

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY
SENATE Regular Meeting, 8 February 2022, 4:00 p.m.
Union Capitol Rooms/Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: S. Bailey, D. Banash, L. Brice, G. Cabedo-Timmons, A. Carr, L. Ebert Wallace, R. Filipink, I. Lauer, B. Polley, J. Robinett, Y. Tang, E. Taylor, B. Thompson, J. Wroblewski
Ex-officio: Billy Clow, Interim Provost; Betsy Perabo, Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Atherton, J. Choi, J. Land, T. Lough, S. Macchi, D. Oursler, R. Sawhney, E. Shupe

GUESTS: Steve Bennett, Tom Blackford, Craig Conrad, Cody Cornell, Dennis DeVolder, Francis Godwyll, Kishor Kapale, Doug LaFountain, Sarah Lawson, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Hector Maymi-Sugranes, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Kristi Mindrup, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Renee Polubinsky, Jim Schmidt

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. January 25, 2022

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Clow told senators there was a small ceremony for the winners of the Provost Awards for Excellence. He also told them that the Provost Travel Awards are progressing well with no issues. He observed that applications show a pretty good breakdown of tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Interim Provost Clow acknowledged that a recent press release on changes to transfer admissions caused confusion. He said the press release went out on a Friday, and the Provost's office did not have a chance to see it before it was published. He noted that the press release did not specify that it is only the Early Childhood Education transfer requirements that are being changed at this time due to legislation passed earlier this year, not all transfer guidelines, and apologized for the confusion.

Interim Provost Clow announced that the University will be undergoing a number of computer security updates with the help of University Technology. One of these will necessitate a change to the password policy to require that passwords comprise 12 characters rather than the current eight characters. This will occur during Summer 2022 and is important for the University's cybersecurity insurance. Senator Szyjka asked if someone can reuse their current password if it is already longer than eight characters. He also asked if passwords will not have to be updated again for a long time, similar to the current policy, or if they will be required to be changed again after a certain number of months. Interim Provost Clow responded that once the University starts requiring 12 characters, the passwords will stay as they are, but he does not know if persons who already have passwords of 12 characters or more will have to change theirs. He recognizes that WIUP passwords do require that they be changed on a regular basis, but the 12-character passwords will apply only to Ecom passwords.

Senator Thompson asked if there is a departmental reorganization going on in the School of Education. Interim Provost Clow replied that there have been internal discussions about some possible changes. He has meetings coming up to talk to representatives from Education about what is being discussed internally, but nothing has been submitted to his office. Senator Thompson asked if the Interim Provost could provide more clarity, but Interim Provost Clow said he does not have more clarity at this time. He added that it is a faculty-driven process and has to be voted on.

Senator Carr remarked that she read some discussion about early college courses in the Executive Committee minutes. She wonders how many private vendors will be offering General Education courses to Illinois high school students and why this is happening. She asked what the state-level conversations are among provosts regarding early college credit and why the state is avoiding working through community colleges. Interim Provost Clow responded the state's plan to use vendors to offer early college credit courses was news to him when it was announced, and he is trying to get details. He does not know why the state decided to go outside Illinois when there are plenty of institutions inside the state that could provide those courses.

Kristi Mindrup, Vice President for Quad Cities Campus Operations, added that this is something the University just learned about from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). She related that the vendor list includes private entities, as well as Arizona State providing access to early learning. She said in some cases what is being offered includes Advanced Placement (AP) courses and sometimes direct alignment with what other universities offer. She added that those involved with high school dual enrollment are starting to have conversations to determine why the state of Illinois higher ed is not represented on these lists.

Associate Provost Mark Mossman said he does not have any more to add except that his understanding is that the initiative is coming from a Peoria school district. He said these decisions involving outside vendors offering Gen Ed courses to school districts impact all of higher education in Illinois, and he thinks there should be more conversation about exactly what is going on.

Interim Provost Clow has asked Jeanette Malafa, Assistant to the President for Government Relations, to look into this in Springfield, but she has not had much luck yet. He does not think this move makes any sense; the state is looking outside to provide a service that it has already told state institutions they need to deliver. Senator Carr offered to see what she can find out through the Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council, on which she serves. She noted that the Dual Credit Quality Act specifies that high school students have to work with their local community colleges before going elsewhere for early college credit courses. Interim Provost Clow remarked that with online delivery methods, he would think that any community college could be considered "close." He does not know why WIU would be considered to not have any courses to offer. Senator Carr asked if there has been anything coming out of statewide provost conversations about this topic. Interim Provost Clow replied that he has not heard anything because this announcement came out between state provost meetings, but he will bring it up at the next meeting if no one else does. He thinks this topic will get everyone's attention.

Senator Thompson noted that the legislation only mandates that General Education is to be made available to high school students as efficiently and accessibly as possible. He suspects these outside vendors will try to make the case that they can create greater access and efficiency in offering Gen Ed courses. Interim Provost Clow pointed out that WIU delivers these courses in the exact same manner.

B. Student Government Association Report
(Cody Cornell, SGA representative to Faculty Senate)

Mr. Cornell related that SGA has determined a new model for their election process that still needs to be possibly revised and voted on. The SGA President, Speaker of the Senate, and Board of Trustees Representative will remain the same under the new model. The proposal would create three different vice-presidential positions reporting to the SGA President, which will also have different positions reporting to them as well. The proposal would create a Vice President of External Affairs, which will have under it the Director of Academic Affairs and the Director of Technology; a Vice President of Internal Affairs, which will have the Attorney General and the Director of Public Relations reporting to it; and a Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which will be a stand-alone position, although there will be a lot of people who work with that VP position, and there will be a lot of meetings that person will have to attend.

SGA will discuss student fees and present their ideas regarding this topic at their general assembly meeting tomorrow. Mr. Cornell noted that student fees are expected to increase about \$2.50, and SGA is going to weigh in on where they think that money should go.

Mr. Cornell would like to hear what senators think about the early warning grade process. Students have told him they would like to see an actual grade given rather than just an asterisk showing that their grade is above a C-. He would like to see if any senators are opposed to such a change and ask why early warning grades are not currently set up like this. He thinks it would be better for students to see what grade they are actually getting mid-semester so that they can fix any problems if needed. Chair Lauer suggested that there may have been some programmatic reason at some point that necessitated using an asterisk rather than a grade, but it makes sense to him to enter a grade. Senator Banash observed that it is hard to determine what grade a student is getting in some classes, such as those where students are working on long projects that are not due until later in the semester. He said in some cases faculty members might only be providing their best guess because students may have only turned in a few things for the semester by that point, which may be why the system was set up this way. He noted that generally anyone getting above a C is doing all right, but the consensus about what a C means has changed over the years, and there might need to be some distinctions made. Senator Banash thinks overall faculty might be amenable to what Mr. Cornell is proposing and that he would find some support for it. Senator Wroblewski also does not think that faculty would object to entering the actual grades. Senator Wroblewski keeps track of students' grades and they can ask him for them at any time, which he thinks is true of a lot of faculty, but he does not see it being a big issue with faculty if this was changed to entering a letter grade rather than just those grades below a C.

D. Other Announcements

1. Status of Faculty Senate Elections

Chair Lauer announced that the deadline for remaining vacant seats on Faculty Senate was extended two days, to Monday, February 7, because of the University weather-related closure, but two seats remain vacant, so the deadline for those seats will be extended another week. He announced the results of the unopposed elections:

- College of Arts and Sciences: Boris Petrocovi, Mathematics and Philosophy, and Daniel Brown, Foreign Languages and Literature, with one vacancy remaining;
- College of Business and Technology: Dave Hunter, Engineering and Technology for the three-year term, and the one-semester term remains vacant;
- College of Education and Human Services: Denny Barr, Education;
- College of Fine Arts and Communication: Charlie Chadwell, Music;
- At-large: Brian Bellott, Chemistry.

2. Mental Health Task Force

Chair Lauer pointed out that the Executive Committee minutes included a discussion about the Mental Health Task Force. He noted that ExCo will be seeking a representative from CAGAS to serve on it.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI) (Steve Bennett, Chair)

1. Curricular Requests from the Department of Physics

- a. Request for New Option
 - i. Materials Science

Dr. Bennett told senators that it was pointed out to him just prior to the meeting that he forgot to provide two new course requests that are included in the request for new option. He has added those two new course requests to the shared drive. He said the two were approved with no problems by CCPI.

Senator Carr said she has a question about eliminating all the upper-level Gen Ed courses from the proposed new option. She noted that the list of other schools offering similar programs, included with the proposal, all seemed to include upper-level Gen Ed courses. She observed that some have foreign language requirements; the University of New Hampshire has to take six upper-level Gen Eds; and the University of California-San Diego, while they do it in a different way, seems to include upper-level Gen Ed courses as well. Senator Carr wonders if it would be possible to get a rationale for eliminating the upper-level Gen Ed courses. Physics Chair Kishor Kapale pointed out that the proposal was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Council as well as by CCPI. He is not familiar with all of the programs at the other universities, but Materials Science at WIU is kind of a unique idea for the Physics Department. He noted that there are not many examples similar to WIU's proposed program, which would be a combination of materials science with engineering; it will use physics as well as chemistry in order to use the knowledge of WIU's faculty. He noted that the necessity of including advanced course requirements for both physics and chemistry means there is just no room to include additional upper-level Gen Ed courses. Senator Carr asked if all of the examples provided in the request materials were programs that were physics-centered without as much chemistry required. She thinks it would have been helpful to spell out the rationale because it is pretty significant to not have any upper-level Gen Ed courses in an Arts and Sciences-centered program. Dr. Kapale stated that most of the applied aspects of Material Science involve looking at materials from an engineering point of view, and students that complete the option would automatically get a Chemistry minor. He stated that the total hours for the program would have to be increased if the college-level Gen Ed were to be included. Senator Carr reiterated that it would have been helpful to see a more detailed rationale. She remarked that what Dr. Kapale seems to be saying is that there is no other program like this in the United States. She thinks it sounds more like something one might more often see at an engineering school, where there are less Gen ED requirements to begin with – although even they often have upper-level Gen Ed courses required because of statewide requirements. Dr. Kapale replied that is correct.

Chair Lauer noted that the new courses do not appear to be in the shared drive. Dr. Bennett stated that he added them to the shared drive just after the meeting started. Chair Lauer pointed out that he will either need a motion to add the new course requests to the agenda or a motion to table the proposal to a future date.

Motion: To table (Filipink/Brice)

MOTION TO TABLE APPROVED 16 YES – 0 NO – 1 ABSTENTION

Dr. Kapale offered to get more data to address Senator Carr's question before the next meeting.

B. Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID)
(Doug LaFountain, Chair)

1. Request for WID Designation

a. CTSM/ET 320, Professional Preparation, 3 s.h.

Dr. LaFountain stated that the course will be cross-listed with BCOM 320, one of the main WID courses for the College of Business and Technology. He noted that CTSM/ET 320 is a very writing-intensive course; half of the course involves professional writing – emails, resumes, reports – and the other half focuses on professional preparation. He pointed out that the syllabus indicates writing assignments throughout the semester rather than concentrated at the end, which is one of the things the WID Council looks for. He noted that students will receive feedback and have the opportunity to revise their initial drafts for certain assignments. The syllabus indicates that there will be at least 20 pages of writing throughout the semester, including graded drafts and revisions, and at least one credit hour of the three-hour course will be devoted to writing development.

Rafael Obregon, Interim Director of the School of Engineering and Technology, said the school is pursuing professional development while trying to obtain synergy within the College of Business and Technology. He said the course tries to integrate aspects of engineering, agriculture, and business.

NO OBJECTIONS

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Senator Thompson announced that there is a proposal in Springfield for a five percent (\$2.5 million) increase in appropriations for WIU.

Motion: To adjourn (Brice)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Jeremy Robinett, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary