

**WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY SENATE**  
**Regular Meeting, 30 August 2022, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Union Capitol Rooms/Zoom**

**A C T I O N   M I N U T E S**

**SENATORS PRESENT:** J. Albarracin, S. Bailey, D. Banash, D. Barr, B. Bellott, M. Bernards, L. Brice, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, A. Carr, C. Chadwell, L. Ebert Wallace, D. Hunter, J. Land, T. Lough, S. Macchi, B. Petrocovich, B. Polley, E. Shupe, B. Thompson, Y. Tang, J. Wroblewski  
**Ex-officio:** Manoochehr Zoghi, Provost; Craig Whetten, Parliamentarian

**SENATORS ABSENT:** D. Atherton

**GUESTS:** Marjorie Allison, Debra Allwardt, Steve Bennett, Barry Birnbaum, Tom Blackford, Craig Conrad, Tom Cody, Sean Cordes, Julie Cox, Katrina Daytner, Patricia Eathington, Redina Finch, Greg Kain, Rob Kelly, Doug LaFountain, Sarah Lawson, George Mangalaraj, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Rose McConnell, Patrick McGinty, Christopher Merrett, Mary Mhango, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Kat Myers, Lorette Odom, Katherine Perone, Kaycee Peterman, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prorise, Sumner Roberts, Tim Roberts, Jim Schmidt, Eric Sheffield, Bobbi Smith, Brian Stone, Sebastian Szyjka, Beth Wilson, Joseph Zaylik

I.     Consideration of Minutes

A.     May 3, 2022

**APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED**

II.    Announcements

A.     Provost's Report – None

Chair Thompson asked if anyone has any questions for the Provost. Senator Carr encouraged the Provost and President to visit each department/school sometime this year to get to know the faculty, something that was done annually prior to the pandemic. Provost Zoghi responded he has this on his list and plans to attend some upcoming faculty meetings.

1.     Remote Work Policy (<http://wiu.edu/policies/remote.php>)

Chair Thompson asked if it is correct that the Remote Work Policy does not apply to faculty; Associate Provost Russ Morgan confirmed this is correct. Chair Thompson asked if faculty are supposed to work out remote work arrangements with their supervisors. Associate Provost Morgan confirmed that this is based on the faculty contract and should be worked out with the department chair/school director or faculty member's supervisor. He compared this to the situation when determining faculty office hours; in the past, it was felt that the standard for office hours should be face-to-face, but Covid and the increase in entirety online schedules have brought greater flexibility to this standard. Chair Thompson reminded Associate Provost Morgan that the faculty contract contains no language regarding the location of office hours. Associate Provost Morgan noted that if faculty prefer a mix of office hours with remote and face-to-face, this can be worked out with the supervisor.

2.     Covid Policies (<http://wiu.edu/policies/> -- top of All University Policies manual) – Informational Item

B.     Student Government Association (SGA) Report  
(Joseph Zaylik, SGA Vice President for External Affairs)

Mr. Zaylik announced that the first SGA meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 7 from 3-4:30 p.m. in the Union Capitol Rooms and will continue meeting weekly at that time. SGA has started filling the Director positions for Technology, Public Relations, and Academic Affairs and the Attorney General position so that they can start moving forward. SGA is also working with the colleges to fill the senator positions.

Chair Thompson asked how students feel about returning to campus and the level of Covid restrictions. Mr. Zaylik responded he feels a much more optimistic aura on campus this year. Mr. Zaylik is involved with the Greek organizations and said it seems like the incoming class is happy with the way things are going so far. He has been seeing a lot more students walking to classes and thinks things are overall going well.

D. Other Announcements

1. Greg Kain, Chief Information Officer, University Technology

Mr. Kain introduced himself to senators, noting that WIU is the third Illinois institution he has worked in addition to his history of industry employment. He encourages faculty to reach out to him to discuss ideas or suggest topics for discussion. Mr. Kain prefers a solution-based, constructive approach to conversations but is open to hearing any ideas or reasons why faculty think their areas are unique in order to make sure that all areas are served appropriately.

Mr. Kain provided updates on some of the technology topics and initiatives that have been discussed recently around the campus, many of which began before his arrival at WIU:

- a) *Google Drive*: Mr. Kain related that Google has started charging for the space used on Drive, something that institutions of higher education are not happy about, but they are all pretty much under the Google umbrella. University Technology has been working diligently to reduce space, and Mr. Kain thinks they have now reached a place where they feel pretty comfortable. University Technology will continue to work with people on space restrictions, but he thinks it is now mostly under control. He asked that anyone who needs space exceptions let University Technology know.
- b) *Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)*: Mr. Kain related that WIU had initially contracted with Unified but that initiative has been cancelled. The University is actively seeking a replacement ERP system. He said this is a long project that will take several years to implement, but it is still a priority for the institution.
- c) *Information Security*: Mr. Kain stated that this was a high priority for his position when he was hired because of two recent audit findings related to cybersecurity. Both findings highlighted compliance issues for the institution since WIU, because it distributes financial aid, must apply by the state's guidelines. Mr. Kain related that the University recently completed a Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) financial aid audit and are trying to address those findings. One result of this effort will be the removal of administrative rights from workstations. Mr. Kain explained that ransomware or malware is distributed mostly through email, such as phishing attacks; users are tricked to click on a link which creates a vulnerability. By the removal of administrative rights, when an individual clicks on one of these links they will not be able to download the malware, which protects the university. Mr. Kain recognizes that this is frustrating for employees who want to be able to download whatever software they wish to their machines; some software requires only user rights to download, which will not be affected, but software that requires administrative rights to download will require a call to the University Technology Help Desk. Mr. Kain recognizes this can be cumbersome and apologized, adding that he also does not like this because he does not have administrative rights on his machine either, but this is a compliance issue for the University that WIU must adhere to. Mr. Kain remarked that the recent closure of Lincoln College was partly because of an encrypted ransomware attack that the institution was unable to get out of.

Mr. Kain noted that removal of administrative rights is the first step of others yet to come to address security issues. It will be completed in a phased roll-out beginning at the end of October/early November with the administrative areas, followed by working through each of the colleges. Mr. Kain believes that a phased roll-out will help keep down the volume of problems and those can be worked through early with the least disruption to users. University Technology does not want this process to impede instruction, so they want to make sure the timeline of this change works with the colleges' schedules and does not impact mid-terms or finals.

Mr. Kain stated that additional upcoming security modifications will include password hardening and a multiple authentication process, all as a result of the audit findings which require the University to tighten up its security standards.

- d) *Account Life Cycle:* Mr. Kain explained this is another information security item because if there were to be a break of the university's security systems, WIU would be liable for every account in the system, and the more accounts that are open, the more liable the university becomes. He said this becomes a big problem from an insurance standpoint, so University Technology is working to shut down accounts that are no longer used. He hopes this process can be implemented by the end of this year. Mr. Kain noted that Senator Brice suggested that University Technology may want to change the planned "emeritus.wiu.edu" domain for certain email accounts to something different, and a meeting is planned to discuss this tomorrow; Mr. Kain believes this is why collaboration between University Technology and faculty is important. Mr. Kain wants to have conversations that result from the new policies and procedures that will be coming out but added that sometimes the rules must be enforced. He stressed that University Technology wants to do this in as reasonable a way as possible so that it has the least impact.

Chair Thompson asked how this would affect retirees' email accounts. Mr. Kain responded that University Technology is working on a schedule for accounts; if a student applies to but never attends WIU, those accounts can be eliminated fairly quickly, but if a student graduates or an employee retires, University Technology wants to be able to provide those email accounts as long as individuals use them. If email accounts have not been used for six months, the plan is to inactivate them. Mr. Kain explained that in order to facilitate this, University Technology wants to create different domains for faculty, emeriti, and others, but that has not yet been entirely figured out and organized. He hopes this plan will make the process as structured and intuitive as possible.

Chair Thompson asked if University Technology has learned anything from going out into various areas of the campus to help individuals with this process. Mr. Kain responded that University Technology needs administrative rights to help other areas, but they operate under the theory of "least privilege," so uTech administrators do not have carte blanche but have specific rights for a certain server, application, etc. He related that this means when uTech employees go around campus to help employees, they often find out they do not have the needed administrative rights, but other than that things have been going fairly well. Mr. Kain went through this process at a previous institution and realizes that issues are encountered at first that may necessitate procedural or structural changes in a ripple effect. He noted that making software changes manually versus making them remotely using a software installer, like University Technology has, helps to highlight solutions that can be implemented fairly reasonably.

Mr. Kain stated that WIU has over 900 versions of Adobe on its workstations and over 1,000 versions of Java. He thinks only the most current versions need to be used, and making this inventory to assure that the University can support these applications is part of University Technology's process. He added that a lot of spring cleaning is required to do this at an institution.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean Sue Martinelli-Fernandez asked if Mr. Kain has consulted with other offices, such as the Office of Sponsored Projects, because there is sometimes specialized grant software that faculty need to be able to access to submit a proposal. Mr. Kain responded that he has not done this yet, but in general there are a lot of different areas that require specialized software, and University Technology wants to support these areas with their needs. He stressed that University Technology does not want to take software away from anyone but only to encourage employees to have on their workstations the software that they need to do their work and to prevent them from downloading ransomware. Chair Thompson asked if cloud-based software, such as Microsoft 365, will be affected; Mr. Kain confirmed that it will not.

Mr. Kain related that University Technology made several investments in its classroom systems during the pandemic which students may notice as they come back to campus for the first time since Covid. On the Macomb campus, over 300 new computers were added to every classroom; over 500 new computers were added to labs and lab classrooms; projectors or interactive displays were added to at least 90 percent of classrooms; every classroom now has Zoom capability; new monitors were added to every classroom that could support them; touch-screen monitors were installed in 15 classrooms; universalized document cameras were installed in every classroom; microphone and camera redundancies were added to all classrooms; and University Technology continues efforts to universalize rooms and equipment. Mr. Kain related that the amount of videoconferencing capability on the Quad Cities campus was doubled; nearly all learning spaces at WIUQC got new PCs with increased RAM and storage; the first Dell 86-inch interactive screen TV was installed; and QR codes were added to all the instructor stations so that instructors can click on them to learn how to use the equipment. Mr. Kain stated that about \$2 million dollars was put into new classroom investments over the past couple of years at WIU, so hopefully users will notice the improvements.

2. Christopher Merrett, Dean, Innovation and Economic Development/Director, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs

Dean Merrett told senators he began his position as Dean for Innovation and Economic Development and Special Advisor to the President for Innovation and Community Engagement on July 1, while also remaining the Program Chair for the Masters in Community and Economic Development and the Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA). IIRA was created in 1989 as a research, teaching, and outreach center, and Dean Merrett has acted as the Director since 2005 following his initial hiring as a tenure-track faculty member in 1995. It currently employs about 20 people and has a budget of about \$2.5 million, two-thirds of which is raised externally. IIRA is a tenure-granting academic unit at WIU, reporting to the Provost.

In his PowerPoint presentation, Dean Merrett showed senators a map illustrating the census year in which Illinois counties saw their peak population numbers. He pointed out that many counties in west central Illinois saw their populations peak a half century or a century ago. McDonough County's peak population occurred in 1980, and Rock Island County, host to the Quad Cities campus, saw its population peak in 1970. Dean Merrett observed that this raises questions about student recruitment, economic development, and other existential questions, and the goal of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs is to address some of these issues – first of all, by trying to determine why it is happening. He noted that some of these factors include changes in mechanization, birthrate issues, slowed immigration, rural outmigration, and a rural versus urban opportunities gap. Dean Merrett listed some of the impacts of these factors as loss of anchor institutions, such as local healthcare facilities and grocery stores; a declining tax base to meet fixed infrastructure costs; the educational attainment gap; rural poverty; an aging population; mobility and transportation issues; and quality of life issues, all of which can lead to a “psychology of decline.” Dean Merrett stated that communities which have been on “the glide to oblivion” for 50 to 100 years become locked into a negative mindset, and what IIRA tries to do is to help communities rethink who they are to change the trajectory of their development.

IIRA is comprised of six units or departments: the MAPPING unit, which works with communities on strategic visioning; the Sustainable Development unit, which focuses on cooperatives as a sustainable development strategy; the Rural Transit Planning unit; the Business Development unit, which manages two small business development centers; the Peace Corps Fellows Program, which oversees 11 masters on the WIU campus who spend their capstone experience working 40 hours per week in a rural Illinois community; and the Masters in Community Economic Development, which has about 20 students. IIRA takes client communities through the strategic visioning process, asking them where they want to be and how they can get there; determines a consensus-based set of goals; and brings various areas together to engage in business or land use planning and to conduct feasibility studies. Once communities have gone through the planning process, the Peace Corps Fellows are placed in those communities to implement the plans, which Dean Merrett thinks is the reason they have been so successful.

Dean Merrett listed some of the community initiatives for which IIRA has served as a catalyst for success:

- A \$7 million fitness center in Rushville that emerged following their MAPPING process with IIRA;
- The community of Detrick, on the south side of Illinois, has raised over \$3 million for their recreation/childcare complex, and the MAPPING process helped them secure a \$2 million loan from the state of Illinois;
- IIRA helped to start a grocery store cooperative in Winchester, Illinois, which had not had one for 15 years, an initiative which was mentioned in a *New York Times* article;
- Mattoon, Illinois secured a \$250,000 Google Impact Challenge award and was featured in a *Fortune Magazine* article last month after working with two IIRA Peace Corps Fellows and developing an initiative to lure remote workers to live in Mattoon while working at a distance.

Dean Merrett observed there have been a lot of recent changes to the higher education landscape in Illinois, including development of the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN), which prompted creation of his new job title and duties. He explained that IIN is a half-million dollar investment in public higher education which will encourage economic development through innovation and research by creating 15 innovation hubs in Illinois public universities, including WIU. Dean Merrett explained that public universities who participate in this initiative are expected to engage with the IIN Council and transform itself to be able to take advantage of opportunities that the Innovation Network will provide. This is primarily focused on externally funded collaborative research projects and outreach to business and community partners. Dean Merrett explained there is an IIN executive committee, general counsel, and governance structure already in place, and he has served as the WIU representative on the IIN Council since 2020, which he was asked by the President to coordinate IIN Hub activities. Five IIN committees focus on research, entrepreneurship, education, corporate engagement, and public policy; Dean Merrett serves on three of these committees, and has the help in this effort of his IIRA colleague Sean Park, WIU Dean of Libraries Hector Maymi-Sugranes, WIU Governmental Liaison Jeanette Malafa, and Jennifer von Kaenal, new WIU Director of Corporate Relations.

Dean Merrett observed that WIU is the only public university which was named a single hub overseeing two campuses; for example, Southern Illinois University's campuses at Edwardsville and Carbondale were both named as hubs. He said the unifying theme for the hubs is local economic development and innovation; the Quad Cities campus will focus on manufacturing innovation and economic development, with a particular focus on the Quad Cities Manufacturing Lab and the School of Engineering, while the Macomb campus will focus on community innovation and economic development, with the investment hopefully going into information technology, electronic classrooms, and immersive and augmented learning environments. Dean Merrett told senators a \$7.5 million grant has been secured to leverage an additional \$9 million in funding for a total of \$16.5 million toward these efforts. He said the majority of the funding will go toward securing a new structure for the Quad Cities campus to enable the Quad Cities Manufacturing Lab to be moved from the Rock Island Arsenal to

WIUQC to foster more collaboration, innovation, and research on WIU's own campus. He explained this is also necessary in order to avoid the restrictions associated with the Arsenal site, such as struggles to get foreign students and faculty on there.

Dean Merrett hopes to foster more research collaboration between WIU's colleges, among departments/schools, across both campuses, with WIU's host communities, and with other IIN hubs. Some examples of WIU Innovation Hub activities since 2020 include:

- The \$30,000 CURES Small Town Development Initiative, to address waste, storm, and drinking water issues in small rural communities;
- A \$183,000 R3 (Restore, Reinvest, Renew) grant, secured from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, using cannabis sales income to help marginalized communities build their community infrastructure, including a new grocery store for Cairo, Illinois;
- Involvement in a \$50,000 Farmer Equity Study, sponsored by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, which focuses on the marginalization of minorities and women in the farming sector.

Dean Merrett informed senators that in addition to reaching out beyond WIU's campuses, his mission also includes engaging with and strengthening relationships within WIU. He plans to do this by fostering new research relationships that may not have previously existed, such as securing \$50,000 from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as part of the Broadband Ready Grant. He added that School of Accounting Finance, Economics, and Decision Sciences faculty member Shankar Ghimire will serve as PI for this grant, and School of Computer Sciences Director Dennis DeVolder will also be involved with this initiative. Dean Merrett related that other initiatives include a Chromebook lending program with four rural libraries, giving digital literacy workshops on cybersecurity and data analytics, and working with 19 community partners to create a regional digital divide reduction plan.

Dean Merrett related that the WIU Hub is in the middle of a National Science Foundation (NSF) Regional Innovation Engine \$1 million proposal, which is due in a month; the two-year grant will involve seven hubs, and WIU may get \$100,000 out of it. He stated that two Engineering and two Supply Chain Management faculty on both campuses are working with the other innovation hubs on this proposal, which he thinks is another example of what IIN and WIU leadership want Dean Merrett to support in his new position.

Dean Merrett stated that \$9 million has been appropriated in a capitol account controlled by the Governor's Office for IIN efforts, and he hopes to secure one to two externally funded projects per year that WIU can lead and then recruit faculty to oversee these projects. He would like to encourage WIU faculty to apply for IIN seed grants; there are four of these at \$30,000 each. At least two innovation hubs must work in partnership on these seed grants. Dean Merrett hopes to encourage WIU faculty participation in IIN conferences, such as a conference on sustainability at Northeastern Illinois University on October 28. He would like to get faculty input on novel teaching strategies that might be able to be shared between hubs and invites guidance from Faculty Senate and other WIU constituencies on how the University can benefit by engaging with the Illinois Innovation Network.

Chair Thompson asked if faculty who are doing research in rural areas should contact Dean Merrett to let him know about their efforts. Dean Merrett admitted this would be helpful. He stated that IIRA has a research series called Rural Research Reports which is intended to be a clearinghouse for information on rural development. IIRA has also done some work on rural minority issues, and Dean Merrett would like to see additional work done on this more broadly. Chair Thompson suggested that Faculty Senate can let faculty know that if they are doing research in a rural setting, they should let Dean Merrett know because there may be funding and other opportunities available. Dean Merrett responded that while this is true, the Illinois Innovation Network is not just concerned with rural issues. The half-million-dollar IIN is intended for innovation broadly defined to drive economic development, which could, for example, be a project on supply chain management which examines water, air, road, and rail in downtown Chicago, Peoria, and Quincy and looks at sustainability issues. He added that the

kinds of projects that the WIU's IIN Hub will look at would be relevant to almost every department on campus and is not limited to a rural niche.

Senator Albarracin asked if the one or two projects a year that faculty might lead would be projects that they would choose and secure or projects that WIU's IIN Hub would bring in. Dean Merrett responded that this is a great question which he has wondered himself. He plans to visit the Dean's Council, faculty council meetings, and return to Faculty Senate in a couple of months to reach out and provide updates. He stated that the IIN General Council and the committees meet every two months, so there is a continuous flow of information; Dean Merrett will try to make sure when he sees an opportunity to share that information as broadly as he can. He added that if there is another round of seed grants, he will work especially hard to make sure that WIU faculty know about that because, although it is not a huge amount of money, it is not like competing with 500 applicants for five NSF grants. Senator Albarracin observed that some area schools must shut down in hot weather because they do not have air conditioning and do not know how to write a grant to obtain it. She would like to see WIU's grant writing resources applied to projects like this. Dean Merrett offered to talk more to Senator Albarracin about this.

3. Bobbi Smith, Director, Financial Aid

Ms. Smith, who has worked in WIU's Financial Aid office for 15 years, told senators that federal student aid, including Pell loans, federal direct loans, federal supplemental education grants, and the TEACH grant, are an integral part of Western Illinois University, providing \$56 million of revenue for WIU. She stated that about 50 percent of WIU students are PELL eligible. She explained that the Department of Education has a lot of authority over the regulations that revolve around revenue provided through Title IV, the federal student aid program. She told senators that 93 percent of WIU students get some form of financial aid, and without these students there would be no WIU because such a large number would be unable to attend. Ms. Smith stated that a lot of the decisions that drive WIU's financial aid revenue are governmentally driven by the Department of Education, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and institutional regulations, such as those of the Board of Trustees.

Ms. Smith told senators that Financial Aid made a decision last year regarding the way WIU disburses federal student aid. Regulations allow for federal student aid to be dispersed up to ten business days prior to the start of the semester so that students can purchase textbooks and supplies. She said the problem with this is that enrollment is not locked in at this point, so Financial Aid in the past has disbursed aid to students still changing their enrollments; the Financial Aid office would disperse aid based on a full courseload of 12 hours, students would receive excess financial aid and drop 6 semester hours, at which time WIU would be responsible for returning that money to the U.S. Department of Education. She said that while students are supposed to pay WIU's Financial Aid office back, it often does not happen, so from a financial sustainability standpoint the University lost a lot of money every semester because students took that money and did not return it. She added that while WIU can collect that money from students, it involves attorneys and collection fees and also creates barriers to students enrolling for subsequent semesters. Financial Aid wants to make sure that if it puts money in the hands of WIU students, those students are eligible for the funds they receive and that they are not responsible for paying them back because they decide to drop a class without resulting that their PELL grant will be reduced as a result.

Financial Aid decided last year to delay the disbursement of federal aid until after the tenth day of classes beginning this fall. Ms. Smith explained that when Financial Aid made the decision to implement this change, they also had to determine a way for students to get access to their textbooks and supplies. She stated that the Retail Sales Tax Act had, up to this point, prevented students from charging books at university bookstores, but this was recently changed to allow for an exemption; students may now charge their books at WIU's Union Bookstore, that charge goes on their student account, and when the financial aid is released it can be applied to those charges as opposed to giving students that money up front when they have not locked in their enrollments.

Ms. Smith told senators this change in policy was communicated to students and faculty in March 2022; in July, a communication went out to the community because a lot of WIU students live off-campus and use their excess funds for housing needs. Financial Aid communicated with landlords to let them know that students would not have those excess funds until September. Ms. Smith stated that all the landlords were very supportive and expressed a willingness to work with students, and she has not heard any push-back from the community or faculty. Financial Aid thinks this change is not only good for the sustainability of the university but also for students' sustainability because the funds they get are what they are really supposed to be receiving.

Ms. Smith told senators a lot of students are benefitting from this change and should not tell faculty they are unable to buy their textbooks since they can charge them from the university bookstore. If students do not get financial aid, those charges become part of their university bill, and they must pay it to under \$1,000 before registering for the next semester.

Ms. Smith related that the new Verification of Academic Activity Roster will allow Financial Aid to verify if students begin attending their classes before disbursing funding. She explained that students must be verified that they have begun attending their classes or they could have their PELL grants reduced. In the past, Financial Aid checked whether a student had attended class at the end of the semester in cases when a student withdrew from or failed a class; multiple emails were sent to faculty to verify if students attended their classes and what their last day of attendance was. Financial Aid is now trying to get this information at the front end by asking faculty to verify that students did attend their classes so that their financial aid eligibility can be determined at the beginning of the semester versus having to tell students they owe money back because of lack of attendance. Financial Aid hopes that if students are not attending classes at the beginning of the semester, university retention initiatives can be initiated to reach out to them and, if necessary, help them withdraw from the class before they suffer financial consequences.

Senator Carr asked if it is true that faculty should not record a student as attending an online course if they only login; the student must participate in a discussion or assignment. She also wonders if students will receive their funding if they do not take this step within the ten-day period but instead jump in on Day 14. Ms. Smith responded that the Department of Education defines what they consider to be a student beginning a course, and she can share that definition with senators; just simply logging on is not considered beginning attendance because there must be an exchange between the instructor and the student. She added that this conversation does not have to be specific to the course the student is taking – a student could ask about their major in general or the job market – but it does have to be an exchange between the instructor and the student. Ms. Smith clarified that if a professor leaves the Verification of Academic Activity Roster blank for a particular student because the professor does not know if the student has attended, there will be no negative ramifications for the student. Financial Aid will not negatively reduce a student's PELL grant or financial aid eligibility because of a non-response. She stated that if a faculty member marks on the Verification of Academic Activity Roster that a student did not begin to attend class, Financial Aid will reduce the financial aid award from 12 s.h. to 9 s.h. (for a three-hour class), notify the student of that reduction, and share that information with the Office of Retention Initiatives in order for them to reach out to the student. She added that if the student begins attending after the eighth day (when the roster information is due), Financial Aid can adjust the federal aid to increase it back to full-time enrollment. She noted that Financial Aid now has the ability to make changes early in the semester rather than waiting until a student fails a midterm grade to try to change behavior.

Chair Thompson asked if Ms. Smith will be sending faculty a reminder about the importance of filling out the Verification of Academic Activity Roster. Ms. Smith responded that because the period for filling out the form ends tomorrow, she will probably not have time to send out another reminder but she is willing to share the information with anyone who requests it. She explained the reason Financial Aid is only able to leave the roster open through the eighth day is to allow Financial Aid time to receive, analyze, and use that data because financial aid

funding must be disbursed on the tenth day or after; if the roster were to be kept open until the tenth day, students would not receive their aid until the 15<sup>th</sup> day of classes, which Ms. Smith thought was too long for a student to wait when they might be relying on that money to eat or feed their families. Senator Albarracin asked if the data about which students are not attending classes can be used for retention and student success as well; Ms. Smith responded that it will. She explained that instead of the retention survey that is usually sent out, the Office of Retention Initiatives this year will use the information gathered by Financial Aid. She added that the offices of Financial Aid and Retention Initiatives are both under the Vice President for Enrollment Management, and the two offices collaborate very regularly. Provost Zoghi remarked that he would like to meet with Ms. Smith separately to talk about how these efforts coordinate with his vision of the student life cycle.

