

**WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY
SENATE Regular Meeting, 16 February 2021, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom**

A C T I O N M I N U T E S

SENATORS PRESENT: D. Banash, M. Bean, B. Bellott, M. Bernards, L. Brice, A. Carr, J. Choi, S. Cordes, R. Dimitrov, R. Filipink, D. Hunter, I. Lauer, S. Macchi, M. Maskarinec, D. Oursler, C. Pynes, J. Robinett, E. Shupe, M. Stinnett, E. Taylor, J. Wroblewski, K. Zbeeb

Ex-officio: Martin Abraham, Provost; Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: T. Lough, R. Sawhney

GUESTS: Marjorie Allison, Josh Averbeck, Steve Bennett, Tom Blackford, Jeffrey Brown, Guado Cabedo-Timmons, Peter Cole, Craig Conrad, Dennis DeVolder, Sarah Haynes, Peter Jorgensen, Angela Lynn, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Kristi Mindrup, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Kristi Mindrup, Lorette Oden, Elizabeth Orwig, Renee Polubinsky, Molly Selders, Jim Schmidt, Yong Tang, Lora Ebert Wallace,

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. 26 January 2021

MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

Chairperson Pynes will correct the date in the heading of the Executive Committee minutes, which was brought to his attention by Senator Carr.

II. Announcements

A. President Guiyou Huang

President Huang on his first visit to the Faculty Senate said he feels delighted, privileged, and humbled to be the President of Western Illinois University. He has been at WIU for 46 days and is learning a lot about the faculty, students, campuses, and communities, and thinks he will be in learning mode for a long time. He stated his intention to speak to senators about his priorities and the budget. Chairperson Pynes anticipates that people would like to hear President Huang speak about programs overall and where he sees them going forward, as well as information on enrollment.

President Huang outlined some priorities in his first letter to the University community the first week he was on campus. He said these include recruitment, enrollment, and retention, which all go into one basket. President Huang prioritized what he calls the 3Rs principle -- Recruitment, Retention, and Revenue -- for many years while working as a dean and chancellor. He noted that WIU brings in a lot of students, however, by their fourth year many do not graduate; under 40 percent of the University's freshmen cohort graduate in four years. He said this number is decent but does show room for improvement, so retention will be as important as recruitment for many years to come. He pointed out that both recruitment and retention are related to student success and institutional financial success, so they are big priorities. President Huang has asked the enrollment management team, including Interim Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Gary Swegan, Admissions Director Doug Freed, and their colleagues who worked on the enrollment management plan, to be ready for review, critique, and approval of that plan by the end of spring semester.

President Huang noted that the 2017-2027 WIU Strategic Plan called for an enrollment of 10,000 by 2027. He stated that as the new president on campus, he does not want it to be a foregone conclusion that this is achievable, so he is giving the enrollment management team the opportunity to study this goal to determine whether it is. President Huang personally thinks that this goal is

achievable by 2027, and if the enrollment management team agrees they can then design their recruitment plan around this goal. President Huang has also asked the retention committee, under the leadership of Justin Schuch, Executive Director of Retention Initiatives, to study retention issues and barriers to success. They have also been asked to produce a plan by the end of the semester. President Huang said he is not looking for a lengthy, elaborate document but rather for a list of barriers identified by the group and strategies to remove them so that students succeed and graduate in four to five years.

President Huang would also like the University to look at racial issues from a social justice/equity viewpoint. He recognizes that this has been a problem in some respects over the past several years, and he wants WIU students to feel safe, appreciated, and protected on the campuses, especially students, faculty, and staff with minority status. President Huang recently had a conversation with Provost Abraham about some of the issues he has been working on with student groups, especially with the Black Student Association; President Huang has a list of their demands which he has been studying with thought to improving race relations between the University and the surrounding communities. He believes that the success of minority students will have a major positive impact upon the success of WIU, so that must also be a priority.

President Huang also plans to speak with chairpersons/directors and deans to spend time and energy looking toward the future of online programs. He noted that WIU currently offers a number of online degree programs; approximately ten percent of WIU students are online degree students. He said the question of whether this number can be increased is not only about student success but also involves financial sustainability; he believes WIU needs to have a wider operating margin. President Huang believes that a wider operating margin needs to be developed in order to be able to offer increases to faculty and staff but warned that the University is not there yet. He believes that online education is a huge market that must be explored in order to get more students to study with us, and WIU is either onboard or it is not. He believes this will generate a larger revenue stream.

