

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 October 2025
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremy Robinett, Chair; Lisa Wipperling, Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alice Melkumian, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Mossman, Provost; William Gblerkpor, Parliamentarian; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager

GUEST: Sarah Lawson, Registrar

1. *Rebuild update*

Provost Mossman reported that he has responded to the Rebuild Communication Committee and agreed to their report; in his response he emphasized that the first step should be internal communication, which has already begun with the digital dashboard. He reported that the Rebuild Interdisciplinary and Co-Curricular Committee also submitted their report, and Provost Mossman hopes to have a response back to them by Friday, October 24.

Provost Mossman presented an update on the Rebuild to the Board of Trustees (BOT) recently. He said that Chair Robinett and Jessica Lin, Interim Associate Dean for the College of Business and Technology, provided the BOT with a detailed report on aspects of the Rebuild as well. Provost Mossman also met with the retired faculty annuitants' group to give an overview of the Rebuild effort, and they were very supportive. Tomorrow he will join the Rebuild Chairs and Directors Committee meeting for their discussion.

Chair Robinett thinks it is important to be mindful of and make sure people understand that this is a comprehensive rebuild and not simply a merging of different programs. He said the process looks at structural facets as well as processes and procedures, and it is important to respect and honor existing traditions while at the same time becoming more efficient. He stressed that the Rebuild is far more than just the structural piece; it is also looking at how the university does business.

Provost Mossman reported that a lot of work has already been done on ACE sheets, which touches other things being done, such as becoming more efficient with schedules, programs, and administrative operations.

2. *Search updates (AVPs, Deans)*

Provost Mossman reported that all five position announcements have now been posted. He plans to send an email to the Division of Academic Affairs on Thursday, October 23 to inform them that the two dean positions have been posted and the search committees are being formed; part of the Communications Plan includes a recommendation that the Provost email a general update to the Division every Thursday or Friday. He added that the due date for applications is tomorrow.

Provost Mossman stated that while the search committees have elected chairs, meetings for yesterday and today have been pushed back until after the due date so that the committees can get the number of applicants they need. He added that if this does not occur, the deadline for applications may be extended.

Provost Mossman received a request for more representation on the search committees from the Council of Administrative Personnel (COAP) and the Civil Service Employees' Council (CSEC), and he has agreed to accommodate that request as long as it is done within an appropriate timeframe. He noted that the purpose of having a Faculty Senate seat is to be more inclusive, so he thinks this request is appropriate. He added that COAP meets tomorrow to ask for volunteers.

Chair Robinett stated that one of the ways Faculty Senate demonstrates its commitment to shared governance is by putting people on search committees; it is important to have broad representative so that multiple voices

representing different areas are involved in the decision-making process. He reported that there were not the number of volunteers to serve on the dean search committees as there were designated faculty seats, so he sent an email to senators yesterday asking for their unanimous consent to extending the deadline for volunteers; the timeline for the search would remain the same, but the deadline for self-nominations to serve on the search committees would be extended. He said senators were given until 5:00 today to object to the deadline extension; if there are no objections, an email will be sent to faculty announcing that extension with the plan that any balloting would be completed by 4:00 next Tuesday, October 28, in time to announce the appointments at the Senate meeting on that day.

Chair Robinett noted that there are a lot of conversations taking place, and for many of these firm decisions cannot be made until the deans are in place to serve as the leaders of their colleges. He stated that Faculty Senate, in its role for shared governance, is trying to be respectful of the deadlines while providing plenty of opportunities for individuals to become engaged. Provost Mossman remarked that CSEC and the Deans' Council have provided him with the names of representatives for the two dean search committees, so he is only waiting on the faculty and chair representatives to be determined. Chair Robinett appreciates that the Provost has chosen to work with a far more inclusive model for selecting leadership which provides opportunities for individuals to have more of a say in what the institution is doing and how it is moving forward.

3. *Discussions on updating charges for the Budget Transparency Committee (BTC) and Council on General Education (CGE)*

Chair Robinett reported that Vice President Roselieb gave a presentation to the Board of Trustees last Friday, October 17 that included much of the information that was presented at the Faculty Senate meeting on October 14. He noted that she went a little further in demonstrating some cash flow projections based on what Vice President Roselieb called "conservative" estimates of what things will look like in terms of enrollment, retention, and state funding, which she assumes will remain flat. Senator Walker is trying to get the first Budget Transparency Committee meeting date set because by this point in the semester there is more information to begin looking at in order to understand the university's fiscal realities. Chair Robinett anticipates the BTC will want to refine their charge a little based upon Vice President Roselieb's recent presentations and some of the conversations.

Chair Robinett reported that after reviewing some of the Council on General Education's issues and looking at assessment models that may need to be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission and others, the decision has been made to conduct an overall review of General Education. He said this will be communicated to the faculty in the Faculty Senate updates, highlighting that it should not be assumed that just because a course has received Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) approval it will automatically receive CGE approval and become part of WIU's General Education. He said that Faculty Senate, as an institution of shared governance, needs to develop and think through General Education to fit 2025 instead of the timeline in which it was developed. Chair Robinett said this will include consideration of how to honor the tradition of liberal arts as well as the need for career readiness. He stated that these two are not exclusive, and there is overlap that can occur between them, but there are many goals and philosophies in the existing CGE documentation that may not align with where the university is in 2025, 2026, or 2028. He stated that the Executive Committee will look into a new charge for CGE that will allow them to implement a process for moving forward. He does not anticipate any significant change to General Education that would affect the ERP being developed for Fall 2026; this will instead involve discussions of a philosophy of Gen Ed.

4. *Discussions of ongoing AI activities*

Chair Robinett related that last summer, Provost Mossman agreed to provide funding to establish a reading group of faculty, administrators, and a few staff in order to hold discussions about artificial intelligence (AI) and writing. He said the group will meet this Thursday, October 23 to talk about their reading text and a wide array of other resources that have been pulled together. He said the document in their shared folder includes views that are pro, con, and in the middle regarding AI, work-related, and ethical considerations so that a variety of opinions can be expressed.

Chair Robinett told ExCo that another faculty-led group made up primarily of senators, members of the

Senate Council for Instructional Technology, and the Interim Director for Sponsored Projects have been meeting to talk about some practical considerations. He said this group has considered what AI modules need to be included in IRB procedures in order to make sure the university is conducting ethical research. He said this has now been determined, so modules will be made available.

Chair Robinett related that this group has also been trying to determine what students and faculty know about AI, what they are choosing to use, how they assess what they choose to use, and what their general knowledge is. He said these discussions have shown that some people are very anti-AI, others are very pro-AI, and there are many anecdotal stories about what individuals are doing with AI. He reported that in order to make evidence-based decisions regarding policy formation and practices, there are two surveys being conducted, using the Senate's Qualtrics license, in order to provide a better picture. He noted that 41 faculty, including adjuncts, have responded out of 313 possible, so only about 12 percent. He said only 28 students have responded; if there is not a stronger student response, the survey may be shortened, the deadline extended, or departments and schools may be asked to encourage participation.

Chair Robinett related the Provost's Office is also soliciting survey responses from chairs and directors regarding their department/school activities using AI, so there are a lot of discussions taking place across the campus. One of Chair Robinett's students sent him an article indicating that while corporations have been able to use AI to automate some activities, it has actually led to additional hiring because they need individuals to fill the relationship management jobs that this is creating. He noted that humans are also needed to create networks to connect the different data and workflows. He has talked to some of his classes about this, and the students have come up with some interesting articles and considerations that Chair Robinett had not thought of before. He thinks this is a ripe opportunity to invite WIU students to be a part of the process because the topic of discussion is something that is relevant to them today.

5. *Faculty Governance Committee update*

Senator Wipplerling, who chairs this committee, reported that their conversations have been quite lively but long because there is a lot to talk about. Last week they discussed the size of the Senate and whether it should be determined by apportionment or in a representative fashion, with one senator per school. She said that while the committee has been leaning toward one senator per school within the colleges, with one at-large member for every 25 faculty on top of that number, this has not been definitely decided. She said this would roughly result in 12-13 senators as a base number plus one at-large senator for every 25 faculty.

Chair Robinett has been impressed with the discussions faculty have been engaging in regarding this because it comes down to a question of whether the structure, the number of faculty, or a combination of the two should determine the size of the Senate. He noted that larger senates can sometimes run into issues with establishing quorum. He pointed out that the current Faculty Senate was designed when there were significantly more faculty members than now, and the representative models were designed for four colleges and included representatives from libraries, Quad Cities, and some other spaces. He noted that not only is Faculty Senate but also its councils and committees are affected by moving from a four-college to a two-college model. He remarked that the Graduate Council has expressed a desire to engage in these conversations as well.

Chair Robinett pointed out another consideration is that if there are 15 senators but 18 committees that senators are called upon to serve on, then more work will be put on individuals at a time when the university is trying to look at ways to more effectively share the work that needs to be done. He thinks this discussion item will carry forward as part of deciding the structure of the Senate, determining how individuals will serve in representative roles on councils and committees, and getting Senate councils and committees to update their documentation. He pointed out that all of this must be ratified by the faculty; this is not an exercise for Faculty Senate only but represents a campus-wide faculty decision which must ultimately be signed off on by the President.

Senator Wipplerling noted that the committee felt it would be nice to continue to have a senator representing the Quad Cities campus. She said that future conversations will look at representation on councils and committees and which ones need representation from senators.

Chair Robinett recognized that there are a lot of people doing great work at the university, including those in the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and administrative spaces who are doing their jobs while building the ERP. He noted that faculty are teaching new courses, refining existing courses, and learning how to work with new versions of WesternOnline. He appreciates that there are people who are very passionate about the accessibility issues the university will be facing very soon. Chair Robinett announced that the administration has been working with Online Teaching and Learning and the Accessibility Committee to look into a software program that would greatly ease the workload involved in making materials meet federal accessibility standards in a timely fashion. He stated that instead of faculty having to convert every document they use in a class, the software would provide some ways for that to occur in a much simpler fashion.

6. *Finalize agenda for Senate meeting of October 28*

President Mindrup will meet with Faculty Senate on October 28. Also, the first new Multicultural Perspectives course request is coming forward for consideration.

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary