WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, *27 October 2026*, 4:00 p.m.

Union Lincoln Room and Via Zoom

A C T I O N M I N U T E S

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: D. Allwardt, E. Asare, M. Blankenship, S. Chakravorti, P. Cole, R. DiCarmine, R. Kelly, T. Khan, C. Kovacs, H. Mason, M. McConnell, J. McKenzie, S. Nash, F. Tasdan

SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: A. Baker, A. Frederick, L. Parzefall, R. Sharma, Y. Tang

SENATORS ABSENT: N. Gillotti, M. Hoge, A. Melkumian, J. Walker

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

GUESTS: Tawnya Adkins Covert, Greg Baldi, Mary Bourell, Zaire Bradsher, Amy Carr, Dennis DeVolder, Kristy Keefe, Jessica Lin, Kyle Mayborn, Heather McIlvaine-Newsdad, Lorette Oden, Betsy Perabo, Tim Roberts, Ketra Roselieb

Faculty Senate welcomed Matt McConnell as a new senator representing the School of Natural Sciences.

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. October 13, 2026

MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Chair McKenzie announced that Provost Mossman was attending the Provost's Awards ceremony in the Union Capitol Rooms next door, which is why today's meeting was held in the Lincoln Room, so his report will be delayed until he can be present, at which time he will be next on the agenda.

B. Student Government Association Report
(Zaire Bradsher, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

Mr. Bradsher reported that the casual luncheon with SGA members and faculty has been pushed back to spring semester. He hopes that the luncheon can help create a bond between students and faculty. He also noted that SGA is currently auditing its Constitution.

Chair McKenzie is glad SGA is planning a luncheon for students and faculty again this year. She related that she and Senator Mason met current SGA President Alonso Ruffin at last year's luncheon. She recalled it was a fun event where faculty could spend half an hour talking to a student who they would not necessarily have interacted with otherwise (because the student would presumably not have been in any of the faculty member's classes) and get to know that student better. Mr. Bradsher stated that SGA will provide a lot more information and a flyer closer to the date of the event in spring.

C. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

1. Highlighting Good News

Chair McKenzie announced that the very best good news is that Senator Walker has a new baby girl, born October 23, and mom and baby are doing great.

- Febe Pamonag, a faculty member in the School of Humanities, has an upcoming book called *Island of Pain, Island of Hope: A Social History of Leprosy in U.S.-Occupied Philippines*, which is coming out in December from the University of Illinois Press.
- Lissa Thompson, a faculty member in the School of Nursing, Applied Health, and Human Performance, was named one of the Illinois Nursing Foundation's "40 Under 40" Emerging Nurse Leaders in Illinois, a prestigious recognition that highlights her impact, leadership, and dedication to the nursing profession.
- Abha Singh, a faculty member in the School of Education, and her graduate student, Gretchen Planek, a junior Early Childhood major, presented on using science exploration activities for early childhood and elementary teachers at the Illinois Science Teachers Association conference. Chair McKenzie noted that Ms. Planik is in one of her classes and told her it was really good experience to get to present in front of professors since it meant that "people who know what we're talking about" were there to listen to her, which she thought was really cool.

Chair McKenzie noted that everyone should have received an email about the strategic plan feedback open sessions, which are being held this week. She hopes that everyone marks their calendar to be able to attend at least one of them. They will be held on Wednesday, October 28 from 2:00-3:00; Thursday, October 29 from 2:30-4:30; and on Friday, October 30 from 12:00-1:00 in the Union Sandburg Lounge; as well as on Wednesday, October 28 from 12:00-1:00 in Riverfront 103/104 on the Quad Cities Campus. She noted that these will all be in-person sessions, and a virtual session is planned as well. She explained that the decision was made not to have the virtual and the in-person sessions at the same time because those are difficult to manage, and sometimes the online attendees can kind of get left out and lost, so the Strategic Planning Committee decided to just have one session that is entirely virtual so that they can make sure they receive feedback from those who must attend online.

Chair McKenzie thinks that another email went out about the Qualtrics survey explaining where individuals can provide feedback to the revisions to the mission and vision statements. She said the Strategic Planning Committee hopes that it can get endorsement from Faculty Senate at its November 10 meeting, then take the plan to the Board of Trustees for consideration at their meeting in December, which is why the timeline is so quick. She hopes that senators take advantage of the opportunities they have to provide feedback on the plan this week because it is really important that everyone on campus is a part of this process.

Chair McKenzie pointed out that the IBHE FAC folder in the shared Drive for today's meeting contains some things she would like to draw senators' attention to and which Dr. Carr will talk about more during her presentation. She pointed out that the Integrating Civil Discourse Into the Curriculum document talks about a research project studying a novel method of teaching critical thinking and civil discourse. She said this group has a $4 million grant from the Department of Education and will engage 375 faculty fellows over the next three years to teach and evaluate this curriculum of teaching civil discourse. She noted that there is a quick turnaround, with applications opening on November 1 and closing February 1. She thinks this sounds really interesting, and she encourages senators to spread the word if they or one of their colleagues have an interest in this.

Chair McKenzie noted that the Illinois Campus Cares Technical Assistance Center (ICCTAC) has created mental health modules that will be made available to higher education. She noted that senators can find links to these in the shared Google Drive folder, although right now they are not live websites but just demo model websites. Chair McKenzie hopes that in the spring these resources can be used both for faculty members' own training as well as for use in classes with students.

Chair McKenzie reported that the Executive Committee has reached out to the Chairs of Senate curricular councils – the Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID), the Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI), the Council on General Education (CGE), and the Council for International Education and Multicultural Perspectives (CIEMP). She said ExCo would like them to begin some discussions about reviewing and possibly revising the curriculum approval process. She stated that although there are no solid plans or direction yet, she has been told by a few faculty that they feel the curriculum process is really complicated and perhaps more onerous than it needs to be. Chair McKenzie is not sure that is actually the case because she has not actually submitted a full new curriculum proposal, only changes to existing curriculum. She said ExCo is simply asking the councils to look at the way their processes work and consider whether there are any ways they can be streamlined. She related that ExCo suggested the councils might be able to develop a manual so that anyone who does a curricular improvement has a solid checklist of how to do these things, so that it is less of a loop and the request does not get sent back. She thinks the councils are aware of what common errors that they come across and could make sure that these are addressed so that those submitting requests only have to do them once. She encouraged senators who have any thoughts about the curriculum process to send them to her because she will be engaging in some of these discussions with the curriculum entities.

Senator Asare asked what the timeline is to submit suggestions. Chair McKenzie responded that it will probably be the second semester when any work is done, so she would like to receive suggestions between now and the end of the fall semester. She said the Executive Committee thought this year was a good time to look at this subject since there is a moratorium on curricular requests this year, so there is not as much action going to these groups.

A. Provost's Report *(Reordered)*

The Provost, having now arrived at the meeting, noted that he just left the Provost's Awards ceremony, and it was excellent to recognize faculty for their performance in all the different areas offered at the university, from teaching, to technology, research, etc. He thinks that Homecoming this year was memorable and one of the best ones for the university, with fantastic weather and a win at the Homecoming football game. He noted that the mums at the Alumni House looked fantastic. He expressed thanks to Faculty Senate and the entire Division of Academic Affairs for continuing to attend these types of events because it is excellent to see people there and good for students to see faculty there, as well. He added that these events provide an informal mentoring opportunity created to develop an environment where students and faculty can meet casually, which is very good for students.

Provost Mossman is working very closely with Vice President Roselieb, as well as with individuals from across the division and the university, as they continue discussions about developing a Consolidated Annual Report process. He said the goal is for the university to return to this former type of budgeting process beginning in April 2027; he hopes that this can provide a sort of rhythm and calendar to all of the budget reports as they come into the administration. He explained that first school directors will bring their budgets to the deans, who will bring them to the Provost, who will deliver a budget presentation to the entire Division of Academic Affairs. He noted that aspects of the budget are tracked by the university's accreditors in various ways, including WIU's national accreditor for research production; the way WIU lines up with its designation as a Carnegie institution; and, more importantly, how the university is allocating resources. Provost Mossman believes this resource allocation should be transparent across the board and throughout the division – both how decisions are being made and that there actually is a plan moving forward as WIU slowly but surely keeps making progress as an institution, which is the key thing. He stated that news will come out on this process to school directors, followed by the entire division.

Provost Mossman told senators that the administration continues its statewide advocacy for the equitable funding formula and for all other things that impact the institution. He noted, for example, that rural education is very important to WIU since the institution is known as a leader in and provider of rural education and because the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs is housed at WIU. He wants to make sure that WIU continues to include this in the narrative and identity for the institution.

Senator Cole remarked that he does not think a week has gone by this semester that he has not talked to a friend and colleague who just told him they plan to retire because they were offered incentives. He is concerned because many faculty are much closer to retirement than at the beginning of their careers; Senator Cole began his career at WIU in 2000, at which time there were 20 historians, but now there are seven, and they are all close to retirement. He noted that almost all of his students, undergraduate and graduate, occasionally complain that there are not enough course offerings already. Senator Cole observed that there seems to be a Rebuild committee about everything except what to do about this situation. He thinks that faculty are the most importance resource at WIU – not its buildings – so he hopes and trusts there is a plan because when these faculty retire, there need to be new hires, and to his knowledge the university is not in the midst of a big hiring push.

Senator Cole remarked that if he understood UPI President Merrill Cole's presentation to the Board of Trustees, the big drop in faculty and staff recently did not result in a big increase in money because there was an equal drop in enrollment, so losing more faculty will not necessarily result in more money for the university and might actually result in more students choosing not to come to WIU because there are not enough faculty. He wonders where in the Rebuild plan faculty are and when the university will begin hiring to replace people. He noted that hiring an assistant professor is cheaper than hiring a full professor, so it would seem that money can be saved while still hiring more people. Senator Cole can foresee the administration doing nothing to address this and WIU having half the faculty it currently has, which scares him because there are already one-third of the faculty here than when he arrived.

Provost Mossman responded that this is a constant juggling act; for instance, there is overload in the entire College of Business, Health, and Community Programs (CBHCP). He recognizes that there are staffing concerns in every part of the division. He explained that, like every public institution in Illinois, WIU had a wave of hires between 2001 and 2008; both Provost Mossman and Senator Cole came to WIU in 2000. He noted that Senator DiCarmine came to WIU in 2006, but by 2008 the entire Department of English, which Provost Mossman formerly chaired, had mostly been replaced. He said there was a massive turnover at that time, and the university is absolutely headed in that direction again. He has received a number of Irrevocable Election to Retire (IER) submissions, and that number increased in May and August.

Provost Mossman hopes that part of what can be achieved with the Consolidated Annual Reports is to begin to get the university's arms around again having a definite planning process for how resources are allocated and how hiring occurs in programs. He said that he will never stop talking about the massive wreck that the 2015 budget impasse was for the state of Illinois; it was like a Hunger Games move for the state, and although all 12 public universities survived, it was an incredibly difficult period. He recalled that WIU's budget went from over $40 million to zero, and WIU is still in the struggle to right that ship.

Provost Mossman recognizes simultaneously that, absolutely, the university cannot deliver programs if it does not hire replacements for retiring faculty, so he agrees that efforts need to be made to move in this direction. He stressed, though, that this needs to be done in a planned way. He noted that after the tenth day of classes, a capacity analysis is conducted, and he wants the university to get out of the mode of hiring in a panic. He recalled that prior to 2015, if a department asked for an assistant chair, for example, the administration would consider the budget at that time and the larger financial picture, including the history and conundrums of the state. He thinks that the university is absolutely making progress, and there are several meetings a week regarding personnel; for instance, approval was recently granted for Education hires.

Provost Mossman recalled that at the beginning of the semester, there were dozens of positions identified, and the administration had to figure out how to deal with that; while they do not plan to ask for 48 positions next week, they have to figure out how to plan for this because 12, 24, and 36 month from now the number of IERs will increase and an increasing number of people will be leaving. He noted that there were twice as many students at WIU when he came in 2000 as there are now, so there is an element of right-sizing involved. He believes the level of communication that

there is across the institution now was not present when the budget impasse occurred, and WIU basically got hit in the nose with it; he thinks communication is the way to right the direction and begin to fully staff Academic Affairs and deliver, grow, and innovate the kinds of programs that are needed.

Senator Cole has never understood why, if a full professor costs X and an assistant professor costs X minus some amount, it would not be really simple to just replace faculty. He suggested that if WIU faculty are already right-sized, since they are one-third the size they were 15 years ago, everyone who retires should be able to be replaced at this point because the retirements are piecemeal. He wonders why, when there is a hole in a program because a faculty member just happens to be retirement age and makes the personal choice to retire, the university cannot just say that this person will be replaced because we are now much smaller. Provost Mossman responded that he wishes thing were like this, and he thinks before 2015 – and certainly in the 1990s – things were done like this because WIU had an excess of appropriated dollars. He noted that now, however, the university gets $57 million from the state without any consideration of matching inflation or costs, whether the year is 2000 or 2050. He noted that cost of instruction is not the only factor in figuring out how to fund the institution; it includes consideration of tuition, discount rates, and how all of that works, so it is a very complicated picture, not simply a one-for-one replacement.

Provost Mossman pointed out that there could be a program which in 1970 had 300 majors which 20 or 25 years later, when everyone is ready to retire, has either up to 600 majors, so more staff is actually needed, or is down to 50 majors, so there would probably be no need to hire one replacement faculty member. He noted that there is a whole complicated set of factors that go into determining whether resources can be allocated for a replacement position. Provost Mossman said he is absolutely an advocate for the Division of Academic Affairs and for its hires because this is crucial for the model of university that WIU has. He thinks the budget impasse showed how resilient WIU is, what the foundation of the institution is, and, also, how excellent shared governance is at WIU, and it is important to maintain those standards as the university moves forward.

Provost Mossman thinks this is the moment where faculty mentoring is needed; in the same way as there are efforts to develop alumni mentoring for current students, faculty mentoring is needed for junior faculty. He pointed out that Chair McKenzie, an assistant professor, is chairing Faculty Senate, while Senator Mason, also an assistant professor, is Vice Chair, and those are leadership roles that are intense, but junior faculty are moving into these types of positions. He believes that it is absolutely crucial that the university does not experience a leadership gap as it transitions one, three, or five years down the road.

Senator Kovacs expressed his agreement with everything Senator Cole said. He thinks there were 20 faculty in his department when he was hired, and now there are two. He is afraid that what might be getting lost is that there will be a massive wave of retirements at a time when the information about and reputation of this institution, because of a lot of things everyone has heard, is not the best. His fear is that there will be a period of time when the university needs a lot of faculty, but it will be hard to get good faculty because of a lot of the issues WIU has dealt with. He supports that the university celebrates its positive news, even though the press may not always do so, but he is worried that when the time comes that the administration says hiring can begin, WIU will be very low on a lot of young applicants' lists. He thinks this needs to be considered in terms of being prepared for this and improving the reputation of the institution because he agrees with Senator Cole 100 percent that the university may be digging a hole in regard to the number of retirements that are expected.

Provost Mossman responded that he does not disagree and would even put this into a larger context because the state of Illinois is in the bottom 10 percent of the nation in terms of higher education funding. He sees somewhat of a flu going across the country in terms of institutions eliminating dozens of majors, such as Syracuse recently, and he is seeing this across the entire culture of higher ed. He noted that another concern during the current budget constraints is how much WIU can pay junior faculty because the university will be competing with the state and beyond in terms of matching salaries. He added that these are perennial concerns, and a number of disciplines have dealt with them for decades in terms of matching salaries to attract personnel.

Senator Kovacs stated that while he hears things about the budget and filling personnel lines, he wonders, as a 20-year employee of this institution, when the university will be willing to take risks. He understands the need to manage the university's money closely, but he also thinks the institution needs to grow and to develop programs. He thinks one of WIU's biggest problems right now is that nobody is willing to take risks. He is not advocating for uneducated risks and thinks that the decisions need to be smart ones; he understands what the Provost has said about filling roles based on where they fall financially, but at some point he thinks one must look past the bottom lump and just leap. Senator Kovacs gets the feeling the university is too timid and worried about spending money, refilling a line, and whether they can be funded or supported, and he wonders when the administration will financially be willing to take some risks.

Senator Tasdan asked if, in the short-term projection of faculty planning to retire, there is a certain number of faculty retirements that would endanger delivery of courses. He wonders if there is some solid number, such as 30 or 40 people. Provost Mossman responded that he does not remember. Senator Tasdan recognizes that each program is different, but he now serves as the Mathematics graduate coordinator so is closely looking at these sorts of things because currently things are at the limit. He noted that certain Mathematics courses have to be offered in the summer and in the regular semester, but the faculty size is preventing offering more courses. He thinks the department is keeping up, at a certain level, with its enrollments, but their programs require that more courses be offered for their students to be able to graduate. Senator Tasdan noted that when he joined the department, there were 25-28 faculty members, and now there are 14-15 with only one new hire. He shares the concern that if there are about 300 faculty at WIU programs may be in danger if there are 50 retirements, for example.

