

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 24 October 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: J. Albarracin, S. Bailey, B. Bellott, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, L. Ebert Wallace, H. Elbe, D. Gravitt, E. Hamner, D. Hunter, S. Ko, J. Land, A. Lewis, K. Perone, B. Petrocovici, J. Sarra, M. Shamsuddoha, Y. Tang, S. Turkelli, K. Wiseley, L. Wipperling

Ex-officio: Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Provost Manoochehr Zoghi

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Atherton, D. Barr, C. Chadwell

GUESTS: Amy Carr, Craig Conrad, Kassie Daly, Triston Eddlemon, Tara Feld, Doug Freed, Jeffrey Keith, Sarah Lawson, Kristi Mindrup, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Lorette Oden, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prorise, Carlyann Pyles, Eric Sheffield

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. October 10, 2023

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

Senator Hunter suggested that the chairs of the ad hoc committees have their WIU titles added to their names in the Executive Committee minutes.

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Provost Zoghi announced that following the Board of Trustees meeting a couple of weeks ago on the Quad Cities campus, the administration has been working diligently with the academic deans and yesterday met with chairs during the Chairs' Council meeting. He stated that the administration is trying to address the concerns that were raised at the BOT meeting and expressed his appreciation for everyone's cooperation and contributions as the university works through the current challenging times, particularly in the next couple of months with scheduling courses for the spring and other issues. Senator Hamner asked if Provost Zoghi has any specifics he can share regarding how he anticipates the spring semester looking different than the current fall semester. Provost Zoghi responded it is too early to say except that over time, starting at the beginning of the semester, the administration plans to keep a close eye on the courses being offered and the numbers because that is a big concern. He said the administration wants to make sure there are not multiple sections of courses with low enrollment and suggested that perhaps enrollment could be increased by offering a course next fall rather than in the spring. Provost Zoghi noted that oftentimes students do not enroll in courses until close to the beginning of the semester so it is difficult to tell what will happen until closer to next semester.

Parliamentarian Robinett observed that when speaking about low-enrolled courses, if a faculty member is still within their ACE window and not going into overload, it may not be the low-enrolled course, in and of itself, that is leading to expenditures. Provost Zoghi responded that there can be cost savings if courses are not enrolled, although some, of course, are required for students to graduate. He said it has been suggested that if sections were merged it might free up a faculty member to contribute to other areas such as advising, outreach, or a combination of these.

Chair Albarracin asked if this would be worked out with the consent of the faculty member or how else it would be worked out because faculty members' duties are pretty specific. Provost Zoghi responded that schedules are determined by chairs, who work closely with the faculty in their departments. He noted that deans have oversight of these schedules, and the deans work closely with the Provost's office. He thinks it is important to make sure there are checks and balances in order to be more intentional in offering courses as opposed to offering courses the same way they always have been offered.

Senator Petrocovi related that the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy, due to an unexpected retirement, hired three Unit B adjunct faculty positions which have not been renewed for the spring. He said this has resulted in faculty with below 20 ACEs having to pick up an extra course and teach seven courses per year rather than the usual six. He added that this used to only occur when faculty had 18 ACEs but this year it was applied to faculty with 20 ACEs because of cost considerations.

Chair Albarracin clarified her question was whether her chair will have a conversation with her about going into a high school to do outreach or doing advising because those are not her usual duties. She wonders if someone is going to ask if she is okay with that change or if departments are going to ask for volunteers. She realizes this is all being worked out but wonders if Provost Zoghi has thought about these types of things. Provost Zoghi responded that if faculty members' courses are merged, for example, and they end up with insufficient ACEs, they could work with their chair to find some way to be productive for the department. He thinks it would be great if faculty can find impactful ways to contribute because enrollment, student success, and retention are all big challenges right now. Associate Provost Russ Morgan noted that what Provost Zoghi is suggesting is similar to the tutored study provision that the university used to have: if a faculty member had a course or two that did not make and needed ACEs, they would work with their chair, or with their chair and dean, to develop a project or some sort of work that needed to be done to fill their workload. He expects this would be some sort of conversation between the faculty member and their chair, or with their chair and dean, to find things within the purview or the skill set of that faculty member.

Senator Bellott remarked that in the past if a faculty member fell below 18 ACEs they would be found extra duties, but if the faculty member was still between 18 to 22 ACEs they would be okay. Associate Provost Morgan responded this is a good point. He noted that this has varied a lot over the years among the colleges. He stated that two of the four academic colleges have maintained a full 21 to 22 ACE basis for the past four to five years; that has now increased to three colleges, so there is only one college which remains at 18 ACEs at this point. He thinks those expectations will gradually start changing in this way.

B. Student Government Association (SGA) Report
(Triston Eddlemon, SGA Vice President for External Affairs)

Mr. Eddlemon reported that SGA was surprised to hear at a recent meeting that students are being charged for using the Counseling Center. SGA had thought that use of the Counseling Center was free for students, but apparently only the first six visits are free. SGA noted that some students have broader needs that cannot be met within six visits, and SGA President Kyle Ramlow is meeting with Counseling Center Director Cara Cerullo to try to get this issue addressed.

SGA last week participated in their annual Safety Walk with the Office of Public Safety's Chief of Police. Mr. Eddlemon related that Chief Watts spoke about the things that OPS has done to improve safety on the campus, such as improvements in parking light lighting. Mr. Eddlemon said one concern that SGA specifically brought to Chief Watts' attention drivers not slowing down and being cautious of crosswalks, particularly the ones in front of Stipes Hall and between Currens and Horrabin Halls. SGA suggested things that might help, such as speed bumps, but was informed that these are city streets, so any solution has to be worked out through the city administrators. The SGA President will reach out to city officials to see what can be done to make those crosswalks safer, particularly during the busier times of the day.

Mr. Eddlemon reported that there are still some councils and committees that are waiting on student representatives, including CAGAS, the WID Council, the Council on Campus Planning and Usage, and the ad hoc AI Committee. SGA's Director of Technology will act as student representative for the Senate's Council for Instructional Technology, and the SGA President is sitting on three councils. Mr. Eddlemon said that his position as Faculty Senate rep will be filled beginning with the next meeting by Jeffrey Keith, SGA Director of Academic Affairs. SGA also filled two of its senator at-large positions.

Mr. Eddlemon reported that the SGA's representative for diversity, equity, and inclusion has been busy this semester, including attending the Diversity Council meetings and events through Unity during inclusion week.

Chair Albarracin asked if the issue of the Counseling Center fee has been addressed or is in the process of being addressed. Mr. Eddlemon responded that SGA President Ramlow sat down with Counseling Center Director Cerullo, who explained that only the first six visits are free; the Counseling Center usually tries to set them up for every other week, although sometimes there are students with greater needs. Mr. Eddlemon said the two talked about the appeals process if a student were to be charged for visits, so although there is not yet a fix for those students, the discussions are in process. Senator Wipperling asked that Mr. Eddlemon keep Faculty Senate informed about what happens as a result of these discussions because she advises a student organization that would probably want to donate toward these fees if there is no other way to handle this situation so that the affected students can get the help they need for this semester.

Senator Bellott asked if SGA has considered asking OPS to sit at the problematic crosswalks by Currens and Morgan and hand out tickets rather than installing speed bumps. Mr. Eddlemon responded that his understanding is that this would be difficult for OPS because this is not the only area where they are needed, but they have put out cones to slow traffic in those areas and have parked a squad car to deter speeders. He offered to speak further with OPS to see if they could provide more of a police presence during certain hours.

C. Other Announcements

1. Doug Freed, Admissions Director, and Kassie Daly, Associate Director for Admissions and Outreach

Mr. Freed told senators that one of the questions he has been asked to address is about the transfer process, particularly reaching out to community colleges to create transfer guides. He stated that transfer guides are much easier for community college students, advisors, and counselors to understand. He added that transfer guides are also easy for academic departments to create by reaching out to their counterparts at community colleges to develop an agreement that would help students complete their Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees with courses that might be specific to one of WIU's programs and then transfer to WIU with their Gen Ed requirements met. Mr. Freed thinks the transfer guide format allows for the maximum flexibility on WIU's end because the university does not have to worry about course changes that can occur in the intervening time between when students complete the agreement and when they actually transfer.

Ms. Daly stated that the only time a more formal 2+2 agreement is warranted is if the purpose is to transfer in an Associate of Applied Science, which is a two-year non-transferrable degree. She thinks in this case it makes sense to itemize the courses; otherwise, the transfer guides are the most ideal. According to the document provided by Admissions, "2+2 articulation agreements are limiting and have no flexibility for student course choices of changing their mind on a major. They also get out-of-date very quickly due to curriculum changes."

Senator Gravitt asked if Admissions can post some examples of transfer pathways and outlines for transfer agreements. She has run into roadblocks when trying to set these up in

the past with, for example, being told that Gen Ed courses would not transfer in to WIU, so it has been a lot of work and frustration on her part. She thinks that if others have already figured out solutions to some of these problems it would be good to see them as examples of successful transfer procedures. Senator Gravitt would like to see a list of people who could help her facilitate this more smoothly because, for example, she had to ask for lists of courses that transfer into WIU because she could not find this information anywhere. She added that when trying to develop something faculty will want to use, it is better to make it easier to use. Mr. Freed responded what Senator Gravitt describes is the way transfer agreements were done in the past, but now there is no need to worry about Gen Ed courses transferring in since that is automatic for students with AA and AS degrees. He said the only concern for departments now is the courses they want students to take in their community colleges before they transfer to WIU to complete their graduation requirements at the major level.

Senator Gravitt asked if those additional courses they would take at their community college would count toward a student's associate degree or if they would be taken in addition to the requirements for that degree. Ms. Daly responded that it depends on the major. She explained that an AA or AS degree includes a core set of General Education courses and then typically four or five courses of what most community colleges call an "area of emphasis" or elective courses. She noted that since community colleges do not require a major, these courses can be used by the student to apply toward whatever the major at WIU needs for them to complete before transferring here. Ms. Daly stated that a lot of transfer guides have been set up with departments in the College of Business and Technology, and they will tell students to use their elective courses to take micro- or macroeconomics, financial accounting, business calculus, statistics, and managerial courses. She noted that an economics course can count toward a student's Gen Ed in the social/behavioral sciences area but can also count toward their major at WIU. She said another good example is law enforcement; students are asked to incorporate four core law enforcement classes into their Associate of Science degree, which will not be more than is needed for the AS but will be incorporated into the 60-64 hours needed for that degree. Senator Gravitt asked if telling students to take these courses at the community college level will impact them being able to take enough classes at WIU to complete their majors. Ms. Daly responded that students will need to take 60 hours of upper level coursework at WIU for their graduation requirement, so they will be advised not to take 70 hours at the community college level because they will still need to take 60 hours here. She added that the College of Arts and Sciences requires additional Gen Ed courses for their majors, so students could take some of those at the community college level if they choose.

Senator Gravitt asked if Admissions representatives could do some sort of workshop on this topic, perhaps through the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research (CITR). She envisions something where interested faculty could bring their specific needs and engage in work sessions with Admissions representatives, which might answer multiple peoples' questions at the same time. Ms. Daly said she would be happy to do this, adding that there are also templates that individuals can use. Senator Gravitt thinks it would be particularly helpful for junior faculty who have never worked through this process before or those, such as her, who have not set something like this up for quite awhile or have never set one up at WIU.

Senator Hamner asked what community colleges are most actively contributing as pipelines to WIU. He wonders who the big players are and where Admissions would like to see more activity. Ms. Daly replied that the top five feeder community colleges for WIU are Black Hawk College, Black Hawk East, Spoon River College, John Wood Community College, and Carl Sandburg College, which are the closest to both campuses. She added that Eastern Iowa Community College and Lincoln Land Community College also send WIU a lot of students.

Senator Gravitt remarked that when she came to WIU in 2010, community colleges that are not on this list were feeding transfer students into her program. She asked if there is any historical data from ten years ago to see what was done then and compare it to what is in place currently to find out how to approach these institutions and reestablish connections. Mr. Freed responded it is possible to see where students came from historically, and this is a good

idea. He added that Admissions is always looking at data and reassessing where they should make their connections or visits. Ms. Daly added that sometimes there may have been a WIU faculty member who had a relationship with another faculty member at a certain community college, and when one of them retires or leaves the institution it can change the dynamic of students being fed into WIU because that may not have been a relationship that Admissions was a part of. Mr. Freed stressed that nothing beats the faculty-to-faculty connection between WIU and community colleges. He noted that Admissions typically has relationships with advisors or counselors, but for the academic side it is awesome when faculty can connect with their peers at these institutions.

Senator Hamner offered to help with those kinds of relationships with Black Hawk and Scott Community Colleges in the Quad Cities. He noted, however, that as WIU has developed into an institution that accepts traditional students on its Quad Cities campus, some of these community colleges have begun to think of WIU as a competitor rather than as an institution that can help their students to take the next steps toward obtaining their degree. He thinks it is important to strategize about delivering a positive message to these community colleges that WIU is on the same page as them. Senator Hamner thinks there are good reasons for students to come straight to WIU after high school, and there are also good reasons for students to use the services community colleges have to offer first. He added that he would be willing to help with that messaging, too, either now or later. Mr. Freed expressed thanks to Senator Hamner for volunteering. He said that while he thinks it is important for the university to have a consistent message, he is not in a place to comment about that now because that involves other areas, such as marketing.

Chair Albarracin remarked that with the decrease in high school graduates and the increases in dual enrollment and college credit classes taken at the high school level, she wonders if it would be fair to say that transfer students will take up an increasing share of the students WIU will be seeing in the future. Mr. Freed responded that is a great question because as WIU is experiencing decline so are the community colleges. He noted that from 2019 to 2021 in the state of Illinois, there was about a 15 percent decline in students going to a community college and intending to transfer. He agrees that WIU does need to exert effort at the transfer level, but he does not think this will be a 100 percent perfect replacement for freshmen because there are an increasing number of students who are leaving high school and not choosing to go on to school anywhere. Mr. Freed noted that this new trend sees students going straight into working fields from high school because of the economy, because they do not see the value of a college education, or for other reasons, so these students will not be available as new freshmen or as transfer students. He suspects perhaps five or ten years down the road these individuals may decide they do want a college education, but as an immediate replacement for incoming freshmen he does not think transfers will help 100 percent because of the decline in community college enrollment in Illinois, which is where most of WIU's community college transfers come from.

Senator Hamner recalled that when Vice President Edwards visited with Faculty Senate at its last meeting, he indicated that the numbers he got from Admissions, which he used to try to assess WIU's overall financial situation, indicated that if the institution does not see significant growth or positive change, its enrollment could drop to 5,000 students in five years. Senator Hamner said he understands that this is all educated guesswork but wonders if Mr. Freed could expand on where that number comes from and whether it feels accurate or potentially not that bad. Mr. Freed responded that his area is undergraduate domestic admissions, which represents only a portion of WIU's enrollment and does not consider graduate, international, or adult students. He admitted that, looking at domestic undergraduate education, the university should expect some level of decline in its freshmen classes, which will also expand to transfer classes because of the decline in demographics, the huge amount of competition, the image reputation, and other factors that go into why students choose one institution over another. He would not expect any increases in growth over the next couple of years at least. Mr. Freed cannot say for sure because does not oversee all enrollment and wishes that he could provide a more definite idea of where things might land, but he does

think that WIU will definitely see some kind of decline. He added that many other factors, such as retention and cost, go into overall enrollment determinations. Chair Albarracin remarked that she thought Vice President Edwards made the statement about 5,000 enrollment as a worst case scenario rather than a prediction. Senator Hamner agreed that the statement was regarding what could happen without expanded investments beyond what WIU currently has.

Senator Hunter observed that Mr. Freed’s handout indicated under the heading “Opportunities for academic departments to support recruitment efforts” that departments can “reach out and connect directly” with high schools and community colleges and offer to visit their classrooms with a presentation. He stated that over the years his school has not been clear on whether they are allowed to go into high school classrooms. Mr. Freed responded there has been some change or miscommunication over the years, but at this point departments/schools are encouraged to go into high school and community college classrooms. He explained that Admissions is restricted by its state association on the number of times it can visit, but there is no restriction for departmental faculty. He stated that if a faculty member wants to bring a biology exhibit or something similar into a classroom, they can connect directly with the teacher and go ahead to do so if allowed because that is a great connection. Mr. Freed added that if there are materials that Admissions can provide for the faculty members to take along on their visit they would be happy to do so. He stressed that there is no restriction as long as the high school or community college allows it. Ms. Daly added that Admissions would prefer for arrangements to be made department to department rather than going through the high school counselors because if multiple individuals reach out to an individual counselor that they may not take kindly to that. She would prefer that contacts be made directly to the high school teacher or community college instructor. Senator Hunter remarked that his school has had a close relationship with the Rushville High School counseling center because of contacts made during their Career Days. He asked if it is still okay to work through them. Mr. Freed replied that in a case like this, where there is a prior relationship or the counseling center might have invited the WIU department in the past, it would be fine to work with them. He clarified that Ms. Daly is speaking in general about situations where a new contact is being made.

2. Biennial Reapportionment

According to the Senate Constitution, adjustment in Senate membership is calculated in the fall semester of each odd-numbered year (Article III.2.e.). Faculty enumerated for the purpose of determining Senate membership must be eligible to vote according to the provisions of Article III (Article III.2.c.). Using this definition, there are 401 faculty members at this time who are eligible to vote in Senate elections, and the Senate membership for the next two years will remain at 24 – seven Arts and Sciences, four each from the other three academic colleges, and five at-large.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Senate Nominating Committee
(Katherine Perone, Chair)

1. Faculty Nominations

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Counseling Center Mental Health Awareness Committee

Lora Ebert-Wallace, Soc/Anth	new position	A&S
Tahir Khan, Computer Sciences	new position	B&T
Karen Zellman, Health Sciences/Social Work	new position	E&HS

Emily Sevcik, Music	new position	FA&C
Haley Wikoff, Counselor Ed/College Stud Per	new position	WIUQC
Bob Intrieri, Psychology	new position	At-large
Angi Martin, Speech Pathology & Audiology	new position	At-large
Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Soc/Anth	new position	At-large

There were no further nominations, and the slate of candidates was declared elected.

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Chair Albarracin was asked by Carl Ervin, Interim Director of JIDE, to announce that there is a workshop opportunity on Friday, November 3 from 1-3 PM in Horrabin Hall 1 which will provide equity tools and resources for faculty engagement. She noted that, having attended the town hall with the Anti-Racism Task Force last week and heard the comments from students, there is still a lot of room for improvement in terms of diversity and working with diverse students. She thinks the university needs to continue to work on diversity and inclusion because there are a lot of unhappy students who do not feel like they belong, and it is a complex issue.

Motion: To adjourn (Gravitt)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary