

Minutes
UCA Faculty Senate
Tuesday, April 28 at 11:00 am
Wingo 315
Chris Craun, Secretary

I. Call to order: FS President Thomas

Present:

Provost Hargis, FS President Thomas, and Ex-President Dunlap (as a guest)

Senators:

At Large Senators: Mukherjee, , Rosenow

CAHSS: Burley, Craun, Spivey (left early due to illness)

CHBS: Downey, Jamerson, Jenkins

COB:

COE: Couture, Buchanan, McClellan

COSE: Yarberry, Naumiec, Johnson

Honors: Frank

Library:

II. Approval of Minutes from Faculty Senate regular meeting, April 7, 2026

Minutes (the last of the 2025-2026 Senate) were approved at the last meeting.

III. Comments:

A. Provost Hargis

Thank you, new and returning Senators, for being willing to serve in 2026-2027. I wish you all a restful summer in preparation for a busy next year. I look forward to working with you.

B. FS President Thomas

I want to welcome all of you! I'll begin by awarding a plaque on behalf of UCA to former Faculty Senate President, Tori Dunlap in recognition of her excellent service as FS President during Academic Year 2025-2026.

However, I also want to give her a personal gift in appreciation for her guidance during my time as VP and the many hours she spent working for the Senate.

(The gift was a framed quote on “Leadership” with a picture of a protein structure that is central to Dr. Dunlap’s dissertation research).

President Thomas continued: One of the best parts of being on the Faculty Senate is working beside quality people and learning from their experiences. I am greatly looking forward to this next year.

Before we move ahead with the Agenda, I want to provide some information regarding the new charges for Faculty Senate Committees. I believe this will help guide senators when they volunteer for FS committees later today. It is easier to work on something that coincides with your passions and interests.

See Item A at the end of these Minutes: Draft Charges 2026-2027 and Draft A&E Committee Description documents.

IV. Constituent Concerns

- A.** Has the Faculty Senate addressed yet that faculty have lost access to student phone numbers? I can see an emergency contact but nothing for the student themselves. One advisor refused to give me a student number when I thought both of us were trying to get the student back on track. He said that I had to go through the Registrar's Office or an administrator. Is this a new policy? Will BrightSpace give us this access? Please advise.

Response from Registrar:

Question: Has the Faculty Senate addressed yet that faculty has lost access to student phone numbers? I can see an emergency contact but nothing for the student themselves.

Response – The Registrar’s Office has worked with IT to restore student telephone numbers in self-service. It seems this feature was lost in the transition to the updated version. While phone numbers are available, please note that not

all students will have a visible phone number. The system only displays numbers that are designated in Banner as either “cell” or “mailing” and marked as the primary number. If a student’s phone number does not meet these criteria, it will not appear in self-service.

Question - One advisor refused to give me a student number when I thought both of us were trying to get the student back on track. He said that I had to go through the Registrar's Office or an administrator. Is this a new policy? Will Bright-space give us this access?

Response - Telephone numbers are not considered directory information at UCA and should therefore be treated as FERPA-protected information.

FERPA-protected information may be shared without a student’s prior consent with school officials who have a legitimate educational interest (FERPA Quick Guide, AACRAO).

There is no new policy regarding this information. However, it is always advisable that if there are any questions about what information can be shared and with whom, to contact the Office of the Registrar for clarification.

I am unable to speak to the capabilities of Brightspace.

- B.** Why did UCA choose to pay OneDigital to select retirement investments when TIAA did it for free? What drove the timing of this change? Why can I not opt out and keep my former investments, as promised? Almost all of my former investments are unavailable, and none of my "cultural choices" are.

Answer: We have paid a 3rd party benefits manager for many years. OneDigital won the contract a little over a year ago. Some of TIAA’s services are marketed separately from our contract. Therefore, OneDigital’s separate fiduciary relationship with UCA helps ensure objectivity regarding financial decisions.

It has been regular practice to review investment accounts based on their performance. If an investment fails to perform over a prolonged period, it is removed from the portfolio. Some of the investments from the past are no longer available due to the advice of TIAA and/or OneDigital. Ed Powers is the Faculty Representative on the Investment Committee, and he would likely be better able to answer questions about specific funds.

There was a follow up concern regarding UCA’s new retirement plan, and Amy Whitehead (as Chair of the Investment Committee) provided a more detailed and informative response—See Item B at the end of these Minutes.

- C. "I saw the announcement of the "Mid-to-Late Career Faculty Reception ". There are numerous ambiguities. The announcement was made to everyone via UCA Inform, but it states that only invited faculty can attend. It first states that the event is for faculty with 10 or more years of service, but then suggests that this only refers to service at UCA.

I have been at UCA for less than five years, but I have more than ten years of experience as a full-time faculty member at the previous universities. If the intention of this event is to honor those who have been at UCA a long time, why is it called a "Mid-to-Late Career Faculty Reception"?

If the intention is to support and listen to Mid-to-Late career faculty like myself, then why is it by invitation only?

The invitation was intended for everyone, but this year we were specifically honoring faculty with longevity at UCA, so a Mid-to-Late career developed here. We will review this issue for future gatherings in light of this concern.

- D. A constituent would like to raise once again the problem of Department Chairs being unwilling to step down due to the loss of income. This continues to limit the career trajectories of other faculty. Is there a way to address this financial concern and open up opportunities for more faculty to attain leadership?

- E. Members from the Dept of Education Faculty would like to see the Promotion and Tenure process become an online procedure with virtual candidate portfolios.

Provost Hargis indicated that this is an idea that could be explored. Any effort to develop a plan would need to include input from departments and disciplines across the institution to ensure that the process reflects the range of expectations, materials, and standards currently in place.

There are also important professional considerations. The Promotion and Tenure review progresses through multiple levels (Department, Chair, College, Dean, Provost, President, Board), and candidates retain the ability to withdraw their application materials prior to review at higher levels. Additionally, once materials are submitted, applicants may only add content if it is formally requested during the review process. Any move to a virtual format would need to

account for appropriate access, visibility, and control of materials as the file advances through each stage of review.

Finally, any change to the Promotion and Tenure process would need to be considered at the university level. It would not be appropriate to implement changes at the department or college level, as consistency in process is essential across the institution.

- F. Faculty asked regarding the Pearson (and other) 3rd party tools currently being used in Blackboard. Will those be available for Brightspace in Summer I?

The consensus of faculty members who had attended a Brightspace training session was “yes”, but this concern will be forwarded to CETAL.

V. Action Items

A. Election of Vice President/President-Elect

Nominations: Chris Craun & Rhonda Mcclellan

Rhonda Mcclellan–Elected.

B. Election of Secretary-Treasurer

Nominations: Chris Craun & Faith Yarberrry

Chris Craun–Elected

C. Election of Parliamentarian

Nominations: Yarberrry, Burley, Spivey

Faith Yarberrry–Elected

D. Election of Web Archivist

Nominations: Buchanan

Buchanan–Elected unopposed

E. Confirmation of FS-appointed positions on University Committees.

Due to unfilled positions, Confirmation is postponed until the FS retreat.

VI. New Business

A. Filling of Faculty Senate Committees

1. Committee on Committees

VP McClellan is the Chair (Mandate of ByLaws) (as VP).
Members: Frank, Burley, Jenkins, Yarberry, and Couture

2. Faculty Affairs Committee

Members: Rosenow, Muhkarjee, Johnson, Rowley, Britton

3. Academic Affairs Committee

Members: Frank, Spivey, Buchanan, Jamerson, Fang

4. Advocacy and Engagement Committee

Members: Craun, Naumiec, Horpenthal, Lebeau-Ford, Downey

VII. For the Good of the Faculty

Sen. McClellan provided a summary of the responses provided by faculty at the Mid-to-Late Career reception (**See ITEM C at the bottom of these minutes**).

Sen. Buchanan suggested that we publish professional photos of all senators on the FS web-page to enable faculty to identify their senators more easily. Currently, only the Executive Members are pictured.

President Thomas was asked to bring his service dog to campus next year. He responded that he may, but his dog is still in training so it will depend upon his continued development.

VIII. Reminders:

- A. Fall retreat will be the Monday before classes begin (Aug. 17), with the format to be determined.
- B. Fall planning: Senators should not schedule courses or meetings during FS meeting hours.

Sen. Buchanan moved to adjourn. Craun seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

ITEM A:

University of Central Arkansas
Faculty Senate
DRAFT Committee Charges (2026–2027)

The following builds upon the standing responsibilities of each committee and identifies priority areas of focus for the 2026–2027 academic year. These are draft charges for the purpose of Senator committee selections; final Presidential Charges will be delivered at the Faculty Senate Retreat the week before the Fall term begins.

Faculty Affairs Committee

Standing Role:

Addresses matters related to faculty welfare, compensation, policies, and working conditions.

2026–2027 Charges:

- Advance Governance Updates
 - Finalize and support implementation of revisions to the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws
 - Ensure alignment with the Faculty Handbook and university policies

- Advance Salary and Equity Transparency
 - Work with the Faculty Salary Review Committee to translate findings into actionable recommendations
 - Develop communication to improve faculty understanding of salary structures

- Clarify Faculty Workload Expectations
 - Identify inconsistencies in workload expectations across units
 - Develop recommendations for greater transparency

Academic Affairs Committee

Standing Role:

Focuses on academic quality, curriculum, and policies affecting the academic mission.

2026–2027 Charges:

- Implement and Assess the Research Empowerment Grant Program
 - Oversee the first full cycle
 - Develop metrics to assess participation and impact
 - Recommend long-term sustainability

- Support Instructional Innovation
 - Identify gaps in support for online, hybrid, and experiential learning
 - Recommend improvements
 - Work with existing instructional offices (i.e., CETAL)

- Strengthen Academic Policy Feedback
 - Develop mechanisms for consistent faculty input on academic policy changes

Faculty Advocacy & Engagement Committee

Standing Role:

Promotes faculty voice, engagement, morale, and a supportive institutional climate.

(Because this committee is new, more detailed draft priorities are provided here.)

Guiding Principles

Emphasize practical, action-oriented initiatives that strengthen faculty morale and engagement.

Foster a welcoming and collegial faculty culture across the university.

Encourage faculty interaction

2026–2027 Charges:

- Faculty Advocacy and Communication
 - Provide a channel through which faculty perspectives and concerns related to morale, engagement, and campus climate can be shared with Faculty Senate.
- Faculty Engagement and Community Building
 - Support, encourage, and facilitate opportunities for faculty interaction across departments and colleges.
 - Promote event and activities that strengthen collegiality, collaboration, and shared identity among faculty.
- Faculty Morale & Welfare
 - Recommend strategies to improve morale and retention.

- o Develop and support initiatives that strengthen faculty morale and foster a sense of belonging within the university community.
- o Encourage activities that build esprit de corps and strengthen collegial relationships.
- Expand the Faculty Welcome Initiative
 - o Senators will welcome new faculty and introduce themselves as their Faculty Senate representative
 - o They will present them with a welcome gift and an information sheet on the Faculty Senate
 - o This will occur within the first two weeks of the term
- Implement In-Person First-Year Support for New Faculty
 - o Toward the end of new faculties first term, conduct a face-to-face check-in with new faculty.
 - o Towards the end of new faculties second term, conduct one more face-to-face check-in to see how their first year went.
 - o Assist them with connecting with UCA service, offer guidance and support as they desire.
- Career Awareness and Professional Community
 - o When appropriate, and in collaboration with existing UCA programs, facilitate conversations and informational efforts related to faculty career development, mentoring, and professional growth.
 - o The committee's work should complement – rather than duplicate – the responsibilities of existing UCA organizations already focused on career development.

Committee of Committees

Standing Role:

Coordinates faculty representation on university committees.

2026–2027 Charges:

- Review Committee Structure and Necessity
- Evaluate relevance and identify opportunities to streamline
- Establish a Committee Reporting System
 - o Define expectations and timelines for reporting
 - o Track compliance
- Improve Appointment Processes and Workload Distribution
 - o Recommend improvements to distribute workload
- Increase Transparency of Committee Work
 - o Encourage accessible summaries of committee work

Faculty Advocacy and Engagement Committee

The Faculty Advocacy and Engagement Committee promotes a supportive, connected, and engaged faculty community. The committee serves as a practical and hands-on arm of the Faculty Senate focused on strengthening faculty morale, welfare, and collegial engagement across the university.

Unlike committees primarily focused on policy development or formal governance review, the Faculty Advocacy and Engagement Committee emphasizes initiatives that build relationships, foster communication, and support the day-to-day experience of faculty. Through outreach, programming, and community-building activities, the committee helps cultivate a positive faculty culture and encourages meaningful participation in the life of the university.

Responsibilities

1. Faculty Advocacy and Communication

- Provide a channel through which faculty perspectives and concerns related to faculty morale, engagement, and campus climate can be shared with the Faculty Senate.
- Identify emerging concerns affecting the faculty experience and recommend constructive, practical ways the Senate can support faculty well-being and engagement.
- Promote awareness of Senate initiatives and encourage faculty participation in shared governance.

2. Faculty Engagement and Community Building

- Support, encourage, and facilitate opportunities for faculty interaction across departments and colleges.
- Promote events and activities that strengthen collegiality, collaboration, and shared identity among faculty.
- Examples may include: informal gatherings, interdisciplinary meetups, faculty social events, networking opportunities, and other community-building activities that allow faculty to connect in both professional and informal settings.

3. Faculty Morale and Welfare

- Develop and support initiatives that strengthen faculty morale and foster a sense of belonging within the university community.
- Encourage activities that build esprit de corps and strengthen collegial relationships among faculty.
- Identify opportunities for the Senate to acknowledge faculty contributions and celebrate the faculty community.

4. Supporting New Faculty Engagement

- Encourage initiatives that help new faculty connect with colleagues and the broader university community.

- Support welcoming efforts, networking opportunities, and informal mentoring connections that help faculty build relationships early in their time at the university.

5. Career Awareness and Professional Community

- When appropriate, facilitate conversations or informational efforts related to faculty career development, mentoring, and professional growth.
- The committee's work should complement — rather than duplicate — the responsibilities of bodies responsible for formal policy review, faculty handbook matters, workload policies, promotion and tenure processes, or other administrative functions.

Guiding Principles

The committee's work should:

- Emphasize **practical, action-oriented initiatives** that strengthen faculty morale and engagement.
- Foster a welcoming and collegial faculty culture across the university.
- Encourage faculty interaction, collaboration, and participation in community-building activities across disciplines and colleges.
- Support the well-being of faculty as members of a broader academic community.
- Complement the policy and governance work of other Faculty Senate committees without duplicating their responsibilities.

Through these efforts, the Faculty Advocacy and Engagement Committee helps strengthen the relationships, collaboration, and community that support faculty success and contribute to a thriving university environment.

ITEM B:

Response to UCA Faculty Senate Constituent Concern

April 2026

RE: TIAA Plan Changes

Thank you for the opportunity to answer these concerns. The retirement plan adjustments that were made in April 2026 were preceded by presentations made to both Faculty Senate and Staff Senate. Four campus information sessions were also held (two via zoom and two face to face) in addition to numerous emails alerting plan members to the changes. If you have specific questions regarding your investments, I encourage you to set up a meeting with TIAA, OneDigital, or your financial advisor.

- 1) I did a full check of my former investment options and compared them with the ones currently available. The current options are lower-rated (dropping from more than a dozen 5-star options to 3, with many of the previous 5-star options that were multi-asset becoming single-asset funds. Plus, the previous ones could be aligned with retirement goals). The new options also yield less, including the new TIAA traditional. Finally, several of the recommended side-by-side swaps (new funds) have higher costs. This does not seem like a better deal, despite what we have been told.**

I am attaching the cost comparison provided to UCA by OneDigital in September 2025. I am also attaching an updated cost comparison as of March 2026.

It provides a side-by-side look at the 1, 5, and 10-year returns of the new lineup compared to the old, demonstrating why these specific swaps were made to improve the plan's net value.

Comment from OneDigital:

Morningstar "star" ratings are generally not a factor evaluated by OneDigital as a qualified plan investment advisor and plan fiduciary. OneDigital focuses on qualitative and quantitative metrics such as peer & benchmark relative performance metrics (total return rank, rolling return rank, excess return rank, etc.), peer & benchmark relative risk metrics (information ratios, Sharpe ratios, standard deviation, overall capture ratio, etc.), and stewardship metrics (R-squared, rolling R-squared, expense ratios).

OneDigital also recommended to the committee that the plan modernize not only the plan's core menu investment offerings with institutional share classes of funds but also its QDIA (qualified default investment alternative). We would assume that when the constituent is referencing the "previous 5-star options that were multi-asset", he or she is referencing the removal of the Nuveen Lifecycle Index target-date fund series. This index-based TDF series was replaced with the dynamic and legacy-contract-smart Retire Plus Pro model portfolios. The general structure of a multi-asset portfolio as the plan's default investment option was not changed, but the actual multi-asset portfolios were indeed changed.

- 2) **The entire investment committee are now co-fiduciaries with OneDigital, per FS minutes from February. Ergo, they need to deliver on concrete numbers proving that everything they said about new options are true. Do they realize that as fiduciaries they are all now legally liable for our reduced investment options?**

The committee is aware of its role and the legal responsibilities that come with being a co-fiduciary.

The committee's decisions to update the investment lineup are based on concrete data, including fee benchmarks and long-term performance metrics, rather than subjective preference. We recognize our responsibility to act in the best interest of all participants, which is why we moved toward lower cost mutual funds via institutional share classes that historically provide better net outcomes for retirees.

You can find the specific charge of the committee and its current membership here:

<https://uca.edu/committees/retirement-committee/>

- 3) **A true comparison would measure every single investment option we had previously, with costs, ratings, and 1, 5, and 10-year returns and set it against every current option with the same things: costs, ratings, and 1, 5, and 10-year returns. I would like to see that.**

I am attaching the cost comparison provided to us by OneDigital in September 2025. I am also attaching an updated analysis as of March 2026. This analysis includes

information on funds that were selected in comparison to funds that were replaced. Each fund has return information for 3 months, YTD, 1 year, 3 year, 5 year, and 10 year. There is also information on each fund's Net Expense Ratio.

The committee and its advisor monitor the performance of each fund that is part of the core lineup and will replace low-performing funds from time-to-time. Funds may also be replaced by other funds with similar rates of returns but lower expense ratios.

4) Could we get a narrative of when/how OneDigital won the UCA contract and became a co-fiduciary?

The selection of OneDigital followed a formal and competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process initiated by HR in September 2024 to ensure UCA secured the best possible expertise for our retirement plan.

Four firms submitted detailed proposals. An Evaluation Committee—comprised of Amy Whitehead, Brent Shires, Ed Powers, Jerri Worthington, and Michael Casey—rigorously reviewed these bids in October and conducted in-person interviews in November.

OneDigital was selected based on their specialized expertise in fiduciary oversight and cost-reduction strategies.

The UCA Board of Trustees officially approved the contract in December 2024. Following the July 1, 2025 effective date, OneDigital began a comprehensive multi-month review of our existing investment lineup. Their recommendations, which were implemented starting in April 2026, were focused on modernizing the plan, lowering participant fees, and strengthening asset protection.

5) I believe that law requires the minutes of the Investment Committee to be publicly available. Where can I access those?

As a public institution, UCA is committed to transparency. While our retirement plans are 'governmental plans' and therefore not subject to the federal ERISA statute, we

operate under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and follow fiduciary standards to protect participant interests.

All Retirement Committee minutes are public records. We are happy to provide records for any timeframe you wish to review.

- 6) **Are the committee members aware that they had a duty to act to protect individual members as well as the whole group? That case was decided in *LaRue v. DeWolff, Boberg & Associates* in 2008. They have already reduced rather than diversified plan investments, which appears to be a violation of their fiduciary duties.**

The committee takes its fiduciary role seriously. Our co-fiduciary relationship with OneDigital is specifically designed to add an extra layer of professional oversight and legal accountability. Our duty is to the plan as a whole, which includes ensuring that the default options are diversified and cost-effective.

- 7) **I've also attached the fund replacement guide. You'll notice immediately that none of the Nuveen assets were even on the sheet with comparables. When this plan was introduced in February, Amy Whitehead said, "i) UCA is going to reset everyone into an age-appropriate target-date fund, BUT you may still opt-out (even after the fact) and either keep your investments as they are now or select another option." That was a lie, and we need relief.**

To clarify the 'opt-out' process: While UCA transitioned to a new plan structure to reduce costs and improve oversight, participants retain full control over where their money is invested.

The reset to age-appropriate target-date funds was a 'mapping' process to ensure no one was left in discontinued or unmonitored funds. However, this was never intended to be a permanent lock-in. Participants have always had, and continue to have, the right to move their assets out of the default fund.

For participants who prefer investments outside of our core lineup, the Self-Directed Brokerage Account (SDBA) allows you to invest up to 95% of your balance in thousands of different funds. This is the mechanism for those who wish to maintain a 'self-directed' strategy.

It is important to note that the total value of your retirement balance did not change during this transition. The movement of funds was an administrative transfer of value from old options to new ones, and you can log into your account at any time to reallocate those funds according to your personal preference.

We apologize for any confusion regarding the 'opt-out' terminology. The intent was to convey that the default fund is a starting point, not a mandatory destination.

- 8) I chose to keep my current investments but had no choice for future contributions. However, they moved almost all of my money, without my permission. And I'm hearing from other people that the committee moved their money into investments that the faculty and staff had zeroed out.**

TIAA moved the money at the committee's direction. The committee itself does not move the money. I am not sure about what the constituent means by "I chose to keep my current investments."

There may be a misunderstanding regarding the 'mapping' process. When a plan is updated, existing balances are 'mapped' to the closest equivalent in the new lineup to ensure no funds are left uninvested. However, participants retain full control. While future contributions were directed to the new lineup by default, you can move your existing balance or future contributions at any time. If the 'core' lineup does not meet your specific needs, the Self-Directed Brokerage Account (SDBA) allows you to access thousands of other funds.

- 9) Notice too DigitalOne's track record on managing and protecting assets from the Feb. 2026 meeting.**

The screenshot that is referenced in this concern was from a larger presentation by Stuart Smith of TIAA. This data is a look back and is reflective of how our plan was managed before OneDigital began working with us. OneDigital's changes only became

effective in April 2026. I am attaching TIAA's Plan Outcomes slide deck so you can see the full presentation.

- 10) Notice that our plan is at the bottom for protecting assets--68% off from the best and 17 off the benchmark, despite the committee's statement in that meeting that "The retirement plan is financially healthy and performing well. We see room to strengthen how the plan helps participants manage risk and protect their savings over time, especially as they get closer to retirement." DigitalOne's track record says otherwise, right in the presentation.**

The data cited from the February meeting actually highlights the reason for these changes. That 68% gap in asset protection occurred under the previous structure. The committee recognized that the old plan was underperforming against some benchmarks, which is precisely why OneDigital recommended plan changes.

- 11) We need to know what committee members are being paid as fiduciaries. If they are being paid anything as co-fiduciaries, then the burden of proof is on them to provide the data I've requested, because they are benefitting from their choice. Saying that the decision was made last year does not negate their responsibility to provide minutes of meetings, correspondence, etc.**

UCA employees serving on the Retirement Committee do so as part of their service to the university; they receive no additional salary, stipends, or financial incentives for their roles as co-fiduciaries. There is no financial benefit to any committee member tied to the selection of OneDigital or the specific investment options chosen.

We are happy to provide meeting minutes. Please specify the time period of interest.

Chief Whitehead included several supporting documents including Core (Investment) Menu Comparison charts, but these documents are quite long and it was decided to attach them as separate documents instead of including them in the text of the Minutes.

ITEM C:

AI (Claude) Analysis of Submitted Comments from the Mid-to-Late Career Faculty Event.

Financial Support & Compensation—This is the most prominent theme. Multiple respondents mention salary increases keeping pace with inflation, longevity bonuses, travel funds for conferences, publication page charges, manuscript completion stipends, micro-grant ceiling increases, and merit-based incentives. Even those noting that it was “not Faculty Senate’s direct responsibility” still raised it.

Recognition & Valuation—A recurring undercurrent is that mid-to-late career faculty feel underappreciated. The reception itself is framed as a meaningful gesture, and several comments reference morale, feeling valued, and the demoralizing effect of stagnant compensation.

Research Productivity Support—Several comments specifically target getting scholarship across the finish line: writing retreats, accountability circles, manuscript completion grants, course reassignments, and continued (not just new) research funding through URC-like mechanisms.

Mentorship: Both Giving and Receiving—There’s notable interest in both directions: supporting senior faculty as mentors to junior colleagues (including digital recognition for mentoring) and providing mentorship to senior faculty navigating promotion to Full Professor or transitioning into leadership roles.

Career Renewal & Sustainability—Multiple respondents call for structured support around work-life balance, burnout prevention, reconsidering commitments at mid/late career, and staying relevant in the classroom with newer generations of students. The Strage & Merdinger retreat model is one concrete example cited.

Community & Connection—Faculty expressed a desire for cross-departmental social and intellectual engagement—book groups, solidarity events, thematic discussions—reflecting a sense of professional isolation within siloed departmental structures.

Leadership Pathways—A smaller but distinct thread points to wanting Leadership Development opportunities and clearer pathways that don’t require becoming departmental Chair.