

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, *October 8 2019, 4:00 p.m.*
Union Capitol Rooms/WIUQC Riverfront 205

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: D. Banash, M. Bean, B. Bellott, J. Choi, S. Cordes, S. Czechowski, G. Delany- Barmann, R. Dimitrov, R. Filipink, J. Franken, D. Hunter, I. Lauer, T. Lough, M. Maskarinec, D. Oursler, B. Perabo, C. Pynes, J. Robinett, R. Sawhney, M. Stinnett, E. Taylor, K. Zbeeb (via teleconference)

Ex-officio: Billy Clow, Interim Provost; Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: F. Tasdan

GUESTS: Mark Bernards, Tom Blackford, Angela Bonifas, Amy Carr, Drew Donahoo, Doug Freed, Anna James, Angela Lynn, Colton Markey, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Patty Mason, Rose McConnell, Kristi Mindrup (via teleconference), Mark Mossman, Jill Myers, Lorette Oden, Melissa Telles

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. September 24, 2019

MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Clow announced that early warning grades are due by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, October 14. He encouraged faculty to turn in the grades as part of the University's efforts to promote retention. He also encouraged faculty to turn in as many grades as possible, not just for those who are below the grade expectation level, in order to follow up with students who may have issues or might be in trouble academically.

Interim Provost Clow informed senators that several faculty searches were approved, and this process will begin fairly quickly. He stated that deans should let departments know once the announcements are made. He told senators that the process has been revamped by Interim President Abraham, and one thing that should prove beneficial is that all 15-20 positions will be advertised at once in one mass ad. He stated that this will announce that WIU is hiring a bulk group of faculty at one time, which should be good press. Interim Provost Clow related that deans had to request the positions, and so far, all have been approved by Interim President Abraham, which is a good sign; other positions are still being negotiated. He recognizes that WIU still has financial issues to be concerned about, so everyone will still need to be cognizant of that this year and next.

B. Student Government Association Report
(Colton Markey, SGA President)

Mr. Markey reminded senators to encourage their students to apply for the two \$400 scholarships per semester given out by SGA by completing the form on PurplePost. They must have a 2.0 cumulative WIU GPA, be in good judicial standing, and submit a resume to be eligible for the award. Mr. Markey stated that despite the GPA requirement, first semester freshmen can still apply.

Mr. Markey encouraged senators to nominate students for the SGA Student of the Month award. SGA tries to give out two Student of the Month recognitions every month.

Araceli Villagomez will be the SGA Representative to Faculty Senate this year. She will assume her new duties at the next Senate meeting.

Chairperson Pynes asked how SGA is doing with their efforts to fill vacant seats for student representatives on Faculty Senate councils. Mr. Markey replied that with enrollment down, SGA is finding it hard to get students involved because their commitments are pretty spread out. He told senators that if they have a student that they think would do a good job on a council, they can recommend that person to Mr. Markey and he will contact them about possible service. Chairperson Pynes asked how many seats remain to be filled. The Recording Secretary had just emailed Mr. Markey this week to inform him that four seats remain vacant so far this year: one of the two student seats on CAGAS (just for fall semester) and one seat each for the Council for Instructional Technology, the WID Council, and the Council on Campus Planning and Usage. Chairperson Pynes recently recommended a student from one of his classes for the other vacant seat on CAGAS. He thinks part of the problem is that students do not know how important it is to fill these council seats.

A. Other Announcements

1. “Spring for Books” Scholarship
(Anna James, Academic Advisor, College of Business and Technology)

Ms. James chairs the Council of Academic Advisors (COAA) Public Relations Committee, which selects the scholarship recipients. COAA sponsors a spring semester book scholarship which last year awarded 12 \$200 scholarships to deserving WIU students. Ms. James related that students must submit an application explaining why they deserve the scholarship and providing their cumulative GPA, and other hours earned. Students must also be full-time, show financial need, and have filed the FAFSA (preference *may* be given to those who filed by October 14). According to the scholarship form, preference *may* also be given to students who have earned 10-59 s.h. at WIU and to those with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

The number of scholarships awarded depends on the balance in the account. Ms. James told senators that this year the account has \$1,200 less than it had last year at this time, while student need is higher than ever. She stated that textbooks and purchase of online codes are an essential part of a student’s success at WIU, so she encourages everyone to think about donating. The selection process begins December 3.

2. Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council Notes from September 19, 2019
(Amy Carr, WIU Representative to the IBHE FAC)

Chairperson Pynes observed that FAC Chair Marie Donovan “shared her optimism at the positive and productive atmosphere at the last two IBHE meetings.” He asked if these meetings included the two new members; Dr. Carr confirmed they did. Chairperson Pynes asked if John Bambenek and others are no longer on the Board; Dr. Carr confirmed this is correct. She added that the current faculty representative on the IBHE, who is from the University of Illinois, has done an IBHE FAC internship in the past, teaches in higher education, and has been very active. Chairperson Pynes believes this is encouraging. He recalled that Faculty Senate (in 2016) wrote a letter to former Governor Rauner objecting to the appointment of Mr. Bambenek to the Board; the Governor in response only moved Mr. Bambenek from one seat to another. Chairperson Pynes said it is good to know that change in membership has resulted in a change in attitude for the Board.

3. Response to Dual Enrollment Questions
(Kristi Mindrup, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs)

Dr. Mindrup provided the following information via email to Chairperson Pynes:

“Following up on the question raised at the 9/24 Faculty Senate meeting about how WIU dual enrollment counting compares to Eastern Illinois University, I checked with Registrar and Institutional Research, who provided the following information:

- Both WIU and EIU count dual enrollment students in total headcount.
- WIU does not count dual enrollment students as "new freshmen.”

- EIU offers both dual enrollment and dual credit courses. Like the community college model, EIU dual credit students earn simultaneous credit at the high school and EIU, and these courses are taught by high school teachers. For reporting purposes, dual credit students are identified as a separate category on the EIU headcount page.

Note that WIU offers dual enrollment courses, and has not offered dual credit. The WIU approach is to work with high schools throughout the region to tailor a dual enrollment experience specific to the needs of the district, the high school, and especially the students. WIU dual enrollment focuses on academic quality, connecting students to WIU faculty, and creating positive experiences and supports that inspire students to choose WIU.”

Senators did not have any further questions for Dr. Mindrup at this time. Chairperson Pynes thanked Dr. Mindrup for the information and said he looks forward to finding out how EIU became so successful in the area of dual enrollment.

4. Chairperson Pynes announced that the Honors College Pre-Law Symposium is being held in the Union Brattain Lounge from 5:00-7:00 tonight, so those who wish to do so can go there immediately following the Senate meeting.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS) (Mark Bernards, Chair)

1. Proposed Freshmen Admission Policy

Dr. Barnards told senators that CAGAS received the proposal from the Office of Admissions. He noted that one of the things CAGAS considered is that GPA is the strongest predictor of retention from freshman to sophomore year among WIU students, which mirrors national graduation rates; those with a high school GPA above 3.33 have a greater percentage of success. He stated that SAT scores are not a good predictor in the models for WIU, which is also true for many of the national studies; SAT scores do a good job of correlating with socioeconomic factors but not with success in college. He pointed out that, despite the fact that ACT scores have such a significant relation to college success, Illinois is now an SAT state. He added that many WIU students come are first generation college students, and standardized tests may not be very advantageous to them.

Dr. Bernards related that for the past four years students with 3.2 GPAs or greater have been retaining to the sophomore year at 71 percent; the current University average is 67 percent. He said Admissions would like to admit more students with high GPAs who might potentially have a positive impact. Admissions currently uses a model where if the high school GPA, times 10, plus the ACT score equals 46, the student is automatically admitted; for instance, a student with a 3.0 (which times 10 equals 30) plus a 16 ACT would be a regular admit since this equates to 46. Dr. Bernards pointed out that for students who do not achieve a score of 46, the Reach Program (formerly called OAS) may be an option. He said students are not automatically admitted to the Reach Program; they look at additional criteria, such as academic GPA versus overall GPA and letters of recommendation, to make a decision. He stressed that Admissions hopes to bring in students that are likely to succeed.

Dr. Bernards related that in 2018, when Illinois was changing from an ACT to an SAT state, CAGAS changed the minimum standardized test score for automatic admission to an 880 SAT, which is equivalent to a 16 on the ACT test. He pointed out that a student could have a 4.0 high school GPA, but if the student scores 14-15 on the ACT test (which would equate to 54-55 points with WIU’s formula), this would not be a regular admit because the ACT score was less than 16. Dr. Bernards stated that, based on the models that Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) Director Angela Bonifas prepared and on national data, CAGAS believes

that students that score 14, 15, or 16 on their ACT and have a GPA of 3.3 or higher are as likely or more likely to succeed at WIU than the general student population.

Dr. Bernards told senators that CAGAS voted to approve a test-optional admission process for high school students with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3; students with GPAs below 3.3 would still be required to submit test scores to reach the threshold of 46, and Reach review would still require additional criteria for admission. He related that concerns were expressed by the Departments of Mathematics and Philosophy and English because of their use of standardized test scores as one of the criteria for placement in first year Math and English classes. Dr. Bernards related that Ms. Bonifas offered to work with Math to develop models for them to use, and Mathematics and Philosophy Interim Chair Victoria Baramidze then sent an email expressing their support: “If you recall, the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy was concerned about how the changes in admissions policy might affect mathematics placement procedures. Since our conversation at the September 26th CAGAS meeting, the issue has been discussed at length and plans are now in place to deal with it.” Dr. Bernards also received an email of support from Christopher Morrow, Interim Chair of the Department of English: “I wanted to let you know that I support the proposed admissions change. In discussions within CAS and with Doug Freed over the last couple of weeks, many of our questions have been addressed as well as they can be at this point. If this change is implemented, we will be able to work with Admissions and other offices to develop a placement system that can best serve the needs of our students.”

Dr. Bernards told senators that there was a split vote at CAGAS in support of the proposal (6 yes – 2 no – 0 abstentions). He said one of the concerns was from Mathematics and the other was related to the model and how it was developed. He related that Ms. Bonifas then provided a sheet explaining how the model was developed, and this satisfied that concern.

Dr. Bernards was concerned about whether the University would see a large increase of students not likely to succeed as a result of this change, as happened in 2011, but he does not expect that to be the case. He related that the University will continue to have a selective Reach process but more automatic admissions for students with higher high school GPAs who Admissions thinks would be likely to succeed. He added that the administration intends to adjust the Western Commitment Scholarship so that it is developed more broadly and not just focused on students with high GPAs and test scores. He pointed out that the new admissions model would allow admission to students with high GPAs but lower test scores, and this group will also receive more support from the University under the new scholarship model, which will increase their likelihood to succeed because they would receive the same financial support as others. Dr. Bernards also pointed out that WIU would be the first public university in Illinois to have a selective test-optional admissions criterion, which will hopefully generate positive news and increase enrollment numbers. He added that the change, if approved, would be applicable to and hopefully impact Fall 2020 admissions.

Senator Perabo asked if students no longer take the ACT but only the SAT. Dr. Bernards replied that Illinois pays for all high school students to take the SAT; students must pay for the ACT test on their own. Senator Perabo pointed out that a 16 on the ACT, which equates to a 3.0 high school GPA, falls within the 25th percentile in the ACT range, so these are the students that WIU is currently accepting in terms of their test scores. She said those with ACT scores of 15 fall within the 19th percentile, and those with a score of 14 are within the 13th percentile, which seems really low to her. She agrees with the desire not to overemphasize test scores, but she is concerned that the University may go too far in that direction. Dr. Bernards related that Admissions Associate Director Melissa Telles told CAGAS that 152 students who applied last year but were not admitted to WIU had a high school GPA of 3.3 or above; 133 of those scored 14-15 on their ACT and only 19 scored less than 14, with the majority of those scoring a 13. He said this group of 152 applicants are the ones that would be affected by this change. Dr. Bernards related that a report written by Matthew Chingos, Director of the Center on Education Data and Policy at the Urban Institute, looked at a number of test scores and equated an 800-900 on the SAT with a 14-16 ACT and a 900-1000 on the SAT with a 16-18 ACT; his research shows the likelihood of

students in these categories graduating within six years is equivalent to students with ACTs of 17-18. Dr. Bernards stated that, based on the model developed with internal WIU students as well as on national models such as this one, CAGAS feels that these students are as likely to succeed as students with higher ACT scores.

Senator Perabo asked if a similar case can be made for students with a 3.0 high school GPA. Dr. Bernards explained that Table 3 was based on the law of regression analysis conducted for the likelihood of these students moving from their first year and coming back for a second year at WIU. He pointed out that the line is drawn at 60 percent or greater in terms of likely to retain. Senator Perabo asked if this data actually came from looking at students with 13 ACT scores, which shows that 75-76 percent of those with 3.7 GPAs retained at 75 percent. Ms. Bonifas replied that is a good question. She explained the table shows the *probability* of retaining based on this model. She used data from Fall 2013 through Fall 2018, and the cohorts of students who matriculated in those years were used to predict future retention. Ms. Bonifas related that Chairperson Pynes asked her to create a similar table with *actual* retention rates, which she did, but senators were not provided with that table. She said the probability percentages provided in the tables to Faculty Senate are very conservative; WIU students are actually retaining better, and she has a lot of confidence in the 3.3 or higher data because of the number of students in the model. She added that one limitation of the model is that students are not currently being admitted in the “proposed regular admit” (purple) area, so the model tries to predict which groups those students will be in if the Admissions proposal is adopted; it relies heavily on high school GPA to place these students into the retain/not retained groups because test scores have very low predictive properties.

Senator Dimitrov asked if the “current regular admit students” are being used to predict the “proposed regular admit” students on the table. Ms. Bonifas responded that data from all students in the table is used to predict, but the table uses high school GPA to predict probability. Senator Dimitrov asked if a variable function was used. Ms. Bonifas responded that she conducted a logistic regression which uses a binary outcome variable of retain/did not retain. Senator Dimitrov asked if one of the tables reflects first-year retention and the other depicts second-year retention; Dr. Bernards replied that both tables depict retention from the first to the second year, but Table 1 only shows 2017-18. Ms. Bonifas added that a larger sample was available from 2017-18 because students were required to take the SAT those two years. She said Dr. Bernards then asked her to analyze data for Fall 2014 through Fall 2018. She explained that what is being analyzed in Tables 1 and 2 and Tables 3 and 4 are the same, but they represent different cohorts. She added that the model became stronger with the larger sample. Senator Dimitrov asked how student success is defined. Ms. Bonifas responded that the model is predicts retention to the second academic year; however, the current admissions formula is based only on the first term at WIU. Chairperson Pynes observed that this question was also raised at the Executive Committee meeting. Dr. Bernards added that this model is more rigorous than the University’s current admissions model because it goes through two semesters rather than one.

Senator Hunter asked how many students would go into the Reach program with this model. Dr. Bernards replied that students with less than a 16 GPA could appeal to CAGAS for regular admission. Dr. Hunter asked how many students WIU currently has that would fall into the “proposed regular admit” area of the table; Chairperson Pynes replied there are none currently because the institution does not yet admit those students. Senator Hunter asked how many are expected; Chairperson Pynes replied 152. Ms. Telles added that there were 152 students in this group in Fall 2019 that were not accepted by WIU; another 157, using Fall 2019 numbers, are in the “proposed Reach review” section of the table who could be eligible to be admitted through the Office of Academic Services (OAS). Senator Hunter observed that under this proposal the University could potentially accept a student with an ACT of 9. He asked if the University would advertise this and how many other institutions are accepting students with that low of an ACT score. Ms. Telles responded that many institutions nationally, including the University of Chicago, a private institution, have implemented test-optional policies. She related that at this year’s High School Articulation

Conference, an event which all state universities attend, she learned that many other state institutions are considering this type of policy but so far none have implemented it, so WIU could be the first.

Chairperson Pynes clarified that admission would not be test-optional for everyone but only for those students with a 3.3 GPA or higher. He was originally skeptical about this proposal but now supports it. He observed that WIU already weighs GPA ten times test scores in its current formula $[(10 \times \text{HS GPA}) + \text{ACT} \geq 46]$. He observed that there were 19 students in Fall 2019 with a 4.0 GPA and a 14-15 ACT score that WIU did not admit. Chairperson Pynes thinks everyone would agree that a student with a high school GPA of 4.0 should be eligible for admission to WIU, but if a student with a 4.0 and a 14 ACT applies, that student is denied admission, even though their WIU admissions formula number of 54 ($40 + 14$) is well over the 46 threshold. He wants senators to be clear that what is being proposed is not a test-optional admissions policy for the University but only for those students who achieved a 3.3 GPA or above during three and one-half to four years of high school. He added that the model predicts these students will retain higher than the University's current retention rate. He thinks the proposal represents a very mild change. Chairperson Pynes admitted he complained that there is no data for those students in the "proposed regular admit" range on the table because they have not been admitted, but because most of those are in the 14-15 ACT group, those students are really close to the 16 ACT that would allow them to be admitted currently.

Senator Filipink observed that the argument is that although ACT scores are predictive, the SAT is not predictive, but he is not sure if this is just for Illinois or generally speaking. Dr. Bernards replied that the data indicates that the SAT is not predictive generally speaking. Senator Filipink asked if this is a recent occurrence or if SAT has been traditionally non-predictive. Dr. Bernards related that the SAT was originally scored on a 2,400-point level, but this was later changed to 1,600 points because it was thought not to be predictive; 2,400 was found to be predictive of socioeconomic factors and not much else. He added that with the revision to 1,600 points, the College Board also offered a "corrective factor" to adjust the score based on parents' income. Senator Filipink stated while the ACT had been found to be traditionally predictive, Illinois decided to switch to a different system; however, it is not clear that the SAT scores that WIU is proposing to accept actually correspond exactly to ACT scores. He observed that students will not really be coming in with ACT scores of 14-15 (since they will be submitting SAT scores), but Admissions will make that assumption because the company that produces the exams says those scores are equivalent.

Senator Filipink observed that the proposal states that "GED, proficiency-based school applicants, and standards-based school applicants are not eligible for test-optional admission." He asked, however, if Admissions plans to make any adjustment for the potential for high school grade inflation. Dr. Bernards replied that this was not part of the proposal. He added that once a student comes to WIU with a GPA below a 2.5 on Table 3, the model does not necessarily have a really strong predictive value for retention. Senator Filipink asked, since the University has actual data on high school GPAs, whether there is any way to analyze whether GPAs are predictive across the board or are more predictive for some schools than others. Ms. Bonifast replied that there is currently no accounting for grade inflation and no adjustment for that in the formula, although she does admit to seeing grade inflation and recognizes it when reviewing the data. She would be open to looking at different variables, especially once a student is admitted to WIU, such as variables to account for the student's school and home location, and potentially having a conversation about adjusting for grade inflation in future formulas, if needed. Ms. Bonifas added that she could produce more robust retention models once students are admitted and she has the freedom to add more variables to the models. She stated that even if this is not something that is accounted for when admitting, once students are here and can be identified to be at-risk or with the potential of being at-risk, she thinks this would be an excellent idea.

Senator Filipink asked if students in the "proposed regular admit" purple area of the table would be regular admission while students in the "proposed Reach review" yellow area

would be admitted to the Reach program if the proposal is approved. Mr. Freed clarified those students in the yellow area would be eligible for Reach review, not necessarily admitted to the Reach program. Senator Filipink expressed concerns that students, especially with GPAs of 3.3 or 3.4, may not actually retain at the rates being predicted but will not get any extra support because they would, under this proposal, be considered regular admits. He is concerned that this will increase the cohort in Reach and also, more significantly, increase the cohort of students who would benefit from Reach but will not get it. He is also concerned that additional resources will not be invested in Reach. He observed that this is beyond CAGAS's purview but pointed out that student success involves getting students through the first year *and then beyond*. Ms. Bonifas promised to closely monitor how this change affects WIU's enrollment and retention of students; she has been working closely with Justin Schuch, Director of the Office of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Retention Initiatives, and thinks that there are additional student success initiatives in place right now. Ms. Bonifas stated that, regardless of how these students are admitted or whether they are at risk, she plans to put them into her early at-risk analytics model. She thinks that once they are admitted she will be able to see stronger variables that will help identify those students who are at risk. She added that once they are admitted she will add to the high school GPA such variables as their parents' financial status; their activities at WIU; whether the students are part of honors, athletics, or a living-learning community; and their early warning grades. She thinks this will be inclusive of the overall retention model. Senator Filipink stated that it will be even more important to remind faculty to submit early warning grades because if these students are to be retained it will be important to know where they are during the semester. He suggested that if the University plans to bring in students whom there are potential concerns regarding their ability to retain and succeed, perhaps it would be best to run a pilot program for the first year and cohortize the program – put them all into the same classes and provide them with additional support to get them across the line better.

Senator Sawhney asked if Ms. Bonifas has researched the gender divide for these potential students and whether they are coming from rural or urban areas; Ms. Bonifas said this is a great question. She responded that currently WIU's enrollment is about 51-52 percent female; new freshmen classes have been variable regarding where they are coming from over the years depending upon the University's recruiting strategies. She said there is a lot of data that rural students are less likely to retain; however, many WIU students, although they often come from cities in Cook County, are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which is also a factor in non-retention. She added that this has been considered when looking at this fall's freshmen class, and it is included in the model, but gender is not included because it is not predictive of retention. Senator Sawhney asked how the proposal would affect international students. Mr. Freed responded that the proposal is only for domestic undergraduate students, and international students are usually graduate students.

Senator Franken asked if the model takes into account the positive correlation between test scores and GPA, such as a latent or unobserved variable. Ms. Bonifas related that she performed two tests of multicollinearity because if two variables are too alike it will produce a poor model, but she found that, even though they are correlated, they were within a reasonable range.

Senator Robinette asked why, if GPA is more predictive than test scores, the upper righthand corner of the table shows such low retention rates. He wonders why this group is not being reviewed for Reach. Ms. Bonifas responded that this is a great question and was also asked by CAGAS and discussed at their meeting, however, this is not part of the present proposal. She explained that right now most of the students with a 2.5 GPA or lower are Reach admits; there were only seven in Fall 2019 that had 2.5 GPAs but fell into the regular admit section, so the population with low GPAs is not large. She thinks this is something for future discussion to see what resources these students would need in order to retain.

Senator Dimitrov asked if Ms. Bonifas has produced a similar table for SAT scores versus retention – a model using SAT instead of GPA, even though it has been stated that SAT is not

predictive of retention. Ms. Bonifas observed ACT is a significant predictor of retention when combined with high school or even first-term GPA, as is high school GPA alone, so these add something to the model. She stated that in general the more variables that can be added to the model, the better the model becomes, but since the model is limited to admissions, it is very simplistic. She did not look at ACT alone but did look at retention by ACT with high school GPA. Senator Dimitrov asked if there was a similar chart prepared for SAT and retention. Ms. Bonifas reiterated that SAT is not predictive of retention, but high school GPA is highly predictive on its own. Senator Dimirov asked if the reason an SAT table is unavailable is because Ms. Bonifas looked at the data and determined that it is non-predictive; Ms. Bonifas confirmed this is correct but offered to prepare such a table if requested.

Senator Perabo observed that if ACT is not predictive, it does not seem that the University should be admitting students to the Reach program with GPAs of 2.0, 2.1, or 2.2 because their ACT score will not give them a boost. She stated that although this is outside the purview of this proposal, it would seem that students should not be admitted who retain at 30 percent. Ms. Bonifas replied that the actual retention rate for the “current Reach review” students on the table is closer to 50 percent; it was 48.9 percent for the last cohort and is actually 33 percent for the lower end of this section. She explained that the top of the table is 100 percent so the model underpredicts the regular admit section.

Senator Lauer related that he asked a similar question to Senator Filipink’s question about Reach students, but there will not be an expansion of this program, so it might be thought of as an offset. He does think, however, that there is a higher likelihood that students admitted under the proposal might seek out the services available through the Office of Academic Services. Responding to Senator Robinette, Senator Lauer stated that those students in the upper righthand of the table were historically eligible for OAS review, so it would make sense with the way the University used to handle admissions if these students were eligible for Reach review now. Regarding international admissions, Senator Lauer pointed out that one of the elements of the standardized tests is that they clearly are biased towards students with English as their native language. He suggested that senators who are on the fence about the proposal may want to ask themselves if they think that a four-year, day in and day out evaluation of student performance is more accurate than a four-hour evaluation. Senator Lauer recognizes that there are some reasons to do the four-hour evaluation, but there are clear reasons why it might not be the best predictor of how a student will do during the next four years in college.

Senator Filipink pointed out that Tables 2 and 4 are probabilities, but the actual retention rates, as opposed to probable rates, are available. He asked if senators can have the actual rates that students have retained for the last five years. Senator Pynes said this was the complaint that he voiced at the ExCo meeting when he referred to the tables as a “polite fiction.” He recognizes that there is very little data for the sections referred to as “proposed regular admit” and “proposed Reach review” because those students have not been admitted. He stated that if someone told him that there were 19 students with a GPA of 4.0 who were not admitted to WIU, he would want to know why; the answer is because they got a 14 or 15 on their ACT tests. Chairperson Pynes believes that, even with grade inflation, if a student can achieve a 4.0 in four years, they can probably succeed at WIU. He observed that even though the area for “proposed regular admit” on the table looks really big, it is actually very close to WIU’s current threshold. He stated that there are tables showing actual retention rates that Faculty Senate can see if senators want, but what has been provided is a much simpler proposal. Senator Filipink stated that while he understands this, he would appreciate having the actual data.

Senator Filipink asked if taking the academic GPA (using only core academic courses such as English, Math, and Science) would be more predictive than using the overall GPA. Ms. Bonifas agrees it would probably be more accurate. She had a conversation with the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy about weighing the AP courses for Math in order to help them with placement, but right now that information is not collected from students unless they are in Reach, so she would be unable to test that currently. Senator Filipink pointed out that WIU requires that students provide proof that they have completed

these courses, so the University does have this data in students', and he would argue that including this information would make a much stronger proposal if it was based on academic GPA across four years of high school. Mr. Freed acknowledged that Senator Filipink is correct, but pointed out that the resources required to collect and put this information into the system to analyze are not available at this time; Admissions does not have the staff power to enter each course and their grades from student transcripts. Mr. Freed also pointed out this raises the question of what is considered an academic course; for instance, some consider fine arts and foreign languages to be academic courses while others do not. Mr. Freed told senators there has been debate across admissions circles about this question. He stated that some academic departments may feel left out of this discussion because their courses are not considered to be part of the core. Senator Filipink pointed out that WIU has defined what it considers to be core courses; one of the things that is considered by CAGAS when a student is denied admission is the student's academic GPA. He appreciates the staffing issue but thinks this would be doable because WIU does define academic core courses and the information would not need to be gathered for every student but only for the ones affected by this proposed policy, such as those students who did not reach the minimum ACT for admission but achieved a 4.0 high school GPA. He said this makes him question what courses were the basis for the 4.0. Chairperson Pynes pointed out that if a student has a 4.0 in their entire academic career, they also have a 4.0 in their sub-career.

Senator Dimitrov suggested that Admissions explain the correlations in the model with a narrative and then perhaps present that. He noted that a few years ago it was stated that butter production in Bangladesh is the best predictor of the Dow Jones Average, but if there is no narrative it is impossible to use that correlation. He thinks it is important to explain why the correlation happens – why, for example, a student with a 2.0 GPA and an ACT of 33 would have a low probability of being retained. Dr. Bernards responded that a 2.0 GPA in high school would seem to indicate that the student did not work very hard even though the student may be incredibly smart, and habits in high school may carry over in college. Senator Franken remarked this person may not even exist in a data set; it is just extrapolated to predict the probability of retention for a student with those characteristics, and there may not have been anyone actually admitted to WIU in the past with a super high ACT score and a horribly low high school GPA.

Senator Banash remarked that the concerns being raised are important ones, and he believes the University should keep working on this. He pointed out, however that WIU is in a crisis situation in an incredibly competitive environment. He observed that senators are looking at a proposal that may be a little experimental but which makes sense. He noted that data resulting from this change will be tracked, and he thinks the proposal makes sense and offers opportunities. He thinks that what is a narrow proposal is turning into much larger questions about high school readiness, and he does not think that is what is on the table. He believes senators should be able to move forward on this narrow proposal.

Chairperson Pynes related that he convinced himself the proposal is a good idea by asking himself if he would want in his class a student with a 4.0 GPA who got a 15 on the ACT test, as opposed to a student with a 2.0 high school GPA who got a 30 on the ACT. He pointed out that the second student would have a 36 percent retention rate expectation. Chairperson Pynes does not want to be critical of students whose high school careers may have been difficult for a variety of reasons, but it has been found that high school GPA correlates well with first-year retention. He stated that this correlation does not indicate that these students are graduating or that they may not leave college and then come back, but this proposal is about increasing WIU's retention rate and bringing in students that have a good chance to be successful. Chairperson Pynes pointed out that one of WIU's core values is academic opportunity, and he thinks this proposal does that in an academically respectable way.

Senator Bellott asked how long this policy would be good for; Chairperson Pynes replied that it would be good until it is changed by Faculty Senate. Senator Bellott pointed out that this means it would be an indefinite change.

SENATOR FILIPINK OBJECTED TO THE REPORT

Motion: To restore the report to the agenda (Filipink/Oursler)

MOTION TO RESTORE APPROVED 22 YES – 0 NO – 0 AB

Motion: To approve the report (Hunter/Franken)

Senator Lauer stated that if some individuals have concerns about the timeframe or other issues which may not get hashed out today, they should consider service on CAGAS. He noted that several senators have already served on CAGAS, and that council talks about issues in more detail than is sometimes possible at Faculty Senate. He stated that one reason to serve on CAGAS could be to craft an even more robust policy. Chairperson Pynes added that Faculty Senate asks its councils to do the hard work for them, and it is rare for the Senate to outright reject one of their council's recommendations. He stated that it would be more appropriate to make a motion to send the recommendation back to the council if there are serious concerns.

Motion: To vote with secret ballot (Filipink/Bellott)

NO OBJECTIONS TO VOTING WITH SECRET BALLOT

Senator Cordes asked what the outcome would be if the proposal does not pass. Chairperson Pynes responded that it would be rejected until some other proposal comes forward. Senator Cordes asked if the proposal will become policy if approved; Chairperson Pynes responded that it will, pending approval of the President.

Chairperson Pynes stated that he is surprised no one asked what the Interim Provost's opinion is of the proposal. Interim Provost Clow thinks the proposal is a good idea. He noted that individuals do not take tests in the same manner; it is difficult for test taking to be fair and equitable when writers, artists, philosophers, and others may test on a different level and a different model than others. Interim Provost Clow thinks it is time to try something new because what has been tried in the past has not worked. He pointed out that the lowest models match the current rates of retention, so this proposal may let in more bodies that can hopefully be given the support to help them succeed because that is what this institution does. He stated that WIU is all about transforming people's lives and making a difference, which is what the institution is supposed to be doing, and he thinks WIU does it really well. He believes this is why when, year after year, students are asked what they liked best about Western, their response is the faculty, and he does not think this will change because the formula changes that determines how students are admitted. He suspects what might happen is that WIU gets a few more students, which he thinks is a great idea and a good reason to support the proposal.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT PASSED 18 YES – 4 NO – 0 AB

Senator Czechowski remarked that she teaches at WIU to help a C student become a B student and to help a B student become an A student, not to keep an A student as an A student, because she could do that somewhere else.

B. Senate Nominating Committee
(Jeremy Robinett, Chair)

1. Nominations to Fill Vacancies

SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES:

Council on General Education (CGE)

Craig Tollini, Soc/Anth	replacing	Pat Anderson	2021	Soc Science
<u>Council for International Education (CIE)</u>				
Richard Hughey, Music	replacing	Ricardo Sepulveda	Fall 2019 only	FA&C
<u>Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID)</u>				
Joel Gruver, Agriculture	replacing	Cecil Tarrant	2022	B&T

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad Hoc Committee to Identify WIU’s Peer Institutions

Jason Hawkins, Music FA&C

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

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. Discussion and Recommendations for Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council Public University Caucus

Dr. Carr sent an email to Chairperson Pynes asking if Faculty Senate could provide input on a question raised at a recent meeting of the Public University Caucus of the IBHE FAC regarding what the Caucus should focus on in the coming year regarding faculty angles on higher education in the state or nationally. Chairperson Pynes said he knows the caucus plans to discuss programs that are low enrolled, mergers of programs, and similar issues that have been part of the problem in the past. He observed that there are a couple of ways to deal with budget cuts, impasses, and similar problems; the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Illinois State University have addressed this by deciding to admit additional students. Chairperson Pynes recalled that UIUC decided to admit 15,000 more students to deal with the budget impasse. He believes that these institutions ignore their role as institutional leaders in the state by not demanding fair funding for universities because to deal with this problem by admitting more students hurts everyone else down the line since there are only so many students to go around. He would like to see a discussion about universities that are solving their problems with budget shortfalls by admitting more students and hiring adjuncts because this type of solution hurts rural and other institutions. He noted that hiring adjuncts or their own Ph.D. students into positions and underpaying them means these individuals and their grad students are not getting jobs at other regional universities such as WIU. Chairperson Pynes believes that if institutions such as UIUC and ISU do not hold the line, then it will be difficult to defend universities against the state. He thinks these institutions need to be willing to say that they are not going to admit additional students because the state needs to support other universities as well as supporting them. Dr. Carr responded that this would be an interesting discussion.

Senator Maskarinec asked about the statement in Dr. Carr’s email indicating that “in the spring we will likely form a working group on competency-based learning and certification (which could increasingly replace credit hours and semester-length programs taught by faculty).” He asked what certification means in a broader contest (not just for computer science), such as for a faculty member in Religious Studies, and what it means for WIU. Dr. Carr responded that the move toward certification and competency-based learning is coming from various angles and is happening at many different levels; it is particularly directed toward teacher education, and last spring there was a coalition that wanted to extend this to General Education as well. She noted that General Education is already being affected by AP courses and other ways to keep students from taking courses at universities. Dr. Carr stated that the competency-based movement is being directed more toward specific classes or programs right now; it is something that has been building but is not entirely formulated yet. Senator Maskarinec asked if there could be a certification in General Education. Dr. Carr responded that there would not necessarily be a Gen Ed certification, but there might be strategies to get particular distribution requirements met in alternative ways, which is something that has been

aired recently. She stated that a lot of this initiative is geared toward nontraditional students, not require faculty. Dr. Carr has seen proposals that would allow credit if a person had worked as a professional musician for a number of years, for example. She has read through the proposed rule changes at the federal level which aim to expand competency-based learning, which she thinks could lead to even more privatization of education. She remarked that people might begin to think that they only need a certificate rather than a university degree, which is occurring in some cases in the field of computer sciences. Senator Maskarinec remarked that all sorts of certifications are available in computer sciences, but they are training, not education, which is why the word “certification” concerns him. He stated that computer science education exists not just to train students to use certain tools but to educate them regarding why those tools are important and in what context they should be used. He stated that when he sees “certification” used in a broader context, it scares him. Dr. Carr offered to email Senator Maskarinec the proposed rule changes from the Department of Education which would open the door to more competency-based learning; the public comments period is over, but the Department of Education has not yet composed a response to those comments. Senator Perabo remarked that some of this relates to national companies that offer testing. Dr. Carr agreed but said she does not have any specifics about that. Senator Perabo has heard of Bachelor of General Studies students who have signed up to take one of these tests rather than take a class at WIU, online, or elsewhere. Dr. Carr agreed, adding that there are concerns that this could replace a Gen Ed requirement.

There were no further comments on this topic, but Chairperson Pynes asked senators to email Dr. Carr if they have ideas to contribute.

B. For the Good of the Body

Chairperson Pynes related that at the Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting on Thursday, October 3, he stood up for the faculty and reminded the Board that Faculty Senate voted last year to ask the BOT to release all of their closed session recordings. Chairperson Pynes sent that resolution to the prior Board Chair last year, and when he saw that this agenda included a proposal to destroy the closed session recordings, he reminded the current BOT members that they had likely not heard these recordings and that they can release the closed session minutes without destroying the closed session recordings. Chairperson Pynes also provided the new Board with the resolution that was passed by the Senate last year. He related that several other individuals, including Senator Filipink on behalf of University Professionals of Illinois, as well as UPI President Bill Thompson, asked for the recordings to be archived. Chairperson Pynes told senators that the Board has decided to release the closed session recordings that violated the Open Meetings Act and has deleted the wording authorizing their destruction, but they did not release the closed session minutes. He hopes that the BOT will begin to archive these recordings going forward rather than destroying them, although it is legally permissible for them to do so. He suggested that this may be something Faculty Senate will want to discuss in future and possibly consider a resolution asking the BOT to archive their recordings going forward. Chairperson Pynes remarked that if arguments are to be given in closed sessions, it would be nice to be able to access them, especially when the BOT has in the past had extremely truncated closed session minutes. He related that WIU’s General Counsel announced that the approximately four hours of recordings that the BOT self-admitted were violations of the Open Meetings Act will be released soon.

Motion: To adjourn (Bellott)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Susan Czechowski, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary