

# WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 27 January 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and Union Capitol Rooms

## ACTION MINUTES

**SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON:** D. Allwardt, S. Chakravorti, P. Cole, R. Di Carmine, N. Gillotti, D. Gravitt, E. Hamner, H. Mason, D. McArthur, J. McKenzie, J. Robinett, F. Tasdan, S. Turkelli, J. Walker, L. Wipperling, E. Woell

**SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** E. Asare, A. Frederick, M. Hoge, R. Kelly, A. Melkumian, R. Sharma

**SENATORS ABSENT:** H. Elbe

**EX-OFFICIO:** William Gblerkpor, Parliamentarian; Mark Mossman, Provost

**GUESTS:** Audrey Adamson, Dan Barclay, Jill Bisbee, Amy Carr, Merrill Cole, Katrina Daytner, Dennis DeVolder, Patty Eathington, Sue Hum, Andrea Hyde, Bob Intrieri, Kishor Kapale, Sarah Lawson, Jessica Lin, Kyle Mayborn, Heather McIlvane-Newsad, Amy Patrick Mossman, Kat Myers, Lorette Oden, Betsy Perabo, Linda Prosis, Renee Polubinsky, Tim Roberts, Eric Sheffield, Susan Stewart, Sebastian Szyjka, Phoebe Wilson, Riley Zanger

Chair Robinett welcomed everyone to the Spring 2026 semester and expressed his appreciation for the incredible amount of work that was done last semester, much of which he and the Provost will review in their reports today. He told senators that while it can sometimes seem overwhelming, they will have a lot to keep them occupied in the spring semester as the Senate collectively tries to complete some of the things that still need to be done.

### I. Consideration of Minutes

#### A. December 2, 2025

#### **MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED**

### II. Announcements

#### A. Approvals from the Provost

##### 1. Request for Change of Option

###### a. History

##### 2. Request for Multicultural Perspectives Designation

###### a. SPA 225, Deaf Culture, 3 s.h.

#### B. Provost's Report

Provost Mossman announced that he and Chair Robinett will give a brief overview of some of the accomplishments and initiatives from the fall semester. He pointed out that the first two accomplishments listed on the PowerPoint have to do with shared governance and communication: 1) a commitment to shared governance to enhance morale, communication, and transparency, and 2) enhanced communication in the form of the Digital Dashboard, a Jotform for question submissions, and regular communication and encouragement to ask questions. He noted that there was a recommitment to shared governance during the fall semester and a belief that if the university

community communicates and shares documents better, it will improve the overall morale because more people will know what is going on. Provost Mossman related that in addition to creation of the Digital Dashboard and the Jotform for submitting questions, he has been trying to provide more updates to faculty via email and to reply as quickly as possible to the questions or concerns they might express. He added that while this is an attempt to improve communication across the university, it is specifically aimed toward the Division of Academic Affairs.

Provost Mossman noted that Faculty Senate and the Rebuild Constituency Committee will be considering a lot of documents this spring; these will be posted on the Digital Dashboard and the Provost's website, which he realizes still needs some work. He said the intention is to create as much access to those documents as possible. He encouraged anyone to reach out to him if they have questions or need for him to email the documents to them directly.

Provost Mossman asked Chair Robinett to speak about the shared governance rebuild and Faculty Senate's councils and committees. Chair Robinett noted that things worked differently this year for the searches for positions in the Provost's Office and for the two new deans. He appreciates that faculty have had a lot of opportunity to provide feedback for the assistant and associate vice president positions in a way they have not had previously. He thinks it is worth highlighting the commitment to providing an opportunity for faculty governance within shared governance by having faculty representatives on all of these searches.

Chair Robinett explained that while the search for one of the dean positions is taking a bit longer than some people may have wished, it is based on and in cooperation with the search committee, and the process is intended to make sure that faculty voices are heard rather than rushing to a timeline. He said there is an effort to make sure that things are being done right and that people have the opportunity to engage.

Chair Robinett also highlighted that there was an incredible amount of discussion about schools during the fall semester and over winter break. He reminded everyone that when the creation of the schools was approved last year, it was stated that 2025-26 would be an opportunity for rectifying any mistakes or things that were overlooked in 2024-25. He said the point has now been reached where some academic programs are ready to move their ideas for regroupings and re-associations forward. He stressed that the idea is to get these changes right and not to meet an arbitrary timeline.

Chair Robinett explained that those groups – disciplines, departments, or schools – who are looking at reforming the original model between now and, tentatively, February 13 have been engaging in ongoing conversations. He stated that since the process has been following the UPI contract and Faculty Senate procedures, there would need to be a vote of faculty in any affected areas. He said the hope is that these ideas can come forward to the Constituency Committee by February 13 so that documentation can be pulled together and brought to the Senate Executive Committee on February 17. He said ExCo can discuss the possibility of these reorganized schools, then they could come before Faculty Senate for the February 24 meeting.

Chair Robinett explained that this is important because senators will need to consider changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution this semester, and one of the key components of the Constitution is how membership of this body is formed. He noted that in order to consider changes to the Constitution, senators need to understand what the schools will potentially be so that adequate representation can be determined. He added that this will affect all of the Senate's committees and councils as well. Chair Robinett hopes that between now and February 13, deans will facilitate conversations between various groups so that there can be votes which will be taken to the Executive Committee on February 17. He noted that senators will be able to see the ExCo conversation in their minutes prior to the proposed changes coming before the Faculty Senate on February 24.

Chair Robinett stressed that this is a tentative timeline, but he is trying to make sure there is confirmation of how these processes work, an opportunity for collaboration to occur during these meetings, and that individuals have plenty of time to ask questions. He encourages anyone to ask about the process as questions should come up.

Provost Mossman emphasized that every change to the Request for Creation of New Schools documents that were voted on by Faculty Senate last spring will go through the Rebuild Constituency Committee and then come to Faculty Senate. He stressed that if things are not done collaboratively, then they will not succeed, and nothing will happen regarding changes to the schools without coming through these two groups. He believes that this needs to be done with shared governance in mind, as is also true of a number of other initiatives and the work that is being done in the Provost's Office. He added that with the new collective bargaining agreement as well as with the Rebuild, he is committed to working closely with UPI.

Provost Mossman anticipates rolling out a number of initiatives in Fall 2026, and he thinks some, such as retention, are already starting to see some successes. He anticipates a reboot of the First Year Experience (FYE) program in the fall, and Faculty Senate will be a part of that discussion. He added that FYE is rebooted about every three to four years. He noted that there are also plans to take a hard look at how assessment is working in Academic Affairs – both General Education assessment and major assessment. He noted that Senator McArthur has taken over the assessment and data collection role from Associate Provost Lori Baker-Sperry

Provost Mossman stated that another fall initiative will involve taking a look at career readiness. He stressed that this does not mean pre-professional programs with students going into targeted professions; it involves trying to figure out how to increase agency and a sense of volition in WIU students. He hopes that career readiness will be the umbrella that will tap in, along with FYE, some of those kinds of initiatives where the student is not just at WIU for the experience but also to actually get a degree, whether it be in Nursing, History, English, or any other discipline.

Provost Mossman said one spring focus will be to see the two-college leadership and structure established. He thinks that with the restaffing of the Provost's Office there is now an excellent team in place. Provost Mossman noted that Tara Feld has assumed her position as Dean of the College of Business, Health, and Community Programs, and he hopes the search is in the last steps of determining a Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education (CHASE). He added that once both deans are in place, the staffing of school directors and associate deans will follow. Provost Mossman stated that searches will be run for all of these positions.

Provost Mossman pointed out that the university is currently in Stage 2 of the Rebuild; Stage 3 will be where a lot of the work that is not able to be finished this spring will occur. He thinks the Rebuild Academic Use of Space Committee provides a good example; they have turned in an initial report and will submit a revised report in May. He guarantees that a discussion item for the fall will be how space is being used in the university.

Provost Mossman reported that the Rebuild Advising Committee turned in its report this morning, and other Rebuild committees have been working on their reports as well. He has begun to implement a Rebuild Communication Committee as part of an attempt to have regular communication across the Division of Academic Affairs – not only about the events happening in departments but also about the decisions being made, changes being undertaken, and other things happening in the Division. Provost Mossman added that the Rebuild Constituency Committee will continue to be very active and hopefully working closely with Faculty Senate, including bringing things before the Senate as the process moves forward throughout the spring semester. He observed that Senator Hamner will be updating senators on what the Rebuild Interdisciplinary and Co-Curricular Committee has done, their initial report, and their plans for the upcoming semester.

Senator Gravitt asked if the remaining searches will also be internal. Provost Mossman replied that they will. She asked if there was any important budget information that came up over the winter break that Faculty Senate might need to know about; Provost Mossman replied that there was not. He added that while the university is not out of the woods yet, the budget has improved significantly over the past year, and there are a lot of options. He admitted the administration very much hopes the state will come through with some additional funding, but even if they do not, the university is in a

position to move forward. He said the budget is still nerve wracking, but it is no longer causing panic-stricken feelings.

Senator Walker attended both of the dean interviews for the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education and thought both candidates were great. He asked if Provost Mossman could talk about what the hold-up is in choosing a dean for this college, adding that it previously seemed, especially for the first dean search, that there was a lot of urgency. Provost Mossman replied that he does not feel at all comfortable talking about personnel issues, but he does feel comfortable admitting that he pushed as hard as he could in the fall and has now absolutely changed his tune and is recommending the process slow down. He stressed that he really wants to work with the search committee, get this decision right, and not make an error. Senator Walker remarked that in talking with colleagues he has seen a sense of frustration and lack of understanding why they heard a lot of urgency previously and put in a lot of work which they do not feel has resulted in anything. Provost Mossman clarified that the work has not stopped, but he wants to make sure the right decision is made; he could make unilateral decision but prefers to work with the committee as part of the shared governance model, which takes time. He admitted that he did push for urgency on the searches, which worked for the Provost's Office position and for one dean, so four out of five searches were completed fairly quickly.

Senator Walker asked if there is anything the Provost could share to help faculty feel good about the decision to slow down while understanding the difficulty of this in light of personnel issues. Provost Mossman reiterated that he does not feel comfortable making any kind of comment. Senator Mason remarked, in the interest of transparency, that there have been rumors and some information put out, so faculty are wondering what the Provost can tell them. Provost Mossman replied that he is meeting with the search committee, but he does not feel comfortable talking about personnel. Senator Mason clarified that she is not asking the Provost to talk about personnel. Provost Mossman inquired what Senator Mason is asking for; Senator Mason responded she is asking about next steps. Provost Mossman stated that the search committee plans to meet next week, and he will hopefully meet with them after that meeting and go from there.

Senator Di Carmine, who represents Faculty Senate on the CHASE Dean Search Committee, told senators that the committee has already met once with Provost Mossman; they plan to meet again as a group on Thursday, February 4, then meet again with the Provost. Senator Gillotti asked for Provost Mossman to clarify that he can make a unilateral decision; Provost Mossman confirmed that he can. He added that the search committee makes its recommendation to the Provost's Office. Senator Gillotti asked if the Provost can make a unilateral decision if there is disagreement about the search committee's recommendation; Provost Mossman replied that he can, without a doubt, make that decision.

Chair Robinett pointed out that there are Human Resources rules that deal with some of this process. He thinks that Provost Mossman has been very thorough in having conversations with the search committee. He also believes the search committee has been incredibly diligent in their conversations, in their evaluations of what people have shared, and in the concerns that people have expressed as they went through the search process.

Chair Robinett thinks it is fair to say that there were significant differences as to how people reacted when they went through the search processes for the two deans. He pointed out that in one dean search there was only one candidate, and although many people brought comments forward during the interview, there was more of a sense of cohesion in some of that process. He is glad to hear Senator Di Carmine's remark that there has been interaction between faculty governance and the Provost's Office that led to the slowing down of the other search. He appreciates that – as frustrating as the process may be – there is listening occurring from a shared governance perspective and the search committee is being respected.

Senator Gravitt expressed her gratitude to Provost Mossman because she was extremely unhappy and frustrated when coming back from break a year ago to find out that there had been associate and assistant provosts appointed without her being aware that there was even an opening. She is a huge

proponent of faculty being able to have a say in and participate in the search process for vacancies in the Provost's Office and trying to make sure that faculty have equal representation on a search at that level. She noted that Provost Mossman has been very open to involving faculty in that process this time around; faculty were aware of the vacancies that were to be filled, served on the search committees and had input, and could, as much as possible, know what was going on.

Chair Robinett asked, since there are decisions that have to be made and actions taken in the immediate term, what the interim process is regarding leadership of the colleges. He asked who is effectively leading the effort as the university tries to move forward with college reorganization. Provost Mossman responded that the implementation must move forward, and he has asked Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Kyle Mayborn to participate, along with Dean Tara Feld and the Provost's Office. He said part of this has involved going to the different units and talking about possible changes to some of the schools. He reiterated that all of this work will come to the Constituency Committee and then to Faculty Senate; this work has to be done, so even though there is a delay in determining a dean for one of the colleges, the work is still moving forward.

Senator Gravitt asked if the Provost knows the status of faculty searches and whether all of the searches that were paused last semester will be put back on the table. She noted that there were two faculty searches for her school and asked if it is known when they will be able to be opened up again. Provost Mossman responded that his office reviews this every week. He knows that there are some upcoming retirements that will affect this, and two or three searches are ongoing.

C. Student Government Association (SGA)  
(Ripley Zanger, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

Ms. Zanger reported that SGA has not met yet this semester; their first legislative session is tomorrow. She asked senators to reach out to her if there is anything they want her to bring forward.

D. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Chair Robinett noted that due to staffing changes and the way that curriculum changes move through, a lot of faculty have seen their priorities shift over the course of the last year. He thinks there may be some faculty who may be too busy with other duties to continue to serve on Senate councils and committees. Chair Robinett is reaching out to those faculty who have not been attending meetings for councils and committee on which they serve to see if they wish to continue in that service. He noted that some Senate councils and committees have not been able to meet quorum because faculty members have not been able to attend those meetings or have not been regularly attending. He is very happy to thank these individuals for their service, on behalf of Faculty Senate, because if individuals are not going to be able to continue in the service that they have agreed to, Faculty Senate needs to replace them so that councils and committees can continue to perform their duties. He wanted senators to know that he will be reaching out to individuals in order to ask them this, but it will be done with great respect for the work that they have done and acknowledging that a lot of priorities have had to change over the course of the past year.

Chair Robinett expressed appreciation for those who have already submitted their Title IV verifications. He stressed how vitally important this is to our institution due to WIU's reliance on federal funds. He asked those who have not yet submitted their verifications to please do so by Friday, January 30. Chair Robinett observed there seems to be some confusion as to which students these need to be submitted for; he clarified that verifications need to be submitted for both graduate and undergraduate students for all courses. He explained that if a faculty member indicates that a student did not begin a course, this does not limit the student from receiving aid; what this does is communicate to Student Services that they need to check on the student. He noted that sometimes students leave the university and forget to drop their classes or forget to withdraw from a class, so that reminder before the tenth-day saves the student a lot of money. He added that this also allows Student Services to put students in touch with resources they may need but not have access to.

Chair Robinett related that Greg Phelps, Library Operations Associate, reached out to him today to share that they have a lot fewer textbooks on reserve than usual. He noted that this is a great way to save students money, and if faculty have an extra textbook that they can put on two-hour loan at the library, there is a process in place to receive those.

Chair Robinett thanked senators for all the work they have been doing. He said the PowerPoint detailing work done this past fall will be shared with all faculty. He thanked the Senate's ad hoc Faculty Governance Committee, who reviewed the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws last semester and brought forward very thoughtful recommendations. Over the winter break, Chair Robinett translated those into constitutional language and has returned that to the committee for review at their meeting tomorrow, after which revisions will be brought forward to the full Senate. He reiterated that the Senate will review the proposed revisions to the Constitution, then, when it has been approved by senators, it goes forward to the faculty at-large for a vote, after which it goes to the President for final approval.

Chair Robinett thanked Ms. Hamm for completing a charge he gave her last semester to review existing processes and timelines to provide an overview of what is currently being by councils with curricular responsibilities and when. He said this was intended to inform Senate Bylaws updates so that they can more accurately reflect Faculty Senate's role in curricular approvals and to promote greater consistency across the curricular review process. He noted that different groups use different forms asking for different information, and making this more consistent will assist with accreditation as well as assisting departments and schools to understand how those processes move forward.

Senator Gravitt asked if this will also align with the new accessibility requirements that have to be in things like syllabi. She noted that some classes have to be reviewed every so often for compliance and wonders if there will be one location to find everything that is required. Chair Robinett replied that he cannot answer this question, but he thinks others speaking today may be able to offer more guidance or suggestions on this topic.

Chair Robinett related that the Senate's Budget Transparency Committee has already had two meetings with Budget Director Renee Georges which have deepened the members' understanding of WIU's system. Chair Robinett observed that one of the most interesting things he took from these meetings has been looking at screens with the Budget Director and having her explain what they are showing and what the reporting capabilities are of WIU's system.

Chair Robinett reported the Senate Nominating Committee last semester updated their bylaws to allow for more engagement and will be working on the interest survey that will go out later this semester for individuals to indicate which service they would like to volunteer for. He expressed thanks to Senator Gillotti and the Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance, which she chairs, for their work on the president and provost evaluation surveys that senators will be considering later today. Chair Robinett appreciates their efforts to make these more consistent.

Chair Robinett observed that CAGAS has been thoughtful and thorough in their review of their operating papers and specific issues they were charged with. He reminded senators that at the beginning of the fall semester charges were brought before Faculty Senate by the Executive Committee so that senators knew what each of the councils and committees were working on. He said CAGAS will bring their recommendations forward over the course of the next few weeks.

Chair Robinett plans to work tomorrow with Ms. Hamm on the calendar of when things will be coming forward this semester. He said some items will come forward as informational reports, some will be things for which Faculty Senate will need to take action, and others will include changes to operating papers for Senate councils and committees, which affect the Senate Bylaws because membership information is included in both. Chair Robinett thanked the Senate Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction for recommending changes to their membership. He said Faculty Senate will have a lot of procedural elements to navigate this semester.

Chair Robinett related there have been discussions ongoing about what general education is and told senators to expect a charge, hopefully by the next meeting, that will establish a process for a general education review. He stated that a report from the Senate Council for Instructional Technology is due in March regarding AI and all of the changes that are taking place in regard to it. He noted that members of this council were vital in helping the university review and select accessibility software. He informed senators that a contract has been entered into for the accessibility software that needs to be in place by April so that the university can start navigating some of this process. He added that pilot testing will be occurring so that training can be rolled out for all faculty.

Chair Robinett reported the Senate Council on Intercollegiate Athletics is finalizing its scheduling report and updating its operating procedures. He said the Senate Council for International Education has reviewed its charges and will also be submitting reports and revisions to the Faculty Senate. He observed that this group was vital in the process of creating the new multicultural perspectives graduation requirement and developed forms to keep that curricular process consistent with others. Chair Robinett reported that the Senate Council on Campus Planning and Usage (CCPU) has been working with the Rebuild Academic Use of Space Committee and the Space Allocation Committee and navigating all of the changes that have been happening with facilities. He noted that Facilities Management has experienced retirements and replacements, so there has been a lot happening in that space that CCPU has been involved in.

Chair Robinett believes that artificial intelligence presents a really complex set of issues. He reminded senators that in the fall semester, surveys of faculty and student knowledge and use of AI were distributed, but only 81 faculty members and 282 students responded to the surveys, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from this data. He said the data did allow for some preliminary observations, but more in depth engagement is clearly needed, particularly given the implications for accreditation, assessment, ethical and pedagogical considerations, as well as day-to-day operational practices.

Chair Robinett pointed out that the university is understaffed in some very front-facing offices and wonders if there are opportunities where some tools may be able to be used to offset this. He noted that one AI tool which has been used as a way of engaging students is the Rocky chatbot, which can provide students with information that, realistically, it would be impossible to have staff available to provide at the times that students are asking the questions. He added that some AI applications are being considered for use not only in the classroom but for the university as a whole.

Chair Robinett reported that both students and faculty reported on the survey that they use AI tools primarily for writing, editing, and formatting; however, the survey did not provide insight into how either group is determining when such use is appropriate or what they were looking at in order to make that decision. He said student responses indicated they experience greater comfort, confidence, and frequency of AI use than faculty, and ChatGPT was identified by both groups as a commonly used tool. Chair Robinett related that faculty responses suggest they are largely teaching themselves about AI, while students reported learning primarily through social media. He said that there was broad agreement across all of the responses that clear institutional guidance and policies related to AI usage at WIU are lacking. He believes there is a great deal of confusion between what is acceptable usage of AI, when it is acceptable to use AI, and how it is acceptable to use it. Chair Robinett found interesting the number of faculty who said they used AI differently in different courses, which, in light of some of the responses, sort of makes sense.

Chair Robinett reminded senators that the Council for Instructional Technology was charged with helping to address some of these issues. He said one thing the Senate has requested from the council is that they bring forward a recommendation for syllabus language regarding AI – not what is allowable but rather a statement that will help delineate what is communicated to students so that they are aware what is and is not allowed regarding use of AI in their courses. He added that if anyone is interested in digging more into the data related to the AI surveys, they can let him know.

Chair Robinett asked that everyone continue to be respectful that different representative groups on campus have different functions, but there are times they need to come together to do things. He

thanked UPI for recently hosting a social so that people could come together and learn more about the ongoing equitable funding conversations that are taking place. Chair Robinett appreciates how often UPI President Merrill Cole shares information with him and the invitations that everyone receives to attend UPI executive sessions. He asked everyone to mark April 16 on their calendars as this may be an important advocacy day for higher education in Springfield. He has also been informed that UPI may be reaching out to faculty senates to ask for some actions related to the Illinois Board of Higher Education and other governmental entities.

Chair Robinett reported that there has been robust discussion today in the Council of Illinois University Senates, the group of academic senates across the state. He said a lot of emails have been exchanged in preparation for their meeting on February 20.

Senator Gravitt observed that a communication from Provost Mossman stated that students and faculty would not be forbidden from participating in the higher education advocacy event on April 16. She asked what this means – whether it is a teach-out or whether faculty are not supposed to hold classes that day. Provost Mossman responded that his understanding is that there will be buses and other transportation provided for faculty and students to travel to Springfield to articulate the need for the Equitable Funding Act. He said the position of the administration is that neither students nor faculty will be penalized for attending these activities. Senator Wipperling thinks what Dr. Cole said at a meeting at The Wine Sellers was that the teach-out on April 16 involves faculty travelling to Springfield and teaching students there about WIU needing this funding in order to move forward as an educational institution. Provost Mossman recalls there was a similar effort during the budget impasse, and from his perspective at that time there was tension between WIU’s administration and UPI. He wanted to make clear in his announcement that the current administration supports this advocacy. He noted that WIU desperately needs the Equitable Funding Bill, or some version of it, to pass because inequitable university funding is at the root of so many issues in state higher education.

Chair Robinett thanked Dr. Cole attending today’s meeting and asked him to add to the conversation. Dr. Cole said he does not want to contradict anything that has been said but added that UPI is trying to mobilize as much of the Macomb community as possible to join WIU students and faculty in Springfield on April 16. He said UPI is advocating that if faculty teach on that day, they take a personal day or do what they can to join others in Springfield. He said that while the bussing situation is still being worked out, there should be enough buses to get everyone there, or individuals can drive themselves; UPI is also trying to get as many students there as possible because legislators will listen more to students than to faculty. He is happy to speak to student groups about this and asked that faculty do everything possible to encourage students to attend. Dr. Cole noted that UPI is doing a lot with funding this semester, but the teach-out will be the biggest effort; faculty will not be teaching students that day, but rather students will be teaching legislators what they are going through with their student loans, lack of opportunity, and what is happening to them.

Senator Hamner said he wants to emphasize and echo what Dr. Cole is saying. He related that he sat in front of a committee of the Illinois Senate in April of last year testifying about WIU’s situation in regard to funding, and the message he heard back repeatedly was to ask why the students were not pleading for this. He said legislators really want to see students, and faculty need to figure out how to help students advocate for themselves along with the voices of faculty.

Senator Gravitt asked if the university will be able to provide buses for as many students as they can take. Chair Robinett thinks more information will be provided in the coming weeks from UPI regarding what will be offered. Dr. Cole clarified that UPI and WIU are not supplying or paying for the buses; the non-profit Partnership for College Completion will be providing them. Dr. Cole does not know the number of buses that will be provided because he does not have a real sense of what WIU’s need will be and what he should communicate about how many buses WIU might want. Senator Gravitt asked if that means the sooner that faculty can get back to Dr. Cole, the sooner he can provide that information; Dr. Cole confirmed that is correct.

Senator Wipperling thinks the person who spoke to faculty about this said that faculty cannot talk about the higher education advocacy day in their classes but they can speak to students after class.

Dr. Cole explained that he is always working around not being political during business hours because, although he is a very political person, there are things he just cannot say to students. He recognizes that this effort is sort of on the borderline because it involves advocating for higher education, but he thinks that faculty should probably, just in case, avoid talking about it in their classrooms. He noted that with what is happening at the federal level, this could lead to conversations that faculty should not have with students during class. He thinks it is good practice to give students an idea of the topic and tell them that if they can hang around for a few minutes after class, he would like to talk to them, just in order to make sure he does not cross any lines.

Chair Robinett pointed out that the Faculty Senate Constitution says that the Senate is responsible for looking at things that affect the overall health of the institution and empowered to have conversations about them. He thinks there can be no denying at this point that funding is vital to the overall health of WIU. He believes that having these conversations can deepen senators' understanding so that they can talk with those they represent about what the Equitable Funding Model is, and it may be worthwhile to have more conversations about this during the spring semester so that senators will understand the challenges this initiative faces and how it might move forward.

Chair Robinett ended his report by acknowledging that the amount of work from students, advisors, faculty, staff, and administrators is truly staggering. He expressed his thanks for this work as everyone gets ready to start the semester.

#### E. Other Announcements

##### 1. Amy Patrick Mossman, Director, Assessment, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning

Chair Robinett observed that assessment, accreditation, and strategic planning links with many of the discussions occurring now about who WIU is and where the university is going. Dr. Mossman told senators she wants to update them on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation review. She said WIU has completed its Year 4 Assurance Review on the Open Pathway. She explained that some universities, including WIU, can choose whether to be on the standard pathway or the open pathway; open pathway has a little more flexibility but requires a Year 4 review. Dr. Mossman said she is happy to report that WIU retained its accreditation.

Dr. Mossman reported that HLC in their response identified areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and two areas where they are requiring interim monitoring reports, to be due in July 2027. She said a major positive is that the HLC thinks WIU's academic program assessment is very strong; the university has solid processes in place and is meaningful in the ways faculty are involved in that process. Dr. Mossman noted that the HLC's main concern under Criterion 4 involved co-curricular assessment, which reviewers found to be less developed and consistent than the academic assessment. She said they are requiring an interim monitoring report to demonstrate stronger, more meaningful co-curricular assessment.

Senator Gravitt asked if Dr. Mossman could explain more about what co-curricular assessment involves. Dr. Mossman explained that what HLC is looking at in terms of co-curricular assessment are things happening outside of a classroom that are not for a grade. She recognizes that this can get a little confusing because, for instance, service learning can be co-curricular, but a program could assess student learning as some sort of professional development on the academic side. She added that what the HLC is looking at for co-curricular assessment involves a lot of the things Student Success does, such as tutoring.

Dr. Mossman told senators that Michelle Janisz, Director of the Transition and Academic Skills Center under the Vice President for Student Success, is the university's Co-Curricular Assessment Coordinator. Dr. Mossman has been working with Dr. Janisz, Associate Provost Lori Baker-Sperry, and Senator McArthur, the new Academic Assessment Coordinator, to reach out to units across the university on revising or developing co-curricular assessment

plans. She said they are being asked to start small, with maybe two learning outcomes for each program, and responses have been received from everyone submitting plans. Dr. Mossman anticipates that preliminary data will be available this spring, after which a more comprehensive rollout will occur in 2026-27 ahead of the July 2027 interim report deadline, so she thinks good progress is being made.

Dr. Mossman reported that HLC reviewers also encouraged making better use of retention and completion data, moving beyond goals alone to a clear analysis of which students are most affected and how initiatives are designed in response to the data. She said the Divisions of Student Success and Academic Affairs are working together on this effort. Dr. Mossman noted that one of the initiatives, the Illinois Success Launch, works with institutions across the state on different focus areas; the one for the group WIU is in focuses on reducing DFW rates. Dr. Mossman said another initiative involves a national multi-institutional study of leadership that examines student experiences at rural institutions. She added that there is no monitoring on this; it is just something that was mentioned.

Dr. Mossman related that under Criterion 5, which has to do with institutional effectiveness, resources, and planning, HLC mentioned that when the university collects a great deal of data, it needs a clearer framework showing how that data informs decisions and how outcomes are evaluated. She said the HLC will require an interim monitoring report in July 2027 focused on WIU's financial position, the impacts of restructuring, internal controls, and long-term sustainability. Dr. Mossman is working with division leaders, who are also working with their staffs, to strengthen how the university documents and communicates this work for the HLC as well as for ourselves.

Dr. Mossman concluded the work really reaffirmed much of the work that is already underway at WIU as well as identifying areas to work on for improvements. She thinks the interim reports will provide an opportunity to show that the university is making progress and what things have been targeted for focused improvement.

Senator Gravitt asked if Senator McArthur will be reaching out to the individuals working with the different programs. Her understanding is that this part of the process is now being streamlined so that information can be posted directly instead of having to go through the chair or director before reaching the faculty. Dr. Mossman responded this is the way the annual assessments of General Education and learning outcomes in programs will work. She related that there have been discussions about ways to improve the user experience with submitting this data and also consideration of ways to make the process more transparent, such as putting it into a dashboard such as has been done with the Rebuild. She said the goal is to make it easier to complete assessment and to do it in more meaningful ways while also trying to make it consistent. She added that individuals have been meeting pretty frequently to determine ways to do this. She said the group is starting to see some feedback in support of these efforts; for example, a Google Form has been developed to assist with co-curricular assessment.

Provost Mossman pointed out the HLC reviewers found the Academic Affairs side of assessment to be fine, but the Provost's Office has, of their own volition, recognized that it needs work, especially toward making assessment meaningful, directly connecting it to curricular changes, and similar things that have not necessarily always been working that way. Provost Mossman admitted that there was no co-curricular assessment in place a year before the university's ten-year review, but his office was able to get that up and running fairly quickly. He thinks it is certainly time to make co-curricular assessment more robust, particularly since there is new staff in the Provost's Office and everyone is trying to think strategically about connecting these types of things. He thinks it is important to connect what the university does well with assessment in the curriculum with how co-curricular assessment works and connect that directly with learning outcomes, retention initiatives, and those types of things.

Senator Gravitt asked if there will potentially be a platform or framework developed that everyone can use to submit their information, similar to what is being developed for ACE sheets. She thinks if the framework was there, it would make this process a lot easier. Provost Mossman replied that ideally something like this could be developed, but it is difficult because there is such a diversity of disciplines across the institution and very different things are being assessed. He added that the different ways of doing assessment have always been a sticking point, just as they have with trying to assess the First Year Experience (FYE) program. He noted that there is such diversity in the way FYE works that it is hard to develop a measure that fits each program.

Dr. Mossman would like programs to be able to easily see what they submitted for assessment in the past because this would be helpful if there was turnover in a department. She explained that every department will still determine their own learning outcomes and direct measures, but the Provost's Office would like the feedback loop to be a little easier to navigate, particularly if there are some changes that are required. She added they are still talking about what would be the best fit for this because programs vary a lot. Dr. Mossman noted that sometimes the feedback indicates that the report submitted did not provide what was being sought in terms of assessment. She thinks providing some additional information in the feedback loop will help individuals focus on how to make better use of their time to address what is needed.

Senator Gravitt remarked that the Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction has different forms to use for different types of curricular requests. She recognizes that not everyone's assessment will be the same, but she thinks it would be nice if there was some kind of form that submitters could choose that would best fit their kind of assessment needs; then, their assessment would be submitted in the same way each time by simply typing it on the form. Senator McArthur thinks this is great feedback and said the group is trying to develop something like this. He is helping Dr. Mossman gather new information for the assessment and accreditation webpage, and he thinks some mock assessment forms might be a good thing to add. He hopes that a form can be used so that things are submitted consistently, even though programs will have different learning outcomes, direct measures, and results. Senator Gravitt thinks an example would be very helpful for those, like her, who learn best with visuals. Dr. Mossman said the Provost's Office is trying to find ways to demystify the assessment process.

Provost Mossman pointed out that there are disciplines that do massive amounts of assessment work for their accrediting bodies. He noted that in the past these programs have been told they cannot use that work toward their curricular accreditation for WIU, but Provost Mossman thinks a way needs to be determined so that they can. He observed that departments naturally value the assessment work they do for their accrediting bodies more than they value university assessment done for the HLC, so thought needs to be given to how that can work into university assessment as well.

Chair Robinett thanked Dr. Mossman for sharing her time as the university works through this process.

2. Interdisciplinarity and Co-Curricular Engagement  
(Senator Everett Hamner, Professor, English, and Audrey Adamson, Executive Director, Outreach and Quad Cities Campus Operations)

Chair Robinett related that Senator Hamner and Ms. Adamson asked for an opportunity to engage with senators and brainstorm in a conversation related to the information their committee is bringing forward. He noted that this, again, deals with the greater health of the institution.

Senator Hamner stated that the Rebuild Interdisciplinary and Co-Curricular Committee includes Amy Carr, Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies; Merrill Cole,

English; Jackie Price, Director, Student Development and Success Center; Rashmi Sharma, Education; Maureen Bezold, Health and Wellness; and Todd Lough, Law Enforcement and Justice Administration; and is co-chaired by Senator Hamner and Audrey Adamson. He noted that they met nine times during the fall and for an hour with the Chairs' Council where they talked through a lot of ideas. He said the group submitted a draft report to the Provost's Office in mid-October; it has yet to be released, but they want to try to bring some consensus around what it looks like to engage in interdisciplinarity and co-curricularity productively, meaningfully, and non-threateningly at WIU.

Senator Hamner observed that one of the messages that has come through in some conversations among the group and with others is that interdisciplinarity means very different things to different people. He thinks people may struggle with the term because the translation of the prefix turns it into non-disciplinarity; it, thus, becomes an amorphous field that is non-methodological, non-rigorous, some of this, and some of that. He thinks it indicates to some a difficulty in knowing what the outcome is or how to make sense of it, which in some points of view presents a threat to historically disciplinary areas of expertise that dig deep, develop languages and push hard on the correct terms and right models to get to knowledge as defined by that discipline.

Senator Hamner said one thing the committee wants to emphasize is that true interdisciplinarity means deeply respecting disciplinarity. He stated it involves learning across and building translational capacity among the different methodologies and languages that everyone brings to the academic enterprise. He related that as the committee has reached toward that, they have tossed some things around and developed some proposals as possibilities for what this could look like at WIU in a more meaningful way. He said they have tried to look back at what has been done historically with past majors that have been interdisciplinary or understood in that way. He noted that the committee has also tried to articulate the way that many individual disciplines at WIU regard themselves as relatively interdisciplinary compared to others. Senator Hamner stressed that those relationships and cross-pollinations are something the committee thinks should be valued; they want to enable these types of interactions more and get past some of the silo-ization that tends to happen in bigger institutions as people tend to work with those who they see most regularly. He said the committee wants to benefit all of WIU's students through the excitement that can come when some of these doors are opened.

Senator Hamner told senators some quick, imaginative examples to think of when imagining interdisciplinarity might be if Western were to truly invest in the connections between AI, education, and society and brought people with expertise across lots of subject areas into intense conversations that are both curricular and non-curricular around these topics. He noted, as another example, that WIU has individuals with expertise in agriculture, in watersheds, in energy, and in environmental impacts that spread across a lot of different disciplines, and yet these people do not necessarily know one another or interact sufficiently to have the kind of impacts they could. He observed that the university has those with expertise in rural and urban public health and educational access; others have expertise in race, geography, law and emergency services that all interweave in complex ways and matter a great deal, but those individuals speak in different languages and draw on different histories. He added that these are not exclusive categories but just represent some the committee has tossed around.

Senator Hamner remarked that one of the committee's most recent proposals is in response to the fact that, historically, it has been a challenge to have ACEs awarded simply for the act of co-teaching. He said they have been thinking about how to institutionalize the option to teach across disciplines in partnership with each other, given the university's historical means of counting ACEs.

Senator Hamner stated that Ms. Adamson will speak about the co-curricular part of what the committee has been doing, adding that they are equally concerned with both. He

increasingly sees that if individuals are to get beyond their classroom walls and disciplinary silos, they also have to get outside their classroom walls in terms of the institution and constantly be thinking about public impacts and the ways students can taste the world beyond exclusively WIU before they leave it.

Senator Gravitt asked if the reason that co-teaching is not allowed ACEs is because the union does not like the faculty to share ACEs for a class. She wonders why if she taught the first half of the semester and another faculty member taught the second half of a 3 s.h. course they could not simply receive 1.5 ACEs apiece. Senator Hamner replied that right now the university does not have a contract model that makes that possibility explicit. He added that he would not use the term “disallowed” so much as that the administration has not yet figured out a way to do it on an institutional level or how to incentivize and encourage it sufficiently. Senator Gravitt remarked that if the UPI contract does not include this, it should perhaps be added during conversations about the new contract going forward. Senator Hamner thinks there is an opportunity as the university rebuilds to make this kind of possibility part of what can be done and provide the space, incentives, and structure for it to be easy as opposed to it being weird.

Ms. Adamson said she wants to talk about some of the work toward co-curricular assessment as well as embedding some of that in student learning outcomes and other areas, similar to what Dr. Mossman spoke about. She stated that because the university is so focused on co-curricular assessment right now, the committee is trying to figure out how to make sure they are running in the same direction; they want to try to align their report and efforts toward other things that are already happening at the institution in a variety of places. She related they are considering how to support these efforts and make sure that everyone is speaking some of the same language as they talk about student learning outcomes and things that are happening both inside and out of the classroom. She added it is also important to make sure that some of these things are getting embedded into the curriculum.

Ms. Adamson stated that part of her role is overseeing the University Career Center. She reminded senators that Provost Mossman spoke a little bit about the career readiness aspect, particularly in regard to Western being an opportunity institution. She noted that some of this happens co-curricularly, in terms of things happening outside of the classroom, but it is important to determine how these conversations can also occur inside the classroom, how to assess what students are learning from them, and what outcomes are resulting from these efforts, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Ms. Adamson related the committee is working to take the feedback they got from the Chairs’ Council and from her meeting with the Executive Committee, as well as coming to Faculty Senate, and hopes to do a little more talking in the spring with student organizations and leadership and with academic organizations. She said the committee may potentially hold some listening sessions that would allow them to figure out, as Senator Hamner said, that the language around such terms as “interdisciplinary” and “co-curricular” can be very different. She thinks it is important to determine how these things work in tangent to result in creating the best outcomes possible for WIU students and so that these stories can be told in the best way possible in order to really assess what those outcomes were.

Ms. Adamson recognizes there is a lot going on with this but hopes that in the near future the committee will be able to create a little more structure. She said they have not yet had the chance to meet this semester but will be doing so soon in order to take the feedback they received at the end of last semester, embed that into the draft report, and then hopefully continue to move forward to develop a completed project. She recognizes that it is a work in progress but wanted to make sure that if individuals had questions now, they could ask them, as well as alerting everyone to be on the lookout to provide feedback in the near future.

Chair Robinett thanked Ms. Adamson and Senator Hamner for sharing this information. He asked Associate Provost Jessica Lin if she could speak a little about the understanding

around co-teaching. Associate Provost Lin clarified that there are quite a few examples of co-teaching and collaborative teaching experiences happening at WIU, including sharing ACEs. She noted that Music has quite a few different specialties working together, co-teaching, and each receiving base compensation accordingly. She said there are examples where faculty have gotten inventive and creative and have looked for faculty in other disciplines to teach across department lines; she has seen a lot of ways in which they support each other and recognize expertise across various areas, so there is a mechanism, and it can absolutely be done. She added that incentivizing this might lead to a different conversation, but these collaborations exist on the campus and there is the ability to recognize co-teaching.

Senator Hamner said he would be curious about these models and asked to follow up with Associate Provost Lin. He noted that wherever the university has succeeded in doing this, the committee may be able to build on that. Associate Provost Lin said that she has worked with several chairs and deans on how to document these collaborations. Provost Mossman remarked that when he was Chair of the Department of English, they paired sections of ENG 180 for two years, one of those with POLS 180 and one with an Intro to Art class. He recognizes that this is not exactly co-teaching, but it does involve pairing sections together, which is another example of synergy.

Senator Gravitt related that at one time she requested a Math class to be taught for her major, but when the Math Department could not cover it at one point she was allowed to teach it, even though she teaches in another department. She asked if this could also be considered co-teaching. Associate Provost Lin responded this is an example of ACEs being used in a less common way by using faculty expertise from one discipline to contribute to another discipline; she does not, however, think this is what is meant by co-teaching, where there are two to three people on a schedule. She added, though, that examples like Senator Gravitt's do exist, and there are ways to recognize this on the ACE sheets; the schedule build system does technically allow for multiple instructors of different percentages to be allowed onto the schedule, and ACEs can be apportioned accordingly. Senator Gravitt observed that the Engineering senior projects have different ACE assignments for different components of the course. Associate Provost Lin agreed there are ways to do this, and she is always happy to work through an ACE issue on anyone's chart.

Senator Hamner remarked it is good to hear that the bottleneck may not be as significant with the contract as the committee had understood up to this point. He thinks there may instead be a process-oriented bottleneck that involves chairs of specific disciplines feeling like there are only a certain number of faculty to teach the courses, and if not all courses are covered then someone above the chair level will be unhappy. He does not think the opportunity to build something as a faculty member is felt across disciplines because of the way the university has historically scheduled, so this is an institutional cultural challenge as much as it is a potentially contractual one regarding working out the details. He thinks the problem is how to pursue, in a truly respectful and curious way, things that students in one discipline want but which a different discipline may have a stake in or may have different methodologies that they can bring expertise to. He noted that students want classes that will excite them, but they also want whatever will get them to graduation without extra credits being added to their majors. He thinks it is important to determine how to make this real so that a faculty member like him, who has been working on interdisciplinarity at WIU for the past 18 years, is not surprised to hear that there are already ways this is being done in some disciplines with regularity. He thinks there is a lot of opportunity here if the university can get over the humps.

Senator Hamner would appreciate it if senators would share with him, either now or later, what they hear when discussions turn to co-curricularity and professional engagement outside of the classroom. He would like to know how the various senators' disciplines already do this. Senator Hamner noted that some departments, like his own Department of English, require a specific professionalization course that is part of the major and which every student has to work through, while other disciplines may do informal things through

multiple courses and still others may not have as much of that happening as senators may like to see. He would like for senators to also answer the same question about interdisciplinarity. He said the committee wants feedback, and that can look very different depending upon one's college.

Chair Robinett suggested that senators take about five minutes to provide this feedback before moving on to the CPPP report. Senator Allwardt remarked that whenever this comes up in her program, Social Work, because they are accredited any class that counts toward the major has to be taught by someone with a Social Work degree, which creates a bottleneck. She said many Social Work faculty have ideas for things they think would be interesting, but in order to teach those things they need to convince someone above them to hire someone to teach another course in order to free the faculty member up, and that will never happen because they do not have the money. She said because of this bottleneck that requires several chess pieces to move at once, the faculty member is discouraged from developing an idea if it seems impossible for the next step of the process to work out. Senator Allwardt recalled that Social Work used to offer, in conjunction with English, a course in Creative Writing for Social Work when they had 250 students, and the students loved it, but this was only possible because there was an MSW on staff who could teach it as a Social Work elective. She wishes there was a way to make something like this work, but right now Social Work only has two faculty members, so it feels impossible because someone would have to be convinced to allow for an adjunct faculty member to be hired. She thinks this is where bottleneck thinking comes in: she has ten ideas to do but cannot take the time to develop them because she does not think they will play out. She added that this does not mean she does not want to develop them; it means there seem to be too many barriers.

Senator Wipperling related that there is a set of curricula for Musical Theater, which is a three-major degree. She explained that having an acting specialist, a music specialist, and an accompanist in a room becomes very beneficial for a Music Theater degree, and in the past all three positions received ACEs for that work, but that is no longer the case. She stated that because these resources need to be available to give the best education for Music Theater students, one or two persons – the accompanist and/or the acting specialists – are getting ACEs for that, while the music specialists are not getting ACEs but are still being asked to come in and provide offerings as often as possible. She stated that while music specialists are trying to come to classes as often as possible for the benefit of students, since they are no longer receiving ACEs they also need to fill their ACE load with other things while not going into overload. Senator Wipperling added this change occurred this year in order to save the Department of Theatre and Dance money while trying to continue to do what has been recommended. She said that in terms of co-curriculars, the department has an entire season of shows where students are given a practicum to either work backstage or be cast in a show. She does not think that students are graded for this, but it is a requirement of the major to complete a certain number of practicum credits prior to graduation.

Senator Gravitt remarked that one of the issues the School of Engineering and Technology has when trying to work with other units is that their class times and schedules are very different. She noted that sometimes even within her own unit the class times overlap, and students have to leave early for one class in order to go to another. She thinks this needs to be a conversation at both the Senate and the Provost levels. Senator Gravitt related that the College of Business and Technology is conducting a pilot program this semester to see how only offering courses Monday through Thursday would work out, but she has heard from an advisor that there are problems because some units are still offering courses on Monday-Wednesday-Friday and there are still the issues of overlapping times. She thinks, based on the reduction in numbers of students and staff, the university needs to revisit its standardized scheduling options in order to have fewer across the board and stop letting anyone do what they want. She observed that it is difficult to choose a time for her classes when she does not know when the Geology course that is also required for her major will be offered, which might require her switching times so that students are not blocked from taking their other required courses.

Chair Robinett pointed out that this has been one of the primary charges to the Rebuild Efficiency Committee. He said it was also part of the logic behind moving to a two-college model with schools, so that efficiencies could be improved in regard to scheduling. He thinks the test is making sure the university continues to honor the traditions, pedagogy, and purpose of its academic programs while achieving some level of standardization that will allow for better use of limited resources in terms of not only capital but also facilities and faculty. He believes there needs to be sweet spot where student needs can be met in a way that also preserves what has been and where the university is going. Chair Robinett expressed thanks to the Efficiency Committee and to Registrar Sarah Lawson who, because of the way that schedules and buildings work at WIU and the way things are centralized, shoulders a lot of that load. He observed that, as AIMS Director Stacie Hunt shared in December, a lot is going on with Colleague and other things right now because these systems are being built as the university continues to move forward. He noted that while WIU has had challenges in the past, there is no better time to question those challenges and to ask what could be in the future.

Senator Gravitt remarked some of the problems with scheduling is the fault of her own unit because historically it has been up to each faculty member to determine what time they want to teach their class; she might coordinate with one other faculty member in her school but she does not bother to think about everyone else in her unit because they do not necessarily share the same classrooms. She thinks part of the problem is the freedom that faculty have been given in the past to decide when they want to do things according to their own convenience; this makes things convenient for the faculty but not so much for the conglomeration of other people who have to work with them.

Senator Gillotti remarked there a lot of things that are organically present within classes in the Arts that faculty would love to capitalize on; she, for instance, would love to see her students playing in the orchestra pit for a theatre production. She stated that as the system exists right now, however, she is doing the job she was hired to do and is also doing the job of someone who is no longer at the university, and so are a lot of her colleagues in the School of Music. She said that many Music faculty are covering for faculty and staff who are no longer present to help meet the standards of what has existed for their school, at least administratively, for the past decade or more. Senator Gillotti would love to do those things that currently a lack of resources, time, and even the necessity of taking care of herself as a human, prevent. She thinks faculty are at the maximum of capacity in terms of how much they can stretch, and this is not sustainable.

Senator McArthur remarked that since he has started to learn more about the administrative side of things, particularly with assessment, he agrees that the current situation is not sustainable and the university needs to get to a better place. He fully supports bi-disciplinary courses and thinks they are great; he took a bi-disciplinary course in college that combined English and Philosophy in a fascinating way. He thinks, though, that without knowing who will be in the various positions and who the chairs will be who can consolidate the coordination of courses, these things cannot work. Senator McArthur noted that he does unpaid recruitment work in Chicago a couple of times a semester, and the Department of Art and Design offers First Wednesdays on a gratis basis, so he sympathizes with others in similar positions. He hopes the Rebuild and right sizing will solve a lot of these problems.

Chair Robinett observed that the Council on Provost and Presidential Performance has done an excellent job bringing forth recommendations for today's meeting, so asked senators if they wish to continue the current conversation that they bring it up again during For the Good of the Body at the end of the meeting.

### III. Reports of Committees and Councils

#### A. Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance (CPPP)

(Nicole Gillotti, Chair)

Senator Gillotti thanked the committee for their contribution to making some of the edits as well as expressing thanks to the Senate Executive Committee and to Ms. Hamm for providing another set of eyes for an inconsistencies that might have existed.

1. Draft President Survey

Senator Gillotti outlined the changes that were made to the previous presidential survey to update it for distribution this spring:

- Information in the introductory paragraph was updated to indicate the current CPPP chair.
- QID16, 17, and 18 were previously one question, but CPPP felt that this was a lot to include in a single question and that it was important to separate it into three separate categories.
- The verbiage for QID 38 was changed to address how respondents identify in a more respectful manner.
- A rank question was added.

**NO OBJECTIONS TO PRESIDENT SURVEY**

2. **Draft Provost Survey**

Senator Gillotti listed the changes the committee has proposed for the provost survey:

- The introduction was changed to match the president's survey; these were totally different previously.
- The self-evaluation was updated to the current year.
- In QID4, the word "scholarship" was changed to "scholarly research" because CPPP thought this more specifically reflects the duties of full-time faculty in their three branches of responsibilities.
- A question regarding recruitment was added as QID7 because, given the decline in student population, this seemed to be a very relevant topic in the current climate.
- A reference to the Provost's website outlining the Provost's duties was added to QID26 so that faculty can click on it to get an accurate opinion.
- The verbiage was reworded in QID31 to respectfully ask how respondents identify.
- A rank question was added.

Senator Wipperling asked if the paragraph in the introduction indicating that the President receives written comments from the Provost's survey needs to also indicate that those written comments are also provided to the Provost. This was confirmed as an oversight and will be corrected before the survey is distributed.

Senator Gravitt asked if the President and Provost get to see the unedited, raw comments of their own surveys, which can sometimes be mean or nasty. Senator Gillotti replied that she is not involved in this process for animosity but for objective facts, and she thinks that they both just received a summary of the comments. Chair Robinett corrected that the President and Provost, as individuals, do see their comments; however, those comments are not made public. He added that summarizing those comments is one of the tasks of CPPP, and he appreciates the work they are doing so that this report can come forward later this spring.

Senator McArthur observed that some questions might be beyond the control of the Provost and President, such as QID10, which asks whether the Provost effectively promotes policies that foster the activities of the respondent's department or academic unit. He admits that while this might be a fair question, a question about funding scholarly research might require

some sort of preamble indicating that, given the state of affairs, the persons being evaluated are doing the best that they can. He thinks that in regard to giving money or funding research, the questions seem patently unfair because anyone in the position would do a poor job of funding research in the current situation. Provost Mossman remarked that the Provost Travel Awards are back, albeit in a smaller version.

Senator Walker, who serves on CPPP, thinks that the self-evaluations from the President and Provost are kind of designed to provide that background and context. Senator Gillotti acknowledged that the surveys do not paint a picture of sunshine and rainbows or attempt to gaslight anyone into thinking the university is living large, but she thinks it is important to be honest about what is happening. She thinks both the Provost and President's self-evaluations have captured that. She added that CPPP is not naïve to what is happening with the university.

Senator Gravitt asked if most of the questions include a section where respondents can explain their answer. Senator Gillotti responded that there are opportunities to provide comments but not after every question. Senator Gravitt thinks it might be nice to have those next to the individual question so that respondents can explain why they answered the way they did.

Chair Robinett asked senators to keep in mind that the surveys need to be manageable across time. He noted that the surveys offer an opportunity for the Provost and President to provide their own feedback on how they feel they are doing while also giving faculty the opportunity to say what they see as the Provost's and President's strengths and weaknesses. He noted that the university is living through extraordinary times, and it is important to recognize the administrative churn that has occurred over time. He pointed out that, realistically, what the surveys should be able to provide, if WIU has stability in its leadership, is the ability to track responses over a series of years as these surveys are continued. He stated that a record of strengths and weaknesses over time can begin to provide some objective data – as objective as it can be – as to how things are being done.

#### **NO OBJECTIONS WITH CORRECTION TO PROVOST SURVEY**

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Senator Hamner reaffirmed what Senator Gillotti remarked about the context mattering, which is one of the big hurdles for the Rebuild Interdisciplinary and Co-Curricular Committee in these kinds of efforts. He said that while individuals can think there are ways to make this effort work, the reality is that it takes a lot of extra time to work across traditional boundaries. He recognizes that there are faculty who want to do that and will go the extra mile insofar as they can, but when they are already stretched that does not tend to happen. Senator Hamner said that is why he used the word “incentivize” and why the committee has explored providing ACEs for these types of things in a way that is attractive to faculty as they explore ways that their research and this type of interdisciplinarity can work with each other and harmonize in teaching.

Senator Gravitt remarked the School of Engineering and Technology's work document does address this; it assigns ACEs to various components of courses, but this is not apparent in the course descriptions. She said the work documents were set up to address who is sharing the load in a co-curricular way, but she is not sure whether this is typical everywhere else.

**Motion:** To adjourn (Wipperling)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm  
Faculty Senate Office Manager and Recording Secretary