



**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**February 25, 2026**  
**10:00 am**  
**Wingo 315**

**Senators Present: 21**  
**Senators Absent: 6**  
**Ex-Officio: Present**

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- I. Call to Order**
  - A. Meeting called to order by President Kern at 10:08am.
- II. Approval of the Minutes from the previous meeting**
  - A. Minutes from the previous meeting have been approved and are on the website.
- III. Guest Speakers**
  - A. Amy Whitehead- Chief of Staff
    1. Retirement Plan Overview -The retirement plan is financially healthy and performing well. We see room to strengthen how the plan helps participants risk and protect their savings over time, especially as they get closer to retirement.
    2. Upcoming changes to the plan- Three main changes:
      - a. Moving plan participants to RetirePlus Pro (opt-out available) and setting this as the default target date fund
      - b. Changing the 'core line-up' of funds for those individuals not in a target-date-fund. The new core line-up has funds that have lower fees and better returns.
        1. Lower-cost investment options
        2. Stronger historical performance
        3. Streamlined choices to reduce confusion
      - c. Self-Directed Brokerage Option: this option gives participants access to mutual funds not available or appropriate in the core menu; helps those participants balance their allocation with their outside assets or those who are working with wealth/financial advisors; accommodates religious and cultural obligations and beliefs; and participants can move up to 95% of their retirement assets into brokerage window.
      - d. Information Sessions- Virtual- April 7-8; In Person- April 16-17; Help Desk provided with appointments available. Emails will go out to employees. Please read and be aware of changes being made. A 1-800 number will be open for questions in.
    3. HR Website has a list of [retiree benefits](#). Questions about Benefits- contact Jerri Worthington or Clem Garrett. TIAA Financial Training on March 12-Sign up.
  - B. Charlotte Strickland- LEAD Program
    1. Program Overview- LEAD is a series of leadership and higher education seminars. It is free for employees and sponsored by HR Employee Engagement & Enrichment. The purpose is to bring together highly motivated UCA employees to experience first-hand the operational structure, relationships, and leadership within Higher Education to better serve and educate our students and colleagues.
    2. LEAD is for any full-time faculty or staff member, regardless of title, position, department or length of service.
    3. [The selection process is by application only](#). The LEAD TEAM will review the applications to determine the cohort. A cohort of 25 is planned. Those selected are notified

via email by May of each academic year. Please complete the application by March 20, 2026 at 4:30 pm, to be considered for this opportunity.

4. Interest sessions starting March 10 to provide information.
5. For additional information or questions, you may contact [Charlotte Strickland](mailto:Charlotte.Strickland@uca.edu)  
[chars@uca.edu](mailto:chars@uca.edu).

#### **IV. Officer Reports**

- A. President, Sherita Kern**
  1. Scholarship Awareness- Scholarships are available for employees and dependants. Please be aware and apply if you meet the qualifications. Visit the [Staff Senate website](#) for more information.
- B. Vice President, Dylan Richardson-** Working on the website. Volunteer hours are available for basketball and UCA Public Appearances. Staff Senate Election nominations in March.
- C. Treasurer, Shalia Delph**
  1. Treasurer Updates- Professional Development funds are being awarded as documents are being submitted. Received funding for football volunteers.
- D. Secretary, Teresa Burton-** No report
- E. Parliamentarian/Historian/Assistant Treasurer, Melanie Straw-Watson-** Absent
- F. Ex Officio, Carlos Herrera-** No report

#### **V. Senate Committee Reports**

- A. Courtesy Committee-**3 cards
- B. By-laws Committee -** Working on Amendments to By-laws. Presenting to the Senate on April 8th for a vote.

#### **VI. University Committee Reports**

#### **VII. Constituent Concerns/Communication-** None

#### **VIII. Old Business-** None

#### **IX. New Business-** Motion to cancel meeting for March 25 by Senator Hammond. Second by Senator Olson.

#### **X. Good and Welfare**

- A. President Kern:** Teacher's Fair this Friday- 9-12- SC Ballroom
- B. Ex-Officio Herrera-** Gear Up Sessions in STEM, health and wellness, finances, etc. If interested in helping, [sign up here!](#) Conway Artwalk coming back this Friday, March 6. Typically happens on the first Friday of the month, except for May due to Toad Suck Daze.
- C. Senator Turner-** Student Center front elevator is broken- use of the service elevator is available if you need it. SAFA hearings going on. Food trucks are here today outside the Student Center.
- D. Senator Hammond-** T-REC functional fitness area is complete. Early May redoing the floors on the basketball courts. The pool will be closed from April 13- May 22 for resurfacing.
- E. Senator Smith-Todd-** Soft launch of the new Student Engagement platform "Cub Connect" will be in March and the full launch to campus will be in May.
- F. Senator Delph-** Desktop EMS trainings available-look on the website for those dates.
- G. Senator Dickson-** Basketball at home this Friday and Saturday (Senior night games for both Men and Women). Baseball and softball games also. "I appreciate all the volunteers for football and basketball this year. Y'all came in clutch"
- H. Senator Calvery-** Planning for Bear Biographies. If interested in being a part of this event, please sign up.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

- A. Motioned by:** Senator Blew at 11:00 am
- B. Second:** Senator Hanshaw

#### **Important Dates:**

- Campus Talk- March 17th
- W(hine) & Cheese- March 17th | 4:00 pm- 6:00 pm | Buffalo Alumni Hall
- Faculty & Staff Recognition Celebration- April 14th
- Forever a Bear Memorial- April 16th
- Spring Social- April 24th