

# FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 20 August 2024  
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

## ACTION MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jeremy Robinett, Chair; Jeff Hancks, Vice Chair; Ben Brewer, Secretary  
**ALSO PRESENT:** Mark Mossman, Interim Provost; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager  
**GUEST:** Sarah Lawson, Registrar

### 1. *Explanation of switched representation for Senators Brewer and Allwardt*

Chair Robinett told Executive Committee members that he has not yet found a Faculty Senate Parliamentarian. He explained that over the summer, following Faculty Senate protocol, a change was made in the representation of Senators Ben Brewer and Debra Allwardt. Senator Brewer originally represented the College of Education and Human Services, and Senator Allwardt represented the faculty at-large, but since the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, where Senator Brewer is housed, now reports directly to the Provost and is not under the College of Education and Human Services, the decision was made by the previous Executive Committee – with Senators Brewer and Allwardt’s agreement – to switch their representation. Chair Robinett added that neither of their original elections were contested.

### 2. *Review of delegated authority*

Chair Robinett informed the Executive Committee that there are some very specific things relegated to faculty and the faculty governance system by the Board of Trustees. He noted that these include university curriculum; basic policies with regard to campus planning and facilities construction and utilization; creation of administrative positions at the level of dean and vice president, and the selection of administrative officers for such positions, as well as of the president of the university; and academic planning and the determination of priorities for the conduct and development of the university. Chair Robinett recognizes that there was a lot this summer that had to be done on rather short notice, but he hopes that, moving forward, everyone can look at ways to make sure these types of decisions involve a participatory process and that there is an understanding of where things have been. Chair Robinett informed Interim Provost Mossman that the BOT’s delegated authority statement has been sent out to chairs and program coordinators and to the faculty today via email. He explained that he shared this so that people do not assume that faculty have to be involved in every decision, but they do have certain areas where they are authorized to be. He quoted the Board statement that “in order to promote shared participation and responsible and wise decision making,” faculty governance has the authority to participate in the decision-making processes of the university.

### 3. *Impact of layoffs*

Chair Robinett has asked the chairs and program coordinators to share if there is anything Faculty Senate needs to know related to their programs and how they have positioned themselves that may not have been shared publicly. He has received some responses and expects to hear more as the semester progresses. He asked Interim Provost Mossman if there is anything on this topic that he wants to share with the Executive Committee. Interim Provost Mossman replied he understands the entire institution has been impacted by the layoffs and the financial situation that led to them.

### 4. *Disruptive Student Policy*

Chair Robinett noted that over the summer there were some changes within the Division of Student Success with some individuals now being in different roles. He said this led to the division reviewing some policies and procedures, and one that was found to possibly need updating was the Disruptive Student Policy. The Executive Committee decided to refer this policy to CAGAS so that they can determine if the policy is still needed, to what degree, and what updates need to be made to it.

Chair Robinett told ExCo that other policies and procedures will be coming forward in the future, including

one he has talked about with Interim Provost Mossman related to online teaching and learning. He said faculty engagement will be sought regarding this new policy; someone will be speaking to the Executive Committee about it, and Chair Robinett asked if the policy can be referred to the Senate Council for Instructional Technology to review and report back on. Executive Committee members had no objections.

5. *Motion regarding zoom attendance*

Chair Robinett explained that the Open Meetings Act requires a vote among the members present in order to admit those members who are attending via Zoom. He would like to entertain a motion at the first Senate meeting on August 22 that would provide a one-time blanket for this process. He intends for the motion to establish that members attending via Zoom for one of the enumerated reasons requiring that form of attendance (family emergency or work obligations, such as being based in the Quad Cities) will be automatically admitted throughout the year once quorum has been established with in-person attendees. ExCo members had no objections, and this was added to the agenda under the new Report from the Chair section.

