

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
Regular Meeting, 24 January 2023, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: J. Albarracin, D. Atherton, D. Banash, D. Barr, B. Bellott, M. Bernards, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, A. Carr, C. Chadwell, P. Eathington, L. Ebert Wallace, D. Hunter, J. Land, T. Lough, S. Macchi, K. Perone, B. Petrocovici, E. Shupe, Y. Tang, B. Thompson, J. Wroblewski
Ex-officio: Craig Whetten, Parliamentarian; Provost Manoochehr Zoghi

SENATORS ABSENT: S. Bailey, B. Polley

GUESTS: Tom Blackford, Joe Cantu, Ranessa Cooper, Dennis DeVolder, Paige Goodwin, Robert Hironimus-Wendt, Keith Holz, Kishor Kapale, Angela Kline, Rick Kurasz, Ilon Lauer, Sarah Lawson, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Rose McConnell, Leslie Melim, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Lorette Oden, Jose Pavez, Linda Prorise, Jim Schmidt, Bobbi Smith

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. December 6, 2022

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Approvals from the Provost

1. Requests for New Courses

- a. ANSC 280, Pre-Veterinary Science, 3 s.h.
- b. HM 200, Food Service Principles and Application, 3 s.h.

2. Request for Change of Major

- a. Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration

B. Provost's Report

Provost Zoghi reported that the academic colleges, University Libraries, the Honors College, and the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs worked diligently throughout the fall semester on their retention plans. The Provost expressed his thanks for everyone's contributions toward this effort and expressed special thanks to the leadership – deans, chairs, and directors – for bringing together the notion of the student life cycle flow standard process model, which provided the framework for preparation of the retention plans. A day-long summit was held on December 9 for retention plans to be presented; feedback was provided by those in attendance, and the plans were then finalized and given to the Provost, Vice President for Enrollment Management Amber Schultz, and Executive Director for Retention Initiatives Justin Schuch for review. Finalized plans with recommendations from these three administrators – over 200 pages in total – were given to the President, whose recommendations will be forthcoming.

Provost Zoghi announced that a core group has been created to develop a strategic plan for the Division of Academic Affairs. He stated that a SWOT analysis will be conducted before asking for input from the campus community. He added that student success will be the top priority for the strategic plan process.

Senator Carr asked Provost Zoghi if he has a timeline for getting working scanners for Malpass Library. She noted that scanners there have not worked for some time and are important for the use of faculty as well as students, particularly international students. Provost Zoghi responded that he was not aware of this. Chair Thompson remarked that computer support personnel in the Library have been keeping the two current scanners on life support, but the problem has been ongoing for three years. He thinks Malpass Library could really use four working scanners because they get a lot of usage by faculty and students scanning materials that are on reserve or interlibrary loan. He agrees that international students use the scanners a lot, such as in scanning documents for visa applications. Chair Thompson added that the Music Library in Sallee Hall does have a working scanner and is open most days until 8:00 or 9:00 in the evening.

Provost Zoghi asked if University Technology CIO Greg Kain is aware of the problem. Chair Thompson replied he does not know if the scanners are part of the University Technology budget or the Library budget. Provost Zoghi said he will look into getting this issue addressed in a timely manner and report back to Senator Carr.

Senator Petrocovi observed that many of the newer printers have scanning capabilities; the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy has two high-volume printers that can also scan. Chair Thompson responded that Malpass Library does not have this, but their flat-bed scanners are very useful for large format items.

Senator Banash has heard, anecdotally, that freshmen, particularly those going through the first-year experience (FYE) program, really struggled this past fall. He asked if there is a sense yet of these numbers and whether the administration is worried about this. He wonders if these rumors are true and are part of a larger problem, or whether Fall 2023 was exceptional in the number of students struggling in their classes. Provost Zoghi responded that Covid did not help this situation; first-year students coming to WIU are not as well prepared due to this factor. He has heard from various faculty that some freshmen did not bother showing up for class, so it was a big struggle.

Associate Provost Mark Mossman, who oversees FYE, said this has been a worry for a number of years; it was a chronic problem that became acute after Covid in terms of attendance and fall-to-spring retention. He noted that freshmen in the REACH program and others with academic issues are harder to retain. He related that steps are being taken to try to address attendance and other issues though FYE, and things seem to be looking better than it was thought they would. He stated that 43 percent of undergraduates received at least one failing grade at midterm, and there are still a significant number with poor grades, but his sense is that the numbers are not as bad that sounds and that tenth-day numbers will not be as bad as previously anticipated. Associate Provost Mossman told senators that overall enrollment is about flat as of this morning, so the university is hanging in there, but everyone needs to work hard on issues such as attendance and contact points. He thinks there needs to be a university-wide commitment to these issues because they are institution-wide concerns. Chair Thompson remarked that Vice President Schultz will visit with Faculty Senate at its next meeting after tenth-day figures are released, so the conversation can continue then in more depth.

Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Sue Martinelli-Fernandez stated that while she cannot answer Senator Banash's question in terms of a percentage of students who are struggling, she can say that one of the nice things about the retention planning currently being undertaken is that all departments will have remediation plans in place before students need remediation. She stated that special tutoring will now be offered earlier than in the past, and there are efforts to reach out to new freshmen to find student partners for them. Dean Martinelli-Fernandez related there was a lot of good, mindful work done to consider how the university can assist students before they get into trouble. She knows that most, if not all, departments within the College of Arts and Sciences have plans for reaching out to new students within the first ten days of the semester to make sure they know about tutoring -- which she stated is now referred to as "coaching" so that there is no stigma attached to it. She thinks that there are interventions in place now that were not in place in the fall, which will hopefully help. Senator Banash is glad the numbers may be flat, and he is looking forward to hearing more about this and the initiatives people are working on.

Chair Thompson observed that there are a lot of universities in Illinois that received federal earmark dollars of some kind – not simply from congressional higher education committees but also from agriculture and other committees. He hopes that the university is strongly encouraging faculty, staff, and directors of different programs to apply for earmarks because there is a wide variety of institutions in Illinois that got money, and some of them got quite a lot. Provost Zoghi said this is an excellent suggestion. He related that there have been discussions about going after some large federal grants to enable the university to better implement some great initiatives which could be game changers for WIU in regard to student retention.

B. Student Government Association (SGA) Report
(Joe Cantu, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

Mr. Cantu and the SGA Vice President plan to meet with the Provost in the near future to discuss how SGA can partner with students to help them improve academically. Mr. Cantu thinks SGA's biggest role is to help students improve academically, especially after last semester, which was kind of a rough one.

Mr. Cantu reported the SGA Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is in the final stage of planning for their committee. Mr. Cantu stated that if faculty have students who would feel more comfortable talking to another student about a DEI issue, they can contact SGA's VP for DEI, Arianna Hightower. He said SGA is excited to get the new committee going in the next two weeks.

Chair Thompson announced that the Department of English will implement a homework table in Malpass Library to help students with their English literature homework. A librarian subject specialist will help students with their English homework; Chair Thompson has a doctorate in English so will be the librarian manning the table. He asked what Mr. Cantu thinks about making other kinds of homework tables available to students during the school day as an effort toward providing help and retention support. Mr. Cantu responded this sounds like a really good idea. He stated that although many programs are in place at WIU, they sometimes do not attract the student participation that would be desired because many of them are not well advertised. He thinks more students would take advantage of these opportunities if they knew about them and suggested that mass emails would be beneficial. Chair Thompson said it still needs to be determined how many departments would be interested in participating in the homework tables and if there is sufficient staff for them.

C. Other Announcements

1. Election of Faculty Senate Vice Chair

Motion: To nominate Yong Tang as Vice Chair (Thompson/Hunter). Chair Thompson stated that Senator Tang is interested in the position and is well qualified for it.

There were no further nominations, and Senator Tang was elected Vice Chair.

2. Financial Aid Reporting Requirements and the Impact of Withdrawals
(Bobbi Smith, Director, Financial Aid)

Ms. Smith spoke to Faculty Senate last semester about Financial Aid's inaugural verification roster and requested to come back to express her thanks for the faculty's participation in this new recording keeping process. Ms. Smith told senators there was an overwhelming response to the new verification process; she had expected a 20 percent participation rate because it had not been advertised extensively but ended up seeing a 60 percent response from faculty, which enabled some proactive efforts to reach out to students. Financial Aid reported students who were indicated as not attending classes to the Office of Retention Initiatives, who reached out to those students. Ms. Smith would like to believe that, based on the data Financial Aid received from professors, students were helped to understand the importance of attending their classes. Students were offered assistance to get access to

WesternOnline and to textbooks because they had in many cases indicated that was why they were not attending class.

Ms. Smith state that the verification roster will stay open through Thursday, January 26 and will close at 7 a.m. on the 27th. She stated that Financial Aid made some changes to the enrollment verification roster based on recommendations from faculty. Now, when faculty open the verification roster it will default to “everyone began” so they only have to change those students who did not begin academic activities in their courses rather than having to initially change every student to “began,” which was a direct result of faculty input. Ms. Smith related that courses, such as those in Music, that are repeatable up to a certain number of semester hours were causing some problems last semester, and those issues have now been fixed. Ms. Smith encourages faculty to contact her directly if they have any problems with the roster in the next couple of days because that data is vital to the financial security of the university and to student success to help with early intervention.

Ms. Smith told senators that the data they provide is valuable and important. When a student withdraws, either officially or unofficially, Financial Aid asks faculty to verify the last date of academic activity. An official withdrawal is initiated by the student within the term and/or is approved for late withdrawal; upon receipt of the official request for withdrawal, the Registrar’s office notifies the Office of Financial Aid, who then recalculate the student’s financial aid eligibility. Student financial aid is disbursed based on the assumption that they will complete 100 percent of their semester, but if they only complete 30 percent of the semester, for example, Financial Aid needs to recalculate their aid based upon the number of days completed divided by the number of days in the term to determine how much of the money students who withdraw are allowed to retain. Ms. Smith stated that every student who withdraws after 60 percent of the semester is completed is allowed to retain 100 percent of their financial aid, although they do not receive credit for the course.

Ms. Smith explained that the federal financial aid dollars the student owes back to WIU must be returned by Financial Aid to the U.S. Department of Education because the student did not fulfill their agreement to complete 100% of the semester. Students who owe money have holds put on their accounts and cannot register until they pay their federal financial aid off or pay their balances to zero. Ms. Smith stated that this creates a financial hardship because a lot of them are low income/high need students, so Financial Aid wants them to complete the semester to the best of their abilities so they are not in jeopardy of being unable to return to WIU because of what they owe. Ms. Smith included several specific scenarios on her PowerPoint of students withdrawing at different points in the semester. She stated that the requirements for Title IV money are different than other types of funding students may receive.

Ms. Smith explained that unofficial withdrawals are when students do not officially withdraw from all of their classes but fail to pass at least one course during the semester. Faculty are still asked to verify the student’s last day of academic activities, and Financial Aid calculates eligible funding based on this date. Ms. Smith stated that if Financial Aid fails to perform the calculations about how much funding needs to be returned in a timely fashion, which is 30 days from the official or unofficial withdrawal date, the university is considered to be noncompliant with federal student aid eligibility and is at risk of losing federal student aid funding. If students cannot get federal student aid from WIU, they will go elsewhere, so these deadlines are vitally important.

If a student does not begin any of their courses, then all of their aid is cancelled, and federal student aid dollars are returned to the Department of Education because in order to establish eligibility for aid a student has to begin at least one course. If the student withdraws in the first ten days of the semester, the student will receive back any money spent on their housing and dining and their balance would be zero. Students with any combination of F, FN, or FW are those for whom the Financial Aid Office must establish eligibility for financial aid. Financial Aid has 45 days to return funds to the Department of Education, so if they email

faculty multiple times requesting information on the last day of academic activity it is because of this deadline to avoid noncompliance.

Ms. Smith provided senators with demographics of the WIU student body because she thinks it is very important for everyone to understand the importance of federal student aid. Forty-two percent of WIU students receive federal Pell grants, and 86 percent show \$0 Expected Family Contribution, which is the highest level of need. Ms. Smith added that these students may also not understand payment plans or even what college is really about. Fifty percent of both undergraduate and graduate students attending WIU currently receive some form of federal aid in the form of PELL, the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), TEACH, FWS, or Federal Direct Loans. The current maximum PELL grant, \$6,495, covers 67 percent of WIU tuition and fees. Ms. Smith pointed out that for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, federal aid generated \$49,751,310 in revenue for the university, which equates to 50 percent of all other funding sources (federal, state, institution, or private/3rd party). She stated that the loss of this revenue would definitely close WIU down, which is why it is critically important that Financial Aid receive the information they request in a timely manner. She added that much of her office's work depends on collegiality and cooperation across divisions. She wants faculty to be aware of these policies and what Financial Aid is experiencing because the university's operations rely on this process. Ms. Smith added that the Faculty Senate Office Manager will send the PowerPoint out to all faculty this week, and the policy can be accessed on the Financial Aid website at: http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/financial_aid/policies/RefundsAndWithdrawal.php

Senator Shupe related that after she turned in attendance, a student ended up not participating in anything. This is the first time she has encountered this, and Senator Shupe has received a couple of emails stating that the information she submitted is contradictory because the student attended the class but did not do anything in the class. Ms. Smith explained that in the email faculty received when the enrollment verification roster went live, when it asks if a student is attending the class it does not mean that the student has simply logged into an online class. She stated that the Department of Education considers that if a student is in-person and is sitting through class lectures, that is considered attendance because they can be learning by osmosis and internalizing some sort of educational material from their presence. Ms. Smith explained that indicating a student "began" class indicates that they began participating in educational activity beyond simply logging in or being present during an explanation of the syllabus. She stated that if the professor does not have any academic activity in the first eight days of the semester that students can engage in, they should go ahead and mark students as "began"; if a student ends up not participating in academic activities and is getting an FN or withdraws, this can be verified at the end of the course. Senator Shupe related that in this particular case, the student came to lectures but never took an exam or turned in an assignment. She marked that the student was present but does not have any work to show from the student. Ms. Smith said that in this case the student "earned" their Fs; at the end of the semester when Senator Shupe gave the student an F, Financial Aid verified the last day of activity as the last day of lectures to show that the student "participated" in academic activity for the course.

Senator Carr thinks 50 percent of WIU students receiving federal financial aid seems high and asked what percent of that refers to domestic students. Ms. Smith responded that international students are not eligible to receive any federal student aid. She said the 50 percent of undergraduate students who do not receive federal student aid may still receive other forms of assistance, such as scholarships, private loans, talent grants or tuition waivers, state Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) funds, or other state funding. Chair Thompson remarked that this still amounts to tens of millions of dollars because MAP funding is huge. Ms. Smith agreed, adding that MAP is becoming similar to the size of PELL grant program. She thinks Illinois has done a good job of investing in higher education through scholarships and grants for lower-income students. She stated that there are plans to raise the MAP grant limit to \$7,200, which is higher than the PELL grant.

Chair Thompson remarked that Governor Pritzker has spoken about free college education. He asked if Ms. Smith thinks the Governor was talking about raising the amount of MAP funding to such a degree that college becomes, effectively, free. Ms. Smith remarked that there is a lot of debate about free college, with some saying this means no tuition and fees assessed. Ms. Smith's interpretation, however, is that college does not become free but that the cost is covered by grants and scholarships. She noted that federal PELL grants already cover 67 percent of tuition and fees at WIU, so when some WIU students add the other grants they are eligible for, they are already getting a free college education; college is not free for everyone, but it is free for those students with the highest need with no ability to contribute to their higher education. Ms. Smith stated that students do have to pay for housing, but they would have to pay for their housing whether they went to college or not. She stated that universities now act as a pass-through of scholarships and grants, and the question now is to determine where the breaking point is of who is eligible for free college. She thinks this is what MAP is trying to figure out currently – whether the income to be eligible should be less than \$100,000, less than \$200,000, or some other amount. Chair Thompson remarked that the state is considering raising the MAP grant limit again, which will be confirmed in February when Governor Pritzker delivers his budget proposal.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI) (Paige Goodwin, Chair)

Dr. Goodwin explained that all of the requests brought forward today are a result of the changes to credit hours for PHYS 124 and 125, courses which are required for these programs. Senator Hunter observed that the change to credit hours was not included in the packet, but that level of change does not have to come through Faculty Senate and goes straight to the Provost's office for processing once approved by CCPI.

Senator Tang observed that the requests state that semester hour ranges were eliminated to clarify and simplify the categories. He asked if this is intended to attract more students and whether this reduces the requirements for these programs. Dr. Goodwin responded this was a suggestion from Linda Prosis, Administrative Assistant in the Provost's office, because eliminating the credit hour ranges in programs reduces the confusion for students who can find the ranges to seem misleading. Senator Tang asked if this has anything to do with recruitment; Dr. Goodwin replied that it does not.

Chair Thompson noted that the requests referred to "maximum Gen Ed overlap" and wondered what that meant. Dr. Goodwin replied that this has to do with the request form itself and is a way of showing how many courses in a program overlap with Gen Ed; these, when subtracted, show the minimum semester hours required to complete the program.

1. Curricular Requests from the Department of Biological Sciences

- a. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. Biology: Botany Option
 - ii. Biology: Environmental Biology Option
 - iii. Biology: Medical Sciences Option
 - iv. Biology: Microbiology Option
 - v. Biology: Zoology Option
- b. Request for Change of Major
 - i. Clinical Laboratory Science

CHANGES OF OPTIONS AND MAJOR APPROVED

2. Curricular Requests from the Department of Chemistry

- a. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. Chemistry: Biochemistry Option
 - ii. Chemistry: Chemistry Option
 - iii. Chemistry: Pharmacy Option
- b. Request for Change of Major
 - i. Forensic Chemistry

CHANGES OF OPTIONS AND MAJOR APPROVED

- 3. Curricular Requests from the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences
 - a. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. Geology: Geology Option
 - ii. Geology: Paleontology Option

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

B. Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)
(Dave Hunter, Chair)

1. Faculty Nominations

SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES:

Council for Instructional Technology

Rashmi Sharma, Education replacing Minsun Doh 23 E&HS

UNIVERSITY COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES:

Honors Council

Pam Rockwood, Education replacing Sebastian Szjka 24 E&HS

Senator Hunter asked if there were further nominations from the floor or for any of the other vacancies on the SNC report. There were none, and the slate of candidates was elected.

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. Proposed Resolution to Add Faculty Representation to the Policy Review Committee

Whereas the faculty senate is a longstanding forum for communicating opinions and viewpoints of the faculty to the administration of the University and serves as an agency through which the faculty participate in the formation of basic university policy; and

Whereas, one of the functions of Faculty Senate is to participate in the selection of faculty members to university-wide committees; and

Whereas, more than two dozen of the policies on the Provost’s website were created by or endorsed by Faculty Senate; and

Whereas, policies created with Faculty Senate input have in the past been changed by the administration without coming back to Faculty Senate for input on the changes;

Therefore be it resolved that the WIU Faculty Senate request President Huang to allow the Faculty Senate to appoint a faculty member to the Policy Review Committee.

Chair Thompson told senators the Policy Review Committee, created last year, are reviewing the policies which guide and direct the activities of the university to see if they need to be updated or eliminated. He said these policies were originally created by different “power centers” of the university, including a number that originated from Faculty Senate or to which Faculty Senate contributed, such as the Course Syllabus Policy. Chair Thompson stated that the Executive Committee is asking for a Faculty Senate voice to be added to the Policy Review Committee to provide appropriate input. He believes this is an issue of shared governance, and Faculty Senate needs to sit at the same table and be able to look into these policies as they are reviewed. He stated that in similar cases when representation has been requested from the administration, the argument has been that if one governing group is given a seat then all of them must have one, which Chair Thompson thinks is fine. He added that there may be some policies from other areas that Faculty Senate did not have a voice on originally but should now.

Senator Hunter asked who is currently serving on the Policy Review Committee. Ms. Hamm responded that when she reached out to Committee Chair Liz Duvall, WIU’s General Counsel, in August, she was told the committee included Amelia Hartnett, Human Resources Director; Nichole Friederichsen, Civil Service Employees’ Council representative; Kat Myers, Chair of the Department of Art and Design; Audrey Adamson, Director of the Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement; Ketra Roselieb, Executive Director of Financial Affairs; Russ Morgan, Associate Provost; Billy Clow, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication; and Hector Maymi-Sugranes, Dean of University Libraries.

Senator Banash remarked that the resolution makes the point that sometimes language has been changed in policies created by Faculty Senate without the Senate being notified, which is troublesome. He asked what the mechanism is to object to such changes. He wonders what can be done now without representation on this committee and if there is a process that was used to object in the past. Ms. Hamm related that when this occurred when Christopher Pynes was Faculty Senate Chair, he wrote a strongly worded objection to the administration, but that was all that could be done after the fact. Chair Thompson stated that a Faculty Senate representative on the Policy Review Committee could communicate with the Executive Committee and would direct that any policy that needs Faculty Senate approval would be submitted to the Senate.

Senator Banash asked if there is an asterisk or some other indication showing which policies originated with Faculty Senate. Ms. Hamm responded that she reviewed all of the policies on the Provost’s website last summer and prepared an Excel table indicating which originated with Faculty Senate (or its councils) and ones that Faculty Senate was asked to endorse; senators were provided with this table in their documentation for today’s meeting.

Senator Carr asked if it could be added to the resolution that there would be an expectation that Faculty Senate would be informed and have the opportunity to have input on policy changes. She is not sure Faculty Senate would have the ability to approve or not approve all changes, but she would like to see the Senate informed of them. Chair Thompson agreed that this language could be added to the resolution, and it could be returned to the next Faculty Senate meeting under Old Business.

B. For the Good of the Body

1. Discussion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Writing at WIU

Chair Thompson stated that a number of faculty, including former Senator Lee Brice, have expressed concerns to him about ChatGPT, the intelligent chatbot that can reliably fake the opening two paragraphs of a paper. He added that the newest iteration, ChatGPT4, is due to be released in March, and faculty are concerned about what this means for the papers and

online essay questions they may assign their students. The Executive Committee has asked CAGAS to consider whether language regarding AI should be added to the Academic Integrity Policy.

Chair Thompson stated that the Executive Committee wanted to give senators and other faculty the opportunity to express their concerns or describe how they are dealing with ChatGPT. Chair Thompson related that he assigns a lot of writing in his English course and has started requiring that students do their first draft in class on Google Docs so that he can have a basic idea of what they are writing about. Chair Thompson thinks the response across the country has been to have students do more in-class writing.

Senator Banash said the Department of English is very concerned about ChatGPT. He noted there have been a lot of articles recently in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* about this. Senator Banash stated that while ChatGPT could fool an instructor reading a short essay response, it has more difficulty crafting longer essays, especially if they involve research or sourcing. He added that ChatGPT has a hard time citing LA or APA style. Senator Banash thinks Turnitin should be all over this issue. He noted that computer science programmers have developed an algorithm that they claim can predict if text is written with ChatGPT because it has specific quirks; human writers are a little “burstier” than ChatGPT. Senator Banash noted that WIU has a contractual subscription to Turnitin and thinks they should be very concerned about solving this problem.

Dean Martinelli-Fernandez stated that while she does not know what office at WIU oversees the Turnitin contract, she also used to have students begin their writing assignments in class and not deviate from that topic so that she could have a sense of their work. Sociology and Anthropology professor Robert Hironimus-Wendt said he has been thinking about this issue a lot. He noted that a student using this program would be obviously plagiarizing unless they reveal their use of ChatGPT, but he thinks the bigger and broader issue is whether ChatGPT is using citations in their documents, or whether it is also plagiarizing. Chair Thompson thinks it is, at the least, engaging in a form of chicanery. He thinks ChatGPT does try to cite sources, but if a student gives ChatGPT a question to write about, it becomes blathery after about three paragraphs. Dr. Hironimus-Wendt observed that students who use ChatGPT are not only plagiarizing and using others’ ideas as their own, but they are also participating in the broader sharing of ideas that are not their own nor the original sources’. Dr. Hironimus-Wendt already sees students citing term papers improperly and works with them to learn how to cite correctly, but he is now also starting to see things on discussion boards that do not seem to be his students’ ideas and are written differently. He has been holding discussion boards for ten years but is seeing this for the first time now. Chair Thompson had not thought about discussion boards but realizes that would be a place students might also use ChatGPT.

Senator Carr pointed out that for students in asynchronous online courses, there is no way to have students write in front of their instructors, so that solution is limited. She asked if the university could have someone research and pull together, perhaps in an ongoing way, the strategies for responding to this problem. Senator Carr noted that Princeton developed an algorithm to try to track this. She wonders if this is something the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research (CITR) could undertake. Senator Carr thinks a report from Faculty Senate would be great, but she would also like to see something ongoing for faculty. Chair Thompson related that Library faculty member Michael Lorenzen has collected quite a lot of information about ChatGPT. He asked if someone from the School of Computer Sciences might be able to speak to Faculty Senate about this technology; Computer Sciences Director Dennis DeVolder responded that is possible. Dr. DeVolder said that while he does not know what WIU’s arrangement is with Turnitin, he does know that Turnitin is actively pursuing detection of ChatGPT. Chair Thompson stated that if a Computer Sciences professor is interested in doing a presentation to Faculty Senate, the Senate would like to hear it. [Note: Computer Sciences professor Antonio Cardenas-Haro will speak to Faculty Senate on this topic at the February 21 meeting.]

Senator Banash related that about half of the essays he has read about ChatGPT indicate that it is a disaster, but the other half seem to think that faculty should “lean into it” because it is the future of white-collar work and that faculty should skill students to work with artificial intelligence, which Senator Banash thinks is an interesting and terrifying idea, but it is an ongoing debate. Chair Thompson remarked that law firms have been using this type of technology for awhile to do legal research. Mr. Cantu, SGA rep, said that while he hasn’t used ChatGPT, he has a friend who has told him it is very simple for students to use; students simply ask ChatGPT to write a two-page paper on a certain subject, then ask the program to source the document it produces and put it into a certain format. Chair Thompson asked if the sources are provided correctly; Mr. Cantu replied that he does not know, but it does provide both books and articles in the correct format, not just website citations. Senator Banash has heard that ChatGPT runs into more trouble if users try to feed it specific sources, such as if a professor asks a student to cite certain things. Chair Thompson wonders if the paid version of ChatGPT will solve this by subscribing to more data sources.

Senator Macchi related that Communication faculty talked about this in a meeting this week. She said a colleague who teaches a face-to-face class related that he tells students on the rubric that he wants them to reference the concepts and terms discussed in class. Senator Macchi noted that Communication faculty might use different vocabulary in class than would be found on the internet when looking up the same topic, so this is one way to combat usage of ChatGPT. Chair Thompson agrees with Senator Banash that ChatGPT will not go away and will, instead, become increasingly better at what it does, and faculty may have to determine some sort of détente with artificial intelligence to determine what writing in higher education should look like going forward. Dr. Hironimus-Wendt said he does not want to be able to train students to find information; he wants to train them to use and evaluate information. He added that if all students are learning is how to Google information, that is not the definition of being college educated because anyone can do that. He called ChatGPT a “Google on steroids” model.

Art and Design professor Keith Holz suggested students may use ChatGPT to prepare for exams; if professors provide students with study guides, students could feed the questions into ChatGPT, then try to correlate the answers more specifically with what is sought in the class. Dr. Holz thinks there will obviously be a learning curve, but faculty will have to think about how they teach and evaluate students in future. He thinks that to some extent faculty may have to embrace the new technology even while being totally against plagiarism. Chair Thompson observed there may be reasons to use applications such as ChatGPT for English as a Second Language students.

Motion: To adjourn (Albarracin)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Julia Albarracin, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Recording Secretary