

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 22 August 2023
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julia Albarracin, Chair; Denise Gravitt, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Manoochehr Zoghi, Provost; Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager

GUESTS: President Guiyou Huang; Registrar Sarah Lawson; Associate Provost Mark Mossman, Executive Director of Retention Initiatives Justin Schuch

1. President Huang welcomed everyone back and thanked Parliamentarian Robinett and Mr. Schuch for being part of many events to welcome the faculty and the students. He said the past week has been very busy but was very productive. Friday, August 18 kicked off with the University Assembly, which was presided over by Provost Zoghi. The focus of the President's speech was financial sustainability and recruitment/retention/enrollment.

The President noted that faculty will be starting the semester with smaller enrollment than last year, but there are pro-active efforts underway to increase enrollments. President Huang related the Cabinet today discussed looking at enrollment markets beyond the traditional ones and focusing particularly on transfer students from community colleges and dual enrollment students from high schools. He also thinks the online market has a lot of potential.

President Huang noted that there is now a new structure at the university for retention work, but Mr. Schuch will continue to head up the Retention Initiatives Office. Advising has been moved under the Provost's division in order to create more synergy between first-year and college advising efforts.

The President stated that although the current university leadership inherited some issues affecting financial sustainability, they are taking a full leadership role in addressing these issues. He noted that while growing enrollment is one way to address these issues, cost savings is another; this includes hiring practices as well as new revenue. The administration is working on a plan to present to the Board of Trustees in September that promises long-term action to pull WIU back to more solid financial ground.

President Huang feels confident in the ability of the administration, faculty, and staff to work together to address these issues. He noted that faculty and staff already worked on one proposal this summer – the 0.0 GPA proposal being brought forward by CAGAS at the first Senate meeting – and the President would like to follow this up with a deeper conversation about attendance policies. President Huang thinks attendance policies are important for student accountability and retention. He understands the issues surrounding academic freedom, but he thinks a reasonable attendance policy can be created that would incorporate excused absences and would be a good practice for WIU. He encourages senators to consider an attendance policy.

Parliamentarian Robinett asked if there is an estimate as to how much smaller class sizes might be this fall. President Huang responded that WIU's enrollment as of today is close to 7,000 (6,984 according to the Registrar) versus about 7,600 last year at this time. Registrar Lawson added that there are 964 new freshmen as of today compared to 1,073 last year at this point. Senator Gravitt asked if transfer numbers are available and if it is known why transfer students are not choosing to come to WIU. Registrar Lawson responded there are currently 592 transfer students, and there were 632 last year at this time; she does not have information regarding why students choose not to enroll at WIU.

Senator Gravitt asked if there is anyone assigned to target and develop new transfer agreements. President Huang responded that since the restructuring that occurred in June, Vice President for Student Success John Smith has

been overseeing enrollment management and admissions. He and Admissions Director Doug Freed have been looking at transfer guides since July. The President explained that now transfer guides instead of transfer articulations are being used to recruit transfer students. He said Admissions has reached out to a number of community colleges, including John Wood, Sauk Valley, and Highland, among others. He thinks the recent change to allow students bringing in AA and AS degrees to be considered as meeting Gen Ed requirements will help this effort.

President Huang will meet with the full Senate at their first meeting on August 29 during Announcements.

2. CAGAS on July 20 unanimously approved a proposal to add one sentence to the Penalties for Grade Point Average Deficiencies policy. The sentence added would be the last one under the Academic Suspension section: "In addition, any student who has a GPA of 0.00 (as a result of F, FN, FW, U, N, and/or XU) at the end of their first full-time semester of coursework will be academically suspended." By unanimous vote on August 15, CAGAS approved making this change effective Fall 2023 so that it will be implemented when final grades come out in December.

Chair Albarracin asked how students can get reinstated. Registrar Lawson responded that the policy requires students to remain out of the university for one regular semester, after which they are automatically eligible for reinstatement. She added that if a student can show an extenuating circumstance, they can appeal to CAGAS one meeting before the next semester begins for consideration to be reinstated immediately.

The proposed change will go forward to Faculty Senate as a report from CAGAS for the August 29 meeting.

3. Most Faculty Senate council and committee chairs have submitted their annual reports for the 2022-23 academic year. These will be presented to Faculty Senate on August 29 under Reports from Committees and Councils.

4. The Executive Committee discussed continued efforts to populate the two new ad hoc committees created by senators in Spring 2023. Senators will be asked to volunteer for service on the two new committees at the first Senate meeting.

5. With the resignation from Faculty Senate of Craig Whetten, University Libraries, over the summer, the Executive Committee approved sending out a notice of election to full-time faculty to fill his three-year at-large seat. The Senate Office Manager will send the notice out on Wednesday, August 23 via the Senate's listproc. Mr. Whetten had also been elected Faculty Senate Vice Chair in April, so an election to fill that Executive Committee seat will be held on August 29.

6. The Senate Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI) has brought forward a request for a bylaws amendment. Parliamentarian Robinett, who serves as Secretary on CCPI, said the proposal allows individuals from the Provost's and Registrar's offices, without whom CCPI would not be able to function, to be recognized by their titles as ex-officio members, making what CCPI does in practice match what is written in its bylaws. Bylaws amendments require two readings; first reading will occur at the end of the August 29 Senate meeting under New Business, and the second reading and vote will occur on September 12.

7. President Huang on May 30 approved the academic calendars for AY 2025-26 through 2028-20. These will be presented to senators as an informational item under Announcements.

8. The Executive Committee discussed who to invite as guests to speak to senators at fall Senate meetings.

9. Senator Gravitt brought up the need for the administration to coordinate with faculty trying to establish transfer agreements with community colleges. Provost Zoghi is planning to invite representatives from certain community colleges to WIU to discuss what is needed to make the transfer process smoother for students, to include going over syllabi together. Senator Gravitt thinks it would be beneficial to create a process to eliminate roadblocks to developing these agreements and synthesize the process with colleges who formerly used to send their students to WIU. Provost Zoghi stated that Spoon River, Sauk Valley, and Blackhawk Community Colleges have already been approached. He suggested that departments pick one or two community colleges that they

think they can work closely with and start there. Parliamentarian Robinett suggested that departments work with Kassie Daly in Admissions. His department has already developed four agreements. He stated that there is a difference between developing a transfer pathway, which is the current initiative, and the former transfer articulations. Senator Gravitt suggested it would be helpful to have a workshop where this process could be explained to faculty.

10. The Executive Committee discussed ideas for the Senate's Budget Transparency Committee, which did not meet last year. ExCo thinks that with a new Vice President for Finance and Administration and the new fiscal sustainability plan, which will be unveiled in early fall, it will be important for this committee to work closely with the new VP to understand what that plan entails.

11. The Executive Committee is required to provide a representative to the Budget Transparency Committee and the Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance, but they made the decision to table this until the next ExCo meeting so that the newly elected Vice Chair can participate in this process.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager
and Recording Secretary