

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 January 2024
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julia Albarracin, Chair; Everett Hamner, Vice Chair; Denise Gravitt, Secretary
ALSO PRESENT: Mark Mossman, Interim Provost; Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager

1. *Proposed resolution on Embracing Neurodiversity at WIU*

The Student Government Association, with the help of Political Science professor Casey LaFrance, has crafted a resolution for Faculty Senate consideration. The resolution will be on the January 23 agenda under New Business. Parliamentarian Robinett spoke with Dr. LaFrance who assured him that endorsement of the resolution by Faculty Senate or others represents support of the ideas contained in it and does not express support for any financial or other resources related to the resolution.

2. *Creation of Summer Bridge Program Task Force*

Chair Albarracin noted that creation of this task force was included in the last faculty contract negotiations. She said the task force will have the specific purpose of seeking funding. Interim Provost Mossman will chair the task force, which will include two administrative representatives and two faculty representatives, one of those from Faculty Senate and one from UPI.

Senator Gravitt remarked that many faculty are interested in this program and asked if it would be possible to have a faculty representative from each academic college. Chair Albarracin responded that the task force is contractual, so the composition has already been laid out.

Interim Provost Mossman related that a trial summer bridge program was offered last summer; 26 students participated, and 23 of those were retained. A donation through the Foundation Office paid for the two-year trial. Interim Provost Mossman would like to grow the program to offer it to all approximately 200 Reach students, but the primary barrier to that is cost. He added the task force will seek out funding possibilities that can impact the bridge program and first-generation students. Senator Gravitt asked how the initial 26 students were selected. Interim Provost Mossman responded that the offer was extended to students who would be enrolling through the Reach program, and these students volunteered, which is the way a lot of bridge programs work. He said these students are admitted under probation and really want to attend the university.

After discussion, the Executive Committee decided to ask the Senate Nominating Committee to send an email out to faculty asking for volunteers to serve on the task force, then to choose one nominee to bring forward to the Faculty Senate meeting of February 6.

3. *Discussion of ways to grow enrollment and revenue at BOT Retreat on February 8*

Chair Albarracin announced that the Board of Trustees Chair has invited faculty to their retreat on February 8 to discuss ways to grow enrollment and revenue. She said that Faculty Senate needs to send a small number of representatives and suggested that the group be comprised of one senator each from the academic colleges and the Quad Cities campus. She recommended that another senator from each college and the Quad Cities campus (not necessarily, but possibly, the same senator who will attend the retreat) gather information in some way from their faculty colleagues which can be presented to the BOT. Chair Albarracin plans to survey faculty in her college, but the timeframe is short so senators may wish to use a different method, such as a town hall meeting or some other idea. Chair Albarracin will discuss this with senators during Announcements at the January 23 Senate meeting and will ask for a volunteer from each college and the Quad Cities campus to gather this information and present it to the Executive Committee on January 30; then, at the Senate meeting of February 6, she will ask for a senator from each college and the Quad Cities campus to take their information forward to the BOT Retreat.

Parliamentarian Robinett asked if this information has already been collected by the deans. Interim Provost Mossman replied that for the past year and a half, efforts have been made to try to get responses from faculty on ways to generate revenue and enrollment growth, but he is not aware of any document where all of these responses have been compiled. He thinks revenue generation is crucial, and it is important to try to get the entire university involved in these discussions.

Senator Hamner asked about the format for the retreat. Chair Albarracin responded that the faculty representatives will have a very limited amount of time to speak. She also does not yet know what time the faculty presentations will be held during the retreat. Interim Provost Mossman added that the retreat is supposed to be a working session for the BOT, and he thinks it is good that the Board is trying to get more of the institution involved. He related that the Higher Learning Commission on their last accreditation visit recommended that the BOT set up some kind of fellowship program where their members could spend a week in various offices on campus, such as Financial Aid, the Provost's Office, and others, in order to attain a more in-depth understanding.

4. *Representative sought for Aspen-AASCU WIU-SRC Transfer Student Success Initiative*

Justin Schuch, Executive Director of Student Success and Retention Initiatives, has asked Faculty Senate to choose a senator to serve on a team working to review, assess, and improve the transfer student experience and relationship. Interim Provost Mossman said this is a very serious initiative. Mr. Schuch is looking for someone who would report back to Faculty Senate so that the Senate can be involved throughout the process. A Senate volunteer will be sought during Announcements on January 23. More information can be found at <https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-intensive/>.

5. *Election notices – addition of new language*

Election notices will be sent to faculty inboxes on January 25 to seek nominations to fill nine vacancies on Faculty Senate for Fall 2024. Senators are being sought to fill two seats representing Arts and Sciences, two for Business and Technology, one representing Education and Human Services, one for Fine Arts and Communication, two representing the Macomb campus at-large, and one to represent the Quad Cities campus. The deadline for nominating petitions to be submitted will be February 6, after which ballots will be sent out for any contested seats.

Parliamentarian Robinett drafted new language to be added to the election notices: “Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, a quorum of the Senate membership must be gathered in one physical space to be in compliance. This means 15 of 24 senators must be physically present in one location before any official business can be conducted. For this reason, it is preferred that senators on the Macomb campus be able to regularly attend meetings in person.”

6. The report from the Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence will be presented during Reports of Committees and Councils.
7. Guests making brief presentations for the January 23 meeting will include Alisha Looney, Interim AVP of Communication, Marketing, and Media Relations; John Smith, Vice President for Student Success; and Amy Carr, WIU Representative to the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council.
8. The Executive Committee finalized the agenda for the Faculty Senate meeting of January 23, and the ExCo meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary