

‘FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

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

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Thompson, Chair; Yong Tang, Vice Chair; Julia Albarracin, Secretary

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

GUEST: Dana Lindeman, WIU-Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair

1) Following up on efforts to create a bullying/mobbing policy for the university, Chair Thompson told ExCo that President Huang suggested that the Policy Review Committee be delegated to create the proposal. Senator Albarracin suggested it might be more likely that the Board of Trustees would adopt the policy if the Policy Review Committee created it. Ms. Hamm pointed out that although President Huang approved adding a faculty member to the Policy Review Committee, there is no faculty member currently seated on it and no movement yet to determine an appointee.

Chair Thompson said he would prefer to see Faculty Senate create an ad hoc committee to work on the policy. At the last Executive Committee meeting, members recommended a membership for the proposed committee. ExCo decided that they would work on a charge to the committee, establish deadlines for the preliminary and final reports, and take the proposal to Faculty Senate on April 11 under New Business.

Chair Thompson will ask President Huang at their next meeting if the Senate Nominating Committee can find a faculty representative for the Policy Review Committee.

2) CAGAS recommended to the Executive Committee at its February 28 meeting that Faculty Senate create a task force to discuss issues related to artificial intelligence. CAGAS also suggested two of its members who are willing to serve on this task force. The Executive Committee will determine a charge, membership, and deadline dates for this task force and propose that Faculty Senate create it at its April 11 meeting under New Business.

3) Associate Provost Mark Mossman submitted to the Executive Committee a proposal to change the timelines for early warning grades. Provost Zoghi stated that currently grades are sent out in the eighth week but will be sent out in the fifth week if the proposal is adopted. He stated that receiving early warning grades in the eighth week is problematic because it is hard for students to address their problems this late in the semester, and it would be better to reach out to students before they fall through the cracks.

Chair Thompson said he suggested to Associate Provost Mossman that two early warning grades would be even better than one. Senator Albarracin remarked that some faculty may not have given any exams by the fifth week of classes. Provost Zoghi stated that waiting until the eighth week of the semester to gauge the progress of one's students is too late. He used to give quizzes, homework assignments, essays, or indirect assessments to determine how things were going for his students and make suggestions for improvement if anything was not going well. Senator Albarracin related that her first exam for her zoom class was given in week 3. She suggested that perhaps faculty could give an assessment based on participation as well as grades. Chair Thompson observed that receiving bad early warning grades in the eighth week currently means that a student must drop the class.

Senator Albarracin related that even with her best efforts she is unable to keep up with all of the various reports required by Athletics and the First-Year Experience, Hope, Bridge, and REACH programs. She asked if the early warning report could be centralized with these reports to save time because currently they all use a different platform, are convoluted, and faculty are asked to do a lot of reporting. Chair Thompson remarked that this is where an enterprise resource planning (ERP) program would come in handy. He said what Senator Albarracin is asking for would require programming to be written, and WIU has few programmers who can write in COBOL.

Provost Zoghi asked if a mandatory attendance policy could be included in the course syllabus policy. Chair Thompson pointed out that the university does not have a mandatory attendance policy, although faculty are required to specify their personal policies in their syllabi. He noted that a mandatory attendance policy raises

questions of enforcement and how the administration would track that faculty are following it. Senator Albarracin thinks it is better to get faculty on board about requiring attendance by talking to them in a persuasive manner about its importance for retention. Dr. Lindemann remarked that she does not require attendance but informs students in her syllabus that research has shown that good attendance and taking quality notes are the two best indicators for getting A or B grades. She thinks a university-wide mandatory attendance policy would be hard to enforce with so many different kinds of classes. Provost Zoghi suggested that maybe her statement about research and attendance could be added to faculty syllabi; Dr. Lindemann said she could support that.

The Executive Committee will send the proposal to change the early warning grades timetable to CAGAS and ask them to report back.

4) Dr. Lindemann related that the WIU-Quad Cities Faculty Council has been considering lots of different options related to obtaining additional representation on the Faculty Senate. They discussed asking that the Chair of the Council become a senator with a dedicated seat, but it was felt this could be prohibitive and too large of a commitment. Another option being considered is to request a second senator at-large to represent the Quad Cities campus, but Dr. Lindemann expressed concerns about consistently filling it.

Dr. Lindemann said the Faculty Council thinks they would like to have a more significant voice in the leadership of Faculty Senate, specifically a dedicated seat on the Senate Executive Committee. She noted that several years ago the Executive Committee prepared a report on the Quad Cities campus that faculty on that campus thought was very biased, and it would have been beneficial to have a voice on ExCo to provide another viewpoint because ExCo is very influential. Dr. Lindemann said Quad Cities faculty feel the sense that the needs of the Macomb campus are prioritized over the Quad Cities campus.

Chair Thompson pointed out that every senator, including the Quad Cities representative, can run for an Executive Committee position every year. He would hesitate to recommend expanding the voting membership because he suspects it could open the door to other constituent groups wanting to advocate for voting positions on ExCo. Senator Albarracin agreed, stating that the different colleges might want a guaranteed Executive Committee seat for one of their representatives. She could support an additional Quad Cities at-large Senate seat but would not support a guaranteed seat on the Executive Committee because it would completely reshape ExCo and could open it up to more representatives from the university. She added that a dedicated Quad Cities seat would make four voting members on ExCo, opening up the possibility of tie votes.

Dr. Lindemann pointed out that currently there is unequal representation; there are more Senate seats per capita for Macomb faculty than for those in the Quad Cities. She said Quad Cities faculty think it is difficult to be elected for college seats when running against Macomb faculty, although two Quad Cities faculty members were elected to seats this fall because no one ran against them. Chair Thompson said library faculty consistently win elections to Faculty Senate because they conserve their votes and do not vote for anyone other than the library candidate. He thinks the Quad Cities campus could elect more faculty to Faculty Senate if they would practice good politics because vote denial works.

Ms. Hamm pointed out that nearly all of the options for adding Quad Cities representation to Faculty Senate or the Executive Committee would require changes to the Senate Constitution, including adding a second Quad Cities at-large seat or a voting or ex-officio Quad Cities member to the Executive Committee. These would require that a proposal be passed by two-thirds of the entire Senate membership (not just those present that day), then a majority of the eligible faculty on both campuses. Ms. Hamm noted that two ideas to increase the voices of Quad Cities faculty that would not require such a vote are 1) for the QC Faculty Council Chair to attend all Senate meetings and present a report, similar to the reports presented by the Provost and SGA, and 2) for the Quad Cities Faculty Council Chair to attend all Executive Committee meetings as a guest since these are open meetings.

Dr. Lindemann said the Quad Cities Faculty Council meets on Friday, April 7, and she will share the feedback. She thinks they will want someone at ExCo meetings, even if that person is not a voting member. Chair Thompson suggested the Faculty Council could invite the Faculty Senate Chair to their meetings to give reports.

5) The Executive Committee approved sending out University Personnel Committee election notices this week for fall vacancies for the College of Education and Human Services, the College of Fine Arts and

Communication, and the group of resource professionals (libraries, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, and the Counseling Center).

6) The Executive Committee finalized the remainder of the Senate agenda for April 11, and the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary