and doing it every day and the people who really love it. It's not. I think we're good at what we do, and I think we're not good at what we do because we're smarter than other people. I think we just really like it and work hard. It's a lot of work, but it's very valuable.

The chair thanked the Akronauts for a great presentation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TONIA FERRELL

- Budget & Finance – met in July, working on gals and talking about policies; 60-plus program, what can students use their UA discount on, merit scholarship monies, graduate assistant fees.
- Campus Wellness – meeting Friday.
- Information Technology - update on Windows 11 update – required by Microsoft, given option with extended support, can continue to use Windows 10 with that. Have started effort for labs, quite a while since all 175 labs will be Windows 11 compliant. Update in Digest today. Part of first phase we identified high use labs, phase 2 with start of school to complete by winter break, for employees – about 200 will need to replace their devices.

	A question was asked about faculty with computers in instructional labs and how those will be updated. Corby - a lot of special use computers – will have to address those, a lot of loaners out there that will need to be addressed as well. Shared workstations also will need to be updated. If you have a concern, please put in a ticket or reach out to me. - Physical Environment – met in July and have a meeting next week to discuss goals. Chair Ferrell mentioned that the CFO was asked to attend the next UC meeting and give a report during committee reports on campus projects. - Talent Development and Human Resources – met in July to address the topic submission about Workday access, main concern with 7-minutes rule and address process for lunch clock in and out.
CONSTITUTENCY REPORTS TONIA FERRELL	
	- GSG – no report. - USG – hard at work this summer prepping for upcoming year; onboarding, internal processes, updating bylaws, welcoming large group to USG. A lot of freshmen attending orientation sessions. A lot of questions and interest. Looking forward to the start of year, I will be speaking at convocation and welcome them to campus. Heavily planning New Roo Weekend. We are excited for everyone to be back on campus too. - PSAC – met three weeks ago, welcomed new reps and will welcome more at the next meeting. We hosted a professional staff outing at a recent Rubber Ducks game and had 63 in attendance. Thank you to the Office of the President. Will meet next week. - SEAC – in process of receiving nominations, good turnout and hopeful to fill vacancies. - Faculty Senate – did not meet. - Chairs – no report. - Deans – we are busy doing most of the things the Provost talked about, SB1 has been a big time suck but working get part-time faculty hired to teach.
GOOD OF THE ORDER TONIA FERRELL	
	- Today is the last UC meeting for Linda Saliga, stepping down from UC. Founding member, Faculty Senate chair, been a great support and encouragement to me, thank you to Linda for her service to UC and advice and hugs over the years. We will miss you at meetings. - Thank you to outgoing to BOT Tom Waltermire and Max Pastoria. Thank you. Tom you always have your camera on and contribute to conversations. Thank you for being our liaison.

Tom – thank you Tonia, you’ve done a great job and it’s been great to hear all the activity on campus.

- Thank you to everyone for your work on UC, new year begins in a few weeks, working to be more effective as shared governance.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 pm.