

‘FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 29 November 2022

Via Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

ACTION MINUTES

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

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

GUEST: Everett Hamner

1) Everett Hamner, Chair of the Quad Cities Faculty Council, told the Executive Committee the question of greater WIUQC representation on Faculty Senate arose with presidential impetus; the two were discussing the general structural relationship between the Quad Cities and Macomb campuses historically, and President Huang asked Dr. Hamner why he does not sit on the Faculty Senate. Dr. Hamner has never heard of any discussion of the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair serving on Faculty Senate, and President Huang suggested that he explore integrating the two bodies more thoroughly. Dr. Hamner told ExCo that Faculty Senate is perceived as a body with power throughout the university whereas the Quad Cities Faculty Council has an advisory role; its purpose is to provide a bridge between the administration and Quad Cities faculty and to serve as a strategic spot for campuswide initiatives. He said President Huang thinks that making the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair a member of Faculty Senate would help to integrate the two entities and make the Faculty Council feel more visible and relevant to the larger Faculty Senate discussions.

Dr. Hamner admitted that there have been many times over the past 15 years where Quad Cities faculty had the opportunity to submit petitions to represent Quad Cities faculty at-large on the Faculty Senate, but there has not been any kind of intense election competition and has rather been a tendency toward shaking the tree to get someone to volunteer. Dr. Hamner thinks that Quad Cities faculty have historically felt adrift and disconnected from the university as a whole in ways that have been unproductive to them. He noted that tensions have occurred over the years regarding the sense that one campus’s gain must be the other campus’s loss. Dr. Hamner’s main interest is how to create an atmosphere where faculty on both campuses feel like they have enough resources and to encourage the belief that there are two doors to WIU. He estimates that, presently, 90 percent of perspective students who chose WIUQC had no interest in attending classes in Macomb, and thinks the converse is true as well; most prospective students are very much interested in either a more traditional campus experience or a commuter campus experience. Once enrolled at either campus, however, Dr. Hamner sees real potential for more extensive utilization of the other campus, especially in an era when high-quality live streaming has become easier. He thinks people need to move beyond “zero sum thinking” and was intrigued by President Huang’s discussion about integrating.

Dr. Hamner pointed out there is a difference between adding a second at-large faculty member from the Quad Cities campus to Faculty Senate and adding the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair. He observed that there is authority vested in the chair; adding this individual specifically would allow the President, Provost, or Vice President Mindrup to talk to the Faculty Council Chair as a person with a measure of representative authority and responsibility in Faculty Senate in ways that are distinct from an at-large senator representing WIUQC. Dr. Hamner would like to explore whether the Executive Committee also thinks this would be valuable and, if so, how this could be accomplished in the least divisive, most productive way.

Chair Thompson asked when the Quad Cities Faculty Council elects its chair. Dr. Hamner responded the chair is elected at the last meeting of the academic year. He added that this year is unique because the Council has co-chairs due to sabbaticals – Dr. Hamner is serving as chair this fall and Dana Lindemann in the spring. Chair Thompson suggested that the person elected to the position of Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair could run for the Quad Cities faculty at-large seat when it becomes vacant, but that election occurs in the spring for the following fall. Dr. Hamner remarked that the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair is a one-year term, although that could be changed. He added that if the QC Faculty Council Chair was to become a senator at-large, there would still be a 1:24 ratio of Quad Cities reps. He wonders if Faculty Senate would benefit from having the Quad Cities faculty ratio slightly higher, such as 2:24, and, if so, what the best means are toward accomplishing that goal.

Chair Thompson pointed out that greater Quad Cities faculty representation could be achieved through the usual processes. All faculty members, including those in the Quad Cities, have two ways to serve on Faculty Senate: as a representative of their college or as a representative of their campus at-large. He noted that faculty librarians typically get elected to Faculty Senate by voting as a block and depriving other candidates of their vote, and Quad Cities faculty could do the same. Dr. Hamner recognizes that there are strategies that Quad Cities faculty could use to be elected to more seats on Faculty Senate, but he thinks Quad Cities faculty feel like they are on a colony on the moon and their existence is one of indifference to the university as a whole. He thinks changing this attitude will require more people to follow the President's and Provost's leads in reinvigorating faculty university wide to see their connection to both campuses.

Senator Brice asked who the current Quad Cities representatives are on Faculty Senate. Ms. Hamm replied that Suzanne Bailey is the Quad Cities at-large senator, and Bill Polley is a College of Business and Technology senator with his primary appointment in the Quad Cities. Senator Brice asked if Quad Cities faculty feel they are on a colony on the moon because they are excluded from service or because they choose not to serve. Dr. Hamner replied that the number of Quad Cities faculty is small, but many committees want to have a Quad Cities representative serving on them. He thinks the amount of university-level work may be disproportionate compared to what might be expected of faculty primarily based in Macomb, which probably plays a role in the historic hesitancy of Quad Cities faculty to run for Senate seats. Dr. Hamner knows some Quad Cities colleagues would love to see a move toward the Quad Cities Faculty Council being formally and structurally integrated with the Faculty Senate while other Quad Cities faculty would probably be indifferent. He noted that WIUQC has a history which leads some faculty to do their own thing, not to feel integrated, and to prefer to ignore the larger concerns of WIU faculty, and he wonders if this is a weakness that can be addressed while also strengthening all the university faculty and Faculty Senate in the process. He thinks this might be a way to show Quad Cities faculty that the Faculty Council Chair is an important role that a little more authority is being invested in, but admitted that if the Faculty Council Chair is given an automatic seat on Faculty Senate it might reduce the willingness of Quad Cities faculty to serve in the position.

Ms. Hamm asked if the Quad Cities senator submits a report regarding Faculty Senate actions at every meeting of the Quad Cities Faculty Council, as used to be the norm. Dr. Hamner replied that this did not occur last year but he has asked that this be reinstated, and Senator Bailey has started submitting regular reports, although she does not attend Quad Cities Faculty Council meetings in person.

Provost Zoghi emphasized that he totally agrees that more representation from the Quad Cities campus can enhance the uniqueness and holistic approach of both campuses. He added that both he and President Huang are dedicated to creating a better relationship and more integration between the two campuses. Senator Brice said he is open to whatever solution can fix the relationship between the two campuses. He noted that in past years the Distinguished Faculty Lecture was presented on both campuses, but he was told it would not be presented at WIUQC this year, and past lectures on that campus had attendance of less than five people. He thinks this is a result of previous administrations rather than anything to do with Faculty Senate; he believes this is emblematic of a bigger problem and is glad that the administration is working to fix it.

Senator Albarracin indicated that she would be fine with adding one more Quad Cities at-large representative to bring the total to two. Chair Thompson said he is not opposed to figuring out a way to add WIUQC representation to Faculty Senate, but he thinks it is better to get faculty to run for and win their seats because it means they are organized and motivated, which makes the Senate stronger. He noted that if a change were made to have the Chair of the Quad Cities Faculty Council rotate onto Faculty Senate every year, that would require a Constitutional amendment, even if it were to replace the current Quad Cities faculty at-large seat. Dr. Hamner remarked that the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair has to run for that seat. He stated that if there were only one representative from the Quad Cities and that person rotated in every year, it would seem to weaken their contribution to Faculty Senate because that person would not get up to speed on the issues as much as someone serving a normal three-year term. He noted that the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair position could be changed to a three-year term. Senator Albarracin observed that it would be a lot more work for the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair to also serve on Faculty Senate, making that person serve multiple positions instead of just one. Dr. Hamner replied that the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair does not have any serious decision-making authority on anything; the Quad Cities Faculty Council exists as a place for conversation, but it has no deliberations, no budget, and no authority in the university structure.

Senator Brice observed that the Executive Committee is open to trying to find some kind of solution, but he thinks Dr. Hamner needs to talk this through with the Quad Cities Faculty Council, present a summary of today's discussion, and find out their feelings. He recommends that Dr. Hamner bring a formal proposal back to ExCo so that a formal debate can begin on the Senate floor. Chair Thompson said he is very amenable to the idea of greater Quad Cities representation but would prefer to see that the individual be elected. Dr. Hamner pointed out that even if an additional Quad Cities senator at-large were added to the Faculty Senate, that would still only be a 2:24 ratio, which is not commensurate. Senator Brice reiterated that, while today's conversation has been useful, Dr. Hamner needs to go back to the QC Faculty Council and come back with a formal proposal with concise, concrete suggestions. Dr. Hamner asked if it is fair to say that the Executive Committee is open to exploring the possibility of adding an additional faculty senator from the Quad Cities. Chair Thompson replied that none of the Executive Committee members are opposed to moving a proposal forward to the Faculty Senate. Dr. Hamner thinks that making the Faculty Council Chair a faculty senator would be best accomplished for a term of three years rather than one year, and he needs to see how many Quad Cities faculty might be open to taking on such a job. He asked if ExCo thinks senators would support a proposal to add the Quad Cities Faculty Senate Chair to Faculty Senate. Chair Thompson thinks senators would be more open to a proposal if they think it is what Quad Cities faculty want, but there might be some concern to adding a guaranteed seat.

2) CAGAS has submitted two reports, one in response to the previously tabled proposal regarding AA/AS degree holders being allowed to waive General Education requirements when transferring to WIU and the other allowing Early Childhood Education students transferring in AAS degrees to waive the Foreign Language/Global Issues (FLGI) graduation requirement. The Executive Committee placed the FLGI report on the December 6 agenda under Reports from Councils and Committees. They will hold the report related to the AA/AS waiver of Gen Ed until a related report from the Council of General Education (CGE) comes forward so that they can both go to Faculty Senate together. Senator Brice recommended that Associate Provost Mossman and CAGAS Chair Julie Cox be invited to ExCo when the report from CGE is also received.

4) An election will be held at the beginning of the December 6 Senate meeting during Announcements to elect a Faculty Senate Vice Chair to replace Senator Brice. An election notice will be sent out this week to eligible faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences to fill Senator Brice's vacant Senate seat.

5) ExCo considered whether to continue to hold Faculty Senate meetings via zoom during spring semester or whether to go back to in-person meetings or a hybrid of the two. Senator Albarracin expressed a preference for zoom meetings, while Senator Brice expressed a preference for in-person because he thinks it leads to stronger discussions. Chair Thompson recommended that meetings be continued via zoom for January and February because of continued concerns about Covid and other contagions and that in-person meetings be reconsidered after that date if the Covid numbers are not bad.

6) University Technology CIO Greg Kain will speak about Dropbox and other technology issues during Announcements at the Faculty Senate meeting of December 6, and Associate Provost Mossman will provide an update about the First Year Experience program.

7) Provost Zoghi announced that a day-long summit for student success and retention plans will be held on December 9. College deans and others will make presentations, and there will be some deliberations and feedback, after which they will go back to finalize their plans for submission to the President. Chair Thompson asked when retention data from fall to spring will be released. Provost Zoghi said that this will be presented at the first Faculty Senate meeting following the tenth-day count.

8) The Executive Committee finalized the remainder of the Senate agenda for December 6, and the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary