ACADEMIC SENATE REPORT

February 10, 2026

Blackboard Ultra

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Beth Dunn called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

II. **Members Present:** Heather Amwoza, Mary Casey-Incardone, Christopher Clem, Elizabeth Collins, John Cody, Robert Connor, Beth Dunn, Rebecca Fournier, Roseanne Feltman, Joyce Fritz, Mohsin Habeeb, Dmytriy Havrylak, Ruth Hallongren, Saadia Khan, Gail Krahenbuhl, Alec Lisec, Dennis McNamara, Selma Mehmedagic, Julianne Murphy, Antigone Sharris, Salvatore Siriano, Calvin Washington

Ex-Officio Members: Jeanette Bartley, Susan Campos, Paul Jensen, Joe Klinger

Non-Voting Members: Hilary Meyer

Guests: Tatiana Castaneda**,** Purva DeVol, Jean Dugo, Christina Garcia, Sandra Hernandez, Rachel Hindery, Denise Jones, Brenda Jones-Watkins, Justyna Kohtz, Jodi Koslow Martin, Shekinah Lawrence, Mary-Rita Moore, Ivette Perez, Ty Perkins, Gretchen Reyes, Nancy Rizo, Mel Seaton, Jennifer Smith, Kurian Tharakunnel, Michael Thunberg, Leslie Wester

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Beth Dunn asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the **December 9, 2025**, Academic Senate meeting. Ms. Selma Mehmedagic made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Mohsin Habeeb. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. College Curriculum: Dr. Murphy reported that the committee met on February 5, during which the committee reviewed and approved a large number of course and curriculum updates:

- **Course revisions:** 22 total, including updates to learning outcomes, prerequisites removed, and credit hour adjustments.
- **Curriculum revisions:** 21 total, including mergers (e.g., Hospitality Management programs) and updates to align with accreditor requirements.
- **Course inactive:** 11 total, including consolidation of Hospitality programs and the complete inactivation of the horticulture program.
- **New courses:** 7, particularly in the auto technology area, updating courses to modern standards (e.g., engine fundamentals, electrical systems).
- **Specific program updates:** Fire Science, Facility Engineering Technology, and Auto Technology had multiple course and curriculum revisions to meet accreditation standards.

Dr. Murphy noted that old course numbers and titles were updated, topics adjusted, and students were informed of program inactivation's with guidance to complete or transfer programs. All updates were approved internally and are being processed for compliance with HLC and ICCB standards.

Ms. Mary Casey-Incardone asked whether students affected by the horticulture program inactivation's would have options to transfer to other community colleges to complete the programs they had started.

AVP Paul Jensen confirmed that other colleges offer the horticulture coursework, but emphasized that Triton intends to work with all affected students to help them complete their programs at Triton.

Ms. Mary Casey-Incardone asked whether there are any plans for sharing with the college community regarding the future use of the spaces, equipment, and resources currently used by the horticulture program.

AVP Jensen stated that while details aren't finalized, the college is considering using the horticulture spaces and equipment for non-credit courses, such as personal enrichment programs, and is still evaluating how the space might be applied to other academic programs in the future.

Ms. Beth Dunn acknowledged the extensive work done on the Auto program curriculum updates, praised the team for their efforts, and called for a motion to approve the curriculum report and all items presented.

Ms. Dunn conducted the vote on the College Curriculum report, Mr. Mohsin Habeeb made motion to approve curriculum and seconded by Ms. Selma Mehmedagic. Ms. Dunn noting that two people, Ms. Mary Casey and Mr. Christopher Clem opposed it. She confirmed that the motion carried and then asked Dr. Murphy if there were any other items to discuss.

Dr. Murphy reminded everyone of upcoming deadlines for curriculum submissions, noting that the March 5 meeting has passed and the next deadline is March 9 for the April meeting. She emphasized that late submissions will be deferred to the next meeting to allow adequate time for committee review.

B. Academic & Scholastic Standards- Ms. Roseanne Feltman shared the committee met on January 27, via Blackboard.

The committee continued discussing a potential forgiveness policy, a topic under consideration for the last two years. Members questioned the need for the policy, asking what problem it would solve and requesting supporting data on its benefits.

The committee reviewed forgiveness policies at other institutions, where students can retake courses to replace previously earned low grades. While those schools offer broader grade forgiveness options, the committee unanimously agreed to support a more limited policy at Triton applying only to courses that are no longer offered.
A majority voted to move forward with this limited version, though some members still favor adopting a broader forgiveness policy similar to those at other colleges.

Mr. Cody expressed strong support for a broader academic clemency policy, noting that many colleges and universities already offer one. He explained that students especially those

early in their academic careers may struggle and earn poor grades that negatively affect their GPA long term. He believes students should have the opportunity to remove those grades, particularly if they are changing majors, rather than being required to retake courses. He suggested allowing grade forgiveness for poor performance during a student's first year, while acknowledging that continued poor performance would undermine the policy's purpose.

Ms. Feltman agreed with Mr. Cody's support for a broader forgiveness policy similar to the one offered at COD. She described how such a policy would allow students who performed poorly when they were younger to return later, retake courses, and have their new grades replace the old ones even if the courses are still offered. She expressed support for this approach and said she would share his comments with the committee.

Ms. Antigone Sharris supports a forgiveness policy that would allow students to remove certain poor grades from their GPA without retaking the course. She explained that students who earn low grades in dual credit or remedial courses especially while in high school can have their GPAs negatively affected for years. She believes students should be able to petition to have those early grades excluded so they do not continue to harm their academic progress.

Ms. Feltman explained that under a broader forgiveness policy, students could replace a failing grade by earning the same number of credits in a different course, rather than retaking the exact class as required under the current policy.

Ms. Feltman emphasized that GPA is important and disagreed with committee members who argued that it does not significantly affect students. She noted that GPA impacts scholarships, transfer opportunities, program acceptance, and eligibility for organizations like Phi Theta Kappa. She expressed her intention to bring information to the committee highlighting the importance of GPA, as she supports adopting a broader forgiveness policy similar to COD's.

Ms. Leslie Wester asked for clarification, confirming that the proposed forgiveness policy would not change or erase students' official transcripts. Instead, it would only affect how Triton College calculates GPA under its own academic standards, not remove past coursework from the transcript.

Ms. Feltman clarified that under the policy, the original grade stays on the transcript, but a new course grade can replace it in the GPA calculation.

C. Student Development- Ms. Mary Casey-Incardone shared the following:

The Student Development Committee met on February 6 and discussed three upcoming events for the semester:

1. **Trivia Event:** March 11, 12–1 PM in the cafeteria, open to the campus community.
2. **Blood Drive:** April 8, 10 AM–3 PM, mobile unit in front of B Building, aiming to exceed last year's 17 donors.

3. **Luncheon Conversation:** May 6, outdoors under the canopy, providing students and staff a chance to connect before finals.

The committee will also partner with the AI Committee for an event on April 14 at the Campus. She noted strong participation in the committee, encouraged involvement, and announced the next meeting on March 13 at 1 PM via Blackboard.

D. Academic Support- Mr. Christopher Clem reported that the committee met on February 6, noting quorum was met and several items were discussed:

- **Meeting Schedule:** The committee will meet on second Fridays; details will be posted online.
- **Student Success Data Pilot:** 15 faculty volunteers (75+ sections) are participating in a pilot linking Blackboard grade book data to student success, with faculty updating grades weekly; the rest of the data collection is managed by Mr. Jason Lemberg's team. Faculty can still join the pilot.
- **Support Referrals:** Faculty referral submissions have declined, which is positive, but alignment between referral categories and actual student needs remains low. Academic coaching was most selected, likely due to its position in the dropdown menu, highlighting a need for professional development.
- **Outreach Effectiveness:** SMS outreach had an 80% response rate, outperforming phone and email, though it conflicts with official policy that prioritizes Triton email.
- **Attendance Tracking:** Follow-up supports have increased due to prior attendance tracking pilots.
- **Textbook Course Reserves:** Faculty are reminded to submit course titles to the library. Courses with inclusive access limit the library's ability to provide reserves, suggesting a discussion about balancing inclusive access and student support may be needed.

Mr. Clem noted that inclusive access limits students' long-term access to textbooks, which can be problematic for programs using the same book across multiple courses. He also mentioned financial implications for the institution if students drop courses. He encouraged faculty considering alternatives to inclusive access to consult librarians for library resources, open educational resources, or other options.

Ms. Dunn asked two questions regarding inclusive access:

1. *She noted that in the Math department, using the same textbook across multiple courses with inclusive access significantly reduces costs for students, so it can be beneficial in some programs.*
2. *She asked why the library is not allowed to purchase textbooks that match the inclusive access version provided to students, seeking clarification on the restriction.*

Ms. Shekinah Lawrence explained that publishers restrict inclusive access textbooks to individual student licenses. If the library purchased the book to lend to multiple students, it would violate copyright, which is why the library cannot provide these textbooks.

Ms. Saadia Khan asked if the library can provide inclusive access publisher materials for chemistry courses or if the same copyright restrictions apply.

Ms. Shekinah Lawrence clarified that the library can provide hard copies of textbooks or OER materials for course reserves, but cannot include inclusive access content like quizzes. For Ms. Saadia Khan's chemistry courses, the library can hold OER textbooks in reserves without issue.

E. Campus Quality- Mr. Alec Lisec reported that the committee has not met yet their first meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday at 3 PM. He noted that, time permitting, Ms. Roseanne Feltman may share observations about cell tower presence and potential health effects. Mr. Lisec suggested that the discussion about cell towers could be included in the minutes of next week's meeting instead of addressing it now.

Ms. Roseanne Feltman explained that she prepared a 20-page document summarizing 50 years of scientific studies on cell tower electromagnetic radiation, which she previously shared with the committee. She wanted to briefly present it now to ensure it's included in the meeting minutes, emphasizing her concern for the campus community.

Ms. Beth Dunn said she would prefer prior notice for presentations like Roseanne's and suggested it be added to the agenda for the next meeting so it can be formally presented. She then moved on to the next agenda item.

F. Professional Development- Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl shared the committee met on January 29

The Professional Development Committee discussed the following:

- Survey results from Teaching and Learning Day were very positive the best she's seen.
- Subcommittees are selecting outstanding faculty and adjunct faculty winners; announcements will be made soon.
- Planning is underway for the Fall Teaching and Learning Day. A letter was sent to area Deans requesting input on trends, professional development needs, and topics for online and hybrid courses, with a March 2 deadline for responses.
- Collaboration between the Professional Development Committee and the OETC committee is emphasized to avoid duplication and ensure timely, faculty-centered programming.
- She noted the importance of meeting deadlines since OETC committee members are unavailable over the summer and faculty are busiest at the end of the semester.

G. Assessment- Ms. Beth Dunn, serving as interim chair for Assessment, reported on that the Committee met on January 29 and the following was discussed:

- **Gen Ed Assessment Sequence:** Some General Education courses (e.g., RHT 101/102, speech) are being assessed two years in a row due to sequencing. Solutions being considered include changing the sequencing or using different courses.

- **Assessment/Learning Improvement Day:** Scheduled for April 17, 8:30 AM–12:00 PM, with breakfast and lunch. Sessions will be mostly large-group with small-group activities, totaling 5–6 planned sessions. Details will be finalized at the next meeting.

  VP Campos noted a discrepancy in the dates: the minutes state the meeting was January 29, but Learning Improvement Day is scheduled for April 10.

  Ms. Dunn clarified that Learning Improvement Day was originally scheduled for April 10 in the minutes, but the date has been changed to April 17. She offered to correct the minutes accordingly.

H. Online Education and Technology- Ms. Saadia Khan shared that the committee met on February 6, and discussed the following:

- **Teaching & Learning Day Presentations:** Emphasized needing at least two meetings' notice for Deans' input; late submissions would unfairly require faculty to work during academic breaks.
- **Leadership:** Ms. Beth Cliffel was unanimously elected OETC chair starting Fall 2026.
- **Peer Review & Modality Concerns:** Discussed faculty substituting synchronous online sessions for scheduled in-person/hybrid meetings. Highlighted Triton's lack of a synchronous remote modality compared to other colleges and considered optional synchronous support sessions for students (e.g., during closures, illness, or student requests). Noted potential contractual implications for adding synchronous instruction.
- **Next Steps:** Remaining agenda items, including updates on peer review course planning, were tabled for the next meeting (March 6), with priority for early discussion.
- **Administrative Note:** Attendance and meeting minutes will be submitted per new contract requirements.

Ms. Dunn asked for clarification, confirming whether Ms. Beth Cliffel will be taking over as OETC chair from Ms. Khan. Also, noted that since *Ms. Khan is both OETC chair and a senator, and Beth Cliffel is not a senator, they need to discuss offline how the transition affects the senate role. She then moved the meeting forward to the next agenda item.*

I. AI Education and Policy Committee: Ms. Rebecca Fournier shared the following updates from AI EPiC Committee:

- The committee is creating a logo with marketing.
- Each member is now a point person for a specific initiative to improve organization.
- Met January 22, 2026.
- The planned survey will focus on faculty needs for AI, rather than students.
- The "Future Forward Fair for AI and Innovation" is scheduled for April 14, with transfer institutions, campus departments, and communications support for publicity.
- The AI toolkit is being revised, considering a shift from Otter to Genio based on CAAS department recommendations.
- The AI Ambassador program has been condensed, retaining three modules (AI basics, ethics, application) in a video Q&A format with certification.
- Next meeting: February 19 on Collaborate Ultra.

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V. Operational Assembly: Ms. Hilary Meyer shared the following updates from Operational Assembly:

- **Academic Affairs:** Hosted a "Thinking Out Loud" session in the library with Arts & Sciences faculty discussing truth across disciplines; standing-room-only turnout.
- **Student Affairs:** Upcoming info sessions for Student Trustee and TCSA E-board elections on February 17; faculty encouraged to inform interested students.
- **IT:** Migration from Watermark to Curricunet is in progress over the next few months.
- **HR:** Black History Month event "Hidden Figures" on February 12, featuring cultural activities and food.
- **Business & Facilities:** Alumni office partnering with athletics and student life for "Pack the Place" basketball event on February 19 (women's and men's games); all encouraged to attend.

Overall, Ms. Meyer highlighted engagement opportunities across academics, student life, IT, HR, and athletics.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Announcements:

Ms. Beth Dunn shared several updates and announcements:

- **Assessment Committee:** Ms. Francis Figg has been appointed as the new Chair of Assessment, replacing Dunn as Interim Chair. Meeting times will be adjusted due to Ms. Figg's teaching schedule.
- **Senate Membership:** Some current senators are stepping down as their terms expire; department chairs have been notified, and new senators will begin in the fall.
- **Adjunct Representation:** Mr. Frank Alvino will no longer serve as the adjunct representative; nominations for a new adjunct senator are being requested.

Ms. Beth Dunn reminded Senate committee chairs that, as part of their compensation, they must take attendance, record minutes, and submit them to administration. She asked that minutes be submitted to Ms. Casandra Ramirez and include attendance. Chairs should monitor committee members who do not participate and consider replacing inactive members. She also encouraged offering virtual options for meetings to allow broader participation.

Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl mentioned that she also needs an adjunct member for her committee.

Ms. Krahenbuhl clarified that the meeting minutes were requested at the beginning of the semester, she has already submitted them, and she is now waiting to hear from Ms. Casandra Ramirez about when they would like them officially.

Ms. Beth Dunn advised that minutes should be sent to Ms. Casandra Ramirez as soon as they're approved, not held until the end of the semester.

Ms. Dunn clarified that committee chairs should submit meeting minutes as they are approved throughout the semester to ensure timely payment. VP Campos reminded that an updated list of committee members is needed at the semester's start. She also announced that the Academic and Scholastic Standards Committee, chaired by Ms. Roseanne Feltman, will review the current course cancellation policy and requested departments share relevant data with Ms Feltman.

The next Senate meeting is scheduled for March 10 at 2:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion adjourned by Mr. Calvin Washington II and seconded by Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl. Motion carried. Ms. Beth Dunn adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: *Casandra Ramirez*

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Casandra Ramirez

Beth Ann Dunn

Minutes approved: _____

Beth A. Dunn