President Huang said he has been speaking a lot about internationalization, both attracting more students from foreign countries to study at WIU and remain here until graduation, as well as offering more foreign exchange programs for faculty and students and opportunities for faculty to travel abroad for research, lectures, etc. President Huang told senators that internationalization has been part of his professional portfolio for two decades, and he would like for it to also be a priority for the WIU campuses. President Huang stated that no matter how one looks at the recruitment footprint, it is very competitive, both within Illinois and in the nearby states of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri. He believes that Illinois is in decent shape but is not particularly competitive against a state like Iowa. Iowa students are less likely to cross their state line to pursue education in other states, which is not the case in other states the President has worked in, such as Vermont, Louisiana, and now Illinois. He believes a broader recruitment footprint, including internationally, will be important.

President Huang believes that town-gown relationships have been improving over the past few years, and he would like to make this another priority so that the University and the towns become more mutually supportive because they are interdependent. He stated that Macomb's mayor has been friendly and vocal about his support of the University, and President Huang has been pleased with the positive things he has heard. The President was surprised to hear about conversations in the Quad Cities questioning the future of WIU's campus in Moline. He was on the Quad Cities campus last week meeting with trustees, city representatives, and others and believes there is a real future for WIU's campus there. He expressed his thanks to the many faculty who work on the Quad Cities campus and stressed that its future is tied to the future of the Macomb campus. He has worked at numerous institutions with successful branch campuses, both in the U.S. and in China, and there is no reason that WIU should not be able to make both of its campuses successful. He stressed that the Moline campus belongs with WIU; just this morning, President Huang sent a letter, signed by himself and Board of Trustees Chair Polly Radosh, addressed to the Deputy Governor of Illinois, and copied to representatives in the Quad Cities, the Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and lawmakers representing the Macomb and Moline campuses. The President believes that the Quad Cities campus can be a hub of innovation, adding that it can be a compliment to the Macomb campus moving forward. He noted that the campus is in a good location

on the Mississippi River with beautiful views and in a nice building, and it has a lot of potential. President Huang said he wanted to reassure senators that he has taken action on a conversation that has been worrying some for the past few years.

President Huang said the best way to describe WIU's budget is "steady," just as enrollment seems to be remaining steady. He said the bond issuing that he has seen also suggests that the University is steady. President Huang stated that ideally WIU would see increases in its budget and enrollment, but so far that has not been the case. He reiterated, though, that the good news is that budget and enrollment is steady. He observed that the University has a decent income fund balance, but that balance will dwindle in the five months remaining in this fiscal year. President Huang stated there is also a firm cash balance that is also decent, although it will also change and he wishes the number was larger. The President describes himself as a realistic visionary, which means that he likes to look at these things from a very realistic viewpoint while trying to project the future. He stated that the fiscal deficit is real and will take a while to correct, but, as a third time president, he is not scared by that deficit. He thinks that the University should be in a position to deal with that deficit within the next two to three years, although at this time it is a little too early to predict what the state will do for higher education. The President anticipates hearing something about the state budget tomorrow (Feb. 17) when the Governor delivers his State of the State address, but he does not expect an increase in appropriations for public universities for the next year even though the state Board of Higher Education recommended a modest increase. President Huang will be very pleased if the state does not have a mid-year cut. He said there was an \$11 million balance in the income fund in June of last year, and he anticipates a similar amount at the end of this fiscal year. The President stated that whatever funds the University currently has, need to be used to take care of the fiscal deficit, and right now there are a number of positions that can be left empty to help address this. He added that those positions are very helpful to control the deficit since they generate from \$400 to \$25,000, which gives the University some control over spending.

President Huang observed that COVID-19 has led to a lot of changes for WIU, and it has been the same for his former institution. He is glad that WIU received summer CARE funds last year and assistance this year from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. He stated that these two forms of assistance may allow WIU to end the year at the break-even point, so the help from the federal government is making a real difference. President Huang thinks WIU is in better shape than it was at this time last year, although he cannot control any mid-year budget cuts the legislature may decide to make. He thinks part of this is due to the University's limiting purchases to essential items. President Huang assured senators that if there are any cuts, the University will try to protect its priorities as stated in the strategic plan and those he is setting as a new president. He stated that for the next fiscal year, the goal is to be neutral at year's end. He added that while there may not be an increase to the fund balance, the bleeding has subsided, and with a stable increase in enrollments, the University can begin to gain ground and have some residual funds available for fiscal year 2022. He added, however, that the expectation of residual funds will really depend on how well WIU does with its enrollment and, to a lesser degree, with retention; if enrollment remains flat, it will result in one financial scenario, while if it increases by one percent there is another scenario, and if it increases by three percentage points WIU would be in a much better place.

President Huang stated that he is trying to be very realistic, and he does not predict any faculty or staff layoffs or furloughs for FY 2021. He thinks expenditures have been managed pretty well to date, and if this pattern continues there will be no reason to see layoffs or reductions of faculty or staff. He is also not interested in cutting programs at this time. He stated that some changes to the tuition structure will be proposed in March; the financial team is working on this now, and once ideas are solidified, they will be shared more broadly. He stressed that the key to building a firm foundation is sustained enrollment growth as the most important factor, followed secondarily by state increases in funding, but that remains to be seen. President Huang grew faculty and staff salaries a couple of times within a three-year period as chancellor, which was one of his proudest achievements, but as a president in Pennsylvania he did oversee budget cuts, faculty retrenchment, and staff furloughs, so if there is any way to protect WIU faculty and staff, he will consider using it. President Huang noted that his former discussions about student-faculty ratios have caused some people to question why he thinks the 17:1 ratio is so special. He told senators that he did not invent that ratio but took it from WIU's strategic plan which was put into place some years ago. He thinks

it is a good number because low student-faculty ratios can cause real problems and is one of the more important reasons for the merger that Pennsylvania institutions are currently undertaking. He stated that if WIU could achieve a 17:1 student-faculty ratio in a few years, there would be no further need to reduce faculty or staff; similarly, if student enrollment grows by five percentage points in the next few years there will also be no need to reduce faculty.

Senator Bernards likes the idea of sustained enrollment growth but noted that the demographics of graduating high school seniors is flat or declining. He asked how President Huang proposes to differentiate WIU so that the institution can compete for a shrinking pool of students. President Huang responded that institutional distinctiveness is also one of the priorities on his list. He said that under the leadership of Darcy Shinberger, Executive Director of University Communications, a task force or study group is being formed to identify or define ways by which WIU can become more distinctive or more attractive. He said the group may identify programs that are already drawing a lot of students, but he wants to be clear that no low enrolled programs will be punished as part of this process. The task force will look at how WIU can be more distinctive and stand out from other public universities in Illinois or within the tri-state area, particularly in comparison with institutions in Iowa and Wisconsin. President Huang does not think a university can function with an older brand without doing things differently or refreshing things to distinguish it from other programs. He pointed out that this ties in with his emphasis on recruitment within the state, within the country, and internationally, as well as strengthening retention. He noted that WIU has 55-60 departments, so if each department could retain one to two additional students per year, that would mean a significant gain from a revenue viewpoint. He thinks this could be achieved with more programs being structured or designed as being available entirely online. He believes that new markets for recruitment, increased retention, and increased distinctiveness for existing programs will help to grow WIU's enrollment. President Huang stated that there will be another enrollment cliff by 2026; the number of high school seniors is getting smaller, so institutions must act today to minimize the 2026 cliff, which is why the President has been emphasizing new markets, expanding the recruitment footprint, and increasing retention efforts.

Senator Dimitrov asked if the President has any specific ideas or plans for recruitment of international students. He asked if President Huang thinks international students might be interested in fully online programs from WIU. President Huang responded that he was actually thinking more about the domestic audience for online degree programs. He observed that a lot of the attractiveness of the United States is its higher education, and international students want to come to the U.S. to experience that personally, as did he and Senator Dimitrov. President Huang said that he restored the vacant position of Director of the School of Management and Marketing for one purpose: to work with Admissions to increase marketing efforts for WIU programs. He has learned over the past several years that it can be effective to brand and market a university, but it is even more effective to brand and market a university's programs. He noted that this goes along with institutional distinctiveness. He hopes this new position will help WIU expand our recruitment efforts. He also hopes that as WIU international faculty travel back home to Africa, Europe, or Asia, they will bring back students. He saw this happen very effectively when he was a dean. President Huang thinks WIU should be able to find a way to better compensate faculty for their travels on behalf of international recruiting, adding that there is no shortage of ideas; rather, it is the resources and implementation that are short.

Senator Carr recalled that President Huang said earlier that only 40 percent of WIU students graduate within four years, and she knows that statistic is not unique to WIU. She asked what some of the barriers are to students graduating within four years, such as low GPAs or inability to attend full time. She also asked if that statistic includes students who start and then drop out entirely. President Huang responded that the 2018 freshman retention cohort was at 65 percent; the highest four-year graduation rate for an Illinois public university is the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with 93 percent. The President stated that WIU's six-year graduation rate is 51 percent, while the four-year rate is currently under 40 percent, so there is room for improvement; if WIU can graduate its 45-50 percent of its students in four years, that will mean the retention effort is more successful and the student success rate is higher, which will also translate into greater revenue.

