Faculty Senate Agenda
1/24/2025
Noon-1 p.m.
Mill 201

Senators in attendance: S. Risser, C. Gammons, C. Young, C. Faught, A. Mitra, L. Buckley, D. Galarus, R. Nagisetty, M. Egloff, S. Perduss, A. Traut, J. Herndon, D. Reichhardt, J. Cornish, J. Kirtley, G. Southergill

Guests/Dept Rep: C. Roos, M Hardy, H. Skocilich, D. Gilkey

I.   Welcome and minutes: https://mtech.edu/facultystaff/facultysenate/minutes/2025/minutes-11-22-24.pdf

     Minutes were approved unanimously

**Action Items**

II.  CRC Recommendation – Retitle program Materials Science and Engineering (PhD)
     A motion was made and seconded to approve as written, a main motion to postpone until impacted departments had provided input and a letter of agreement from MSU is provided was then made and seconded.  This motion to postpone was passed and the matter will be deliberated at a future meeting.

**Informational Items**

III. Chancellor Search (2/21) - https://www.mtech.edu/chancellor-search/
     Applications open until February 21st.  On campus interviews scheduled to start March 31st

IV.  2024-25 Merit Awards (Non-MTFA)
     An update was provided by the chair.  It was asked that the Library be included in discussions because of their faculty status.

V.   AI Writing Detection
     Discussion of classroom AI in addition to plagiarism detection.  The following resources were highlighted, originating from the Writing Program:
     https://umanitoba.ca/centre-advancement-teaching-learning/sites/centre-advancement-teaching-learning/files/2021-05/UM%20Discovery%20Interview%20Tips.pdf
     https://provost.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2023/10/AI-Misconduct-Question-Guide-202338.pdf

VI.  Accessibility Resource (Math) – Webinar and discussion https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWsxKCoS0RA
     The linked webinar and information below was provided by the Mathematics department

VII. Spring 2025 Senate Schedule - https://mtech.edu/facultystaff/facultysenate/

**Discussion Items**

VIII. Proposed revision to the Excused Absence Policy
      a.  Current Policy - https://catalog.mtech.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=1625#Absences

The below was discussed by those presents.  There were suggestions to expand excused absence definition beyond just NAIA sanctioned sporting events (e.g. Club Hockey).  Senators were directed to take this issue back to their departments and units.

IX.     For the Good of the Order

An instructional designer was recently hired and is currently housed in Engineering Hall.  Additionally, because of an upcoming personnel it was unclear what support would exist for faculty for instructional technology, especially Canvas support.  A motion was made: Given the required switch to Canvas in January 2025, why was a decision made to potentially remove an academic support position?  A main motion to postpone calling this questions until more information could be gathered was made, seconded, and passed.

# Introduction to Accessibility for Mathematics Hub Document

Welcome to the resource hub for the MAA and AMS joint Virtual Program *Introduction to Accessibility for Mathematics* that took place on December 10, 2024. The resources linked below are a combination of recommendations from the presenter and attendee suggestions from the Zoom chat. Please note, these resources are shared for informational purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the official views or endorsements of the MAA or AMS.

## Ximera Demonstration

The YouTube link for the Ximera demonstration is here! I wanted to say a few more things. Ximera is free to use. To get started, you can visit the Ximera webpage at Ohio State or the Github page.

Recently, I have started using HTML for all my TeX files instead of PDF. Honestly, I should have done this years ago, but with how easy Ximera is, I don't have an excuse anymore.

Additionally, Ximera on Github Codespaces allows users to collaborate on TeX files without installation, which is one of its benefits outside of accessibility. (It's one of the benefits of Overleaf, for example). If someone is resistant to making their doc uments accessible, it helps to suggest a program that has other benefits, and I think Ximera is great for this.

Ximera is still under development, and all accessibility features are planned to be finished by April 2026.

## Handwritten Files

During the FAQ, there was a question about turning handwritten files into an accessible format. I wrote my own program to do this, and here is a demonstration of its output. It's not free to run, since it uses the Cloud; for example, I made a video demonstration if you want it to run on Discord.

This YouTube Playlist shows the videos I made before this webinar.

## Chat Resources

- At my institution, we find that communicating with low-vision folks about math is sometimes challenging because we use visual thinking. Anyone have any good resources to address the different experience of folks who don't have easy access to visual thinking?

- - The national federation of the blind recommends sharing the tex files for the advanced math since at that stage the PDFs are not accessible but the raw text code can be
  - I recommend checking out the DIAGRAM Center for complex images like graphs: https://diagramcenter.org/table-of-contents-2.html
  - We are the authors of two books available in epub with full MathML equations - Make: Calculus and Make: Trigonometry. There are also open source repositories of 3D printable models that illustrate the points in the books. See the epub/pdf versions at https://www.makershed.com/collections/make-author-spotlights-joan-horvath-and-rich-cameron, or happy to chat - email joan@nonscriptum.com.
  - FYI, there is a mailing list about BlindMath: http://nfbnet.org/mailman/listinfo/blindmath_nfbnet.org
  - You might find our Make: Calculus book and associated repository of 3D printable models useful.
  - For customizable 3D prints for multivariable calculus, this (free) NSF-funded project has some good resources https://sites.monroecc.edu/multivariablecalculus/
- We have been creating our accessible books in epub, and there are specialized screenreader (open source Thorium Reader) that will read MathJax, which MathML turns into
- I use html with mathjax for class material over pdfs. Screen readers can handle html files better
  - Do you have sample files that you could share?
  - https://tyler-skorczewski-math.github.io/math154/calculus2_usubstitution.html
- Google Slides and Keynote are great options. LaTeXiT (https://www.chachatelier.fr/latexit/) can add transparent .png's of equations if your version doesn't have an equation editor. I suspect this is not a good option for accessibility, though. But most of my slides are handwritten, these days!
- One of my colleagues uses annotate (https://annotate.net/) as a whiteboard since it seems to work will with creating captions/transcriptions for handwritten notes
- Mathpix and EquatIO have improved a lot in turning handwritten to typest LaTeX math + MathML. I'd say Mathpix's errrors are now "predictable" and I can code around them.
- I have been using Chatgpt to convert some of my equations to LaTex. Make sure you check and cross check the final product.
- Some points on both sides here: https://tex.stackexchange.com/questions/510/are-and-preferable-to-dollar-signs-for-math-mode
- Ximera's main website is here:https://ximera.osu.edu/
- If mentioning Ximera, Doenet is part of the same ecosystem (share some designers) (doenet.org) with strong accessibility as part of the core development.
- This is the video I was thinking of: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek2-eL7E4X0

I've converted LaTeX to PreTeXt and this helps/is a good baseline step. I think it also fits in with better practices for identifying sub/superscripts in math - just little details that seem to pay off.

Memo

To:      Members of the Faculty Senate
From:  Janet Cornish, Adjunct Writing Instructor and Senator *JC*
Re:      Proposal for the Management of Excused Absences
Date:   January 15, 2025

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According to the University handbook, the following activities constitute excused absences:

- "NAIA sanctioned sporting events
- Academic Team competitions (i.e., concrete canoe, steel bridge, human powered vehicle, ethics bowl, environmental design, etc.)
- Travel for professional meetings related to major
- Class field trips"

However, increasingly, the definition of excused absences has been stretched to include sport team practice sessions, week-long visits to meet with alumni and extended field trips. While these activities are valuable, as the number of absences increase, students are missing critical elements of their courses. Often these extended absences can cause hardships for other students as well, particularly when the absences interfere with group projects and presentations. Therefore, I would like to suggest the following policies related to excused absences:

1. Students are responsible for notifying their instructors *prior* to the day or days that will be missed due to an excused absence. Such notification is required if a student wishes to make up any missed work. Coach or Advisor notification is appreciated but does not excuse a student from this responsibility.
2. To the extent possible, a list of known excused absences for the semeser should be provided to each instructor for a student engaged in a University sponsored activity or program.
3. The number of excused absences should not exceed *15%* of the total class time for a semester. (suggested percentage)
4. Team practices do not constitute an excused absence.