Provost Mossman explained that all of these things have to be balanced when making hiring decisions. He noted that certain programs, such as Education, Engineering, and others, have external licensing requirements so that even if a course has only four students, it must be offered in order to continue to have that program. He noted that in these cases, the cost of instruction will outweigh the actual enrollment in the class. He works with Vice President Roselieb, Associate Provost Jessica Lin, and others on how to make all of these difficult decisions and juggle to be able to afford things moving forward. He recognizes that every public institution, even prestigious ones like Michigan, are going through a version of these budget troubles; even former President Don Spencer in the early 1980s wrote a memo to the Director of Facilities Management saying that the air conditioning could not be turned on before April due to the necessity of cost savings. Provost Mossman is glad that that the university is not seeing the level of crisis it underwent in 2015, where Illinois went months without funding its public institutions, because that was an incredible thing; every institution was basically asked to spend down every single penny it had with the bet being that some of them would not survive it. He said in those situations, chronic problems can become acute and have to be addressed. He thinks this is why the Consolidated Annual Budget reporting process is needed again so that everyone can be on the same page and see how many resources are being allocated and where. He also thinks it is important to define what risk is, what it actually means from one person to another, and whether it involves funding one position and not another.

Senator Chakravorti asked, when thinking about hiring for certain programs, whether consumer trends are considered as one factor, such as trends regarding education or being educated in particular areas. He understands that education should be broad-based but recognizes that there are certain directions. Provost Mossman responded that this was taken into consideration as part of the Rebuild; it is what he refers to as a pancake since it is not "either" or "or" because he does not think that WIU cannot be everything to everyone. He pointed out that part of being an institution offering a degree in higher education entails a liberal arts education; students may not need to have 60-75 hours in General Education, but they definitely need 34, 43, or similar hours, depending upon the discipline. He does not think the institution can abandon this general principle but it is also, simultaneously, absolutely vital for the university is to be innovative in its programming for such disciplines as Emergency Management, Education, Agriculture, LEJA, and other historic staples of WIU. He believes to do otherwise is also failing the institution, so it is important to figure out how to do both.

Senator Kovacs remarked that one thing he keeps hearing, whether true or not, is that, from an enrollment and recruitment perspective, the university needs to show growth before, potentially, there is significant investment in certain areas. He understands this, however, on the flip side, he and his colleagues, to a large extent, need better resources to draw those students here. He said a simple example of the risk he is talking about involves providing money to invest in equipment that can then be used to recruit those students. He recognizes that money is tight and that spending $20,000 on a piece of equipment sounds like, and is, a lot of money, but at some point the university needs to take the risk to do this. Senator Kovacs was recruiting on Saturday with some potential students who were on campus, and this involved selling them on his department, program, and equipment. He said this is what he means by investing some money now rather than waiting to show growth so that everyone – not just LEJA or the Performing Arts Center or others – can get some pieces, whether a faculty line or a piece of equipment. He recognizes that this is risky because there is the chance that $20,000 would be invested on a piece of equipment but the program would not grow as a result, but maybe it will, which is what Senator Kovacs means by risk.

Provost Mossman thanked Senator Kovacs for his comments and said that he would not disagree. His challenge in the last six months, basically, has been to figure out how to use McAllister and Quinn [grants consulting and government relations firm] and federal earmarks to get external dollars to actually pay for these risks. He thinks that equipment for Nursing and for Speech Pathology and Audiology, where even $8,600 would make a huge difference, are prime examples. Provost Mossman sees his job as not only figuring out how to fund those but also how to communicate to the division in a clear, transparent way how resources and personnel are being allocated. He thinks this is what the university has not been able to do and what needs to be done in the next 12 or 24 months. He added that he is not pushing back against this at all and agrees with Senator Kovacs in wishing that it could be done tomorrow.

Senator Kovacs wishes that reinvestment into multiple programs could happen sooner rather than later, in fact, really soon. Provost Mossman agrees. He related that a colleague told him that when walking across WIU's campus one is in a really great space for awhile, then it is necessary to close your eyes for awhile before coming to another really great space. Provost Mossman thinks the university needs to connect those dots for a total experience.

D. Other Announcements *(Continued)*

1. Ketra Roselieb, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Vice President Roselieb reiterated Provost Mossman's remark that the previous discussion is something that she, Provost Mossman, and Associate Provost Lin engage in very regularly, multiple times per week at their personnel meeting. She agrees with Senator Cole that the university's greatest asset is its humans; 70 percent of the university's income fund budget is spent on personnel, so it is the largest asset and one that must be taken care of and managed very closely. She recognizes that conversations about finances are not fun ones, but they are important to have and remain diligent through.

Vice President Roselieb presented a PowerPoint on where the university ended fiscal year 2026 and how things look moving into FY 2027. She reminded senators that there are three main funding sources for the university; the income fund, which includes tuition and state appropriations, is what she will primarily speak about. She said she will also speak a little bit from a cash flow perspective about the university's other unrestricted funds source, which is where fees and other ancillary operations are run through, as well as grants. She added that there is also a restricted fund source referred to as the university's auxiliary unit, but she did not include information about that fund source in her presentation.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out on a chart of income and expenses for the last decade that in FY 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 24 the university ended the fiscal year with a deficit in its income fund, so the university has operated on a deficit model for most of the last decade.

She explained that of the years where there was not a deficit at the end of the fiscal year, FY 17 included reimbursement of a portion, but not all, of the funds held back in FY 16 because of the budget impasse, and some of that continued through FY 18. She said FY 20 and 21 did not show a deficit because of Covid and federal relief dollars along with all sorts of changes to the university's operations. She pointed out that in FY 24 the university had to shift about $7.6 million worth of expenses to a restricted fund source because there was insufficient cash on hand to make payments.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out that from FY 23 through FY 26 there has been a steady decline in overall income fund expenses, but that does not mean the university is trying to cut its way to prosperity. She does not think this method should be used for financial sustainability, but she recognizes that it is one the university has been forced into due to no state investment, no significant increases in enrollment, and no significant changes in external fundings received for grant dollars, etc. She stated that trying to balance right-sizing with enough to also reinvest and grow is certainly continuing.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out that FY 26 ended with expenses exceeding revenues by about $1.2 million. She reminded senators that the Governor's Office had released a budget that allocated a 3 percent increase in FY 26 for all public institutions, but it included a caveat that did not come out until the end of May 2025 stating that 2 percent of that amount would be held at the Governor's discretion. She said universities had to operate all the way through FY 26 with the understanding that they would only get the remaining 2 percent if the Governor's Office released it, and they did not release it until June 26, 2026, only four days before the fiscal year ended. She said that $1.1 million, had it arrived earlier, would have allowed the university to end the year with about a $100,000 positive balance.

Vice President Roselieb showed a slide of the university's historical and projected tuition income which displays, similar to enrollment, a steady decline over the years. She noted that it also shows a four-year projection of what income is anticipated related to what the university is expected to charge for tuition in future fiscal years, as well as what enrollment projections are expected to look like. She noted that it is very difficult to make up for tens of millions of dollars in changes over a decade, but the administration is working diligently to try to do the best they can.

Vice President Roselieb showed senators the cash flow chart that she tries to bring to them every year. She stressed that it is a draft projection; it shows monthly cash flow and projects out through the end of FY 27. She noted that the income fund line shows that it is negative, as it has since been FY 23, while there is a second line indicating the unrestricted funds source, and a third line showing a combination of those two funds together since the university has essentially been borrowing cash from itself to float day-to-day expenses since 2023. She noted that staying above the "red line" is vitally important, and the university has been teetering on it for several years. She said this has sometimes reached the point where payments have had to be delayed to vendors, where the Illinois Prompt Payment Act has had to be enacted, and where the Comptroller's Office has had to be called to ask for reimbursement as soon as possible for the money for which vouchers were turned in the month before. She acknowledged that cash continues to be something that the administration works to manage and is, unfortunately, something that prohibits the taking of some risks with those dollars.

Vice President Roselieb agrees with Provost Mossman that a return to Consolidated Annual Reporting will really provide, especially in the new administrative structure, better inputs to program what future expenses might look like. She thinks this may enable some savings when there is a retirement that may not need to be filled or a contract that does not need to be renewed, and those dollars might be able to be reinvested in an area of growth instead of continuing to act from a reactionary standpoint. Vice President Roselieb stated that although she has only been at WIU since 2012, she is also tired of living in that realm, so that is something that the administration is certainly trying to move the university out of in order to

be more proactive than reactive. She looks forward to the information that will be received through the Consolidated Annual Reports so that a more comprehensive priority list can be put together and the university can be ready to take advantage of opportunities for future investment when they present themselves.

Senator Cole observed that it appears that a major drop is predicted in tuition income from the current year to next year. Vice President Roselieb confirmed that the current fiscal year has seen a drop of about $6 million in tuition revenues from last year, and next year there is a slight decrease predicted again, although not as much as $6 million. She said the prediction is that tuition revenue will start to grow beginning in fiscal year 2021. She noted that there is no secret that enrollment for Fall 2026 was down from that of Fall 2025, and it is expected that this will continue for one more year, with larger classes graduating before the university sees another growth.

Senator Chakravorti asked what factors went into projecting increasing tuition income over the last year. Vice President Roselieb replied that there are several, but the major ones are an incremental increase in the tuition assessed, namely, a 2 percent increase over the next three years, along with enrollment projections from both the graduate and undergraduate levels. She does not want to speak for Vice President Schuch and what goes into his projected enrollment algorithm, but the incoming class is projected to increase in two fiscal years. She pointed out that this is only part of the income picture because the other 60-70 percent of income received in this fund comes from state appropriations, which is where the university can focus its efforts more positively because that is where the investment needs to come from.

Vice President Roselieb noted that while the Goldfarb Center for the Performing Arts is a wonderful, beautiful building that was fully funded by the state, from a construction standpoint, WIU did not receive any additional funds to operate the building; the university got only a 1 percent budget increase this year from FY 26, which barely covers the inflationary cost and does not cover any of the contractual increases coming from the bargaining units, which are much deserved, as well as the inflationary costs of utilities. She thinks the Goldfarb Center is a good example of where the state needs to step in, and if they expect the university to still provide the same levels of service, then more than a 1 percent increase is needed.

Provost Mossman thinks this is the moment where advocacy for the equitable funding formula is absolutely crucial for an increase in appropriated dollars; this is exactly the moment where everyone can see the difference it would make for the fiscal health of the institution. He noted that WIU operates like a public in name only, liberal arts college and is significantly dependent upon tuition dollars rather than state-appropriated funding.

Senator Tasdan noted that the graphics in the PowerPoint project lower- and upward bound, but when projections are made some boundaries must be set, such as numbers that the projections cannot go above or below. He asked if Vice President Roselieb's projections are based upon the very conservative, lower-bound numbers that might happen, such as a worst-case scenario, or upon the real average. Vice President Roselieb replied that the graph projects a real average; it projects no additional state funding, which would, she thinks, certainly rebuild some confidence that is drastically needed in the state's regional institutions. She added that it does not project, on both sides, anything changing from the current status quo as regards state investment and involvement.

2. <u>Amy Carr, WIU Representative to the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council</u>

Dr. Carr clarified that applications for faculty fellows to participate in the Integrating Civil Discourse Into the Curriculum research project must be submitted between November 1 and February 1. Further information on this opportunity was provided in the Senate shared Drive folder.

Dr. Carr stated that since deferred maintenance needs are one of the issues involved in maintaining an institution, she was thinking about one of the institutions she attended, the University of Chicago Divinity School. She related that Swift Hall just celebrated its 100th birthday but had never had air conditioning; today it is only in place for the basement, where the coffee shop is located, and not for the rest of the building. She shared this to illustrate that these kinds of problems are occurring everywhere, even in those schools which might be considered to be more elite.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Faculty Advisory Council (FAC), of which Dr. Carr is the Chair, met on the WIU campus in September; minutes from the meeting were included in senators' shared Drive folder. Dr. Carr pointed out that President Mindrup and Provost Mossman presented at the meeting, but she did not summarize their presentation for the Senate meeting because senators can read it in full in the minutes.

State Senator Mike Halpin met with the IBHE FAC on the Macomb campus in September and was asked about the Midwest Higher Education Compact. Dr. Carr stated that Senator Halpin, because he has served on higher education committees, served on the Midwest Higher Education Compact for a time. She explained that there are four of these regional compacts in the country; they provide some grants and research demographic trends and student migration patterns. She noted that one interesting thing about migration patterns is that some students who go to college out of state return to their home states later in their careers, which is an example of the kinds of things these groups track. She added that the group also works with the Midwest Technology Purchasing Consortium and provides grants for state policy work.

Dr. Carr related that the IBHE FAC also discussed with Senator Halpin the 2020 Developmental Education Reform Act, which requires remedial co-requisites rather than a whole remedial course before students can take a certain college course, but only if one of multiple measures, such as GPA level, is met. She said that community college faculty have been really concerned about this, and the IBHE FAC will hear a presentation by someone from the City College System in Chicago at their December meeting. She will share more about this when she reports to Faculty Senate about that meeting. Dr. Carr related that Senator Halpin emphasized collecting data to inform state policy, but she noted that, of course, someone has to fund this. She said the data collected might include remedial co-requisites. She thinks that California is starting to reverse its policy on this.

Dr. Carr said that Senator Halpin thinks the theoretical argument regarding the equitable higher education funding formula has been won, and now the discussion needs to be about the details. She thinks he seems to be cautiously hopeful about this passing, but there is always a need for funding many things in the state, so she will wait to see what happens.

Dr. Carr said the IBHE FAC in September heard a presentation from Amy Patrick Mossman, Executive Director of WIU's Office of Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness, along with Leslie Daugherty, IBHE Managing Director of Talent and Workforce Development, about the Illinois State Attainment Working Group. Dr. Carr said this group is working on workforce and economic mobility, adult learners, nonlinear pathways, regional differences, and collaboration. Dr. Carr had previously asked those organizing the State Attainment Working Group to provide some questions that are specific for faculty, so the IBHE FAC discussed those questions with Drs. Mossman and Daugherty. She said a lot of the conversation concerned what is meant by a "credential of value" and what "value" is in this context. She thinks some of this involves the idea of stackable credentials that might be below an associate's degree. She noted that the State Attainment Working Group is holding stakeholder meetings across the state that include many from the business community, so if any senators want to do a deeper dive into this, they can refer to the slides Dr. Carr provided in the shared Drive.

Dr. Carr observed that one of the themes that came out of the Public University Caucus was durable skills. She noted that higher education often allows students to be adaptable beyond what their majors are and what they expect their majors to do. She stated that communication, critical theory, and things that are considered part of a classic liberal arts education can enable some kinds of careers that students might want to go into or that they do not know they want to pursue. She added that civic engagement and meaningful lives are also important in this context.

Dr. Carr noted that Dr. Daugherty also reported on how Pell grants have been expanded to high-demand, high-wage workforce programs – programs that, when students apply, have to already have 70 percent completion rates in the program and 70 percent job placement rates.

Dr. Carr pointed out that a short report on the IBHE FAC's October meeting, by Trish Aumann, Managing Director of Academic Strategy and Programs, was sent as a written statement which just arrived yesterday and was included in the Drive for today's meeting. This meeting was held at Rosalind Franklin on October 16. Dr. Carr told senators this was a really rich meeting, as they will see when the full minutes are released in November.

Dr. Carr noted that the report includes information on benefits navigators, a success program that involves working with the equity plans that every institution has, and the Illinois Campus Cares Technical Assistance Center on Mental Health. Dr. Carr said the report contained information on the THRIVE grant applications which they offer annually for four-year nonprofit institutions to help with ending student housing insecurity, but the deadline for submission was October 19. Dr. Carr noted that there is also an IBHE Student Advisory Council.

Dr. Carr related that Molly Faust and Kristen Garcia from Acton Partners spoke at the October meeting about the Ad Hoc Strategy Committee which is reviewing the Thriving Illinois higher education strategic plan. She explained that the state is in the middle of this ten-year plan, and there will be discussions at the November IBHE FAC meeting about all of the stakeholder sessions that are being held. Dr. Carr said that the Acton Partners representatives talked about the eight options being considered as pathways to degree completion:

- *Community college baccalaureate degrees*, which most IBHE FAC members push back on; for instance, in Nursing, there are not always enough clinical placements, so there are concerns that this would not really be effective.
- *Reduced credit bachelor's degrees*, which the IBHE FAC will be hearing more about. Dr. Carr said this involves 3-year/90 credit hour degrees, about which there are various concerns. She said the IBHE Board Chair had more to say about this.
- *Associate's degrees at universities*, which Dr. Carr said that Michigan Tech University used to have because her father taught a two-year forest technology program there. She said Michigan Tech eliminated this and all other two-year technology degrees because they wanted to have a more research-focused Carnegie classification. She added that Carnegie classification is one of the concerns about offering this degree by some universities.
- *Reverse transfer to award associate degrees*, which would require community colleges to keep track of their transfer students before they complete the associate's degree so that they can help every student get a credential of value even if they do not finish their four-year degrees; the thought is that students might have enough credits to finish a two-year program.
- *Communications and engagement strategy.*
- *Common course numbering*, which was pretty much shut down by everyone as really expensive and unnecessary because of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), even though that program could be better.
- *Technology and AI tools*, which are intended to reduce credit loss.
- *Credit loss reportability.*

Dr. Carr said other topics of discussion with these representatives included affordability, including how to communicate to students that college is more affordable in Illinois, and exploring earlier and clearer notifications regarding financial aid. She said this might include giving the Illinois Student Decisions Commission the power to send out MAP information or to have a standard notification letter, such as Minnesota has. Dr. Carr said the faculty discussion on reducing course material costs brought up that open access resources work for some areas more than for others, and it is important to have faculty autonomy. She said one of the ideas raised is to wrap course textbook costs into the cost of tuition so that students do not say that they cannot afford a textbook or required materials.

Dr. Carr related that another discussion concerned standardized approaches to credit for prior learning or prior learning assessment. She recalled that the FAC a few years ago passed a statement asking for a statewide task force on this. She offered to send interested senators further information and noted that some FAC members who worked on this might be meeting with state legislators in future. She knows that Representative Dan Swanson, as a veteran, was very interested in offering more prior learning assessment.

Dr. Carr told senators that the last topic discussed regarding the strategic plan was workforce and economic development, which somewhat overlaps with the Illinois Statewide Insurance Containment Group. She said one thing coming out of this discussion was a question regarding paid internships in regard to affordability and workforce economic development and whether there can even be paid internships for students.

Dr. Carr said the IBHE FAC engaged in a long discussion with IBHE Board Chair Pranav Kothari, who always asks the FAC for questions ahead of time. She said the IBHE FAC about a year ago approved a statement asking the IBHE Board in its annual budget to indicate what adequate funding would be so that when they publish their budget it would acknowledge how the state is falling short of fully funding its institutions of higher education. She said that the IBHE Board's consistent response to this request has been that this depends on there being a funding formula; the state must approve this first, after which this could be part of the IBHE's budget proposal.

Dr. Carr noted that a task force on three-year degrees is wrapping up their report, so Faculty Senate will hear more about this later. She noted that this is not a plan, nor is it necessarily what the state wants to do. She said Chair Kothari expressed concern about how a three-year degree might reduce summer internships and perhaps make students have less experience when applying for jobs. She thinks it might be hard to know if an applicant has completed 90 or 120 hours toward their degree. Dr. Carr said Chair Kothari is also concerned about whether students could be accepted into graduate school with a three-year undergraduate degree.

Dr. Carr stated that the Working Group on AI and Technology will be sending out a faculty survey on AI for the FAC. She said the last thing the FAC did at the October meeting was a tour of the Rosalind Franklin Medical Center. She related that they heard from two people who oversee the training of actors to be standardized patients; it takes a long time for actors to learn how to manifest particular physical or mental health conditions, and the background of the two individuals who train these actors is Musical Theatre.

Senator Tasdan observed that most state institutions, except for the University of Illinois, are pushing for equitable funding. He asked a friend about how University of Illinois-Springfield and University of Illinois-Chicago felt about this. He noted that their 2017 total enrollment numbers on all three campuses were 81,000, but they have increased to 102,000 in 2026; their enrollment increased over 20,000 in a decade while public school enrollment has declined and schools like Western and Eastern Illinois Universities are losing enrollment. He observed that there are continued conversations about the enrollment cliff,

but it is as if this has never affected these institutions. He wonders if anyone is talking about this issue and thinks that someone should.

Provost Mossman responded that President Mindrup talks about this every day at the state level, and he has as well. He thinks the state needs to have a clear vision about a flagship, and, to quote Senator Halpin, "you can't have a flagship without a fleet." He said the issue is why a flagship institution would be concerned about adult learning and workforce development in the state, which are missions of the regional institutions. He said this question is raised constantly, including by Senator Halpin and by President Mindrup during state testimony in April, so it is a frequent discussion. Senator Tasdan thinks the satellite campuses could still have a fraction of this enrollment, such as setting their limit at 50,000. Provost Mossman thinks that UPI has done a good job bringing this up because this is an advocacy moment where everyone has a role in making the same position; from the labor unions to the administration, everyone at WIU has done a good job making this point and being very clear about it. He recalled that the stated goal of the University of Illinois in 2018-19 was to get 100,000 students, to be like Ohio State rather than like the University of Michigan, which when Provost Mossman was young was a closer comparison. He observed that now, and particularly following the budget impasse, which was a major event for the history of higher education in the state of Illinois, the University of Illinois has become an enrollment giant.

Dr. Carr noted that one of her student mentees is from Canton, Illinois, and told her that almost everyone she knows, if they went to college at all, attended a community college. She thinks it would be really interesting to see a breakdown of how many students come to WIU as juniors with associate's degrees because part of the thing that is hard to think about is the narrative of this four-year space. She observed that WIU has competition from community colleges as well as from dual credit courses, which are taught mostly by high school instructors but credentialed by community colleges, so there is competition on the bottom and the top, prestige competition as well as community college competition. She noted that the university also has cost competition from community colleges, but, simultaneously, she does not think it would be in anyone's best interest for WIU to start to award associate's degrees. She related that is what a couple of schools in Ohio, such as Shawnee State, did as a strategy when Ohio State ballooned to 120,000 students. She does not think this would be in the best interest of WIU's community college partners either, but she does think there is the need to talk about this four-year narrative.

Senator Tasdan noted that WIU used to have a very strong Meteorology major and program, but when the University of Illinois started to offer its own program, within a few years WIU started to lose enrollment in this area. He does not necessarily think that the state should control everything, but these are state schools. Provost Mossman agrees with all of this; he noted that some states, such as Massachusetts, clearly assign program areas to their state schools so that Salem State offers courses in one area while the University of Massachusetts does others. He noted that the situation is similar in California, and he does think this is an important conversation to have. Chair McKenzie agrees that this is a great conversation to have, but she is not sure it will get anywhere. She read an article this past weekend with a headline stating that Illinois experienced record higher education enrollment, which surprised her; Senator Kovacs saw the same article. Chair McKenzie thought the headline was outrageously misleading because it makes it seem like everything is okay in higher education.

Dr. Carr remarked that the University of Illinois-Springfield does not have this same experience; Provost Mossman agreed that none of the directional universities do. He noted that Southern Illinois University-Carbondale experienced an increase, with most of the students coming from a very specific population in Texas, but because SIU-C has an open admissions policy, they will probably see a bump in their freshman enrollment but may also see a drastic decrease in their retention, as WIU did when it had a similar admissions policy. He thinks it is good to talk about this as much as possible because this is the way WIU

builds its culture and identity as an institution. He noted that the "growth flaw" is something almost everyone at WIU has been a part of, where an institution only pays attention to enrollment and does not pay enough attention to the actual quality of the education or to the university's Carnegie classification, which states that students who are able to graduate from WIU have a good chance of being successful. He thinks the challenge is to get these students to graduation by increasing the retention and degree completion rates. Chair McKenzie thinks there is a lot of support behind attracting and enrolling a whole bunch of students, but there is a lot more that comes after that, as faculty know.

Senator Kovacs related the idea of three-year degrees has come up in departmental discussions over the past several years, and he wonders if there is any discussion nationally about where that idea stands. He said one comment from a meeting he attended was that if one school starts to pursue this, there may be a cascading effect with other schools following because if a student can complete a degree in three years at a certain school, they may not wish to go elsewhere. Dr. Carr responded that she does not know if there is any national information on this, but she is aware that schools in many surrounding states already have this; Iowa does not call the degree a BA or a BS but something a little different, for example. She thinks it is an improvement that Iowa is at least not calling the degree the same thing as a four-year degree. She thinks every state is doing something different, which is why the IBHE was tasked with coming up with a response.

Senator Kovacs asked if there would then be options for two-year, three-year, and four-year degrees. Provost Mossman thinks that Utah was the first state to offer a three-year degree. He thinks it applies more to institutions that are focused on adult learners and the workforce development mission, while WIU is a state comprehensive four-year institution. He is not sure how successful these degrees have been outside of the online target audience, which is the audience that everyone tends to talk about and which may or may not be there. He has heard dozens of times that the future for institutions of higher education is reaching adult learners, but there will only be so many adult learners that every institution in the country is trying to reach. He thinks it is much better to stabilize both enrollment and the identity of the institution.

One thing Dr. Carr has learned from serving on the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council all these years is that it is really important to think about the bigger higher education landscape, such as that regional public universities are struggling in many places, but small private colleges are struggling as well, and they are much more vulnerable. When she thinks about higher education, she thinks not just about WIU but about how the larger, statewide policy issues can be addressed. She welcomes any feedback or ideas that senators can provide about these issues and strategies to address them.

Dr. Carr said she forgot to mention in the discussion about regional workforce development that the challenge of all state institutions is to serve people across the state, and people migrate around. She also wanted to mention in regard to the State Attainment Working Group that much of it involves finding people willing to get trained for the jobs that are needed, but the difficulty is how to actually find them. She noted that even if the course is offered at a local community college, that does not necessarily mean people are going to want to go into early childhood, nursing, or whatever other field is offered there.

IV. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)

1. Faculty Nominations

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Accessibility

Leigh Ann Fisler, School of Social Sciences CHASE

Academic Calendar Committee
Brian Bellott, School of Natural Sciences CHASE
Leesa Thompson, School of Nursing, Applied Health, and Human Performance CBHCP

There were no further nominations, and they were approved. Chair McKenzie noted that the SNC has now filled all of its current vacancies.

V. Old Business – None

VI. New Business

A. CHASE Dean Search

Chair McKenzie told senators that a search is needed for a new Dean for the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education (CHASE) since Interim Dean Kyle Mayborn has very clearly stated that he will not continue in the position after this year. She explained that while there are current procedures for conducting this search, they do not exactly fit the current makeup of the schools and colleges. Chair McKenzie met with Provost Mossman and Associate Provost Lin on October 22 about the search at which time the decision was made to conduct the search under the *current* policy with these changes to the committee composition:

- One representative from a dean's office (instead of specifically requiring a dean, since there is only one from which to choose);
- One school director (rather than requiring one chair, since those no longer exist);
- One COAP representative from CHASE (rather than the current wording of the College of Arts and Sciences);
- One CSEC representative from CHASE;
- One senator from CHASE;
- Six CHASE faculty members, chosen from volunteers (the Senate will hold elections if necessary), with at least one graduate faculty member;
- Two SGA representatives, one undergraduate and one graduate (the policy currently requires a total of four with two coming from the Quad Cities campus, but there is no longer a QC-SGA);
- One EOA representative.

Chair McKenzie pointed out that this means there would be a 14-member search committee, and seven of those members would be faculty. Senator Tasdan asked if the faculty members must be CHASE faculty; Chair McKenzie confirmed this is correct. Senator Cole asked if the EOA representative will not be a voting member; Chair McKenzie confirmed this is correct and that they will be ex-officio. Senator Cole asked if the representative from the dean's office could be an associate dean. Chair McKenzie responded that it could be an associate dean from the CHASE Dean's Office, but Katrina Daytner is also a member of that Dean's Office, so there are actually three to choose from. She noted that this person also does not have to come from CHASE but could be a representative from either Dean's Office.

Chair McKenzie stated that the hope is to establish this search committee soon so that on-campus interviews can be held in January or February. She stated that if there are no objections to this search, a senator from CHASE is needed to volunteer. Senator Baker from the School of Visual and Performing Arts, and Senator Parzefall from the School of Humanities volunteered.

Senator Cole asked if this will be a national or an internal search; Chair McKenzie replied that this is a good question, and it will be a national search.

Chair McKenzie noted that since two senators volunteered for this seat, an election will need to occur. She pointed out that there will also be seats for a representative from each of the schools in

CHASE, so the senator who does not win the election for this seat can still volunteer to represent their school, although there is no guarantee because there may be multiple volunteers from schools, in which case an election will still be held.

Senator Parzefall withdrew her name from consideration. Senator Baker was elected to represent Faculty Senate on the CHASE Dean Search Committee.

B. For the Good of the Body

Senator Kovacs, who is in the School of Nursing, Applied Health, and Human Performance, announced that their school has started a new institute called Thrive, and tomorrow is their initial event. He explained that Thrive is The Healthy Resource Institute for Vital Enrichment, which was started by a donation from the previous department chair, who retired. He stated that in honor of Senior Health and Fitness Day tomorrow (October 28), an event will be held from 2:00-4:00 in Brophy Hall which is open to anybody but is primary geared toward individuals over the age of 50. He said that it would involve some basic functional testing. He added that the faculty offering the event are very excited since it is the first one for the new institute.

Motion: To adjourn (Tasdan)

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

Respectfully submitted,

Faculty Senate Office Manager and Recording Secretary