

Opening Faculty Meeting

Friday, August 21, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Blackwell Ballroom

Faculty Senate Chair **Dr. Lee Bidwell** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was established.

- Dr. Bidwell welcomed faculty to the 2026-2027 academic year and extended a welcome to new faculty members. She noted that faculty support for one another remains one of Longwood University's greatest strengths and recognized the beginning of Longwood's 188th academic year.
- Dr. Bidwell provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of Faculty Senate, directing faculty to the Faculty Policies and Procedures Manual (FPPM) and the Faculty Senate website on Solomon for additional information. Faculty senators were recognized, and members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were introduced.

The [Minutes from Closing Faculty Meeting on March 26, 2026](#) were approved as submitted.

Report: Faculty Status and Grievances Committee – Dr. Jake Milne

- Dr. Milne reviewed the role of the Faculty Status and Grievances Committee as outlined in the Faculty Policies and Procedures Manual. He reported that the committee had no cases to address during the 2025-2026 academic year and thanked committee members for their willingness to serve.

Report: Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors (BOV) – Dr. JoEllen Pederson

- Dr. Pederson, entering her second year as Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors, reviewed the responsibilities of the position as outlined in the Faculty Policies and Procedures Manual. She reminded faculty that she welcomes information for inclusion in her reports to the Board of Visitors and encouraged faculty to share accomplishments, community engagement activities, and photographs for future reports.

Report: [AAUP Faculty Salary Study](#) – Dr. Bill Abrams

- Dr. Abrams reviewed the work of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), noting its role in promoting academic freedom and shared governance. He directed faculty to AAUP resources available through the Solomon website and encouraged interested faculty members to learn more about the organization.

- Dr. Abrams announced that Dr. JoEllen Pederson will serve as the next AAUP president and that Dr. Don Blaheta will continue the faculty salary study efforts. Information regarding AAUP membership and resources was made available to faculty.

Report: Civitae Core Curriculum Committee – Dr. Heather Lettner-Rust

- Dr. Lettner-Rust thanked the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for the opportunity to address the faculty and noted that the 2026-2027 academic year will be her final year serving as Civitae Director after six years in the role.
- Dr. Lettner-Rust provided an update on Civitae assessment and curriculum review efforts. During the most recent review cycle, 148 syllabi were reviewed, and assessment results showed continued strengths in student writing, reflection, information literacy, and communication of research findings. Faculty were thanked for their participation and engagement in the review process.
- Dr. Lettner-Rust also highlighted the upcoming CTZN 110 Day of Dialogue and encouraged faculty participation as the program continues to promote civic engagement, citizenship, and the common good.
- Special recognition was announced that the Prince Edward County Symposium collaboration received the 2025 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award for “Solving Civic Challenges Through Innovative Collaboration.”

Remarks from President W. Taylor Reveley IV:

- President Reveley welcomed faculty to the new academic year and reflected on challenges facing higher education nationally. He noted declining public confidence in higher education and discussed concerns related to political bias, workforce preparation, and affordability. He emphasized the importance of demonstrating the value of a Longwood education through student success, strong faculty-student connections, and meaningful educational experiences.
- **Civic Engagement and Student Success:** President Reveley highlighted Civitae as a distinctive aspect of the Longwood experience that supports citizenship, civic engagement, and preparation for life beyond graduation. He noted the University's continued focus on helping students develop as informed and engaged citizens while preparing them for professional success. This is reflected in the high percentage rate of alumni satisfaction with their Longwood education from a statewide survey.
- **Affordability and Value:** President Reveley discussed Longwood's efforts to remain affordable and accessible for students and families. He noted the University's commitment to maintaining a high-quality educational experience while keeping costs manageable for students.
- **Campus Community:** President Reveley highlighted the service of Nancy H. “Cookie” Scott, Longwood's first African American graduate, dedicated civil servant, and member of the Board of Visitors. He shared a recent conversation with Scott regarding the sense of anxiety and disillusionment often observed among young people today. Both noted

that Longwood students frequently demonstrate a strikingly different spirit. Reveley noted that Scott's desire to continue fostering the spirit of doing things well was a motivating factor in her return to service on the Board of Visitors.

- President Reveley concluded his remarks by responding to questions from the faculty.

Remarks from Provost, Dr. Larissa Smith:

- Provost Smith reviewed current enrollment figures, including first-time freshman enrollment and other enrollment trends. She emphasized the importance of planning for long-term enrollment variations by strengthening retention efforts and maintaining overall enrollment stability. Graduate enrollment was identified as an important contributor to enrollment stability.
- **Curriculum:** Provost Smith noted the importance of offering programs and services that reflect Longwood's mission while meeting regional needs. She highlighted the recently approved Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Master of Science in Information Technology programs and announced plans to launch an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program to help address healthcare shortages in Virginia.
- Provost Smith spoke briefly about state initiatives related to reduced-credit undergraduate degrees as well as the internship completion initiative. Faculty were encouraged to continue identifying opportunities in this realm to showcase existing institutional strengths.
- **Retention and First-Year Advising:** Provost Smith announced a college-level initiative focused on examining first-year advising practices. Deans will work with faculty to strengthen advising expectations, incorporate best practices, provide professional development opportunities, and assess the effectiveness of advising strategies.
- She also introduced Civitas, a new software platform scheduled for implementation in the spring, which will assist faculty and staff in communicating concerns related to student attendance and academic performance. More information will be forthcoming.
- **Technology:** Provost Smith discussed Longwood's ongoing efforts to incorporate Universal Design for Learning principles into courses to support student success. She emphasized that the initiative will be implemented gradually and noted that the Centers for Faculty Enrichment (CAFE) and Digital Education (DEC) have combined efforts to support faculty in this work.
- Provost Smith reminded faculty to include an artificial intelligence policy statement in course syllabi in accordance with the policy adopted by Faculty Senate during the previous academic year. She acknowledged that faculty hold differing views regarding AI and encouraged continued collaboration and respect across disciplines as the University works through issues related to AI use by students and faculty. Greenwood Library will continue to serve as a resource for both faculty and students.
- **Faculty Hiring and Leadership:** Provost Smith stated that faculty hiring decisions must continue to be made strategically, with consideration given to enrollment trends, curriculum needs, and academic program development. She emphasized the

importance of using faculty resources efficiently while continuing to provide an excellent in-person educational experience.

- Provost Smith thanked faculty for their dedication to students and affirmed her commitment to supporting faculty and academic leaders in their work.
- A search for a new Honors College dean will begin soon, and interim plans will be announced next week.

New Faculty Introductions:

- Provost Smith introduced Dr. Wade Edwards, the new Dean of the Cook-Cole College of Arts and Sciences.
- Dean Edwards along with Deans, Dr. Khawaja Mamun, College of Business and Economics, and Dr. Angela McDonald, College of Education, Health, and Human Services, introduced new faculty members joining their respective colleges for the 2026-2027 academic year.
- New administrative and departmental leadership appointments were also recognized, including:
 - Dr. Melissa Rhoten, Associate Dean of the Cook-Cole College of Arts and Sciences.
 - Dr. Adam Franssen, Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Assessment.
 - Dr. Phillip Cantrell, Chair of the Department of History, Political Science and Philosophy.
 - Dr. Karla Collins, Assistant Dean for Education.
 - Dr. Ronda Walker, Chair of the Department of Social Work and Communication.

Announcements:

- Dr. Lisa Kinzer invited faculty to attend the annual music faculty performance scheduled for Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. in the former music building.
- Cam Patterson invited faculty to attend First Friday activities in downtown Farmville the following week.
- Dr. Chris Swanson announced the upcoming Blackwell Talks series and encouraged participation.
- Dr. Bidwell reminded faculty of the Honor & Integrity Ceremony line-up at 11 a.m. in Blackwell Foyer.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Reynolds,

Faculty Senate Administrative Assistant