6. *Annual reports from Senate councils and committees*

Chair Robinett asked if any ExCo members had questions or things they wanted clarified prior to the meeting regarding the annual reports that have been submitted by Senate council and committee chairs. He thinks it is interesting to read the annual reports and see what Senate councils and committees have been doing over the past year and some of the issues they have faced. He anticipates that the Executive Committee may have some tasks that it would be beneficial for certain councils to undertake this year.

Interim Provost Mossman announced that this year is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) five-year review. He related as part of that process, his office will be collecting annual reports from across the institution. He added that the review submission is due in March, and these reports are some of the documents that will be helpful in that effort. Interim Provost Mossman explained that this year the institution will not be required to compile a huge evidence file but only to update the main report and add sections to it. He added there will not be an in-person visit this year. Chair Robinett recalled that last time there was an HLC steering committee and several iterations of the report. Interim Provost Mossman said this year the process will not be at that level. Chair Robinett asked who was engaged in this in the past and what was the composition of the steering committee. Interim Provost Mossman replied that in the past, at a certain level, the entire institution was engaged in the process; there was a steering committee as well as individual subcommittees for each section. He said the process was very successful, resulting in four As and a C+. Interim Provost Mossman said this year's report will add onto the previous report and respond to the 17 recommendations it contained, which will be a much smaller task that will probably involve key leaders in each area. He stated that Lori Baker-Sperry and Amy Patrick Mossman are starting to work on this initiative, and there will be a handful of other campus leaders helping with the process. He stressed that the report, which will include some sections on shared governance, will absolutely be presented and made available to the entire institution at some point, noting that last time the Provost's office held five different podcasts on the HLC process. Chair Robinett asked if, given the discussions about accreditation on the campus nowadays, this would be something Interim Provost Mossman could talk about at an October Faculty Senate meeting; Interim Provost Mossman replied that November or the last Senate meeting of the fall semester would be better times to provide an update.

7. *Review of faculty representation on councils and committees*

Chair Robinett related that during his tenure at WIU, the Executive Committee has received two sets of recommendations following reviews of the proportionality of representation on Faculty Senate councils and committees. He would like the Executive Committee to consider asking the Senate Nominating Committee to review Senate councils and committees as to the number of representatives that might be needed and where they should come from, particularly in light of the decrease in faculty numbers. He thinks there might be opportunities to realign the councils and committees to better represent the university now and alleviate problems that Senate councils and committees might have in reaching their quorums. The Executive Committee members had no objections to starting this process. Chair Robinett suggested the Senate Nominating Committee might discuss whether representation on Senate councils and committees always needs to be by college or whether it could be by expertise or some other metric. Senator Hancks agreed this is

certainly worth discussing. Chair Robinett will draft a charge for the Senate Nominating Committee and bring it forward for the next Executive Committee meeting.

Chair Robinett said another topic of discussion this year should likely be the size of the Senate and how representation is apportioned among the faculty. He would like ExCo to take some time in an upcoming meeting to develop an understanding of why Faculty Senate is configured as it is. He noted, though, that as wider discussions may occur about reorganizing the university, in some ways reorganizing the Faculty Senate before reorganizing the institution would not make a lot of sense.

8. *Persons to invite to speak to Faculty Senate this fall*

Chair Robinett said an invitation has been extended to Ketra Roselieb, Executive Director of Financial Affairs, to attend the next Executive Committee meeting. He stated that since former WIU CIO Greg Kain has left the university, he is meeting Friday with the new University Technology “CIO Group” composed of Jeremy Merritt, Stacie Hunt, and Bob Emmert to discuss some of the issues that Mr. Kain had been working with Chair Robinett and former Senate Chair Julia Albarracin on. He said this includes an update on the ERP process, the variety of technology policies that were brought forward in July involving retiree and emeriti emails and other topics, and recommendations coming out of the Online Teaching and Learning Task Force. He will bring back information about this meeting to ExCo.

Chair Robinett asked if there are other individuals that should be invited to speak to Faculty Senate this fall. Suggestions included the President, who attends a Senate and ExCo meeting every semester; the Athletic Director; Stacie Hunt to update senators on the ERP process and talk about Slate admissions changes; the Financial Aid Director in September; the Admissions Director; the Director of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity; a discussion of HLC accreditation in November; and Cara Cerullo, Director of the Counseling Center, to talk about the committee that Faculty Senate placed faculty representatives on last year and about the Crisis Committee.

9. *Finalization of the Senate agenda for August 27*

Chair Robinett pointed out that he has added a Faculty Senate Chair report as an additional item during Announcements. He thinks that as faculty request more transparency, Faculty Senate should also try to provide that, and he thinks a report from the Senate Chair can provide information about meetings he attends and things that are coming forward so that everyone can begin to understand what is happening in a variety of spaces and places.

Chair Robinett pointed out that the CAGAS report mentions a proposed policy on Pregnant and Parenting Students that they recently approved. He said this approval was not received in time to make it onto the ExCo and Senate agendas this time but will be on the next agendas. Ms. Hamm related she asked the CAGAS Chair if SGA had a chance to see and weigh in on this policy proposal but was told this did not come up at CAGAS. She will send the policy to the new SGA President, informing him that it is expected to come forward to Faculty Senate on September 10.

10. *Request from faculty member to add item to Senate agenda*

Chair Robinett said a faculty member has asked that a discussion item be added to a future Senate agenda regarding the faculty response to the variety of actions that occurred this summer. He said the faculty member submitted the request this morning, after the Executive Committee agenda had already been shared and publicized with everyone, so that will be on the next ExCo agenda. Senator Hancks asked if this topic might be brought up on the floor. Chair Robinett said that according to the Senate Constitution, a faculty member can ask that an item be put on a Senate agenda; ExCo makes the determination if the item will go on a Senate agenda, will be referred to a Senate committee, or will be referred to the administration, and notifies the faculty member of the determination. Chair Robinett reached out to the faculty member to inform them that the agenda for today’s meeting was already set but that it would be reviewed at the next meeting. He added that, according to parliamentary procedure, senators can bring up any topic they want during the course of a Senate meeting when it reaches that point in the agenda. He plans to communicate to senators that parliamentary procedures govern the way meetings are run but are not meant to be used as a form of bullying. He said the Parliamentarian may ask senators to make sure they do not submit “messy” motions with several items included in one motion, for example, but the procedures

are mostly intended to facilitate discussion.

11. *Classes switching from in-person to online*

Chair Robinett asked if it is known how many classes have switched to online in recent weeks. Registrar Lawson responded she has seen a lot of classes cancelled but has not seen a significant enough number of courses going online to raise a red flag for her. Chair Robinett has been hearing about this anecdotally from students; several student athletes spoke to him about it at the welcome back event, and it was also discussed in his class today. Registrar Lawson asked if it is worth investigating; Interim Provost Mossman replied he thinks it is. He has concerns about how the fall schedule is working, and no one in his office has the time to look over the shoulders of the deans and chairs who are creating it. Registrar Lawson remarked she receives a daily report that shows her what has changed in the schedule and will scan those for the past week or two to see how many courses have been changed to online. Interim Provost Mossman said he would like to see this and understand the justifications for the changes and who made them. Chair Robinett said he would appreciate this from the standpoint of relaying honest and open information to students; if students are saying this is happening but it is not numerically occurring, faculty need to be able to say that. Registrar Lawson related she has heard this concern in previous years, but there have been reasons for it, such as when the university was coming out of Covid.

[Note: Following the meeting, Registrar Lawson provided the exact number of section delivery changes that have occurred since August 1: four courses changed to online, six changed to livestream, and two changed to hybrid.]

Chair Robinett related the other thing he has been hearing when walking around the campus is regarding the processing of adjunct contracts. Interim Provost Mossman said his office has been working with the Business Office to complete these, and he thinks these are now complete.

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager  
and Recording Secretary