Senator Zbeeb said what he heard about the Quad Cities campus from President Huang is very encouraging because the strategy the administration has followed for the past several years has not worked. He believes the School of Engineering has a lot of potential; it has developed new programs (mechanical, civil, and electrical engineering), and there is a lot of need for engineers in the Quad Cities area, but somehow Iowa State and the University of Wisconsin are really out-marketing WIU in the Quad Cities. Senator Zbeeb noted that WIUQC has the support of local firms, such as John Deere, and he thinks there is room to grow enrollment if people know about the campus's programs. He asked what the marketing strategy is for the Quad Cities campus because that when a person walks into a Quad Cities supermarket, they will see Iowa State and University of Illinois t-shirts, and billboards from those institutions are throughout the Quad Cities area, but none from WIU. Senator Zbeeb has been at WIUQC for almost nine years and does not think the marketing strategy for the campus has worked, which is a waste of WIUQC's potential. He hopes that President Huang can come up with a new strategy that is aggressive enough to grow WIUQC and increase its enrollment. President Huang has been talking to Kristi Mindrup, the chief administrator for the Quad Cities campus, and he thinks she represents new leadership and some new thinking for WIUQC. He also pointed out that as a new president, he will bring new thinking to this problem. He has told the Board of Trustees Chair and others that the Quad Cities campus should be thought of as a hub of innovation. President Huang believes that WIUQC should focus on its two-year upper division courses and programs, thereby not causing competition with the local community colleges, some of whom are not happy with WIU because of the introduction of four-year programs to the Quad Cities campus. President Huang has spoken with some of the presidents of these community colleges and thinks that a concentration on two-year upper division courses will cause WIUQC to be more attractive. President Huang suggested that the Quad Cities campus could become the center of WIU's online and continuing education because online education can use a more flexible model. He summarized that WIU's Quad Cities campus can concentrate on three things: upper division courses, online programs, and continuing education, including certificate programs. He wants to see WIUQC defined as a hub of innovation because that campus has the potential to act more nimbly. He pointed out that online education is here to stay, but how to market those programs is WIU's responsibility. He stated that there is no way that WIU will be able to compete with big schools such as Iowa State and the University of Wisconsin in terms of marketing dollars, but he promised that the niche for the Quad Cities campus will be defined in order to highlight areas where it does really well. President Huang has not been happy about recent conversations about the future of the Quad Cities campus, which is why he wrote the letter to Governor Pritzker and shared it with many groups so that WIU's voice gets heard. He agrees that more resources need to go to marketing in the Quad Cities area, and he thinks the School of Engineering can be an important asset. President Huang was disappointed to hear that there are only three full-time faculty members in WIU's School of Engineering program; he has chaired programs in the past and believes they need at least a minimally adequate number of faculty to teach a program. He pointed out that the United States currently produces fewer engineers proportionately than its competitors China and India, and the Mayor of Moline has stated that engineers are needed in that city, so WIU can be competitive in this field. President Huang asked for more time to think about this and work on future goals for WIUQC. He hopes that some of this new thinking will be able to be incorporated into the strategic plan that Assistant Vice President Mindrup and others are working on. He believes that new resources and new energy must be infused into the future of the Quad Cities campus.

President Huang asked if Senator Zbeeb teaches at WIUQC; Senator Zbeeb confirmed that he does. Senator Zbeeb said WIUQC is not trying to compete with the bigger programs, but the campus is very convenient for local companies who have stated that they would like for WIU to be the default program for them rather than Iowa State; the problem is that WIUQC needs to get more students. Senator Zbeeb related that the Illinois Department of Transportation has said that they would like to see WIUQC graduate more engineers, but the School of Engineering only has one civil engineering faculty member, Senator Zbeeb is the only mechanical engineering faculty member, and Dr. Shin is the only electrical engineering faculty member, so they are shorthanded. He added that ABET, the accreditation board for engineering and technology, has complained about this. He stated that each Engineering faculty member is teaching four courses per semester as well as mentoring, visiting high schools, inviting high schools to visit the school, and other steps because the faculty believe in WIU's engineering program and believe that it is going to grow. Senator Zbeeb thinks it just needs

a little more push from the administration and more marketing. He likes President Huang's thinking that WIUQC will be a technology hub and said that was actually the aim when the Engineering program was started in the Quad Cities. He noted that WIUQC has the Quad Cities Manufacturing Lab, has gotten a lot of contracts with other companies, such as GE, and has brought in millions of dollars over the past few years, but Engineering is still stagnated by the lack of growth in enrollment due to the lack of hiring professors and the loss of their support staff, including their recruiter. He does not know how the program can grow without the manpower.

Senator Oursler asked how the President plans to work with the city of Macomb and its business leaders to differentiate WIU and Macomb in order to help increase enrollment. President Huang responded that he has met with the Macomb mayor twice as well as with a number of community leaders. He thinks it is most important to really hear their needs – to determine what they really need from WIU and find a way, from a programmatic or curricular viewpoint, to meet those needs. The concerns he heard were about the University's inability to meet those needs in the past few years, although how true that is President Huang cannot verify. He said some of those concerns include declining enrollment in the Quad Cities and lack of dormitories and sufficient lab facilities. He said there have been discussions about moving the Quad Cities Manufacturing Lab from one location to another to become more convenient and attractive. President Huang plans to spend a day on the Quad Cities campus to talk with faculty, staff, local politicians, business representatives, and some of WIU's trustees. He believes that once concerns are heard, they can be addressed; the problem is not hearing them or knowing what they are, in which case it is impossible to design solutions to address those concerns. President Huang wants to develop a stronger connection between the main campus in Macomb and the Quad Cities campus, and he would like administrators, faculty leaders, other faculty members, staff leaders, and other staff to talk about both campuses in a positive way as much as possible. He stated that WIUQC is our campus, but it has not been supported as much financially as has the main campus, although the argument can be made that it is even difficult to support everything that is done on the Macomb campus. The President stated that resources, by definition, are limited, so it is important to create new resources all the time. He noted that WIU's most important resource is enrollment, so if the University can grow its enrollment, it will be in a better place. He noted that while recruitment and retention are the responsibility of the division of Enrollment Management, it should be the responsibility of everybody – perhaps not by actually going out to recruit, but by being a resource for recruiters and counselors and by talking positively about both campuses so that people know that this is a good place to get a worthwhile degree. He noted that WIU has been successful for more than a century, and there is every reason to believe that it can continue to be successful in recruiting students and helping them to get a good education. President Huang stressed that faculty are the difference makers; students come to WIU for the faculty, not for its president, and when former students – now alumni – donate, it is often because of a faculty member, not because of a particular president, provost, or dean. He noted that alumni often think about the things a particular faculty member did for them to be successful, which made their future donation back to the university possible. President Huang promised to continue to think about these important questions of how to strengthen both campuses and how to generate more revenue to make good programs happen.

B. Provost's Report

Provost Abraham reported that his office is continuing to move forward on a number of initiatives. His office is in the process of forming a group to look at advising at WIU; this initiative is just getting underway and includes participants from both campuses, advising, faculty, and administration. He said the group will look at the processes and try to identify what works and what does not. He stated that if there are potential changes, this will be discussed down the road, but right now the group plans to evaluate what is happening currently and what is working, then move forward in those areas.

Associate Provost Mark Mossman is getting ready for the University's accreditation visits. On March 26, there will be a visit on the Quad Cities campus, and on March 29, there will be a visit in Macomb, as well as a virtual visit. Provost Abraham stated that all accreditation documents are now uploaded to the Higher Learning Commission webpage, and Associate Provost Mossman is making great progress.

Senator Dimitrov, in a follow up to Senator Carr's question, asked if the University does not have sufficient data to determine why WIU students do not graduate in four years. He proposed a hypothesis that perhaps college preparedness is a major factor for the number of years before graduation. Provost Abraham said the answer to the question of whether WIU has enough data on this topic is really no, even though the University has been looking at it for some time and all sorts of suppositions can be made. He noted that when one looks at college preparedness, the first step is to determine which variable to use to define that term. He stated that if high school GPA is the variable to be used, one will find that it is really all over the place, and students leave the university at fairly comparable rates, so it is not much of a discriminator. Provost Abraham explained that when one starts to look at the more detailed reasons, it is hard to put numbers to them because it is often based on student information in response to requests made by WIU to a student who has already made a decision to leave. He said that best data that the University gets is when a student decides not to return to WIU; for the past year and a half, if a student does not register for the successive semester, enrollment and retention representatives reach out to them beginning in November (for fall-to-spring) to ask if they are going to re-enroll and if not, why not. Provost Abraham said this is the data needed to determine why students are not returning, but this is not a hugely responsive population to get information from because they have already made the decision to leave WIU and are not particularly interested in telling WIU representatives why. Provost Abraham said data is received back from about one-third to one-half of these students, and the question is not asked of students who have been suspended because the University already has that information. He said the responses include students wanting to transfer to another university, expressing dissatisfaction with the faculty, wanting to change majors to a program that WIU does not offer, inability to pay for college, and personal issues. He noted that these responses are all over the board, and there is not one specific thing that really resonates in terms of why these students are not coming back. He added that it is oftentimes not GPA nor academic preparedness; it is simply that in many cases students cannot afford school, they have personal or family issues going on, or they have decided to go to another university. Senator Dimitrov commented that these reasons are not independent; a student may transfer to another university because they find the work to be too hard, and affordability is always a major issue. He asked, at this rate, when Provost Abraham thinks Faculty Senate can have more definitive answers. Provost Abraham responded that the Fall 2019-Fall 2020 retention rate for the freshmen cohort was 75.8 percent, which represents the highest rate in 14 years, so the University did something right in terms of retention from 2019 to 2020. Provost Abraham said the other rate that is tracked in terms of student persistence is from fall to spring, and for both this year and the previous year this rate was between 89 and 90 percent, which is also very high in terms of historical norms. He pointed out that while a lot has been done in the past year and a half to boost some of those numbers, it will be four years before these efforts can affect the graduation rate. He stressed that the same efforts must be made for sophomores to juniors and juniors to seniors, and a lot of that still needs to be done to boost the four-year graduation numbers. He added that this is a long-term project.

Senator Hunter asked if there is a big difference between four-year graduation rates and five-year graduation rates at WIU. Provost Abraham responded that five-year graduation rates are higher, but he does not know the numbers. He stated that the 2019 WIU Fact Book, which is available online, provides data about the 2018 cohort, which reflects the graduation rates for the class of 2013-14. He thinks the four-year graduation rate was in the high 30s, the five-year rate was closer to 50 percent, and the six-year graduation rate was closer to 60 percent. He added that the federal government grades universities on their six-year graduation rates. Chairperson Pynes stated that there is almost always a committee working on persistence and completion and often vacancies if any faculty are interested in helping by serving on it and giving of their expertise. Chairperson Pynes served on this committee for two years in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and learned quite a bit. He stated that just trying to achieve another percentage or two for the six-year graduation rate can make a huge difference overall in enrollments, funding for the institution, and success for students.

C. Student Government Association Report
(Elizabeth Orwig, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

SGA has been busy appointing student representatives to committees. They had a big meeting last week with Interim Vice President for Student Services John Smith, Assistant Director of the University Student Center Ashley Katz, and Executive Director of Auxiliary Services and Risk Management Joe Roselieb to discuss COVID protocols. The state of Illinois recently opened up from gatherings of ten people to gatherings of 50, which also will allow for residence hall and Union dining to reopen. Ms. Orwig said the meeting allowed SGA members to express some of their concerns with how the campus restrictions, compared to restrictions in the larger community, have affected students. She said one way students have been affected is by a constant lack of involvement; SGA is struggling to get students involved in service, such as on the new advising committee discussed by Provost Abraham. She related that SGA senators at the meeting discussed how activities that used to be held on campus would have 50 participants, but they cannot get ten people to participate on zoom. Ms. Orwig said that SGA also discussed student mental health with their guests, including the challenges of getting the college experience in the age of COVID. She said they also talked about retention, particularly as it relates to on-campus living; because a lot of students are doing classes online, the University is losing that student involvement as well as income. She said SGA expressed that the COVID protocols and restrictions, some of which (such as dining) have now been lifted, have affected that. She hopes that now that the state is in Stage III it will help address some of these concerns, but she thinks the meeting was kind of a break-through moment for SGA because they have not had much to talk about due to lack of activity on campus.

SGA also released its spring scholarships and will hold its elections in mid- to late April.

D. Other Announcements

1. Chairperson Pynes announced that the Senate Nominating Committee (SNC) survey has been sent to faculty. SNC Chair Jeremy Robinett corrected that the survey will go out on February 19. He thanked SNC members for working on the survey to make it more usable for faculty respondents. He asked senators to encourage their colleagues to complete the survey since it is the primary way SNC fills the wide array of vacancies that occur throughout the year. Chairperson Pynes thinks the Senate Nominating Committee is undervalued. He explained that whenever the administration asks the Faculty Senate to find a faculty member to serve on a committee, that job is given to SNC, so it is very important that they have information on what kinds of things faculty are interested in doing.
2. Chairperson Pynes announced the Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance (CPPP) surveys were sent out a couple of days ago.
3. Six faculty members have submitted petitions so far for the nine eligible Senate seats, to be filled in the fall. Seats to represent WIUQC and the College of Education and Human Services, as well as one Macomb at-large seat, remain to be filled. The deadline is Thursday, February 18, with elections for contested seats to follow. Chairperson Pynes asked senators to encourage their colleagues who they think would be good senators to submit a nomination.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI)
(Steve Bennett, Chair)

1. Curricular Requests from the Department of English
 - a. Request for New Course
 - i. ENG 363, Cannabis and Popular Culture, 3 s.h.

ENG 363 APPROVED

2. Curricular Requests from the Department of Communication

- a. Request for Change in Minor
 - i. Computer-Mediated Communication

Chairperson Bennett noted that this minor will be called Social Media once the change is approved. Senator Carr related that she has a student who will be presenting in an upper-level senior seminar course and doing some things on social media, and she told Senator Carr that she would have loved to minor in social media but did not know there was a related minor. Additionally, the student's advisor did not know there was a social media minor, so Senator Carr thinks the change in name will be very helpful for advisors as well.

CHANGE IN MINOR APPROVED

- B. Senate Nominating Committee
(Jeremy Robinett, Chair)

- 1. Nominations to Fill Vacancies:

SEARCH COMMITTEES:

Vice President for Finance and Administration

Janice Gates, Management and Marketing, B&T

Vice President for Student Success

Patrick McGinty, Sociology and Anthropology, A&S

Chairperson Robinett told senators the chair representatives on both search committees are from the College of Education and Human Services, so SNC tried to have their nominations be as representative as possible. Chairperson Pynes pointed out that President Huang changed the name of the Vice President for Student Services position to the Vice President for Student Success, so this is not a new position. He added that President Huang was very concerned to make sure that all the processes were followed, and the administrative selection procedures require faculty representation. There were no additional nominations, and the slate of candidates was declared elected.

- IV. Old Business – None

- V. New Business

- A. For the Good of the Body

Senator Carr noted that Chairperson Pynes sent senators some of the comments that the Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council (IBHE FAC) sent to the advisory board working on the Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Illinois. She explained that there is a consulting group running this process, which will probably be delayed a little bit. Their three main priorities are affordability, access, and equity. Groups are working on different pieces, which are supposed to align with core principles -- including that higher education is a public good which includes research and scholarship in the liberal arts -- but those core principles seem to be in the background. Senator Carr thinks a lot of what the strategic plan is doing is intensifying and creating alternatives to the current higher education system, such as alternative credentialing and a huge increase in dual credit courses. She encouraged senators to look at the documentation that was distributed to them and the 6–7-page draft of the strategic plan. Senator Carr told senators one of the narratives that some IBHE FAC members are trying to tell is about the unintended consequences of

this drive to alternative credentialing intended to get more people to obtain college degrees, as well as credentialing for other sorts of things.

Senator Carr pointed out that one unintended consequence is for scholarship and research. She pointed out that the more that General Education courses occur in high schools, the fewer options students have, depending upon their high school, which is an equity issue for them. This also affects faculty in smaller university programs who may recruit minors or majors through discovery Gen Ed courses in college. She noted that students will not have the opportunity to discover courses in RPTA, for example, unless it is offered as a Gen Ed in their high school. She said there is a real concern that there will be fewer spaces for scholars and researchers since dual credit courses are increasingly taught by high school teachers -- not even by community college faculty. Senator Carr stated that 75 percent of Carl Sandburg College's courses are now dual credit courses, so there is a huge shift in the mission of community colleges; they are starting to be kind of the administrative shelters for high schools offering higher education. She suggested that the Faculty Senate may want to invite one of her colleagues from Black Hawk College to talk about what this has meant for his institution. Senator Carr noted that, in the name of equity and the fact that higher education funding has declined for institutions while tuition has risen, dual credit has been considered to be a response to that nationwide, but rural schools may have fewer options for those courses than urban schools – from offering a range of offerings to having none at all – which is also an equity issue. Senator Carr related that her undergraduate alma mater, Carlton College, limits the number of credit hours of AP or other courses that can be transferred in to 2 s.h. She said Carlton College wants students to have a four-year college experience with professors who have terminal degrees in their fields, not just master's degrees. Senator Carr is concerned that there will be an increasing disparity between what people can do at a public university and what people can do at private colleges. She has not seen presidents and administrators speaking out about this shift in the higher education landscape and would like to have faculty senates at some point do that, as the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council is trying to do.

Senator Dimitrov asked where the concerns about dual credit courses will be presented because they do not seem to be particularly directed to one legislative body. He agrees with these concerns but personally feels that if WIU were to limit the number of courses that can be transferred in, it might lead to a drop in enrollment. Senator Carr agreed, adding that this would need to be a statewide sort of thing, and she does not know about the viability of that. She responded that recommendations 1-6 come straight from the IBHE FAC position paper, and all of the recommendations are directed to the IBHE and the 30–40-member advisory board who are working on the strategic plan. She said this advisory board includes six faculty, some presidents, several K-12 representatives, and representatives from business. Senator Dimitrov asked if recommendation number 4, for example, regarding funding higher ed institutions, is being directed to the IBHE or to the state of Illinois. Senator Carr replied these are general recommendations, but this particular document is directed to the IBHE Strategic Plan Advisory Board, the group of people working on creating a strategic plan for the entire state and for higher ed for the next ten to 20 years. She said these recommendations are directed to the people who are thinking about what they want to put in that strategic plan. Chairperson Pynes explained that the Faculty Advisory Council on which Senator Carr serves makes recommendations to the IBHE. Senator Carr added that their position papers get shared more broadly as well.

Senator Bernards remarked that it seems there are decisions being made but he is not seeing the data that support them, and he wonders if data is even being collected. Senator Carr responded there are some kinds of analyses out, but the FAC often gets a mixed picture about it. She asked what Senator Bernards would want to see surveyed. Senator Bernards responded that, from the standpoint of a residential university, he would like to know if students who earn dual credit at their high schools and then experience teaching at a university feel like they are getting a different value or learning more in terms of that education. He added that if they are, he wonders if this is a selling point that could be used to say that faculty with terminal degrees are needed; if not, it sends a message to higher education to say that it needs to rethink how things are currently done and how universities can differentiate their classes from simple dual credit. He appreciates and agrees with Senator Carr's arguments about equity but pointed out that there is also an economic driver, which he thinks is probably the biggest challenge. Senator Carr stated that this is why the narrative is that if the state

funds higher ed properly, there will not be the need for these dual credit courses. She said there are other issues around these courses as well; for instance, colleges can only offer courses that can count as dual credit, which limits the Gen Ed options if courses can only be offered that can be double counted. Senator Carr does not know about all of the studies about these questions, but she does know that some level of dual credit can encourage students to go to college, so it is a mixed picture. Additionally, the more credits students transfer in cuts the number of years they must attend a university, which is interesting in light of the retention statistics. She noted that there is a real shift occurring, and community colleges are experiencing it the most, although in the long run she thinks it will mean fewer programs offered at four-year public universities in a lot of fields that are now being offered at high schools.

Senator Shupe asked if the success of students who took dual credit courses in high school has been studied because there are a growing number of students who take [dual enrollment] courses from WIU while in high school. She asked if these students show a better success rate in college versus students who have had dual credit in high school. Senator Carr remarked that some community college instructors who teach courses in high schools are fired due to academic freedom issues, such as discussing evolution. One study she saw indicated that some level of early college does increase success, but one must keep in mind that students who access these early college courses may have done well in college anyway. Senator Shupe asked how many students are enrolling in WIU after having taken credit courses from WIU in high school because this is one thing the University has been leaning toward in recent years. Senator Shupe's daughter did this and found it very helpful; students also get a tuition discount for doing this. She wonders if WIU is seeing an increase in these courses and whether it is helping students to be more successful. Registrar Angela Lynn replied that when Senator Filipink chaired CAGAS he asked Admissions to submit a yearly report on dual enrollment students in an effort to get at this information. She does not have that report on hand today but said that CAGAS was primarily looking at whether these students continue on at WIU. She recalls there were a good number who did. The Registrar's office has asked Administrative Information Management Systems (AIMS) to report on the number of hours brought in from students taking dual credit and dual enrollment courses from any institution. She explained that if these hours come in on a college transcript -- which is the only way students would get college credit for the class -- it shows up as transfer credit, but there is no way to tell whether the course was taken as dual credit or as dual enrollment; it is impossible to tell from the transcript if the course was taken at the high school or through an agreement that a high school has with a community college. AIMS can only tell that credit was earned at another institution prior to the student's high school graduation date. Registrar Lynn pointed out that other kinds of credit which students achieve before arriving at WIU, such as military credit and CLEP tests, are also transferred in, but those are coded differently. She said UPI has requested information on how many students are bringing in credit; what kinds of credit they are bringing in; breaking up that data, such as how many students are bringing in 1-9 hours, 10-19 hours, etc.; and what kind of success rate these students show, identified by retention. She said WIU is definitely seeing an increase in dual credit rates, so when looking back at graduation rates, the Fall 2014 cohort looks different than the students who are brought in now. She said this is on the list, with many other requests, that the (only three) academic programmers in AIMS are currently working on. Chairperson Pynes expressed his thanks to the Registrar, AIMS, and University Technology for trying to get the data to help the University function properly, as well as at the same time trying to convert WIU to a new enterprise-level technology system. He stated that as much as everyone wants data quickly – and it should be able to be that way – it will take a little longer to get the desired information because WIU is still dealing with COBOL programming.

Motion: To adjourn (Brice)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:30 p.m.