Milgard School of Business Faculty Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 30, 2026

Time: 12:30 PM - 2:35 PM

Location: Milgard Hall Room 301, 1950 S C St, Tacoma, WA 98402

Attendees: Altaf Merchant, Zoe Barsness, Alireza Boloori, Juliet Cao, Ben Chen, Gordon Craig, Sergio Davalos, Haluk Demirkan, Marion Eberly, Ray Tsai Fang, Nasir Haghighi, Abel Hernandez, Arthur Jago, Shalini Jain, Rupinder Jindal, Fei Leng, Stephen Norman, Greg Rose, Shahrokh Saudagaran, Evy Shankus, S. Joseph Shin, Hui Suk So, Arindam Tripathy, Michael Turek, Gary Viers, Juan Wu, Luna Zhang

Staff also Attending: Sandra Lordahl (notetaker), Bertha Fuentes, Nikolette Tabafunda

- Approval of Minutes
- Motion: Approve minutes from the previous Faculty Meeting.
- Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Non Voting Items

- Dean's Updates (Altaf Merchant)
- Fundraising and Advancement: Ongoing fundraising work for Entrepreneurship, Financial Wellness, and other centers, including outreach to families and organizations.
- Benchmarking/External Engagement: Altaf reported visits and conversations with peer institutions (including the University of Chicago) regarding entrepreneurship center development and discussed a possible leadership conference hosting opportunity in 2027, pending feasibility and resource review.
- Milgard received an invitation to host the next BGS International Leadership Conference in February 2027. Turned down the opportunity due to significant AACSB related work and planning required for the peer review visit in Spring 2027.
- Student Outcomes and Enrollment: Positive placement news was shared, including 100% placement for MSAcc with strong salaries. Faculty and staff were thanked. Enrollment growth remains a priority, with a 10% growth goal and a second Academic Program Summit planned in February.
- Personnel Update (Nasir Haghighi): The faculty and staff recognized Nasir's contributions and upcoming departure to Ireland at the end of March for a new position. A request has been submitted to fill the vacated position.
- Associate Deans' Updates (Juliet Cao and Marion Eberly)
- Budget/Hiring Plan (Juliet on behalf of Jaime): School budget is concentrated in faculty and staff salaries/benefits. Plans for a 3% budget cut scenario was reported: A pool faculty reduction was noted. Greg Noronha's retirement line was surrendered back to campus. Hiring plan includes an Assistant Teaching Professor of Finance funded by Gim's line and a tenure-track Assistant Professor Marketing funded by Nasir’s line.
- AACSB (Juliet): A new chair will be assigned for the Peer Review Team (awaiting assignment details). Mimi and Juliet are evaluating data management tools and collecting feedback. A report framework rollout is planned for February.

- Graduate Programs (Juliet): Continued efforts to build domestic and international student pipelines. Direct admit and undergraduate marketing remain active priorities. Visit to JBLM's Stone Education Center occurred on January 13. Ongoing collaboration with foreign universities to improve recruitment pipeline. Quinncia, an AI-powered career platform, will soon launch for graduate students to support resumes, interviews, and job-search skills.
- Personnel/HR (Marion): Assistant Teaching Professor search in BDA is progressing well; three candidates were requested for campus visits, with February visit scheduling to follow by email. Two sabbatical applications were received and approved by Altaf.

- Strategic Planning Task Force: Vision, Mission, and Purpose Drafts (Marion Eberly and Rupinder Jindal)
- Rupinder recapped the strategic planning process beginning in January 2025, including stakeholder feedback collection, initial drafts (May/June), and revisions after sharing statements in September and collecting feedback through October-December.
- Feedback themes included distinctiveness/identity, student-centeredness, language/tone, scope/inclusivity, and community/impact. Conflicting feedback on wording was noted as a major challenge.
- Areas of focus summarized: career readiness/employability, practical/experiential learning, community and business engagement, accessibility/inclusion/belonging, leadership development, ethics/responsibility/integrity, reputation/differentiation/identity (GRIT), and innovation/future readiness.
- Marion presented revised draft statements for Purpose, Vision, and Mission.
- Action Item: A survey will be distributed (the following week) to collect additional feedback across stakeholder groups.

- Faculty Workload Committee Update (Greg Rose)
- Greg thanked the committee and summarized prior listening sessions, noting faculty were generally satisfied overall.
- Four major recommendation areas were summarized (including departmental structure, transparency/dashboard improvements, committee commitment expectations, and committee aggregation/listing).
- Data review: Faculty received workload-related data summaries, including scholarship (2020-2025), teaching load/course prep, and service summaries (appointments/committees and club advising/editorial boards).
- Next step focus: Develop recommendations, review processes, and a process for designating preference allocations across teaching/research/service responsibilities.
- Discussion emphasized the need to account for institutional realities, workload/career progression (especially at associate rank), compensation/fellowships, budget/resource constraints, and improved metrics to capture diverse faculty work.

Voting Items

- Faculty Appointments and Service
- UWT Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee Member
- No nominations were received.

- Executive Council Member
- Proposal: Abel Hernandez volunteered to serve on the Executive Council.
- Discussion: Faculty discussed fit and workload considerations; Gary Viers noted Executive Council work and welcomed Abel's participation.
- Outcome: Motion (Gary Viers) was seconded and approved unanimously.

- Three New Supply Chain Courses (Luna Zhang)
- Courses Presented:
- TLSCM 420 Foundations of Operations and Supply Chain Management
- TLSCM 421 Transportation and Distribution Systems
- TLSCM 422 Decision Modeling in Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- Discussion:
- Luna described the strategic and regional relevance of supply chain education (including Port of Tacoma connections), workforce demand, and industry engagement.
- Faculty discussed student interest, prior special topics offerings (including TBANLT 490 enrollments), undergraduate vs. graduate placement, cost/resource implications, and how the courses would fit into programs.
- Altaf noted the proposal has been in discussion for several years, has regional/community demand, has Council of Deans approval, and is supported by planned hiring capacity.
- Additional discussion addressed the TLSCM subject prefix rationale and enrollment/job market demand.
- Outcome: Motion to approve the three courses was moved and seconded; approved with all yes and 1 no.

- Competency Goal Language Change Proposal (Gary Viers)
- Proposal Summary: Update public facing competency goal terminology (originally approved in 2021-22) to better fit the current climate and AACSB framing.
- Discussion:
- Faculty raised concerns that "sustainability" may not fully capture environmental concerns and that "Collaboration Skills" may not fully preserve the intent of the prior DEI language.
- Discussion emphasized that the proposal changes outward-facing competency goal language, not classroom content.
- Alternative terminology (including "Community & Connectedness") was discussed.
- Vote: Motion to approve the proposal as presented carried: 12 yes, 7 no, 4 abstentions.
- Outcome: Competency goal language changes were approved as presented.

- Tenure and Promotion Guideline Revisions (Stephen Norman)
- This item was deferred and scheduled for a future meeting (potentially via Zoom).

- Postponement of Review of Ben Chen
- Voting Eligibility: Associate teaching faculty and tenure-track faculty remained for the vote.

- Attendance for Vote: 13 voting members present.
- Proposal: Support Ben Chen's request to postpone review.
- Outcome: Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM.