

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 30 November 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: J. Albarracin, D. Atherton, S. Bailey, D. Barr, B. Bellott, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, C. Chadwell, D. Gravitt, E. Hamner, D. Hunter, S. Ko, J. Land, A. Lewis, K. Perone, M. Shamsuddoha, Y. Tang, S. Turkelli, L. Wipperling, K. Wiseley

Ex-officio: Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Interim Provost Mark Mossman

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Barr, L. Ebert Wallace, H. Elbe, B. Petrocovic

GUESTS: Tom Blackford, Amy Burke, Amy Carr, Dennis DeVolder, Patricia Eathington, Rich Filipink, Stacie Hunt, Greg Kain, Jeffrey Keith, Sarah Lawson, Tonya Little, Marty Maskarinec, Patrick McGinty, Russ Morgan, Lorette Oden, Luciano Picanco, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prorise

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. October 24, 2023

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Mossman encouraged everyone to attend the President's holiday reception from 4-6 pm on Tuesday, December 12 in the Grand Ballroom. He told senators it is an honor to serve as interim provost, and he will do his best to be effective. Interim Provost Mossman said he really wants to increase communication across the institution. He is not sure yet how that will be achieved but thinks most people recognize that communication needs to be improved.

B. Student Government Association (SGA) Report (Jeffrey Keith, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

The SGA report was postponed until Mr. Keith arrived.

C. Other Announcements

1. Status of ERP for WIU

(Stacie Hunt, Director, AIMS; Greg Kain, CIO, University Technology; Martin Maskarinec, Professor, Computer Sciences and faculty rep to ERP Committee)

Stacie Hunt told senators she has worked in Administrative Information Management Systems (AIMS) for 27 years and has acted as director of the unit within University Technology for eight years. She said her intention is to present a history of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Committee, discuss the committee's evaluation of the different models and possible solutions, and provide information about current ERP-related implementation projects.

Ms. Hunt explained that ERP is an institution's core administrative system; WIU uses a home-grown custom-built ERP system called MVS/WIUP which was built and is maintained by AIMS. WIU's system is made up of three modules: finance, human resources, and student information. Ms. Hunt stated that with the exception of the finance module, which is purchased from a third party, AIMS has written all of the applications for the existing system using COBOL programming language and CICS. WIUP allows for access of administrative data through QWS 3270 or via the web, while STARS allows students, employees, and alumni to access their own personal data via the web. Besides administering and maintaining STARS and WIUP, AIMS performs batch processing for business needs across campus and is also in charge of running various reports from the administrative system.

Ms. Hunt stated that four main issues have occurred over the years which were the catalyst for creation of the ERP Steering Committee: the high cost of maintaining and operating a mainframe system, limited access to administrative data, an antiquated user interface, and human resource issues. She noted that a new mainframe is very expensive – about \$500,000 – and only lasts five years because IBM will not support the operating system beyond that timeframe. The annual software licenses to run WIU's current mainframe applications cost about \$1 million per year, and the hardware maintenance runs about \$100,000 per year, so it is a very expensive system to operate.

Ms. Hunt related the second issue, limited access to administrative data, is because employees wanting to receive information must submit a request to AIMS to run a report of the requested data. She said a couple of offices have the ability to write their own reports using Easytrieve Plus and Pentaho report designer, but this is the exception because being able to create reports requires a lot of knowledge of WIU's database as well as being able to understand the syntax and language. She added that there is a large learning curve with Easytrieve because it is a code-driven language. Ms. Hunt stated that although AIMS has been able to build ad hoc reporting tools for a few functional areas within Pentaho, they have not had the opportunity or staff to be able to expand this to all of the functional areas on campus. She stated that WIU has an older user interface that runs about 850 WIUP applications written by AIMS, most available through QWS3270 and about two-thirds written with a web interface. She added that most of these were written about 15 years ago and would benefit from being refreshed.

Ms. Hunt thinks the biggest issue is the lack of sufficient human resources in the AIMS office. The department has an aging workforce, and many of the individuals who designed and built the existing ERP system have retired or are nearing retirement. Ms. Hunt stated that AIMS is losing a lot of knowledge about the system as these subject matter experts leave the university, and AIMS has had to hire back some of their retired employees to help maintain the existing system. She stated that recruiting new employees has been difficult because it is hard to find individuals with previous mainframe or COBOL experience or who want to do application development using COBOL as their programming language. She observed there is also a high learning curve because it takes employees years to learn the business processes that AIMS has built into the system. AIMS is also experiencing problems retaining current employees, particularly since the Covid pandemic provided additional work-from-home opportunities; some of AIMS applications developers were lost to higher-paying work-from-home jobs.

Ms. Hunt told senators that because of this, the Enterprise Task Force Steering Committee was formed in 2015 to find a solution to WIU's ERP problems. The committee includes representatives from each of the core functional areas on campus, including financial systems, human resources, student records, academics, and students. The committee engaged third-party consulting firm BerryDunn in March 2015. Over a four-month period, the consultants evaluated the financial and student information systems and human resources, reviewed the system functionality, interviewed many people across campus, and met with a lot of the ERP stakeholders and various functional offices that are supported by the current system built by AIMS. BerryDunn presented their final report in July 2015 to the steering committee and the

President's Leadership Team. Ms. Hunt related the report evaluated the current ERP environment at WIU, suggested various ERP models to consider, outlined WIU's next steps, and provided ten-year cost estimates of each of the proposed ERP options, including the cost of doing nothing and staying with the current system. She said the report also identified some of the strengths and weaknesses of WIU's current system.

One strength identified by BerryDunn was the responsiveness of AIMS staff to users' needs, but Ms. Hunt said this has been affected by the loss of one-third of AIMS employees since this report was presented. Other strengths identified by BerryDunn included a fast and reliable infrastructure, a custom ERP tailored to WIU's users, general satisfaction with the current system, and that users have a good understanding of the system's strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses included that the QWS3270 interface, which is very code-driven, is not intuitive and has limited functionality; the financial system is not meeting business needs; financial transactions are processed nightly rather than in real time; shadow systems are being created to augment the ERP; and training individuals is difficult because of the system's code-driven nature.

Ms. Hunt told senators that BerryDunn provided the steering committee with several ERP models to consider. The first two were continuing with the current state (doing nothing) or, secondly, rearchitecting the current ERP using AIMS staff. She said the third option was to implement a commercial off-the-shelf system, which is a prepackaged ERP system that WIU could host on-site. The fourth option involved implementing a Software as a Service (SaaS) ERP that would be hosted in the cloud. Fifth, WIU could host a community source ERP, which is an open-source idea that would include collaboration with many institutions. The final option presented by BerryDunn was a hybrid of previous suggestions, such as implementing a community source student information system as well as purchasing a SaaS product for human resources and the finance system.

Ms. Hunt told senators that the steering committee chose the SaaS/Cloud model of ERP because the cost of disaster recovery, financial risk of breach, and infrastructure cost for hosting the system would all be assumed by the vendor. The vendor would also provide the staff to write and maintain the system. She said once this decision was made, the committee began to investigate SaaS ERP solutions for higher education, including Anthropology, Ellucian Banner, Ellucian Colleague, Workday, and Oracle Cloud, which is the cloud product for PeopleSoft. She said these vendors have come to campus over the past few years to do on-site demonstrations and discovery discussions so that they could talk about WIU's current business processes and future needs. She added each vendor provided high-level cost information for the annual subscription price of their products and on-site implementation. Ms. Hunt stated that all of these vendors cost between \$15.5 and \$20 million over a ten-year period. She said this would include professional services ranging from \$900,000 on the low end to \$8.8 million on the high end. Ms. Hunt warned that these estimates do not include the cost of purchasing ancillary software that would be necessary to fill in some of the gaps in functionality that the ERP would not meet.

Ms. Hunt related that after evaluating all the different SaaS solutions, holding discovery discussions with the vendors, attending product demonstrations, and considering cost information, the steering committee recommended Ellucian Colleague to provide the new ERP for WIU. She explained Ellucian Colleague is a complete ERP system providing functionality for financial systems, human resources, payroll, and student information systems, including housing and financial aid functionality. She said Colleague is a "tried and true" system used in production by many different institutions for many years and the most affordable of those the committee evaluated; their cost for implementation and professional services was much lower than others that were considered. Ms. Hunt related that a contract was signed with Karasoft, a third-party reseller of Ellucian products, on November 14, and Ellucian has provided the committee with an 18-month implementation plan. They hope to kick off the project in January 2024.

Ms. Hunt outlined the plan is to begin with the financial systems module implementation in February. It is hoped that human resources and payroll implementation can begin in August 2024, followed by the student information system implementation, which will begin in October. She stated that although Ellucian provided an 18-month implementation timeline, the committee does not believe everything can be completed in 18 months. She said this is because additional software will have to be purchased, implemented, and integrated with WIU's core ERP system, which will all take time and must be completed with existing AIMS staff, who are already working at capacity. She added that AIMS does not have enough employees who are able to devote 100 percent of their time to this implementation project, so it will probably take closer to three to four years.

Ms. Hunt related that in addition to the large Ellucian Colleague ERP project, AIMS is also working on two other software implementation projects. AIMS is currently in the middle of working on implementation of the Regent Education financial aid solution. The other software implementation project is the Slate Customer Relations Management (CRM) solution, which has a lot of reporting capabilities for better communicating with students and donors and provides ways to build custom portals for WIU's constituents. Ms. Hunt told senators that the Slate CRM implementation began in January 2023; it will involve implementing the admissions and enrollment module, the advanced module, and, in the future, the student success module. Ms. Hunt said AIMS has been working with Carnegie Underscore as the third-party implementation partner; they have helped AIMS get the system set up and all of the pieces configured and have helped get information from the existing system mapped onto the new Slate system. She said AIMS hopes to have the implementation of the admissions and enrollment module, as well as a custom portal that goes along with it, completed sometime in Spring 2024. She added that AIMS also hopes to start on a student success implementation project with Carnegie Underscore in the spring that will be used for retention initiatives and possibly also for advising, communications, and reporting.

Ms. Hunt explained that the Department of Education has made changes to the FAFSA application process which need to be in place for the 2024-2025 academic year. She stated that WIU does not currently have the financial aid expertise to implement all of these changes; there is insufficient programming staff to make these changes, and the Colleague financial aid module will not be in place in time for WIU to meet the deadlines. This led to the decision being made this year to purchase a third-party financial aid software application. Ms. Hunt related that two vendors bid on the request for purchase this past summer, and Regent Education was chosen. She said the kickoff with Regent Education occurred this month, with implementation of this project to be rolled out in two phases. Ms. Hunt explained that Phase 1 will involve verification and awarding, which it is hoped will be in production by May 2024, with Phase 2 involving disbursement of awards, which it is hoped will be in production by August 2024. She noted that all of these projects are on top of the daily operational tasks of the AIMS staff. She introduced University Technology CIO Greg Kain to provide information about what to expect moving forward.

Mr. Kain acknowledged there is a resource constraint in trying to take on this many projects at one time. He observed that the 18-month projects overlap with other projects, so University Technology plans to initiative a change freeze so that the current MVS system will not be changed while in the process of implementing a new ERP. He realizes this is a bit of a culture modification since AIMS has been very customer centric as far as making whatever adaptations to the system are needed for any adjustments in business processes that users expect or want to do. He said University Technology will establish a governance committee to review the scope of any changes that are needed for the project itself or some of the other projects, as well as adjustments that may be necessary to the MVS system to respond to state or federal compliance obligations. Mr. Kain said the governance committee will make sure that requested changes meet the standards set in order to keep the University's resources freed up as much as possible over the next 18 months during these overlapping projects.

Mr. Kain explained that the process of implementing the new ERP will strain all of the functional areas of the university affected by the software applications, and everyone needs to understand that this will be a strain on the university as a whole, not just on AIMS or University Technology. He stated that business applications will need to be pulled out of the existing system and reimplemented into the new system, and the technical support people do not know these processes as well as the people in those areas who work with them. He noted that there is also an enormous amount of testing that accompanies these types of system implementations, and only the end users can really perform those tests.

Mr. Kain said he has worked with Ellucian Colleague in the past, and it is a quality product and probably the most popular implementation for ERPs in the state. He thinks this is the right direction for WIU, but he has also experienced ERP implementations and has seen them occur at other institutions, and there will be “pain points” during the implementation process. He hopes that everyone can work together to keep the project moving forward. Mr. Kain explained that there will be staggered times over the next 18 months when different aspects of the project go live, which he compared to drinking from a fire hose. He thinks the core functionality will be able to go live in 18 months but that there will probably be a lot of Phase 2 items because the ERP will be able to do a lot more to help WIU improve. He expects that the internal workflows and other items addressed in Phase 2 will involve another year or two of projects. Mr. Kain stressed that these types of projects are truly transformational for a university, but he wants everyone to understand the gravity of these types of implementations and that they require a lot of university commitment.

Chair Albarracin remarked that Ms. Hunt provided a bulk idea of the cost of ERPs but did not indicate the cost for Ellucian Colleague specifically and if there were other considerations for choosing it besides cost. Ms. Hunt responded that Ellucian Colleague was one of the cheaper models that was evaluated, and its implementation cost was much less than that of other models. The implementation cost for Ellucian Colleague will be \$900,000.

Chair Albarracin asked about the staging of the implementation by different areas. She is concerned because WIU will be applying for a big TRIO grant next year, which will require a lot of student information that does not currently exist. She asked if the order of implementation could be altered based on specific needs that the university might have. Mr. Kain responded that these are exactly the kinds of challenges the steering committee is concerned about. He explained that the resources needed to complete the installation are very tight, and they hope to push back as many other initiatives as possible beyond the 18-, 24-, or 36-month window.

Senator Hamner expressed his thanks to Mr. Kain, Ms. Hunt, and Dr. Maskarinec, noting that Ms. Hunt and Dr. Maskarinec have been working to bring this initiative about for the past nine years. He said that while he does not understand all of the technology, he realizes that there has been enormous lifting that has been going on by these three, and he looks forward to using a 21st-century system instead of one from the 1980s. Ms. Hunt stated that if anyone has further questions they can reach out to her via email, or she would be willing to have a one-on-one conversation with anyone to address any of these issues further.

2. Amy Carr, WIU Representative to the Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council

Dr. Carr said she plans to highlight some items from recent Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) meetings, but much more detail can be found on the minutes on their website ([minutes :: facibhe](#)). Dr. Carr was unable to attend the November meeting, but alternate WIU representative Melissa Stinnett provided her with notes from that meeting. The IBHE-FAC at the November meeting discussed Illinois Senate Bill 2606, proposed by Senator Dave Koehler, which WIU’s SGA representative brought to Faculty Senate’s attention last year. This bill would require that students be allowed to take five mental health days. Dr. Carr said that Senator Koehler is generally very open to hearing

feedback if anyone wants to discuss this bill with him. She thinks some concerns surrounded how randomly taking mental health days might affect clinics or letters of recommendation.

The November IBHE-FAC meeting also featured a presentation from Lisa Phillips, who teaches composition at Texas Tech University. She provided an update, from her personal experience, on how attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives have affected higher education at her institution. Dr. Carr related that Dr. Phillips told the FAC that the black cultural center and women's faculty writing center at Texas Tech have both been eliminated, and faculty are no longer allowed to ask for preferred pronouns. She said there is also a question as to whether faculty research can still include phrases such as "critical race theory." Dr. Carr stated there will be more details about this conversation in the minutes, which will be approved next month.

Dr. Carr reported the IBHE-FAC has been having general conversations about the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding. She said the proposal was presented as an initiative which is unusual across states – having public university funding modeled on the K-12 Adequate Formula Funding, which treats tuition similar to local property taxes. Dr. Carr said there is a lot of concern among the FAC working group which has been studying it that this funding model will not translate well to public higher education funding. She encouraged senators to search out the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding's main and working group meeting minutes to read comments made by Jen Delaney, the public university faculty representative to the IBHE. Dr. Carr said Dr. Laney's concerns are that this funding model is overly complicated and that equity can be disincentivized since universities can get more money if there are gaps for certain populations of students. She said there are also concerns that there could be price controls because a differential funding rate would be used and that the funding method is very hard to communicate. Dr. Carr related that a lot of these meetings have been cancelled because a report was supposed to have been presented by June 2023, but there is some refiguring occurring following the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action. She explained the funding method presupposes paying attention to different demographics in order to determine what it takes to adequately fund each student in each different category so that 70 percent can graduate in four years. She said at this point it looks like the work will continue into 2024.

Dr. Carr reported that a position paper was passed in June by the FAC, which can be viewed on their website, which proposed establishing a statewide task force to analyze what is occurring currently with prior learning assessments at different institutions and to standardize the practices. Dr. Carr said that if anyone is interested in this issue she can put them in contact with Marie Donovan, who has been doing a lot of work on this issue.

Dr. Carr suggested that there might be interest in looking at the slides as well as the minutes from the IBHE-FAC June 2023 meeting where Jim Coolich, a computer scientist from Elmhurst, gave a rich presentation on exploring possibilities for generative AI. There was also a conversation at the September meeting on the Illinois Articulation Initiative as it turns 30, including changes to IAI majors.

The October IBHE-FAC meeting included a conversation with three members of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) on the new FAFSA Simplification Act. Dr. Carr said ISAC representatives have mixed emotions about the changes; some things are improving while other things may be more difficult for students. She said one of the challenges is that FAFSA will open in December this year rather than in October. She noted that one thing ISAC reps like is that colleges and universities must now show their complete costs on their websites. She thinks this, along with standardized language in award letters which will be required in future, may communicate to students that Illinois schools are not more expensive than Purdue or in Iowa or surrounding states. Dr. Carr said one change ISAC finds problematic is that parents with the most financial contribution must consent to release all their financial data, which can cause problems if parents are divorced and one parent is out-

of-state or refuses to release the information. More information on this topic can be found in the October minutes.

Chair Albarracin remarked that Dr. Carr mentioned some challenges of the proposed equitable funding formula, but she wonders if there are some advantages to highlight as well. Dr. Carr responded that the general tenor among the FAC and Jen Delany are that it is really complicated, hard to communicate to people, and that while it might seem to advantage schools with more underserved students, it also creates a disincentive to actually close gaps because then the funding would end. Chair Albarracin asked if Dr. Carr could further explain the disincentive to schools serving a large number of first-generation college students, for example. Dr. Carr responded that if these institutions actually improve the data completion rate, they could end up with less money.

Senator Gravitt remarked that Dr. Carr said there was a committee or group of people looking into evaluations of learning from previous institutions. She asked if this refers to high school students so that universities are not just evaluating students by their grades since many schools no longer use SAT or ACT scores. Dr. Carr clarified that prior learning assessment is often applied to nontraditional students who may have a lot of life experiences, such as in the military, as a working musician, or those who worked in child care for a long time but did not get a degree. She said it is quite varied but is geared toward life experience assessment. Senator Gravitt asked if the FAC has discussed trying to evaluate learning from schools in the state that are not graduating students with the skills they ideally should have coming from high school, even though their GPAs indicate that they do have these skills. Dr. Carr responded that the FAC is not looking at this issue in particular but she will share Senator Gravitt's question with them.

B. Student Government Association (SGA) Report (Reordered)
(Jeffrey Keith, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

Mr. Keith said he was currently attending an SGA Cabinet meeting but stepped out to touch base with Faculty Senate. He does not think there is much going on with SGA at this time.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS)
(Rich Filipink, Chair)

1. CAGAS Report on Admissions and Retention

Chair Albarracin explained the CAGAS report had a somewhat unusual origin because a Board of Trustees member came to the Senate Executive Committee asking for information related to retention, which led to the report's creation. Dr. Filipink thanked Sue Thorman and Justin Schuch for providing the data, all of which senators received in the Google Drive for this meeting, with the exception of the individual student exit surveys because they contained some identifiable data. He explained the report is broken down by the four parts of the charge to CAGAS: to provide persistence rates broken down by starting GPA; GPAs of admitted students by race; persistence rates by gender and race; and reasons students drop out.

Dr. Filipink reported that, not surprisingly, the students with the highest persistence rates are those with the highest high school GPAs, those 3.5 or above. He observed that there is a bump in persistence for students with high school GPAs in the mid-range, which seems to be a result of WIU's Reach program since those students are usually targeted by that program. Dr. Filipink added that the Reach expansion to 3.0 or below just began this semester so there will not be any data for that until next year.

Regarding GPA for admitted students by race, Dr. Filipink noted that the GPA for all admitted students has been in the 3.4 range during the data period he received information

for. He said the highest GPAs belong to those students who identify as Asian. White students' GPAs are hovering in the 3.6 range; black students' GPAs in the 3.2 range; and GPAs for Hispanic students in the 3.375 range.

Dr. Filipink reported that female students show higher graduation rates, regardless of 4-year, 5-year, or 6-year measurements. He said that while the data shows no consistent pattern of persistence from Year 1 to Year 2, from Year 2 to Year 3 more females than males persist. Dr. Filipink reported that, by race, black student persistence was the lowest of any group by more than ten students in each of the years included in the data, with black student retention falling below 50 percent by Year 3. He said that before Covid, Hispanic student retention to Year 3 had been improving steadily and had reached over 60 percent, but post-Covid shows a decline, although persistence to Year 3 does remain over 50 percent. He added that fewer than one-third of WIU students obtained a degree within four years during the data period.

Dr. Filipink reported there was limited data on the reasons students left the university during this period. Of the 849 students surveyed, 439 did not respond or did not provide any reason. Of those who did respond, 71 said the reason was financial, eight responded it was academic, 16 listed a psychological reason for withdrawing, 17 indicated health reasons, 28 dropped out due to family issues, 20 were dissatisfied with campus life, and 17 found jobs and left school. He added that 49 of the students indicated they plan to return. Additionally, 32 students transferred to a community college and 101 transferred to a different university.

Dr. Filipink remarked that, as he stated last year when Faculty Senate voted to support expanding the program, Reach will not work if it is not staffed properly. He said it does increase persistence for some students who participate in the program, but if Reach is not staffed properly that is as far as it will go. Dr. Filipink stressed that the university needs to prioritize increased persistence for our black population because WIU is clearly not getting them to their degrees in the rates that it should. He thinks that although Hispanic student persistence has fallen off a little bit post-Covid, the university is in a position to regain some of those higher persistence rates.

Dr. Filipink believes that increasing graduation rates across the board should be a priority because WIU prides itself, as it should, on being the second-best institution in Illinois on improving the social and economic status of its graduates. He observed that the more students WIU can get to reach their degree, the better this data will be, and it becomes an even bigger selling point for getting students to come to this university. Chair Albarracin expressed her thanks to Dr. Filipink and CAGAS for providing the report.

NO OBJECTIONS

B. Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI) (Amy Burke, Chair)

1. Curricular Requests from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

- a. Requests for New Courses
 - i. FL 150, Introduction to Latinx Studies, 3 s.h.
 - ii. FL 250, Latin Creative Expressions, 3 s.h.

NEW COURSES APPROVED

- b. Request for New Minor
 - i. Latinx Studies

NEW MINOR APPROVED

C. Committee on Provost and Presidential Performance (CPPP)
(Dave Hunter, Chair)

1. Proposed Changes to President's Evaluation Survey

Senator Hunter related that changes are proposed to the gender question on the survey, which in previous years has simply listed Male, Female, and Other as response choices. He said the committee thought that this question needed to be changed or removed, and after much discussion among committee members and meeting with the Senate Executive Committee, CPPP decided to expand the demographic information that it collects. He said CPPP rewrote the introduction to the survey so that it is a little more explanatory of the options available to survey respondents, such as stressing that participants do not have to answer any questions they choose to skip.

Senator Hunter related that CPPP changed the gender question to include the choices female/woman, male/man, transgender, trans female/woman, trans male/man, gender queer/gender nonconforming/nonbinary, questioning/unsure, and prefer to self-describe. He said the committee is trying to make everyone comfortable with indicating what describes their individual gender. The committee added a race question, asking whether respondents would consider themselves as white or Caucasian, Asian, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or prefer to self-describe. Another new question asks if the respondent is a Latina/o/x/e or of Spanish origin. CPPP also changed the question asking whether faculty were Unit A or B to include the choices for all of the faculty ranks that would receive the survey.

Senator Gravitt noted that the survey indicates the responses will be kept anonymous to the degree permitted by the technology being used. She asked if Senator Hunter can be more specific about what that means. Senator Hunter responded that anonymity can only be guaranteed based on the technology that the committee has available to them, and there is always opportunity for leaks, but those are very minor risks. He said this statement is trying to say that the risk associated with taking the survey is far outweighed by the benefits of participation. Senator Gravitt said she likes what Senator Hunter just said, but that is not what she read into the statement, which she thinks is almost alarming when it says "permitted by the technology being used." Senator Hamner clarified that this statement is an introduction to what follows; it goes on to explain how the Qualtrics data works and that individuals can trust that the raw data will remain within the committee. He said the introduction attempts to explain while trying to be as transparent and frank as possible. Senator Gravitt said the statement talks about technology being used but does not specify what system or name Qualtrics specifically. She likes Senator Hunter's statement that participation is much more valuable than the minute likelihood that someone might access respondents' data and thinks this statement would be helpful to add. Senator Hunter said he is not sure the committee would want to commit to using a particular vendor's software because they may at some point have something better to use, such as with the new ERP. He added this would not change the promise to keep the raw data within the CPPP.

Senator Gravitt suggested that this section be moved to the very end of the survey, but she has no problems with the questions and likes the addition of gender-affirming language. Parliamentarian Robinett asked if Senator Gravitt is objecting to the report. Senator Gravitt asked whether the language remains the way it has been presented if she does not object to it. Parliamentarian Robinett confirmed this is correct. He explained that if she objects, there would need to be a motion to return the report to the table where senators could discuss Senator Gravitt's proposed amendment, and a vote would need to be taken at the end of that discussion. Senator Gravitt said she would like her concerns and suggestions recorded in the minutes and will not object to the report, with the caveat that if Faculty Senate does not see an improvement in survey results they will try to determine a way to "sell" the survey in a manner that might be more hospitable and lessen people's fears about it. Parliamentarian

Robinett assured Senator Gravitt that this will all be recorded in the minutes. Senator Gravitt added that Faculty Senate has not been seeing good results in terms of participation in the survey, and she wonders if additional rephrasing might reduce or increase the results. Chair Albarracin remarked that survey participation rates are rather low in general, and it does not necessarily mean that people are scared they will be retaliated against for giving their opinion.

NO OBJECTIONS

Senator Hunter thanked CPPP members for their hard work on the survey.

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Chair Albarracin observed that when looking at the future academic calendars, spring semester classes start on January 13 in 2025, which she thought is unusually early. She asked if anyone knows why classes are starting earlier next year because the break between semesters is a good opportunity for study abroad. Senator Gravitt responded it depends on when Martin Luther King's Day falls. Chair Albarracin observed that classes start on January 13, 2025, but Martin Luther King Day is the following Monday. Registrar Sarah Lawson explained that every few years the university begins spring semester the week before the Martin Luther King holiday because the start date is based on four weeks after the end of the previous semester. Chair Albarracin reiterated it feels unusually early.

Chair Albarracin said she hopes senators will all try to meet in person for the first spring semester meeting on January 23 in the Union Capitol Rooms and will try to attend the President's reception.

Motion: To adjourn (Hamner)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary