

‘FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 4 October 2022
Via Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Thompson, Chair; Lee Brice, Vice Chair; Julia Albarracin, Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: Craig Whetten, Parliamentarian

ALSO PRESENT: Manoochehr Zoghi, Provost; Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Office Manager

1) The School of Education will have four items on the agenda for the October 11 Faculty Senate meeting, all of which have been approved by CAGAS. One item, the GPA gateway reduction for the Elementary Education: Elementary option, Middle Level program, and Special Education program, was already approved by Faculty Senate and by the President, but the School of Education is asking that the previously approved GPA change be made retroactive to the beginning of Fall 2022. This item will appear on the agenda under Old Business.

A similar proposal from the School of Education was inadvertently omitted from the original request. It makes the same GPA change request (from 2.75 to 2.5) for the ESL and Multilingual options and will be a report from CAGAS on October 11.

The third request from Education is to waive Gen Ed for Early Childhood transfer students with AAS degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field from an Illinois community college. The final request from Education which was approved by CAGAS is to allow the Elementary Education: Early Childhood option to adopt the advanced placement credit “swap” process used by Nursing to provide credit for previous work/life experience. Both of these will appear on the October 11 under Reports from Councils and Committees.

Chair Thompson noted in regard to the AAS request that the applicable state law (Sec. 130-10. Gateway Credentials: Associate Degree) specifies that “Students entering with an AAS may not be required to take a total number of credits greater than those students first starting in a baccalaureate degree program.” He explained this means WIU cannot require these students to take more than the number of credits four-year students take in this program, but the School of Education in its proposal states that approval of the prior learning course credit through the advanced placement process will allow them to “have some credit space to advise students into particularly important general education classes.” Chair Thompson wonders if other departments/schools in Education may wish to do this as well, which creates two classes of students in Gen Ed: the ones that enroll at WIU as freshmen and the ones that transfer to WIU and take only certain Gen Ed classes, with one taking slightly more Gen Ed than the other. Senator Brice observed that the difference between this request and the one regarding waiving Gen Ed for transfer students bringing in AA or AS degrees (discussed at the September 27 Senate meeting) is that the School of Education’s proposal is just for Illinois students while the proposal brought forward by Associate Provost Mossman applies to students from across the country where other states may not have comparable standards to WIU.

Chair Thompson remarked that the Executive Committee rarely knows how faculty voted on the proposals being brought forward from departments/schools. He thinks CAGAS should be asking these questions before the proposals come to the Senate. Senator Brice moved that CAGAS be charged to ask about any faculty vote when items come to them from an academic college, school, or department; if there was not a faculty vote, CAGAS should ask if faculty supported the request in some way, such as participating in the decision making. This motion passed unanimously and will be conveyed to CAGAS for future requests. Ms. Hamm will see if she can find out whether faculty voted on or supported the requests coming forward to Faculty Senate on October 11 from the School of Education.

2) The proposal from Associate Provost Mossman and Enrollment Management to allow students transferring an AA or AS degree to WIU from an accredited community college nationwide to waive their Gen Ed requirements was tabled at the Faculty Senate meeting of September 27 pending revision. The Executive Committee decided the proposal needs to go back to CAGAS before coming back to Faculty Senate and also recommended that it go to the Council on General Education, as well, to determine the potential impact on General Education student

credit hours (SCH). Both council reports will need to be returned to the Executive Committee before the revised proposal comes back to a Faculty Senate agenda.

3) Senator Brice has proposed that the title of Distinguished Faculty Lecturers be changed to Distinguished University Professors. He explained that the title Distinguished Faculty Lecturer means nothing outside of WIU, and a lecturer in large parts of the United States and all of Europe is either a non-tenured or a teaching faculty member and does not rise to the level of associate professor or professor. He noted that while being named as a Distinguished Faculty Lecturer is a great honor, the title does not convey that honor to parents, alumni, potential students, or others outside of WIU. Senator Brice observed that the President is trying to find ways to build a reputation of academic excellence at WIU, and he thinks this change would make this distinction identifiable and visible to people outside the university.

Senator Brice envisions that if this title change is approved by Faculty Senate and the President, all previous Distinguished Faculty Lecturers would automatically be part of this group, and future professors who are named Distinguished Faculty Lecturer would be given this title as well. He stated that if Faculty Senate at some point in the future wants to create criteria to recognize one or two faculty members per year who deserve recognition as Distinguished University Professors (without being named Distinguished Faculty Lecturer), they could do so at some point, but right now he would just like for the Senate to consider a new title.

Chair Thompson asked if there is any money which accrues to Distinguished Faculty Lecturers. Senator Brice replied that they receive \$2,000. Chair Thompson asked if there would be any money associated with the designation of Distinguished University Professor; Senator Brice replied that there would not be because the honorarium applies only to the Distinguished Faculty Lecturer designation. Senator Brice added that the university had the title of Distinguished University Professor in the past, and he spoke to the President about a year and a half ago about restoring it, but at that time the university was waiting on someone to permanently fill the provost position. Provost Zoghi stated that he wholeheartedly supports the title change.

The proposal for a Distinguished University Professor designation was placed on the October 11 Senate agenda under New Business.

4) The Executive Committee posed questions to the Provost about the current status of the First Year Experience (FYE) program. Provost Zoghi remarked that among his top priorities since coming to WIU have been improving student retention, timely graduation, and closing the graduation gap via the student success lifecycle flow model. This model creates a systemic and collaborative approach to retention, and FYE is a critical component of that. Chair Thompson asked if the FYE program still functions as it was originally envisioned. Provost Zoghi replied that this is something that is currently being addressed. He has met with advisors and made it a priority in regard to the student success lifecycle flow model for each college. Chair Thompson remarked that Faculty Senate has not discussed FYE for some time. Provost Zoghi responded he has spoken to Associate Provost Mossman about the FYE program, and the Associate Provost plans to come to the next Executive Committee meeting to elaborate more on it. Provost Zoghi added that he is very much invested in FYE. Chair Thompson asked when Provost Zoghi will be presenting his student success lifecycle flow model to the larger university community. Provost Zoghi responded that it is still in draft form and will be finalized based on the continual feedback being provided by the colleges and other units before the end of fall semester.

Chair Thompson asked if “Y” courses are still being created specifically for the FYE program. Senator Brice stated that one of his courses was created specifically for FYE, but after the layoffs several years ago departments pulled back from offering “Y” courses because their limited enrollments did not seem to be in departments’ best interests. Chair Thompson recalled that “Y” courses also included experiential learning opportunities for their classes. Provost Zoghi believes in equipping students with a growth mindset and high-impact practices and said right now the effort is on creating this synergy. He said efforts are being put toward identifying what is being done currently and how improvements can be designed and potential barriers and roadblocks eliminated. He suggested that there may be other ways to identify with new students rather than a structured course, such as upper-level students mentoring new students in various ways.

Senator Albarracin remarked that part of FYE is the Building Connections program, which is ongoing. Provost Zoghi agreed that there are many initiatives, but he thinks there is a need to determine how to bring everyone together collaboratively. He explained there are typically four viewpoints to student success, including academic

success, financial stability, health and wellness, and a sense of belonging. Additionally, there may be institutional barriers resulting in registration holds. Senator Albarracin remarked that many schools have programs for retention based on ethnicity; Provost Zoghi stated that WIU could explore this, too. Senator Brice observed that oftentimes female faculty members and faculty of color are overly burdened with service commitments because of the need for diverse representation on searches and other committees. Provost Zoghi thinks the university community needs to come together to work toward improved retention because WIU's retention rate has remained relatively low for the past several years, which he finds very concerning.

Senator Albarracin remarked that small class sizes can be an advantage for the university when attracting students. Provost Zoghi agrees that they can be helpful with recruiting, and potential students are often more comfortable visiting a small class than one with 200 students. He would like to see a small increase in student-faculty ratio rather than a large one; for instance, Provost Zoghi thinks average class sizes of 16:1 or 17:1 rather than 13:1 would make a positive impact for WIU.

5) John Smith, Interim Vice President for Student Success, will be invited to a future Faculty Senate meeting to discuss what kinds of support for reproductive freedom are offered by Beu Health Center. Athletics Director Paul Bubb will discuss the student-athlete transfer portal and the Athletics budget at the October 11 Senate meeting. Human Resources Representative Alyssa Eddington will discuss the Covid-19 Paid Leave Policy on October 11. Both will speak during Announcements.

6) The Executive Committee finalized the remainder of the Senate agenda for October 11, and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary