

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 October 2023
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

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

GUESTS: Michael Lorenzen; Lorette Oden; Cassandra Standberry; Lisa Wipperling

1. *Ad Hoc Committee on Anti-Bullying Policies Preliminary Report – Cassandra Standberry, Chair*

Ad hoc committee Chair Cassandra Standberry related that the committee thought the first thing they should do is determine definitions related to bullying, which generated a lot of good discussion. The definitions agreed on by the committee are from the Commonwealth of Virginia Policy on Civility in the Workplace. Ms. Standberry noted this policy includes information on bullying, harassment, and discrimination; the ad hoc committee also used research by universities across Illinois. She pointed out that the proposed definitions include cyberbullying, which the ad hoc committee thought it was important to include.

Ms. Standberry stated that the policy, once approved, would apply to contract workers, customers, clients, student workers, volunteers, and other third-party partners in the workplace. The ad hoc committee will look at procedures to accompany the policy, to include how employees will grieve if there is a violation of the policy, grievance forms, and levels of response, which will ultimately include working through Human Resources.

Parliamentarian Robinett asked if the ad hoc committee has discussed rank, such as if a full professor engages in bullying behavior toward a non-tenured faculty member or a faculty member bullies an office worker. Ms. Standberry replied that this has not been discussed; for her, the policy will apply to everyone without reference to rank. She added that if the policy is approved, there can be some accountability at every level. Chair Albarracin asked if Parliamentarian Robinett is wondering whether, for instance, a chair bullying a non-tenured faculty member would be a more serious offense than colleague to colleague bullying. Parliamentarian Robinett replied that he appreciates that the policy would apply to everyone, but he was thinking about prejudicial stereotyping and protected classes. He noted that a non-tenured faculty member may not fall within a protected class. Dr. Oden, who serves on the ad hoc committee, recalled that they talked about the reporting structure, which may accommodate what Parliamentarian Robinett is referring to. She noted that who is reporting would determine where the report should be sent to.

Ms. Standberry added that the ad hoc committee has started working on the grievance form, which will include categories for protected classes. Employees can choose all that apply from a list including bullying/mobbing, cyberbullying, harassment, retaliation, hostile work environment, and discrimination and indicate whether the violation is related to race, political affiliation, age, religion, etc. She said the committee is trying to keep in mind the importance of remaining all-inclusive because everyone from student workers to the highest-level administrators need to be protected.

Senator Wipperling, who also serves on the ad hoc committee, related that they engaged in a lot of discussion about things that should or should not stay in the definitions and things from other definitions that they wanted to include before coming up with their own recommendations to use as guides. The committee thought they should start with definitions before moving forward on the rest of the process.

Provost Zoghi noted that while WIU does need a clear anti-bullying policy, he would like to create a culture of collegiality and camaraderie at the university. He asked if there is a way to also start thinking about providing training and awareness for all employees to encourage open communication so that things do not reach the bullying level. He would like to see training on support and mediation. Ms. Standberry responded that Human Resources is working on professional development and a variety of training opportunities. They have a lot of PowerPoint presentations from the Society of Human Resource Management and some in-

house, and they hope to develop essential skills for supervisors and leaders, such as on FMLA, performance management, cultural competencies, microaggressions, and others. Ms. Standberry envisions this being included in mandatory training for new employees within their first 30 days, 90 days, and six months of employment.

Senator Wipperling remarked the hope is that the anti-bullying policy will never have to be used, but it needs to be in place as a safeguard. She noted that trainings that can be incorporated into things the university is already doing, such as new faculty orientation, will be helpful. Chair Albarracin remarked that when former Senate Chair Bill Thompson proposed this ad hoc committee to Faculty Senate, he had a few faculty members come up to him afterward to relate examples of bullying they had experienced, so she thinks the policy will be used.

Senator Gravitt remarked she attended a microaggressions seminar last week and asked if that definition could be incorporated as well. Ms. Standberry replied she will discuss this with the committee.

2. *Ad Hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence Preliminary Report – Michael Lorenzen, Chair*

Ad hoc committee Chair Michael Lorenzen recalled that last fall the university community was surprised when ChatGPT was being used to write papers and AI was creating artwork, and CAGAS was concerned when hearing about students being accused of cheating using this technology, which was part of the genesis behind creation of the ad hoc committee. He said the committee is trying not to go to extremes on one end or the other – neither to the fear that AI will destroy homework because students will use it to cheat all the time nor to thinking that AI will create a new golden age – but rather looking at AI within a realistic balance. Dr. Lorenzen pointed out that no matter what WIU decides to do with AI, it will continue to evolve and shape the workforce, and students will have to deal with it and use it the same way they use other technologies. He thinks the overview of the ad hoc committee is that there is a need to embrace this technology, use it, and avoid some of its downsides.

Dr. Lorenzen noted that AI is a really broad topic, but the committee is trying to narrow their examination down to higher education. He said one aspect of that is how to best integrate AI into teaching, such as creating better lectures, tutoring systems, and other ways to help students. He thinks that students should be taught how to use AI in ethical ways and incorporate it into their assignments since they will be using it in their future jobs. He warned, though, that students should guard against losing learning by relying on AI to do all the hard work. He noted that while AI can do rapid searches and is good at recognizing patterns, it also has problems, such as a lack of transparency and biases based on the information it was trained on. AI can be used for hacking, organized crime, and cyber terrorism, but it can also be used to help with disability accommodations.

Dr. Lorenzen noted that besides training students on what AI can do, it will also be important to develop policies and guidelines on how to properly document use of AI within academic integrity standards. He warned that faculty should not jump to the conclusion that a student has cheated using AI just because they have a paper flagged on Turnitin because that program can be incorrect. He thinks the university needs to be proactive and thoughtful regarding how AI should be used in the academic environment and how students should be taught to use it in a socially responsible manner.

Chair Albarracin asked how AI can be used as an assessment tool. Dr. Lorenzen replied AI programs will allow faculty to grade not only multiple-choice questions but also essay responses, suggest scores for full papers, and highlight mistakes. Chair Albarracin is glad the ad hoc committee is looking into all angles of AI and not just concentrating on a policy to punish cheaters. She noted that last year the detection program she uses flagged all of her international students' papers as being written using AI, presumably because they write more formally. She asked if there has been any progress on improving these detection programs or if they are still unreliable. Dr. Lorenzen replied that OpenAI turned off its detector because it had such a high false positive rate. He noted that students for whom English is a second language may write very well but have been trained to write concisely; they may have a smaller vocabulary with commonly used English words and be very precise, which means they may get flagged. He noted that when 1950s *New York Times* articles are submitted to detection programs, most of them will be flagged as being AI-written because journalism is more a precise, formulaic form of writing. Dr. Lorenzen said he would not want to rely on AI

to fail a student because it flags too much writing incorrectly, but it could be the reason to have a conversation with a student. He thinks a better way to look at AI is how to better design assignments in the knowledge that AI is out there and some students will use it to deliberately cheat, which they can learn from YouTube videos.

Senator Gravitt asked if the detection software could still be effective in catching plagiarism issues separate from writing using AI. Dr. Lorenzen replied that it can, noting that AI detection software looks for original work created using artificial intelligence while plagiarism software looks for text-to-text matches.

Parliamentarian Robinett noted that while he knows some of his students have been using ChatGPT to write their papers because they do not speak or write emails at the level of the language used in their papers, the problem is that there is no way to prove it; because it is “new work,” there is no way to catch them out. He thinks it will be challenging to design new forms of assessment based on the ones commonly used in academic disciplines. He noted that the students he is sure used ChatGPT for their papers showed 0% on Turnitin, so he thinks the conversation about academic integrity is a long way from being resolved.

Senator Hamner, who serves on the ad hoc committee, thinks everyone needs to learn as much as they can about the capabilities involved with AI so that the university community is not surprised by them. He noted that not only can individuals give the existing free AI platforms a prompt, but also enormous documents can be uploaded into the AI program with a request that they be analyzed; once the output is received, the individual can ask for a modification of it in order to, for example, shift the tone, which will result in an entirely new document. He encourages faculty to dig into AI and try things themselves so that they can learn what is possible. He stated that the tangible feel of exponential growth is really remarkable.

