

ACADEMIC SENATE REPORT

March 10, 2026

Blackboard Ultra

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Beth Dunn called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

- II. **Members Present:** Heather Amwoza, John Cody, Elizabeth Collins, Tuan Dena, Beth Dunn, Rebecca Fournier, Roseanne Feltman, Joyce Fritz, Gail Krahenbuhl, Mohsin Habeeb, Ruth Hallongren, Saadia Khan, Alec Lisec, Larry Manno, 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 Castañeda, Christina Garcia, Sandra Hernandez, Rachel Hindery, Denise Jones, Jodi Koslow Martin, John Lambrecht, Shekinah Lawrence, Mary-Rita Moore, Ivette Perez, Mel Seaton, Kurian Tharakunnel, Michael Thunberg, Shelley Tiwari, Nicole Zumpano

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Beth Dunn asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the **February 10, 2025**, Academic Senate meeting. Ms. Selma Mehmedagic made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Calvin Washington. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

Course Revisions:

BOS 291 – Co-Op Work Experience: Minor updates to course learning outcomes, topics, and assessments.

ECE 121 – Language Development and Activities: Changes to prerequisite/pre-work requirements.

ECE 142 – Students with Disabilities in School: Title changed to Children with Exceptionalities and Inclusion in Early Childhood Education, with updated assessments and textbook.

ECE 233 – Creative Activities for the Young Child: Changes to prerequisite/pre-work requirements.

MUS 253 – Ensemble: Title adjusted to Small Ensemble, with updated course description and learning outcomes.

HTH 202 – Health, Culture and Society: Title changed to Culture, Society and Health, with a disciplinary approach update and submission to pursue the IBHE code 900 (Interdisciplinary Behavioral Social Science).

New Course:

MUS 103 – Applied Music Composition: A new course consisting of two lab hours.

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Curriculum Inactivation:

CET 260 – Renewable Energy Technology (AAS): Program will be inactivated. The certificate in this area will remain active, and the department may revisit deletion or reactivation depending on future interest.

Dr. Julianne Murphy announced upcoming Curriculum Committee meeting dates and deadlines. The next meeting will be April 2, and the submission deadline for that meeting has already passed. Items submitted by April 13 will be considered at the final meeting of the semester on May 7. The committee does not meet during the summer, but curriculum proposals can still be submitted during that time and will be scheduled for the September meeting. She will share the September submission deadline at a future Senate meeting.

She also reviewed the IAI (Illinois Articulation Initiative) website, which provides course descriptions and requirements for obtaining IAI numbers for both major and general education courses. The link to this resource is available on the Curriculum Committee Blackboard page. Faculty who wished to access the Blackboard shell can request to be added. The shell includes information on maintaining IAI status and submitting new proposals to the state, whose IAI panels meet twice a year in October and March.

Ms. Dunn conducted the vote on the College Curriculum report, Mr. Dennis McNamara made motion to approve curriculum and seconded by Mr. Calvin Washington.

B. Academic & Scholastic Standards- Ms. Roseanne Feltman shared the committee met on February 24.

Ms. Roseanne Feltman reported Dr. Griffin from the Business Department attended to discuss concerns about course cancellations, noting that he receives emails about cancellations up to a month in advance and believes courses may be canceled too early, since they could still fill later.

The committee reviewed the issue and found that there is an existing Board policy on course cancellations, but it is very vague. As a result, the committee plans to further investigate the issue and consider drafting a clearer Board policy regarding course cancellations.

Student members also shared concerns, noting that students are often upset when their classes are canceled, and that frequent cancellations can create a negative perception of the college.

Finally, the committee continued discussing the forgiveness policy, which remains an ongoing project alongside the new effort to review the course cancellation policy.

C. Student Development- Mr. Tuan Dean reported on behalf of Ms. Mary Casey-Incardone the following:

The Student Development Committee met on March 6. The trivia game scheduled for March 11 was canceled due to Ms. Mary Casey's absence. The committee will revisit scheduling it once she returns.

Members discussed participation in the blood drive on April 8 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Because of privacy laws, they plan to stand outside or near the building and hand out treats (such as cookies) to students who donate. A raffle will not be held for this event, and any prizes will be saved for a future activity.

The committee will also assist the AI Committee during the AI Technology Fair on April 14, with further planning expected once Ms. Mary Casey returns.

They finalized plans for a "Lunch and Conversation" event on May 6, where the trivia prizes and donations will be carried over and used.

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The committee's next meeting is scheduled for April 3, when their chair will return to continue event planning and discussions.

D. Academic Support- No report.

E. Campus Quality- Mr. Alec Lisec reported that the Campus Quality Committee met on February 18 and had a quorum. The committee first reviewed updates from:

Greening the Campus Committee:

- A photography contest for Earth Day themed *"Our Power, Our Planet"* will be announced soon.
- A Sustainability Conference will take place on April 24 at 4 p.m., featuring educational tables and vendors focused on renewable energy and climate coaching.
- The One Earth Film Festival will also be held on April 24 in R Building, Room R221, showing *How to Power a City* followed by a panel discussion.
- Campus litter cleanup days are scheduled throughout March, meeting at the Botanical Garden.
- A battery recycling station is available in J Building, Room J256.
- Volunteers are being sought to chaperone Des Plaines River paddling trips through the Greater Maywood Paddling Program, with training tentatively planned for April.

The committee also reviewed Senate discussions about department chairs sharing data on course cancellations.

Ongoing campus issues and initiatives discussed:

- Continued concerns about air quality in the second-floor suite of the G Building, despite testing that found no issues.
- Odor problems in second-floor women's bathrooms in the G, F and E buildings remain unresolved.
- Efforts to improve anonymous campus feedback systems, including installing a physical suggestion box, creating a kiosk designed through an Architecture Club competition, and developing a digital anonymous form.

Other initiatives and discussions:

- Proposal for a single-use bathroom in the B Building, possibly included in the FY2027 budget.
- Adding bilingual wayfinding to the upcoming interactive campus map on the new website.
- Addressing laptop charging needs in classrooms to prevent unsafe cords and tripping hazards.
- Improving classroom safety, including testing new wireless panic buttons and possibly creating a campus safety video.
- Fixing errors in the campus directory, which should improve with the new website launch.
- Delays in issuing campus keys;

Mr. Tuan Dean asked whether the Campus Quality Committee has considered alternatives to traditional keys for classroom access, such as implementing swipe card entry systems for professors and instructors instead of relying on physical keys.

Mr. Alec Lisec responded that alternative access systems, such as swipe cards or key fobs, are possible but would likely be expensive to implement campus-wide. He noted that a fob system was previously installed in the H Building during renovations, but it ultimately failed due to issues with the vendor and lack of support, leading the college to abandon it. While some doors in the G Building use keypad entry, he is not aware of any current discussions about implementing a campus-wide card or fob access system.

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- F. Professional Development-** Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl shared The Professional Development Committee discussed the following:

Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl reported that the Outstanding Adjunct and Full-Time Faculty awards have been selected, with the announcement expected in the next few days. She emphasized ongoing discussions about collaboration between the OETC Committee and administrators to ensure Teaching and Learning Day is effective and seamless. Planning is still underway, including deciding on a keynote speaker for the event. She expressed confidence and optimism about the outcome of these efforts.

- G. Assessment-** Ms. Beth Dunn reported on behalf of the Assessment Committee because the chair, Ms. Frances Figg was unable to attend the Senate meeting due to teaching. The following was discussed:

The main topic discussed at the last meeting was Assessment Day, scheduled for Friday, April 17, from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

The event will include breakfast, several large-group sessions, and lunch. Planned sessions include presentations on Bloom's Taxonomy, guidance on submitting assessment forms through Microsoft Forms instead of Watermark, and a session on developing action plans. Time will also be provided for a hands-on workshop where participants can receive help with assessment plans and reports.

The committee also discussed general education outcomes, including adjusting the assessment schedule for Speech 101 and REP 101 to prevent instructors from assessing communication and information literacy outcomes in consecutive years. Additionally, the committee reviewed updates to the Assessment Handbook.

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

The committee reviewed and approved updates to the online and hybrid course proposal forms. The changes focused on accessibility and usability improvements, including:

- Readable fonts and proper alt text
- Better reading order
- Larger text fields
- Separation of checkboxes from narrative sections for clarity

The committee unanimously approved the revised form, which is cleaner, easier to complete, and ready to be shared with the Senate.

Ms. Saadia Khan explained that the updated online and hybrid course proposal form now places the narrative section at the front and moves the approvals, modality, and signing sections toward the end, making it easier for faculty to complete. She also noted that the form is now ADA compliant.

Ms. Khan also shared:

Online and Hybrid Course Proposal Form:

- No substantive changes were made beyond reorganizing the form and enlarging fields for easier completion.
- Senate could review and approve it again if desired.

Professional Development (PD) Requirement:

- Committee agreed PD should be flexible, including online learning, CTE workshops, Triton training, relevant tech or AI sessions.
- They avoided strict hour-tracking since committee members have varying time and PD resources.
- Focus is on best practices for course design and professional growth.

Waiver Request:

- A full-time faculty member completed a graduate-level distance learning course meeting the online pedagogy outcome.
- Committee approved the waiver conditionally, requiring completion of Blackboard training.

Teaching and Learning Day Planning:

- Concern that observation data may arrive too late to guide presentations.
- Committee will develop evergreen presentation topics to ensure readiness.
- Upcoming meetings with deans will finalize the plan for the event.

Overall, the focus is on improving accessibility, flexibility, and preparedness for professional development and teaching initiatives.

Ms. Beth Dunn emphasized that the Academic Senate's role is to provide faculty input and make recommendations to the VP of Campus and President Moore. She stated that the online and hybrid course proposal form will be sent to faculty for review and that the Senate will formally vote on it at the April meeting.

I. AI Education and Policy Committee: Ms. Rebecca Fournier reported the following:

Ms. Rebecca Fournier provided updates on two main topics from the committee:

- Future Forward Fair (April 14, 10:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.)
- Collaboration with Student Development, with marketing and flyers in progress.
- Confirmed participants include 12 transfer institutions, departments showcasing AI in classrooms (e.g., Business and Robotics), and numerous student clubs.
- Open to the community, with ongoing logistics and additional resource planning.
- A student survey is being developed in anonymous QR code format to gather data on student needs for faculty presentations.

AI Recommendations:

- Departmental model selection: Various departments are exploring the use of different AI tools (e.g., Google, ChatGPT, publisher platforms like McGraw Hill).
- Committee consensus is that departments should choose their own AI model, as no single tool fits all disciplines.
- AI use is evolving rapidly, and students already have access to tools like Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini Pro.
- The committee recommends no campus-wide designated AI model at this time, leaving flexibility for departments to select what works best.

Ms. Fournier noted that these recommendations are fluid due to the fast-changing nature of AI and planned to open the first recommendation for discussion before a vote.

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Ms. Beth Dunn motion to forward it, Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl motion to move forward and seconded by Ms. Saadia Khan.

Ms. Beth Dunn motion on Recommendation One and opened it for discussion. She thanked Rebecca Fournier for her work and asked for clarification regarding Google Gemini Pro, noting that while students have free access, she inquired whether faculty also have free access to the tool.

Ms. Rebecca Fournier clarified that Google Gemini Pro is currently free only for students, and faculty would need to purchase access if they want to use it.

Ms. Elizabeth Collins noted that while she understands the committee's "no one-size-fits-all" approach for AI tools, she suggested it might be beneficial for the college to provide some basic, college-wide subscriptions as a standard practice. She also asked whether the committee researched what other institutions are doing and how the proposal aligns with broader trends in higher education.

Ms. Rebecca Fournier explained that most community colleges in Northern Illinois, including City Colleges of Chicago, are not locked into a specific AI model. Many provide access similar to Microsoft Copilot for students, but not always at the pro level.

She noted that four-year institutions vary in their AI tool choices, with some using ChatGPT, others using Google's Gemini. Policies often change yearly depending on the tool's capabilities and sources.

Her committee concluded that allowing multiple models gives students broader perspectives, since different AI tools access different content. She confirmed that she researched peer practices to inform the committee's recommendation.

Ms. Beth Dunn opened the vote on Recommendation One, which is to forward the recommendation to the Vice President of Academics. She reminded attendees that only Senate voting members should vote and instructed anyone unsure of their voting status to ask her or Ms. Casandra Ramirez.

The motion passed. The recommendation will be presented to VP Campos.

Mr. Rob Connor motioned to forward Recommendation One and seconded by Ms. Saadia Khan.

Ms. Rebecca Fournier presented the AI Ambassador Program, a faculty-focused, peer-to-peer, self-paced training initiative designed to provide foundational AI knowledge and practical classroom applications. Key points include:

1. Program Structure:

- Three learning areas: AI Basics, AI Ethics, and AI Applications in the Classroom.
- Includes an AI toolkit with models, platforms, and classroom discussion guides.
- Open-access, free, and self-paced via a Blackboard shell, using curated YouTube and educational resources.
- Faculty earn badges and a basic certificate as an AI Ambassador.

2. Advanced Certification:

- Faculty may pursue additional AI certification using professional development funds, subject to administrative approval.
- Options include approved external certifications (as low as \$60) or participation in the League of AI Fellows cohort program for advanced training.

3. Goals:

- Encourage cross-department collaboration and peer-to-peer learning.
- Provide practical, low-barrier AI training for faculty new to AI.
- Keep the program flexible and adaptable as AI tools and classroom applications evolve.

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The recommendation for Senate vote is to make the AI Ambassador Program freely available to all faculty, with optional pathways for additional certified training if approved by administration.

Ms. Beth Dunn called for a motion and second to open Recommendation Two (AI Ambassador Program) for discussion. Ms. Roseanne Feltman made the motion, and Mr. Calvin Washington seconded. She then opened the floor for discussion and thanked Ms. Rebecca Fournier for her work on the program.

Ms. Beth Dunn addressed a question from the chat about whether staff could participate in the AI Ambassador training program, confirming that the answer was yes.

Ms. Gail Krahenbuhl asked for clarification on the AI Ambassador Program and certification, specifically what it enables faculty to do and whether there are any restrictions or prohibitions for faculty who choose not to complete the program or certification.

Ms. Rebecca Fournier clarified that the AI Ambassador Program is completely optional with no prohibitions for those who do not participate. It provides faculty with:

- Basic AI skills for those new to the field
- Guidance on ethical considerations
- Classroom applications, such as word prompting or using GPT as a tutor

The program is intended for informational and educational purposes, to support faculty in classroom integration and discussion, but nothing is mandatory.

Rebecca Fournier noted that the EPIC committee's AI training recommendation aligns with EDUCAUSE best practices, emphasizing that faculty exploration and adoption should move forward with light guardrails in place. Beth Dunn then called the vote on forwarding Recommendation Two (AI Ambassador Program and professional development), reminding only Senate voting members to vote. Passed.

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

- **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS:** Mr. George Lam shared that Triton College sent 11 students the largest delegation in over 10 years to the Model Illinois Government simulation in Springfield from March 5–8. Students served as representatives, senators, and lobbyists, and represented Triton with enthusiasm and professionalism. One student, Jaden Chandler, received the Outstanding Lobbyist Award, marking Triton's second win in the past five years.
- **STUDENT AFFAIRS:** Faculty counselors and staff are leading training for Mental Health First Aid for faculty and staff, with a separate location for students, Monday, March 16 and Tuesday, March 17, 9-1 (8 hours total). Faculty counselors are providing QPR Suicide Prevention Training for faculty, staff, and students Wednesday, March 18 or Tuesday, March 24, 10 am-noon (2 hours total). \$90 student stipends available for one of these trainings.
- **BUSINESS & FINANCE:** The Communications Department is creating a video for ICCB featuring e-vehicle program faculty.
- **GUIDED PATHWAYS:** Tom shared features of the Award Spring scholarship portal, including SSO, auto-matching to specific scholarships, auto reminders, built in and smart reports to see where students are getting stuck. 1092 applications so far this year.
- **OA GOAL UPDATE:** Lead process improvement to lower barriers to completion (Student Success Goal):
 - FY26 to date (Summer and Fall) we saw an increase of 22% in both the number of students and programs awarded due to auto-award procedures.

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- This fiscal year alone, 188 students and 197 programs have been awarded as a direct result of this work, with Spring graduation numbers still to come.
- Over five terms (Summer 2024 to Fall 2025), 692 students and 783 programs have been awarded as a direct result of this work.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Announcements:

Ms. Roseanne Feltman expressed serious health and safety concerns about cell towers on Triton's athletic fields, sharing both personal experiences and scientific evidence. Key points include:

She and her family experienced medical issues (headaches, fatigue, memory loss, nausea, etc.) linked to proximity to a cell tower.

She compiled a 20-page document summarizing 50+ years of scientific studies showing negative health effects of cell tower radiation, including cancer risk, neurological symptoms, and fatigue.

Triton's fields are unique in having three cell towers, with no protections like distance, shielding, or limiting exposure time for athletes or visitors.

She offered to forego her salary for four years to have the towers removed during her son's time on the fields, emphasizing the risk to students, coaches, and visiting youth athletes.

Ms. Feltman requested that cell towers be moved as far away as possible, ideally into forested or shielded areas, and sought information on 5G upgrades for the towers.

She is concerned about ensuring her document is taken seriously and wants proper review by the college.

Her report combines personal testimony, research evidence, and a formal request for action regarding cell tower safety on campus.

Ms. Beth Dunn responded appreciatively to Ms. Roseanne Feltman, acknowledging the effort put into her presentation and suggesting she reach out to facilities regarding her cell tower concerns, while noting she wasn't certain who the correct contact should be.

Ms. Beth Dunn concluded the meeting by noting that she is waiting for departments to submit the names of newly elected senators, whose terms will begin in Fall 2026. She reminded everyone that nominations for Senate Chair will take place at the April meeting and that the next Senate meeting is scheduled for April 14 at 2:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion adjourned by Mr. Rob Connor and seconded by Ms. Saadia Khan. Motion carried. Ms. Beth Dunn adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cassandra Ramirez

Cassandra Ramirez

Beth Ann Dunn

Minutes approved:

Beth A. Dunn