

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 7 April 2026
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: Patty Eathington, Chair, Nursing; Sarah Lawson, Registrar

1. CAGAS

a. *Nursing admissions change request*

Chair Robinett observed that the reason behind the request for change seems to be that WIU students are being held to a higher standard than the School of Nursing is able to hold transfer students coming from community colleges. He remarked that the proposal appears to be requesting that WIU students and community college transfers be held to the same standards of rigor in regard to science courses. Dr. Eathington replied that is absolutely correct. She explained that when students get a C when taking an Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) class in their community college, that transfers in as “Satisfactory” to WIU; however, currently, a C in A&P does not qualify a WIU student for Nursing because in WIU’s current Nursing policy a C+ is necessary. She does not think this is fair for WIU students, and it results in them leaving WIU to pursue the Nursing program at Spoon River College. She would like for students to enter WIU’s program where she knows there is more rigor, so Nursing would like this requirement to be changed to a C. She said students would still have to have a 3.0 GPA to be fully qualified for the program, and C- grades would not be acceptable.

Dr. Eathington related that a student applied to WIU’s Nursing program after having taken two Physics courses, Organic Chemistry, and another science; the student had wanted to enter the Pre-Med program but decided to switch to Nursing. Dr. Eathington noted that this student had a 2.98 GPA rather than a 3.0, due to having taken these hard courses, but she had As and Bs in her other coursework, so Nursing would like for her to be able to switch paths. She said Nursing would like to make entry to their program fair for everyone.

Chair Robinett remarked the admissions change request does not seem to represent a lowering of expectations but is intended to provide ways that students can demonstrate success. Dr. Eathington replied that this is well stated. Provost Mossman pointed out that the Nursing curriculum is controlled by their external accrediting body, and if the change is fine with that body that is meaningful information to include in this discussion.

Senator Wipperling asked if, in the example of the student with a 2.98 GPA, that GPA would be rounded up to a 3.0. Dr. Eathington replied that it would not be rounded – 2.98 would remain her GPA – but Dr. Eathington would like for more of a holistic review to occur so that the Nursing Admissions Committee would see that the student took Organic Chemistry and Advanced Physics and take that into consideration. She stated that right now any student who has completed all of their prerequisite courses at WIU would not be turned away if they are qualified. Senator Wipperling asked if Nursing is asking for a way to be able to make their best judgment based on what they see versus just strictly following the guidelines; Dr. Eathington confirmed that is correct. Dr. Eathington added that the idea of holistic review is terminology from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).

Chair Robinett asked if there were any objections to this request being sent to CAGAS for review and to ask them to bring back a recommendation to Faculty Senate; there were no objections.

b. *Total withdrawal language*

Chair Robinett related that CAGAS reached out because they want to revise their appeal instructions. He said the instructions are somewhat confusing in regard to total late withdrawals and who students should reach out to in order to process them; CAGAS would like to clarify that in cases of total late withdrawal, students should contact the Student Development and Success Center (SDSC). He thinks this is really a cleanup in order to make the instructions reflect what is currently happening.

Registrar Lawson clarified that what CAGAS is requesting is actually a practice change because right now the total late withdrawals only go the SDSC from Weeks 10-16; then, after the term is done, they go back to CAGAS. She said CAGAS wants the total late withdrawals to always go to SDSC and eliminate the back and forth in order to avoid confusion. She thinks this represents a procedure change and not a policy change.

ExCo decided that this can be reported to Faculty Senate as an informational item during the Chair's Report and does not need to be submitted to a more formal consideration or approval process.

c. *Classroom Disruption Policy*

Chair Robinett explained that the Classroom Disruption Policy includes the requirement to complete a written Violation of Student Code of Conduct form and route it to appropriate bodies. He noted that the university is moving away from written reports and towards things that can be completed online and routed electronically, and Associate Provost Lori Baker-Sperry and Student Rights and Responsibilities Director Kelly Severs have requested a Classroom Disruption report be completed instead. He asked ExCo if they have any objections to routing this to CAGAS because it is not coming from the council but from another area, and he would like for CAGAS to consider whether any steps would be missing if this change is adopted, although it seems procedural.

Senator Wippering observed that the proposed language does not include a link to the form. Chair Robinett said he does not have an answer to this, but CAGAS can check what is being asked for in the old form versus what changes there are in the proposed new form. He also noted that the proposed language continues to use the terminology "department chair," and he thinks CAGAS may want to change this to whatever terminology comes out of the collective bargaining in regard to these positions.

ExCo had no objections to routing this request to CAGAS. Registrar Lawson asked if the requests going to CAGAS are urgent or how soon they need to be on an agenda. Chair Robinett responded there are only two more regular meetings of Faculty Senate, and since the April 14 agenda is quite full he would be fine with them coming to the Senate on April 28; he thinks the Nursing request is the most pressing.

2. *CIT recommendations*

Chair Robinett expressed thanks to the Council for Instructional Technology (CIT) and its Chair Andrea Alveshere for bringing forth proposed AI and regular substantive interaction (RSI) statements for course syllabi. He noted that while CIT passed both of these statements, there was one member who wanted them to be more prescriptive. He said this individual wanted the RSI statement to include added flexibility for different course formats and the recognition that RSI can vary, while for the AI statement the CIT member suggested emphasizing instructor discretion in defining permitted and prohibited use of AI while providing flexibility and clarity to faculty to explain what their own requirements will be.

Senator Wippering asked for clarification that Faculty Senate is not developing a statement that faculty must include; Chair Robinett confirmed that Faculty Senate would not be providing the statement but just asking faculty to develop their own AI and RSI statements. Senator Melkumian noted the AI statement would address whether the faculty member will allow AI, how it will be assessed, what the penalties would be, etc. Chair Robinett thinks CIT's statement is prescriptive enough without getting too prescriptive.

Senator Wippering asked if it would be helpful to include a sample statement; she thinks such a sample would help her form her own statement for her syllabi. Chair Robinett noted that CIT plans to develop a webpage where they can give examples and provide operational statements. He noted there are several institutions with excellent webpages already established like this, such as Ohio State and the University of

Minnesota, who have done an excellent job operationalizing AI into easy-to-digest ways of looking at it. He noted that WIU's Online Teaching and Learning group has developed an RSI webpage where that information will be posted, and CIT would develop an AI page that would include resources that are sharable. He fears that if the statement becomes too prescriptive, it begins to impinge on the academic freedom of faculty in their classes and might run afoul. He thinks requiring faculty to explain how AI can be used in their classes, however, makes a lot of sense.

The CIT report with language recommendations for the two statements will be included on the April 14 Senate agenda under Reports from Committees and Councils. Chair Robinett noted that if Faculty Senate accepts CIT's report, it will make things much easier when senators consider the full Course Syllabus Policy later in the agenda under New Business.

3. *Rebuild and search updates*

Provost Mossman reported that there are 21 searches going on currently for associate deans, school directors, and a Director for Education Preparation. He thinks the Provost's Office staff and Deans' offices staff are doing an excellent job of managing all of these searches, and he thanked Chair Robinett for making sure there is faculty representation on all of the committees. He thinks there has been good communication across the board.

Provost Mossman said his office is now working on how to improve the efficiency of direct reports to the Provost's Office from such offices as the Registrar's and many more. He noted that one of the goals of the Rebuild is improving communication, coherence, and efficiency in these offices as well. He thinks the Rebuild is well on target for the July 1 end of Phase 2 and beginning of Phase 3.

Provost Mossman related that the Space Allocation Committee in the fall will engage in some major conversations on how space can be better utilized at WIU. He noted that once the Ellucian conversion is completed in the Registrar's Office, there will also be a major retooling of the schedule during Phase 3.

Chair Robinett noted the Provost's Office is taking time to be thoughtful in the direct reporting areas; he did not understand when these conversations began the importance of making sure who is involved in the supervision of different areas. He said the thought that is begin given to which groups should report to which associate or assistant provost and why has been very meaningful in determining what the logic is as to how all of the roles and things they are tasked with go together.

Provost Mossman related that former President Thomas many years ago combined the positions of Associate Provost of Undergraduate Studies with Associate Provost of Graduate Studies into one position. He thinks asking one person to oversee all of that is very difficult and severely dampens their ability to focus on each area and make innovations. He noted that splitting these into two positions allows the positions to concentrate on retention and student success and getting resources invested into them. Chair Robinett noted that from a governance standpoint, the undergraduate and graduate aspects of the university are different, with the graduate school being coordinated through its Graduate Council while Faculty Senate is broader but primarily focused on undergraduate education, curriculum, and policies and procedures. He pointed out that next year, after the change to the Senate's Constitution, the Graduate Council will have an ex-officio seat at the Senate table, similar to SGA, in order to help increase communication between the governance bodies. Provost Mossman thinks this will be a big win for communications.

Provost Mossman noted that the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board and Executive Institute has been associated with, but not really a true part of, the university in many ways. He noted that they are very successful, and what they do will be brought in line with the larger mission of the Provost's Office and the institution.

4. *Petitions and elections update*

Chair Robinett related that he and Ms. Hamm looked at which senators have terms that will continue next year in order to determine which schools will need representation. He recalled that it was made very clear in the Constitutional amendments that if senators are currently serving, they can complete their terms, even if

that means that some areas may be over-represented for a while.

Chair Robinett told ExCo that he and Ms. Hamm worked to simplify the petition forms; the intention is to go to electronic forms in the future, but for this year the paper forms will need to continue to be used while decisions are made on what will be the most efficient method. He said that does not mean that faculty will not be able to email their nominations to Ms. Hamm if they are, for example, on the Quad Cities campus or remote. Ms. Hamm pointed out that the narrative of the petition form has been very pared down, so there is a lot less information than in the past, which made it just a two-sided document.

Ms. Hamm plans to email the notices tomorrow, if ExCo has no objections, and petitions will be due on April 17. She added that if there is a contested seat, ballots will be sent out on April 20 and due on April 24 because new senators need to be in place for Senate elections on April 28. ExCo had no objections to moving the election notices forward.

5. *Proposed Course Syllabus Policy changes*

Chair Robinett walked ExCo through proposed changes to the Course Syllabus Policy, to be considered during New Business on April 14. He noted that there has been some regrouping in the document to make it more concise for faculty to find the information that they need. He pointed out that while an Online Teaching and Learning accessible template is being developed, faculty will not be required to use it, although it is hoped that they will choose to do so. He said that the policy will include a statement indicating that syllabi are required to comply with university, state, and federal accessibility policies. He stressed that it is not a choice that faculty will get to make on whether or not to comply with accessibility laws; faculty are required to make their syllabi accessible, and the university has done the work of creating an accessible template that faculty can choose to use, but a faculty member can develop their own, as long as it meets accessibility requirements.

Chair Robinett noted that the course “nature and purpose” statement currently required on syllabi was thought to be vague; this has been replaced with a requirement that syllabi include the course description, as well as semester hours and contact hours and designating if the course is Gen Ed, WID, or Multicultural Perspectives. He pointed out that a new requirement relates to indicating the learning outcome statements related to course and discipline-specific accreditation, such as IAI, Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and individual program accreditations. He added that the disability statement, at the request of Jackie Price, will reference barriers to access or inclusion, rather than just to inclusion.

Chair Robinett said the last statement added to the Course Syllabus Policy would be a statement for all courses designated with a G, making explicit how grading is done and what distinguishes the undergraduate portion of the class from the graduate portion. He said the statement was proposed by the Chair of the Graduate Council in consultation with that council, and it is found in the Graduate Catalog.

Ms. Hamm asked if faculty always know the learning outcome statements for their classes “related to course and discipline-specific accreditations.” Chair Robinett replied that he does not think they do, but he thinks they should. He thinks that as the university talks about meaningful measures of assessment and engages in co-curricular conversations, these types of statements would hopefully provide opportunities for those responsible for assessment to make sure faculty are aware of this. Parliamentarian Gblerkpor said he became aware of this while going through Online Teaching and Learning best practices training for his online course. He noted that Online Teaching and Learning recently advertised more opportunities for this training.

Chair Robinett noted that this statement is really looking for the learning outcomes that are listed out for accreditation. He explained that each program at the undergraduate and graduate levels has learning outcomes specific to those programs, but not every class has accreditation studied in the same way. He noted that in the Department of Recreation, Park, Tourism, and Hospitality (RPTH), every core course is linked to a learning outcome, and there are direct and indirect measures for every core graduate class related to one of those six learning outcomes. He noted that at the undergraduate level, RPTH has some electives that are not linked specifically to learning outcome statements, but all of their core courses are, so the core course syllabi would have to include the learning outcome statement but the elective courses would not. He hopes that program coordinators or school directors will articulate this clearly to faculty since they will be the ones most involved

in the accreditation process.

Senator Wipperliling stated that while she has never seen a document showing her department's learning outcomes, she has been verbally told about them and is very knowledgeable about what is needed in each of her classes in order to have them meet what the department needs for aligned curriculum. She stressed, though, that she has never seen any accreditation document to see that her learning outcomes are in alignment with those outlined in that document.

Ms. Hamm observed that if not all faculty have this information easily available, she wonders if they will be able to obtain it quickly to include on their syllabi for fall. Chair Robinett replied that all faculty turn in assessment reports; he has worked on assessment reports for General Education, undergraduate, and graduate. He knows that departments do things differently, but RPTH's learning outcomes appear at the top of their assessment reports. Provost Mossman does not think asking faculty to include this information is an unreasonable request, and, looking at long-term planning, this will make assessment much easier. He noted that the university needs to update its strategic plan, and if there are individuals at the university who are unaware of learning outcome statements and assessment processes, this is a step in the right direction to get everyone on the same page. He encouraged everyone to check out the university's HLC document on the AACSB website because Criteria 3 and 4 are a long list of WIU's assessment activities. He added that there should be coherence in what is presented to students.

Senator Melkumian noted that the School of Accounting and Business Administration, as part of the Rebuild reorganization, is currently revising its curriculum, including learning outcomes and procedures for assessment. She said this is being done in addition to other work; she assumes that assessment is done at the end of the semester but has never been involved in this previously. She said her school's curriculum committee is gearing up to address this, but there are seven disciplines, and she does not know if they will be able to complete everything by the end of the semester. She noted that their syllabi have never included learning outcomes for every course, and some of them are electives which do not have this information. Chair Robinett remarked that now that his department's Sport Management program has been approved, they will be in the same boat, although they have only two disciplines rather than seven. Senator Wipperliling remarked that their graduate program is undergoing curriculum revision right now as well.

Chair Robinett noted that part of the Rebuild is the realization that as new groupings are formed, those learning outcomes may realistically need to be altered. Senator Wipperliling suggested that if these changes are expected for Fall 2026 syllabi, it should be announced prior to the end of the spring semester rather than a week before school begins in fall.

Senator Melkumian hopes there will also be some flexibility in that it may be extremely desirable to have this information, but it just might not happen for this fall, although for the following fall it absolutely must be included. She specified that she is not referring to syllabus accessibility but to the second guideline regarding learning outcomes. Provost Mossman replied that his office will be flexible. He thinks the university needs to reach the point where assessment is not something that two people in a department work on, but where there is a larger conversation including more individuals and departments with more collaboration and coordination. He thinks that if a year from now most course syllabi can include this information, it would be a huge accomplishment. He noted that when HLC visits, syllabi are all pulled together into a giant file, and the reviewers spot check to look for continuous improvement. He said that if the reviewers find one syllabus without this information but nine that include the information, it will be okay, so there is flexibility all the way up to the HLC as long as the university is showing improvement. He thinks it is better to do something right than to do it as fast as possible, and he recognizes that assessment will be different for every discipline. He thinks, though, that this will be a good step forward.

Chair Robinett thinks it will be important to train faculty in how assessment procedures work. He agrees with Provost Mossman that in many departments and programs there are a few people who are very knowledgeable about assessment while many others are not involved in assessment or give the information to the people who are actually doing the assessment work. He thinks there will need to be a training component to go along with this change. Chair Robinett told Senator Wipperliling that he wanted the changes to the policy to move forward at the April 14 meeting so that there is time to potentially have them approved and inform faculty before they leave campus at the end of the semester. He said this will also allow new school directors

to become familiar with the changes in order to discuss them at faculty meetings. Senator Wipperling said she does not know where to access those learning outcomes, so she will need to ask her chair; she noted that the school directors and program coordinators will be new in those roles, so it may be easier to get the information from current chairs so that faculty can move forward with the new requirements.

6. *Bylaws*

Chair Robinett noted that first reading has already occurred. He had a conversation with Ms. Hamm about whether different Senate committee and council chairpersonships should be restricted to different roles or ranks. He and Ms. Hamm agree that this should not be required in the Bylaws, but if Senate councils and committees wish to restrict their chair seats this could be something they included in their policies and procedures. He thinks this should be governance work that they do at the council and committee level but not something that Faculty Senate should impose upon them. He noted that the vote on the Bylaws will occur on April 14 under Old Business.

7. *Finalize agenda for Senate meeting of April 14*

Chair Robinett pointed out that Financial Aid Director Bobbi Smith will speak to senators during Announcements on April 14 about the impacts of the “One Big Beautiful Bill” on Pell grants, graduate loans, and a variety of other measures. He plans to continue to highlight to faculty that it is extremely important for them to participate in the Title IV verifications. He thinks that if additional training is needed for faculty or if there are impediments to meeting this requirement, it is vitally important that this be addressed at the start of every semester, within the first ten days.

Senator Melkumian related that she does her verifications on the second or third day, but if she has a student add for a course that has already been verified it blinks red – unreported – and she has to continuously go back to redo it. Provost Mossman thinks this is a serious problem. He thought this problem had been fixed going into the spring semester, so he will put that on his radar again. He knew there were problems in Fall 2025. He agrees that has to be addressed so that faculty do not have to redo the entire verification every time a student adds. Both he and Chair Robinett communicated previously to Ms. Smith about this problem, and he will reach out to her again.

Chair Robinett noted Amy Carr will also speak to senators on April 14, and the April 28 Senate meeting will include the President and Vice President Roselieb talking about budgets, as well as the Senate election of officers.

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager/Recording Secretary