Ms. Hamm asked what the Executive Committee expects from this committee when it submits its final report in January. She asked if they expect to receive a policy with clear penalties. Chair Albarracin responded that although that was the original charge, she feels more conflicted about it now because AI does have some legitimate uses; she originally envisioned a policy with consequences, but the more she knows about AI and how difficult it is to detect she is unsure about that outcome. Senator Gravitt would like to see some basic educational information for faculty that would explain how students might be using AI and how professors can recognize its use. She suspects her WID course may have to be restructured in light of AI usage. She would like to see the final paper advise faculty on how they might go about investigating if they think a student might be using AI to cheat because some faculty may have no idea where to start.

Provost Zoghi remarked that Education professor Rashmi Sharma, who serves on the ad hoc committee, developed an AI policy for the College of Education and Human Services; he recalled that the first level was that a student was not allowed to use AI at all while the second tier allowed for usage with citations. He asked if the ad hoc committee has considered her document as a first step. Senator Hamner responded that the ad hoc committee did look at this policy, which offers syllabus statement possibilities so that students can have clarity about the expectations of their particular course. He noted that challenges remain in the more prohibitive cases where the faculty member states that AI should not be used at all; it will be very difficult to detect without requiring only in-class writing or oral exams. Senator Hamner thinks the original charge to the ad hoc committee – “To suggest a policy or policies to address the opportunities and challenges that AI presents to the academic mission of the university” – was very broad and that the most important thing for the committee to do is to educate everyone about the various models, such as that being used in COEHS.

Dr. Lorenzen added that the committee does not want to turn in a 50-page document but rather a 10-12 page look at the big issues and some of the policy suggestions. Senator Hamner thinks every discipline will have to ask itself what it is offering that is not easily replicable and what they are giving their majors that is unique and will not be replaced on the job market by artificial sources a year after students are hired. Dr. Lorenzen thinks the final report will be the beginning of ongoing conversations on campus into the future.

3. *Results of attendance survey administered by Parliamentarian Robinett and Executive Director of Retention Initiatives Justin Schuch*

Parliamentarian Robinett remarked one thing that stood out is that the 230 students who responded to the survey understand that attendance is important. They have opinions about what classes should have required

attendance and indicated that classes in their majors are the most important to them. Parliamentarian Robinett noted this somewhat matches the results of a survey administered last year to students taking online classes. He recalled those students indicated they wanted to take Gen Ed courses online, and they spoke about the significance of a class as being the determiner of whether it should be offered in an online format. He noted that some students really seem to like attendance and think it should be a responsibility while others indicated that since they are paying for their education, they should be able to say if they wish to attend a class in person. Some students responding to the survey thought attendance should be required only for freshmen and sophomores. Parliamentarian Robinett related that the greatest variability in responses was to the question asking whether attendance policies should be the same across all courses.

Parliamentarian Robinett told ExCo he would refer to this survey as a pilot study. He is glad 230 students filled it out but does not think the results are a clear guide regarding whether an attendance policy is needed. Provost Zoghi asked if there is a similar survey planned for faculty. Chair Albarracin responded she is working on one. She wants to understand where faculty members stand on the topic of attendance because faculty members have different ways of communicating their expectations to their students. She would like to have an idea of what different faculty members do in their various courses – how attendance is addressed and how students are encouraged to attend classes. Chair Albarracin will share the faculty survey with ExCo before sending it out.

Parliamentarian Robinett noted that the survey did show that “instructor stated expectations about attendance” mattered highly to the students who responded to the survey. He noted that perhaps it is just the way professors talk about attendance that makes a big difference in what students do. He noted that the students indicated “all” or “most” to the question asking “how many of your instructors explained their attendance requirements during the first week of classes,” which suggests that faculty are communicating their expectations to their students.

Chair Albarracin noted that some research shows that students exhibit an oppositional attitude when told they have to come to class whereas if attendance is less rigid, they will feel a responsibility to come on their own. She has also seen evidence that recording attendance, but not penalizing absentees, sends a strong message that student attendance is important to that faculty member; even if attendance is merely taken by passing around a sign-in sheet, this is more effective than an overall mandatory attendance policy.

Senator Hamner expressed his agreement, adding that there are few faculty, if any, who do not care if students are present for their classes. He noted that many faculty deliver pretty impassioned statements about attendance, but the real question is whether attendance should be built into students’ grades and whether students should be downgraded if they are not present for classes. He noted there are many factors that go into whether a student is able to attend every single class during a semester, and the situation may be different for a single mom who lives 45 minutes away from campus and works full-time versus a residential student whose dorm is five minutes from class. Senator Hamner thinks the underlying question is whether there are results about whether mandatory attendance policies do harm or good or something in-between.

Provost Zoghi stated that attendance is a way of communicating to students that the faculty member cares about them and wants them to be successful. He noted that students who participate in class do much better than those who do not, but this does not mean that students who do not come to class should necessarily be given a lower grade.

4. *Biennial Reapportionment*

The Faculty Senate Constitution (Article 3.2) requires that a count be taken every two years of faculty who are eligible to vote in Senate elections and that this count determine the membership of the Senate. According to the Article, the Senate membership cannot fall below 23. Figures obtained from Administrative Information Management Services (AIMS) by the Faculty Senate Office Manager show that there are 401 faculty who meet the requirements specified in the Constitution for eligibility to vote; that number breaks down to 145 in Arts and Sciences, 87 in Business and Technology, 83 in Education and Human Services, and 86 in Fine Arts and Communication. These figures mean that the membership of the Senate for the next two years will remain at 24: seven senators from Arts and Sciences; four each from the three remaining academic colleges; four at-large from the Macomb campus; and one at-large from the Quad Cities campus.

The biennial reapportionment breakdown will be presented to senators as an informational item during the Faculty Senate meeting on October 24.

5. *Procedures to address requests from Trustees*

Chair Albarracin noted that in May the Executive Committee held a special meeting to address concerns from a member of the Board of Trustees, and at the most recent Board meeting a Trustee asked her to request a special report from CAGAS. The Trustee would like for CAGAS to craft a policy to prohibit resident students on the Macomb campus from taking online classes. Chair Albarracin asked if it is the Executive Committee's role to be responsive to requests from Trustees or if, as seems more logical, these requests should first go through the upper administration. Provost Zoghi stated that the administration received a three-page memo from the Board of Trustees about this and other topics and will follow up with them in trying to address their concerns.

Chair Albarracin related she has heard people theorize that Macomb residential students choose to take online classes because they think they are easier, but she does not think residential students are necessarily less serious about their educations than other students. She thinks such a policy would go against the university's best interests and the flexibility that it is trying to offer to students. Provost Zoghi noted that the concern is that students in residence halls are not showing up for class, and coming to class enhances participation and retention.

Parliamentarian Robinett observed that some programs were set up for online-only students, but when the pandemic arrived these courses and programs were opened up to allow any students to take them. He noted that departments have moved away from online-only sections to open them up so that the courses have enough students to make their required enrollments. He noted that, pedagogically, those programs that were only supposed to be delivered to online and distance students are now mingled into traditional on-campus offerings. Chair Albarracin said she also has heard complaints about this, but it could be a very complex issue.

Senator Hamner noted that the university only determines that a student is enrolled in a particular location or modality retroactively; the Registrar looks at the schedule of classes a student signs up for during a particular semester to determine how to identify a student for the purposes of that semester. He added that there is nowhere on the university's website where a student can say if they are permanently an online, Quad Cities, or Macomb student. Parliamentarian Robinett remarked this determination can have real effects for student billing and benefits. His department offers a live-streamed class which, when live-streamed from Macomb, counts as a Macomb class, even if the student resides in the Quad Cities, which can affect, for example, a student's military benefits. Parliamentarian Robinett has heard that the ERP, when WIU gets one, will help with this problem because it will not be as rigid regarding how these students are characterized for billing purposes. Senator Hamner asked if students will be permanently assigned a status in a particular bucket once the ERP is operational; Parliamentarian Robinett replied he has not heard. Senator Hamner noted that currently students are assigned an enrollment campus and an application campus in the system; Parliamentarian Robinett remarked his understanding is that a student is assigned based on where they have a preponderance of their courses. Senator Hamner added that if the status is 50-50 between the two campuses, a student is counted as Macomb. Senator Hamner knows of someone who is currently being counted as a Macomb Extension student even though she is the president of a student organization in the Quad Cities, works on the QC campus, has only taken in-person classes in the Quad Cities, and has only been on the Macomb campus once; however, she has two classes from Macomb-based professors and two from Quad Cities-based professors this semester.

6. The Executive Committee finalized the agenda for the October 24 Senate meeting. Doug Freed and Kassie Daly from the Admissions Office will be the guests. The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary