

Faculty Senate Priorities for Academic Year 2026–2027

Purpose and Role of Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate represents the faculty in matters of academic, administrative, fiscal, and personnel policy and operations. In 2026–2027, the Faculty Senate will continue its regular governance responsibilities while focusing attention on areas where faculty expertise is especially important in this moment to MSU Denver’s mission, strategic plan, and students.

Our work this year will be guided by four leadership commitments: (1) stewarding effective work and processes, (2) supporting and advocating for faculty voices, (3) building productive and collaborative relationships, and (3) aligning Senate’s work with the university’s strategic priorities. These commitments clarify that we will approach its work with focus, transparency, cooperative partnership, and attention to institutional impact.

Ongoing Governance Responsibilities

Faculty Senate’s ongoing responsibilities remain the foundation of its work. These include curriculum oversight; academic policy review; faculty personnel processes; recognition of and advocacy for faculty excellence, diversity, and wellbeing; participation in university committees and searches; engagement with budget processes; and communication with faculty and administration.

This list is not intended to capture every Faculty Senate function or every committee’s charge. It identifies core areas of shared governance through which faculty contribute to the academic life of the university. We will continue to carry out this regular work carefully, transparently, and on time.

Priorities for 2026–2027

1. Teaching and Learning in the Age of AI

The Faculty Senate will support faculty-led work on excellent teaching and learning in the age of generative AI.

This priority matters because generative AI is shaping how students learn, how faculty teach courses and design instructional materials, how academic integrity is understood, and how graduates will need to think, communicate, create, and work in the future. Faculty must be central to shaping MSU Denver’s response.

In particular, we will contribute to efforts that connect generative AI, online education, academic standards, and student learning. This includes participation in a day-long faculty design workshop focused on excellence in online education and teaching in the age of AI; involvement with the development of the AI-Readiness Team of Teams (ARTT) steering committee and a new Academic Affairs’ AI leadership team (AAxAI); and attention to the ongoing work of the Holistic Teaching Evaluation Task Force. Faculty Senate’s role is to keep faculty judgment, academic quality, student learning, and workload in view as the university develops practical responses to next-generation technologies.

2. Curriculum Process Review and Improvement

Faculty Senate will use the 2026–2027 undergraduate curriculum pause on substantive proposals to reassess curriculum rules, processes, timelines, and support structures.

This priority matters because curriculum is one of the central ways faculty sustain academic quality, respond to student needs, support degree completion, and create new pathways for learning. A strong curriculum process should be rigorous, transparent, navigable, and responsive.

During the year, Faculty Senate committees will examine timing bottlenecks, barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration, clarity around approval processes, documentation expectations, and other structural issues that may make curricular work harder or more confusing than it needs to be. The goal is a nimbler and more reliable curriculum process that encourages collaboration and creativity while preserving academic standards, trust, and transparent review.

3. Faculty Voice in Academic Strategy

Faculty Senate will engage actively with academic strategy discussions, including the Academic Affairs branch's work this year to bring greater clarity, transparency, and long-term thinking to how MSU Denver manages its range of academic programs.

This priority matters because decisions about academic programs, student pathways, enrollment, resources, and long-term sustainability depend on faculty expertise. Faculty understand curriculum, disciplines, teaching conditions, student learning, program quality, and the relationships between academic offerings and student opportunity.

Faculty Senate will work to ensure that faculty perspectives inform how MSU Denver evaluates academic programs, new program opportunities, supports student pathways, and aligns academic offerings with mission, capacity, quality, and student need. We will engage in this work constructively while asking clear questions about process, evidence, workload, equity, academic standards, and the conditions required for durable change that keeps MSU Denver vibrant.

4. Budget, Compensation, and Faculty Welfare

Faculty Senate will continue active participation in budget, compensation, and faculty welfare discussions as new university and Academic Affairs budget models move into practice. This includes rigorous monitoring of Faculty Senate's own FY 2027 budget and careful planning for FY 2028.

This priority matters because budget decisions shape the conditions under which faculty teach, advise, mentor, conduct scholarly and creative work, support students, and serve the university. The Senate is well positioned to identify strengths in the new models and to raise questions about areas where budget structures can better support excellent academic experiences for students and operating conditions for programs and faculty.

We will monitor the budget environment, including the effects of state funding, enrollment trends, and institutional priorities. We also deeply appreciate the 2% across-the-board raises for faculty and staff in 2026 as an investment in our people, especially our dedicated and talented faculty. We will continue tracking compensation-related questions, including the rollout of new tenure-line faculty pay structures, new policies on compensation for affiliate faculty's late-cancelled classes, and the Faculty Compensation Committee's ongoing discussion of Category II faculty compensation.

Compensation remains central to faculty welfare, but faculty welfare also includes role clarity, workload, sustainable expectations, transparent processes, diversity, and the conditions faculty need to do excellent work with students.

Connection to MSU Denver's Strategic Plan

These priorities support MSU Denver's 2030 Strategic Plan, especially Pillar II: Student-Centered Academic Excellence. Faculty Senate's work on teaching and learning, curriculum process improvement, academic strategy, and faculty welfare connects directly to rigorous and enriching learning experiences, effective curriculum processes, collaboration, cross-disciplinarity, and the distinct academic experience MSU Denver seeks to provide.

Our work also contributes to broader university goals connected to student recruitment, retention, completion, and post-graduate outcomes. Faculty Senate will keep those outcomes in view while also affirming that excellent education depends on more than metrics. It requires strong and innovative curriculum, meaningful standards, effective teaching, sustainable faculty workload, and faculty-student relationships that help students transform access into opportunity.

Communication and Reporting

Faculty Senate leadership will report regularly to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, and our faculty colleagues on progress in these areas. These priorities may be refined as conditions change, but Senate's work will remain grounded in faculty voice, academic quality, student success, shared governance, and the long-term strength of MSU Denver.