Ms. Smith told senators she hopes these changes are positive ones, but at this point students do not understand why they cannot have the money immediately and have been posting negatively about the change on social media. Ms. Smith said Financial Aid tries to explain to students that the money is not theirs, it belongs to the government, and WIU's Financial Aid office must be a good steward of those dollars. She noted that if Financial Aid disburses aid to the wrong group of students because the students are not eligible, it is not the students that have to pay the money back to the government but the university; WIU is liable for any funds awarded in error. She related that the University of Missouri several years ago were found through an audit that they were not verifying that students began attendance and had to pay back about \$8 million to the Department of Education. Ms. Smith told senators that her office is trying to be more fiscally responsible with the university's funds and on behalf of students who do not necessarily know that taking 9 s.h. rather than 12 s.h. of classes affects their federal PELL grant awards.

Ms. Smith reiterated that the Verification of Academic Activity Roster and students' ability to charge their textbooks and supplies at the Union Bookstore closes tomorrow (August 31). This must be ended on the eighth day in order to get charges on students' accounts before releasing financial aid. Financial Aid does not want students to get a refund of aid and then a charge come through for textbooks after they thought they had a zero balance. Senator Petrocovic asked how this will affect students whose textbooks have been backordered. Ms. Smith responded the Union Bookstore is aware of this, and students have already had this charge processed so that, once the books come in, the system will simply finish the process that it started earlier. She added that Financial Aid works very closely with WIU's Bookstore to make those accommodations.

Senator Hunter asked whose responsibility it is to notify Financial Aid if a student who has not been attending classes starts attending, for instance, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Ms. Smith responded it is the student's responsibility. She explained that the student would be notified that their lack of attendance is affecting their financial aid and that if they begin attending it is their responsibility to notify the Financial Aid office, upon which Financial Aid would reach out to the faculty member to verify that attendance and make adjustments to the student's account, as applicable.

School of Education Interim Director Sebastian Szyjka asked what happens if the Verification of Academic Activity Roster is not completed at all. Ms. Smith responded that in this case Financial Aid would go back to their previous procedure of verifying attendance upon a student's withdrawal or failure from the course. She said Financial Aid's goal is to eliminate this process, but if it cannot be eliminated in one semester it is okay. Their goal is to verify all academic activity by tenth day rather than sending emails to faculty when they are busy grading and going off contract. Dr. Szyjka asked if this process would also be used for irregular courses. Ms. Smith responded that it will, although there has not yet been time to apply this to irregular classes because the system was built in-house from the ground up. Financial Aid realizes that if a faculty member is teaching a second eight-week course they cannot verify academic activity by the eighth day of classes, so this will be verified at the end of the semester. She stressed that if a faculty member does not know if a student has attended their class, the best thing to do is to leave the roster blank because this will cause less harm to the student than

marking the student not in attendance. She encourages faculty to email her with any questions about the new process.

### III. Reports of Committees and Councils

#### A. Budget Transparency Committee (BTC) (TBD, Chair, 2022-2023)

##### 1. Annual Report (Bill Thompson, Chair, 2021-2022)

The BTC last year met with the Vice President for Administration and the Budget Director to get an understanding of the annual amount of money set aside in the budget for faculty salaries and raises. They determined there is a formula for this amount, but no one knows how old the formula is or who originally wrote it. BTC recommended to the administration that they consider rethinking a formula that feels disconnected from the current fiscal reality or at least to provide a rationale for the number to show that it still works.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

#### B. Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS) (Julie Cox, Chair, 2022-2023)

##### 1. Annual Report (Jason Covert, Chair, 2021-2022)

The CAGAS annual report was not available for this meeting.

##### 2. Request for GPA Gateway

###### a. School of Education – Elementary Education: Elementary Option, Middle Level Program, Special Education Program

Dr. Cox told senators that the state of Illinois, in response to its huge teacher shortage, mandated that the GPA requirement for acceptance into teacher education programs for the Elementary Education – Early Childhood option be reduced from 2.75 to 2.0; although CAGAS approved this change in late May, there is very little that universities can do since this is coming down from the state. CAGAS also approved a request from the School of Education to similarly reduce the GPA gateway for its Elementary Education: Elementary option, Middle Level Program, and Special Education program from 2.75 to 2.5. This change is not mandated by the state.

Chair Thompson asked if it is rare for legislative members to mandate a GPA because he has never seen this before. Senator Barr, a faculty member in the School of Education, responded that, coming from another state, he thinks the legislation is a disaster but he suspects Illinois is just now realizing what the restrictions put in place five years ago have done to the teacher supply in Illinois. Senator Barr related he had to go through a lot of steps to transfer his license to Illinois originally, but a year later the same process only took one week, which shows how much has changed.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS TO THE GATEWAY CHANGE**

#### C. Council on Campus Planning and Usage (CCPU) (TBD, Chair, 2022-2023)

##### 1. Annual Report (Redina Finch, Chair, 2021-2022)

CCPU last year was given the charge “to explore and report on the advantages and disadvantages of current and alternative scheduling models at WIU” to include such items as time of day courses are offered, number of times a week a course meets, and the duration of the

course. Dr. Finch reported that CCPU did not get this data from Administrative Information Management Services (AIMS) until March and has been so far unable to do anything related to retention with the data. She related that one problem is that there are 300,000 lines of data, and CCPU needs the help of an Excel whiz to work on this project. Chair Thompson asked what CCPU is seeing in the data. Dr. Finch responded they are seeing how every student did in their classes for one semester. She noted that the council could filter the data down to 100- and 200-level classes and eliminate grad classes, but it is still an enormous amount of data because it covers every student in every class. George Mangalaraj, School of Computer Sciences faculty member and last year's Council for Instructional Technology Chair, works with data analytics and offered to put CCPU in contact with those that can help them with this process.

Dr. Finch pointed out that this charge was from last year and asked if it is something CCPU should continue working on this year. Chair Thompson observed that scheduling models are something that is part of the national conversation and is of continuing interest, so he thinks it is worth continue to look at.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

D. Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI)  
(Paige Goodwin, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Steve Bennett, Chair, 2021-2022)

CCPI last year approved one new minor (Management and Marketing: Sustainable Business) and three new options (Physics: Materials Science, and Liberal Arts and Sciences: African American Studies and Paired Minors). They approved 22 new courses, four experimental courses, 52 changes to existing courses, eight changes to existing majors, and eight changes to existing options.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

E. Council on General Education (CGE)  
(Barry Birnbaum, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Rob Kelly, Chair, 2021-2022)

During AY 2021-2022, CGE reviewed four articulation requests, five Requests for Inclusion in General Education, and three change requests related to Gen Ed courses or assessments. CGE also discussed a potential video project for the promotion of general education at WIU.

Chair Thompson remarked it might be useful for CGE to look at the number of student credit hours (SCH) being produced by Gen Ed courses as a percentage of the total SCH and whether this is shrinking. He thinks this may be a way of measuring the impact of dual college credit classes, which mostly speak to general education. He suspects this data would be easily available. He thinks it might also be good to break down the data by Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) classes so that CGE could look at which parts of general education are shrinking faster than others. Dr. Kelly invited Chair Thompson to attend a future CGE meeting to speak to the council more about this.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

F. Council for Instructional Technology (CIT)  
(Debra Allwardt, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (George Mangalaraj, Chair, 2021-2022)

CIT invited and interacted with guests from University Technology and the Office for Distance Education and Support and discussed instructional technology topics, including the online proctoring tool, plagiarism checker for assignments, possible faculty peer mentoring for WesternOnline and student knowledge of WesternOnline features. CIT hopes next year to survey students' expectations and knowledge with regard to online instructional tools and technologies and evaluate CIT's policies and procedures in light of the preponderance of the use of online instructional technologies across various course modalities.

Chair Thompson observed that WIU has changed the way it funds instructional technology by instituting a paper usage fee for students. He would be interested to see how much money that generated. He thinks printing costs were a lot of the University Technology budget and wonders how much of the improvements made by uTech recently were a result of freeing up funds due to this change. He suspects the change to fee-based printing is affecting the university's technology resources in a positive way.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

G. Council for Intercollegiate Athletics (CIA)  
(TBD, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Brian Stone, Chair, 2021-2022)

Dr. Stone introduced Tom Cody, WIU's NCAA Athletics representative, and Beth Wilson, the administrative representative between student-athletes and the university, who were in attendance. Dr. Stone reported that in addition to their regular duties of approving athletics schedules, CIA also discussed support for student-athletes mental health, particularly considering the process of coming out of Covid protocols and getting back into a more normal athletics lifestyle.

Chair Thompson is pleased to see CIA encouraging better support for student-athletes' mental health because this is an important issue. He would like to see CIA give a report later in the semester on the new student-athlete transfer portal process, a big change for WIU Athletics. He thinks this change is causing quite a bit of consternation and comments. Dr. Stone related that CIA engaged in a good amount of discussion on this, particularly how it affects students' progress toward a degree if they are able to transfer more easily, which is the intent of the new program. Dr. Cody confirmed this is a huge issue since student-athletes will be able to transfer anytime to any institution they want to as long as they meet a certain GPA requirement. He thinks this could be a big problem for retention. Dr. Cody remarked that changes to allow college athletes to be compensated for use of their images/likenesses is also a new factor. Chair Thompson said Faculty Senate would like to hear a presentation about these changes.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

H. Council for International Education (CIE)  
(TBD, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Sean Cordes, Chair, 2021-2022)

CIE met with the Dean of Libraries last year and developed initial strategies to support international education through libraries and other campus units and programming. The council plans to work with the Center for Global Studies this year to see how CIE can better support cultural activities and educational learning experiences to promote international student success.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS**

I. Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID)

(Kaycee Peterman, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Doug LaFountain, Chair, 2021-2022)

The WID Council last year implemented a new biennial rotational review of all WID courses throughout the university and approved three Requests for WID Designation.

**NO OBJECTIONS**

J. Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)  
(Dave Hunter, Chair, 2022-2023)

1. Annual Report (Josh Wroblewski, Chair, 2021-2022)

SNC made 59 nominations to fill vacancies last year, 22 less than the previous year. They distributed the annual interest survey to which 107 faculty members responded, 29 more than the previous year. Of the 59 nominations presented to Faculty Senate last year, 30 identified as male and 29 as female; 26 were full professors, 12 associate professors, 15 assistant professors, and six Unit B. Sixty faculty identified as tenured on the survey; 25 identified as tenure track; and 16 faculty members did not respond to this question. Chair Thompson observed that the male/female representation is about 50/50 and asked if SNC should be looking at committee representation in any other ways or ask for any other demographic information. Senator Wroblewski pointed out that SNC also asks for rank information. He added that SNC's job is made harder when faculty do not respond to the annual interest survey. He encouraged senators to ask their colleagues to take a couple of minutes to complete it every spring because it is extremely helpful.

2. Nominations to Fill Vacancies

**SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

Council on General Education

Barb Lawhorn, English	replacing	Matt Gilchrist	2024	Basic Writing
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**UNIVERSITY COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

Bureau of Cultural Affairs

Daniel Schmidt, Thea/Dan	replacing	Melissa Stinnett	F22	At-large
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Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) Advisory Council

Lisa Wipperling, Thea/Dan	replacing	Vacant	2024	FA&C
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Diversity Council

Leigh Ann Fisler, Psych	replacing	Kristy Keefe	22-23	At-large
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University Benefits Committee

Kaycee Peterman, HS/SW	replacing	Jonathan Hammersley	F22	At-large
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Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council

Jeff Hancks, Library	replacing	Melissa Stinnett	F22	Alternate
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There were no further nominations, and the slate of candidates was declared elected.

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. Election of COEHS Senator to College of Education and Human Services Dean Search Committee

The Senate Executive Committee recommends that the senator elected to represent Faculty Senate also represent that senator's department/school on the search committee. As discussed at the ExCo meeting, this would allow for Military Science to be included as one of the six departments/schools represented on the search committee. There were no objections to this proposal, and Senator Shupe volunteered to represent Faculty Senate and the Department of Kinesiology on the search committee.

B. Election of Senators to the Budget Transparency Committee

*(two senators, one each from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education and Human Services, plus an Executive Committee member, to serve two-year terms)*

Chair Thompson told senators that the Budget Transparency Committee allows for Faculty Senate to talk about the financial condition of the university that provides students with their educations and many employees with their jobs and to ask questions about that. He observed that universities nationwide will experience financial stress in 2026; demographics show that there will be an enrollment drop for several following years as well, and the Budget Transparency Committee can discuss possible ways to anticipate things that might occur because of this situation. He would like to see the BTC this year ask questions that might help WIU navigate what is anticipated to be a very difficult time; some estimates show there may be as many as eight years of declining enrollments after 2025, which could reshape WIU. Chair Thompson stressed these factors need to be considered now so that Faculty Senate can work with the President's and Provost's offices to talk about how to save people's jobs, what kind of a university we want to have, and how expensive that will be.

Dean Martinelli-Fernandez observed that she has over 20 years of practical accounting experience and has worked with accounting systems in many institutions of higher education, and the state of Illinois's system is quite unique and very different from the private sector. She thinks service on BTC would be helpful to provide input into advanced planning rather than having to make decisions during a crisis. She offered the resources of the College of Arts and Sciences to help the individuals serving on BTC with their efforts.

Senator Barr volunteered to represent the College of Education and Human Services on the BTC. Chair Thompson had volunteered at the Executive Committee meeting to be the ExCo representative. No College of Arts and Sciences senators volunteered to serve, so this item will return to the next Faculty Senate agenda under Old Business.

C. Election of Senators to the Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance

*(five senators from any college, to include one Executive Committee member, to serve one-year terms)*

Senator Brice volunteered at the Executive Committee meeting to represent ExCo on the committee. Senators Hunter, Shupe, and Wroblewski volunteered to serve. One more senator is needed, so this agenda item will return to the next Senate agenda under Old Business.

D. Election of Senators to Serve on Provost's Advisory Council

*(two senators to serve two-year terms)*

Senators Carr and Petrocovicci volunteered to serve on this council. There were no other nominations, so they were declared elected.

E. Election of Senator to Student Learning Assessment Committee

*(one senator to serve a one-year term; senator should have assessment experience or be interested in learning more about assessment)*

Senator Barr volunteered to serve. There were no other nominations, and he was declared elected. Senator Brice expressed thanks and congratulations to those who volunteered to serve today.

F. For the Good of the Body

Senator Shupe announced there will be a mobile food pantry on campus at the former HyVee building on University Drive on Friday, September 9. The food pantry is open to all members of the campus and Macomb community. Sign up begins at 9:00 a.m., and drive-through distribution is from 10:00-11:00 a.m. In response to a question from Chair Thompson, Senator Shupe noted that the food pantry is always looking for volunteers.

Chair Thompson announced that there will be a faculty social from 2:30-4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7 in the Union Sandburg Lounge. There will be four of five socials during fall semester, sponsored by UPI, Faculty Senate, and the Provost's office. Each will feature two faculty members speaking briefly about their research and taking questions. Snacks and a cash bar will be available.

**Motion:** To adjourn (Brice)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Julia Albarracin, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Recording Secretary