

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 18 November, 2025

4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremy Robinett, Chair; Lisa Wipperling, Vice Chair; Alice Melkumian, Secretary

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

GUESTS: Sarah Lawson, Registrar; Audrey Adamson, Executive Director for Outreach and Quad Cities Campus Operations

1. *Interdisciplinarity/Co-Curricular Committee discussion – Audrey Adamson*

Chair Robinett announced that Amy Patrick Mossman, Director of Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning, will speak about some assessment-related issues at the first spring Faculty Senate meeting (January 27), and Senator Hamner has requested that there also be some preliminary discussion at that meeting about the Rebuild Interdisciplinarity and Co-Curricular Committee. Audrey Adamson co-chairs that committee with Senator Hamner, who is leading a panel discussion on environmental sustainability at the C30 meeting in Brazil. Ms. Adamson stated that besides herself, there are six faculty members on the committee as well as Jackie Price, Director of the Student Development and Success Center. She related that the charge to the committee is to explore how to increase co-curricular and interdisciplinary involvement at WIU through a variety of means. She noted the committee has met several times to look at things that occurred previously at the university as well as things that could happen in future and what is happening at peer institutions. Ms. Adamson said they have developed an initial draft, and the goal now is to talk to constituency groups and other stakeholders throughout the rest of this semester and the spring to bring more things into focus regarding creating that structure and framework. She related that Provost Mossman met with the committee on Friday, November 14 and provided feedback, but they have not yet made changes to the preliminary report based on that feedback.

Ms. Adamson noted the committee's focus has been on what kind of structure they can put in place, with the goal of providing every student who graduates from WIU with a certain kind of interdisciplinary and co-curricular experience. She said they have also discussed what students will gain from this experience that will make them a stronger graduate of WIU. She remarked that some of the next steps for the committee include chatting with Faculty Senate, the Chairs' Council, SGA, and perhaps some other student organizations; benchmarking some peer regional universities; and potentially seeking more campus input in the spring. She said they have been researching what WIU already has in place that is interdisciplinary by nature and what co-curriculars are already happening on the campuses; they are looking at what the committee would recommend the university continue doing as well as things that may need to be changed or updated. Ms. Adamson observed that the committee has focused a lot on academic outcomes but plan to add more co-curricular learning outcomes recommended by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). She noted that some of these things are already being done in the HLC co-curricular space, but HLC feedback has indicated they need to be a little more robust. She said one example is that co-taught courses are rare due to ACE assignments, so faculty on the Interdisciplinarity/Co-Curricular Committee are discussing what this might look like for requirements and degree plans. Ms. Adamson related the committee also discussed learning-based outcomes for project-based activities with the possibility of expanding into interdisciplinary partnerships. She said they have also discussed how to make some out-of-the-classroom experiences more interdisciplinary.

Ms. Adamson related the committee's recommendations involve developing requirements for interdisciplinary coursework that students would have to complete during their time at WIU. She said initial discussions saw faculty on the committee really leaning towards an upper-level course, but in their meeting with Provost Mossman on Friday they seemed to lean more toward the possibility of having more control over student schedules during their first year, which might open the possibility of some seminar types of functions. She stated there were discussions about how to build career readiness or some of those types of

things into the curriculum; further discussions involved adding certificates and micro-credentials, which could be interdisciplinary by nature, into existing programs. She said they also had some ideas about research collaborations in terms of clusters and areas of interest. She noted that the committee is trying to align co-curricular goals with HLC expectations for student outcomes and student learning.

Ms. Adamson oversees the Career Center and told ExCo that the committee recommends embedding career readiness into the outcomes and learning, as well as highlighting WIU's Carnegie designation as an opportunity university. She added there are also some ideas for student leadership outside the classroom, and the committee is trying to envision what the implementation plan might look like regarding how to create a culture to embed some of these experiences. She hopes there are some things that could be launched next fall.

Provost Mossman noted that Senator Hamner was unable to attend the meeting last Friday. Provost Mossman understands that the co-curricular assessment piece is moving at a pretty fast rate with the involvement of Michelle Janisz, the Director of the Transition and Academic Skills Center, Amy Patrick Mossman, and others. Provost Mossman thinks it is very important for the committee to bring these people in to talk because he suspects they are not necessarily on the same page as the committee. He added that Dr. Janisz has done a massive amount of work within the past three weeks on developing an entire plan, and all that needs to be shared so that different groups are not trying to solve the same problem separately but are working together.

Provost Mossman recalled that the original co-curricular assessment was set up by himself, Interim Assistant Provost Lori Baker-Sperry, and Vice President for Student Services Justin Schuch, and the push at the time was to get this done before the HLC visit once they realized this piece was not in place. He thinks what they established was fine for a beginning, but what is needed now is something more robust. He thinks the Interdisciplinarity and Co-Curricular Committee should focus on how the co-curricular piece interacts with Academic Affairs and with student leadership, such as really thinking about what career readiness means for all the university's classes, not just those considered to be pre-professional.

Provost Mossman related the bulk of his discussion with the committee on Friday involved trying to figure out where the curricular changes should potentially be; there is strong advocacy for the curriculum changes occurring at the junior level, but Provost Mossman argued there would not be any room for them there and they may end up being not as effective as they could be, similar to the writing instruction in the disciplines requirement. He thinks the first year is when the most impact is possible in programs and on students. He is glad that Faculty Senate will be having both Amy Mossman and Senator Hamner speak and hopes that by that point there will be some collaboration going on with different groups.

Ms. Adamson stated that after the committee's meeting with Provost Mossman on Friday and knowing that different areas are working on developing learning outcomes the question becomes how to embed this into the plan because these things occur not just outside the classroom but inside of it as well. She thinks it is important to consider how to help students recognize what they are completing in these areas so that these things in and out of the classroom can make them strong graduates who are ready for their next steps. She said the plan for the committee is to increase some of this language in the document and determine more of the details; there was interest in an umbrella course and maybe some more intensive things, but she agrees there was recognition that maybe this should occur earlier, perhaps in a first-year seminar type of format. She noted that these types of courses are often seen in smaller liberal arts colleges, but the committee plans to explore how that could exist in a university such as WIU with its current student and faculty populations.

Provost Mossman stressed there needs to be an understanding that there are certain programs that are completely packed with no room to add a freshman seminar. He said this situation exists in much of the fine arts, education, and any program with "pre" in front of it, such as Nursing. He added that no one will agree to add hours onto these degrees. He likes the idea of a freshman seminar and has taught those, but it would have to be worked out.

Chair Robinett remarked that as the university begins the review of General Education, he thinks this is one of the areas that should be given thought to. He is observing across conversation groups and things that he works on that it is difficult to envision anything more interdisciplinary – whether positive or negative – than artificial intelligence; some programs indicate AI is a nightmare for what they are doing while others think it is transformative. He thinks that despite what individuals think of AI, this is an interdisciplinary conversation

that needs to take place across the university. He hopes that the Rebuild Interdisciplinarity and Co-Curricular Committee thinks about this and that the Executive Committee does as well as it considers a potential charge for the Council on General Education. Ms. Adamson said AI has been brought up since it might be a component of some interdisciplinary offerings. She thinks there should be discussion about whether AI should be embedded in student leadership, career readiness, and lots of different things. She wonders how to have that broader discussion with WIU students and the campus community about these types of topics that can filter in and out of the classroom in all of their different experiences. She anticipates the next draft version of the committee's report will be more specific about these topics.

Chair Robinett expressed appreciation for the work the committee is doing. He knows the committee is still working on the report, but if it is completed by January 27 it will be included in the information provided to senators for that meeting.

2. *Staffing updates (AVPs, Deans)*

Provost Mossman related the search for the Provost's Office positions is in its final stages. He hopes it will be resolved by the end of the week and will inform faculty via email as well as sending out an internal employee announcement. He met with both dean search committees yesterday; they have been charged and determined their co-chairs – one chair from faculty and the other staff/administration. He hopes the dean search moves pretty quickly as well so that all five positions can be presented to the Board of Trustees at their meeting on December 10. He recognizes, however, that this takes time, and with Thanksgiving break the dean searches may not be completed until after December 10, although hopefully before the end of the semester.

Chair Robinett reiterated that having these positions filled is important so that uncertainties that linger can start to be resolved. He thinks this is fundamentally important not only for the decision-making process but also for transparency and communication. He also thinks that once everyone knows who their leaders will be it will help address the unease around campus. Provost Mossman thinks it was important to have a big search committee, which the university requires for dean searches, because everyone from student government to staff to administration and faculty are involved in the process. He thinks it is important to have representation, even if it does not meet the timeline. He also thinks the committees understand the urgency.

Registrar Lawson asked what the appointment dates are for these positions. Provost Mossman replied the deans will not be appointed until July 1, 2026; the searches are being done now in order to identify who they will be, and they will certainly help with the transition process. He said the Provost positions will be appointed as soon as possible.

3. *Rebuild updates (submitted/accepted reports)*

Chair Robinett has not yet been able to work with the Provost's Office to create the FAQ and jot form for the Rebuild Communication Plan. He will meet with Amy Hodges on Monday, November 24 to set that up. He said this will involve a way for visitors to the Provost's website to submit questions and provide feedback. He hopes this will be in place early next week so that when everyone comes back from Thanksgiving break they will be ready to use. He stated that as reports will be moved to the Provost's webpage as they are finalized.

Provost Mossman related he has received the report from the Rebuild Chairs and Directors Committee, but he has not had a chance to respond to it yet. Chair Robinett said the Rebuild Academic Use of Space Committee is working on their preliminary report, and the Rebuild Efficiency Committee continues to do great work determining ways to streamline things. Provost Mossman met with the Rebuild Academic Advising Committee last week; he has looked at a draft of their report and thinks they will submit their final report next week or by the end of the semester. He thinks they have done a pretty good job giving multiple perspectives and addressing most of the issues.

Chair Robinett reported the Faculty Senate's Budget Transparency Committee is meeting regularly and has reached out in pursuit of fulfilling its charge; Sponsored Projects and the Vice President for Finance and Administration have been contacted. He reported that the Senate's Council for Intercollegiate Athletics has reviewed its operating papers with the goal of bringing forward its recommendations by its deadline in January.

Chair Robinett related that he and Provost Mossman engaged in a beneficial conversation with the Graduate Council about their concerns and ways to move forward in the Rebuild. He said they like the idea of using digital petitions to obtain signatures for candidates and reducing the number of signatures required.

Chair Robinett said the Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance has met, elected its chair, and has a plan in place for moving forward. He said CAGAS has set aside part of every meeting to navigate some of the charges given to them. He will speak to them the week after Thanksgiving to address their lingering questions. Chair Robinett noted that the Senate Council for International Education brought forward its first approved Multicultural Perspectives request at the last Senate meeting. He added that the Senate Council for Instructional Technology has been discussing a potential policy related to AI, and the WID Council has been working on their charge as well. He thinks all the councils have been doing an incredible amount of work in order to participate in shared governance.

4. *Faculty Governance Committee updates*

Senator Wippering, who chairs this committee, reported that she spoke with Chair Robinett after the last Faculty Governance Committee meeting to tell him that they were getting bogged down in language for the revised Senate Constitution and Bylaws, upon which Chair Robinett volunteered to work on the wording if the committee would be responsible for making the decisions.

Senator Wippering reported that at the last Faculty Governance Committee meeting, which was very productive, it was decided that since there are not graduate programs in all of the schools, the Graduate Council will not work with the same school model as the rest of the bodies; therefore, it was decided to add an ex-officio non-voting seat on Faculty Senate for a representative from the Graduate Council. She said a sentence was also added to the membership section of the Constitution to indicate that “faculty not affiliated with a college will be eligible to be elected as an at-large senator,” which the committee hopes will enable every full-time faculty member at the university to have the possibility of a seat at the table; for instance, future faculty in University Libraries or the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs would be eligible to be elected as Senators At-Large.

Senator Wippering said committee decided that faculty appointed as chairs under the new model would be eligible to vote on Faculty Senate issues and serve on the Faculty Senate, but deans and directors will not. She said the committee decided that nominating petitions would require ten signatures or 20 percent of the nominee’s school, and a digitized or jot form will be used to streamline the process. She added that an automatic appointment will be made if only one petition is submitted.

Senator Wippering said the committee recommends that Senate meetings be held every two weeks on average and a minimum of once a month during the fall and spring semesters. She said the current three-fifths required for quorum will be replaced by 50 percent plus one of the voting members. She said the committee has a question for Chair Robinett about referendum procedures and will talk more about that at their next meeting. She said although the committee spoke briefly about council and committee structures, she understands that this will actually be dealt with by the individual councils and committees themselves. She said the entire committee is trying to think about who to give a seat at the table to, making everyone feel included, and making the language more user friendly.

Chair Robinett told ExCo he has asked for the committee’s initial recommendations before winter break if possible so that he can spend time over the break period putting them into Sturgis-appropriate language so that the committee can go back through it in early spring to make sure everything is accurate and reflects what they want. He said the idea is that in the spring the Graduate Council would take their operating papers to the graduate faculty for approval and Faculty Senate will take its Constitution to the faculty at large for approval. He said deans should be in place by this time so that everyone can begin to envision what 2026-2027 might look like.

5. *Facilities Management update*

Chair Robinett noted that it was originally planned that Facilities Management would speak to Faculty Senate last week at the meeting that was subsequently cancelled, but that area is going through a number of changes

right now. He told ExCo that John Smith has retired for the second time so has stepped down as Interim Director of Facilities Management, and Ted Renner, Deputy Director, is leaving the university, and this is his last week. He said Justin Griffith has stepped in to lead Facilities Management in the interim. Chair Robinett said that with the large number of changes occurring in their area, it did not make sense to have someone from Facilities Management come to the Faculty Senate meeting in order to present on things that are rapidly developing and changing; it was not that they did not want to come to Faculty Senate, but it was not an efficient use of everyone's time to get into the questions that Chair Robinett thinks it is really important for Faculty Senate to ask. He said they will be rescheduled to come in the spring when someone will have some time to get oriented to what is going on.

6. *UCOSOGIE request to use Faculty Senate's Qualtrics for a survey*

Chair Robinett noted that the University Committee on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (UCOSOGIE) has provided the Executive Committee with the survey they wish to send out using the Senate's Qualtrics license. Chair Robinett said he would appreciate knowing when the committee wants to send out the survey and what their solicitation email will say. He wonders if it will go to faculty overall or only to Unit A and B faculty. He would like to see some of the questions on the survey broken apart a bit. He also wonders if the questions will be the same for faculty, staff, and students. Senator Wipperling asked if the survey will only be going to faculty or to a larger audience. Ms. Hamm will reach out to the UCOSOGIE Chair to relay the Executive Committee's questions.

7. *Disconnectedness among faculty*

Chair Robinett related that a faculty member reached out to him about a sense of disconnectedness that the faculty member perceived among the faculty. Chair Robinett said he told this individual about the digital spaces that were created last year so that faculty could engage in discussions together on topics on WesternOnline, but he admitted that to date it has primarily been utilized by senators. Chair Robinett will meet with the faculty member, who has some ideas about other platforms that might be beneficial toward this effort. He said this individual has noted that many faculty spend time in their offices but do not get to engage with other faculty regularly, so they will talk about how to get people to come to some of the things happening on campus. Senator Wipperling noted that while there is a lot going on, it seems like faculty tend to go to the things going on in their own areas. She noted that having a social time would not involve a digital space. She has met more faculty by going to faculty orientation events and by being on Faculty Senate than in any other way during her seven years at WIU. Provost Mossman observed that since the university has grown smaller, the department-only events are not as large as they were previously. He thinks the university needs to look into faculty mentoring after the Academic Affairs restructuring is completed as part of the process of building up the faculty culture.

8. *Finalize agenda for Senate meeting of December 2*

Stacie Hunt, Director of Administrative Information Management Services (AIMS), will speak to Faculty Senate on December 2 to provide an overview of Colleague. Chair Robinett noted that the HR and payroll aspects have been pushed back because they need more time to get it right. He said Ms. Hunt will provide an overview of the workload so that senators will have a better understanding. He added that the group is doing incredible work to bring everything online while still completing their normal tasks. Senator Wipperling asked if this means that faculty checks changing to twice a month distribution will not happen for another year; Chair Robinett confirmed that is correct. Provost Mossman thanked Registrar Lawson for all the work the Registrar's Office has been doing with the ERP; he said she has been working with tens of thousands of pages of data.

Chair Robinett will provide an end-of-year social opportunity with cake and cookies just prior to the last Faculty Senate meeting of the semester on December 2. He does not anticipate that the Board book will be available prior to this meeting. Amy Carr will also speak on December 2 about what has been occurring recently with the Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council.

9. *Spring semester Executive Committee meeting dates:*

January 20; February 3 and 17; March 3 and 24; April 7 and 21

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary