

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
Regular Meeting, 10 March 2015, 4:00 p.m.
Capitol Rooms - University Union

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

SENATORS PRESENT: S. Bennett, L. Brice, A. Burke, M. Carncross, R. Chaves, J. Choi, S. Cordes, D. DeVolder, A. Hyde, G. Jorgensen, C. Keist, J. Myers, T. Roberts, S. Romano, T. Sadler, M. Siddiqi, A. Silberer, M. Singh, T. Westerhold
Ex-officio: Ken Hawkinson, Provost; Tej Kaul, Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: J. Baylor, J. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, S. Szyjka

GUESTS: Dale Adkins, Laura Barden-Gabbei, Mark Bernards, Andy Borst, David Giltzow, Jonathan Hammersley, Karen Harris, Melanie Huettman, Don Johnson, Chuck Lydeard, Angela Lynn, Kristi Mindrup, Esmeralda Moreno, Russ Morgan, Nancy Parsons, Bill Rupert, Miriam Satern, Terry Solomonson, Jacob Tomlinson, Bhavneet Walia, Janet Wigglesworth, Ron Williams

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. 24 February 2015

MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Approvals from the Provost

1. Elimination of Pre-LEJA and the revision of the LEJA gateway

2. Requests for New Courses

- a) AAS 102, Survey of African American Studies II, 3 s.h.
- b) AAS 262, African Americans and Hip Hop as Cultural Phenomenon, 3 s.h.
- c) AAS 302, Black Intellectual Traditions, 3 s.h.
- d) AAS 370, African American Interest Groups and Organizations, 3 s.h.
- e) AAS 404, African Americans in the Age of Obama, 3 s.h.
- f) AAS 415, African Americans and Sport in the United States, 3 s.h.
- g) AAS 417, Black Greek-Lettered Organizations, 3 s.h.
- h) AAS 425, African Americans, Corporate America, and Diversity, 3 s.h.
- i) AAS 446, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Desegregation, 3 s.h.
- j) HIST 217, The History of Sports in the United States, 3 s.h.
- k) HIST 421, Global Environmental History, 3 s.h.
- l) POLS 304, Judicial Simulation, 3 s.h.
- m) ZOOL 407, Field Herpetology, 3 s.h.

3. Request for Change of Minor

- a) African American Studies

4. Requests for Changes of Majors

- a) African American Studies
- b) French Teacher Education
- c) Management

d) Spanish Teacher Education

5. Requests for General Education Global Issues Designation

- a) HIST 115, World History to 1500, 3 s.h.
- b) HIST 116, World History Since 1500, 3 s.h.
- c) HIST 211, Technology and Science in World History, 3 s.h.

B. Provost's Report

Provost Hawkinson announced that, despite difficult economic times, President Thomas has released an additional 20 percent of the operating budgets for units and departments. The money should be loaded onto the various accounts by Wednesday, March 11. The Provost explained that President Thomas recognizes the need by departments to have sufficient operating funds to meet their commitments for this year. The disbursement will mean that departments and units will receive 95 percent of this year's operating budgets. Provost Hawkinson stated that five percent will continue to be held in reserve to help cover the potential cost of any mandated rescission. Provost Hawkinson reminded senators that a one percent rescission in January resulted in the University having to return \$520,000 to the state, and the Administration is expecting another rescission that may be even bigger.

President Thomas, Provost Hawkinson, and Budget Director Matt Bierman will testify before the House and Senate in Springfield on Thursday, March 12. Provost Hawkinson promised to speak "with great conviction and passion" about the tremendous negative effect the Governor's proposed 31 percent budget reduction would have on WIU and higher education throughout the state. The Provost stated that while the University does not expect the final cut to be that deep due to state-level negotiations, officials have no idea what the final reduction will be. WIU officials plan to remind officials in the House and Senate that the University has already experienced very sizeable budget cuts in recent years and urge them to hold future cuts as low as possible so that WIU can continue to fulfill its mission.

Aaron Schock, United States Representative for Illinois' 18th Congressional district, will visit the new WIU School of Agriculture Greenhouse at 4:00 Friday afternoon, March 13. Provost Hawkinson said that the University is excited to host Representative Schock at the Greenhouse, which is a state-of-the-art structure. He hopes the Representative can help obtain federal money to support research at the facility.

Provost Hawkinson told senators that Ashley Luke was recently recognized as WIU's first student-athlete to be named an Academic All American of the Year for Division I Women's Basketball. Ms. Luke is the first female in Summit League history to win this distinction. She was also recognized as Western's Lincoln Laureate Scholar at December's WIU graduation.

Provost Hawkinson announced that after consultations in departments and colleges, the consolidated budget process will go public beginning Tuesday, March 24. Directors for the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research; University Technology; Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach; Centennial Honors College; Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs; Sponsored Projects; University Advising and Academic Services Center; Office of the Registrar; and School of Graduate Studies will present their budget priorities for 2015-2016 beginning at 8:30 a.m. in Sherman Hall 205 and continuing until 4:30 p.m. The following day will see presentations from the Deans beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Horrabin Hall 1 and broadcast to Quad Cities Complex Room 1418. Those presentations conclude at 3:45 p.m.

C. Student Government Association (SGA) Report
(Esmeralda Moreno, SGA student representative)

A bill to ask for yearly updates on organizational and academic websites was passed by SGA at its last meeting.

SGA at its February 24 meeting tabled a request for a two percent student fee increase and asked Budget Director Matt Bierman to speak to them about the need for the increase. Mr. Bierman and Associate Vice President for Student Services J.B. Biernbaum attended the March 3 SGA meeting, but the bill to approve the increase was again tabled. The issue will come up for discussion again at tonight's meeting.

President Thomas attended the SGA meeting of March 3 to provide senators with an update on things that are happening at the University.

Ms. Moreno encouraged senators to attend the Rocky Gala on March 26 at 5:30 p.m., sponsored by SGA.

D. Other Announcements

1. Updates to General University Benchmark Institutions for Macomb Campus
(Kristi Mindrup, Assistant Vice President for Quad Cities Campus and Planning)

Vice President Rives was unable to attend today's meeting; he was represented by Dr. Mindrup but will return to the March 31 meeting of the Faculty Senate to answer questions and concerns and to seek endorsement of new University benchmarks. Dr. Mindrup told senators that Vice President Rives will work on non-salary benchmarks for the Quad Cities campus after the Macomb selections are made.

Dr. Mindrup related that ten years ago WIU made a commitment to benchmarking enrollment, retention, graduation, and other Higher Values in Higher Education performance indicators. Vice President Rives had earlier in the week provided senators with five tables showing data on benchmark institutions for non-salary comparisons. Dr. Mindrup explained that the setting of faculty salary peer groups is a contractual agreement between University Professionals of Illinois and WIU and is outside the purview of this discussion.

Dr. Mindrup explained that the President's Leadership Team, which has been studying potential benchmark institutions, received a potential peer group from the federal government's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems and also analyzed the top 15 institutions from *U.S. News and World Report*. This data, along with a list of Western's current benchmark institutions, was provided to senators in Table 1.

Data from Table 1 was used to compile a potential updated list of benchmark institutions for non-salary comparisons for the Macomb campus (Table 2). Dr. Mindrup explained that initially the list of regional institutions was given one point if they had populations less than the sample median (to reflect Macomb's rural environment), one point if they were a Top 15 *U.S. News and World Report* Public Institution, and one point if they were a current WIU-Macomb peer institution. This resulted in 15 potential benchmark institutions with composite scores of 2 or higher.

The Leadership Team then evaluated whether the rural institutions have branch campuses, experienced enrollment growth in the last three years, and have retention and graduation rates higher than projections (Table 3). This resulted in 20 institutions with a composite score of 3 or higher. Table 4 includes comparisons for freshman and transfer show rates, diversity, average ACT, top 20 percent of high school class, freshmen retention and graduation rates, student success, alumni giving, graduates with loans, and average student debt.

Table 5 includes a recommendation for three “aspiration institutions” (Appalachian State, Truman State, and James Madison University) against which to measure long-term success and 17 non-salary benchmark comparison institutions. Dr. Mindrup stated that the Leadership Team recognizes there are both quantitative and qualitative reasons for institutional selection and stated that the Team seeks faculty questions, concerns, and feedback to its recommendations.

Senator Siddiqi noted that the ranking score for WIU on Table 5 shows “not available.” Senator Romano asked if qualitative evaluations could be provided for the aspirational institutions to see how these compare with other institutions and what they mean for WIU. Senator Silberer asked what defines “student success.” Dr. Mindrup promised to take these questions and any others submitted by senators back to Vice President Rives for response.

2. Update on Impending Changes to State Retirement System and Implications for WIU Faculty
(Bill Rupert, Deputy Director, Human Resources)

Mr. Rupert informed senators that the money purchase formula factors for the State Universities Retirement System (SURS) will change on January 4, 2016. The money purchase formula is one of two possible formulas utilized through SURS. Those individuals who have the money purchase formula as the highest option within their SURS accounts will see a six to seven percent reduction on average if they retire on or after that date. Mr. Rupert stated that in order to recoup that reduction, these individuals would have to remain in the workforce an additional nine months on average. He added that this change will not affect individuals who initially joined SURS after July 1, 2005, Self-Managed Plan participants, annuitants, or survivors.

Dr. Westerhold asked whether Western recently began letting employees contribute to Roth IRAs due to the current economic challenges and pending changes to the retirement system. Mr. Rupert responded that WIU employees have always been able to contribute to Roth IRAs, but Western does not have any IRAs in the supplemental retirement system or the 457 deferred compensation plans. The University, however, just over a year ago began offering Roth 403(b) plans, which are completely different. Mr. Rupert explained that Roth 403(b) plans are offered through either Valic or TIAA-CREF because those providers are willing to perform the necessary record keeping. He added that Western employees also have the option to convert pre-tax contributions to Roth contributions.

Dr. Westerhold asked if Western works with four Roth providers; Mr. Rupert clarified that the University works with five – American Funds, Valic, TIAA-CREF, Fidelity, and Vanguard, which is entirely online and does not utilize agents. Mr. Rupert stated that Western formerly worked with 12 providers, but when he came to the University in 2007 he narrowed the list down to five. He stated that TIAA-CREF and Valic have extensive record-keeping capabilities because they work with annuities; American Funds was retained because there are a number of agents in the local area and many people like being able to talk to an agent; and Fidelity and Vanguard have very low costs.

Chairperson Singh asked what percentage of faculty participate in supplemental retirement planning. Mr. Rupert responded that he does not have exact figures but estimates about 70 to 75 percent, which is fairly average. Chairperson Singh observed that Western follows an opt-in model for 403(b) and 457 plans. He asked what the advantages or disadvantages would be for WIU to switch to an opt-out model where faculty are automatically enrolled unless they choose to opt-out. Mr. Rupert responded that he would not feel personally comfortable telling individuals that they have to participate in such plans at some level. He thinks that a number of individuals “at the lower end of the spectrum” would have a hard time understanding this model. He noted

that employees already have SURS, which is more of an income replacement plan than a social security plan. He thinks that automatic enrollment in SURS makes automatic enrollment in a 403(b) plan less desirable and necessary. Chairperson Singh said he thought the University of Illinois had adopted an opt-out model, but Mr. Rupert said that to his knowledge they have not. Chairperson Singh recommended that WIU consider an opt-out model, particularly if required resources continue to increase while retirement funds continue to shrink. He asked that the University Benefits Committee have this conversation and come back to Senate with the result of those discussions.

Parliamentarian Kaul asked if an employee who does not choose to invest in a supplemental retirement plan through WIU and then decides at a later time to invest could have the option of buying back previous years' potential investment in the program. He thinks that it is a federal mandate that employees be allowed to do so but observed that WIU does not allow this option. Mr. Rupert stated that employees cannot buy back time in 403(b) plans because they are not directly related to employment; employees are only allowed to buy back prior service credit. He explained that individuals can opt in and out of 403(b) plans with no consequences. He stated that 403(b) and 401(k) plans are employer-sponsored programs, so any contributions, whether pre-tax or post-tax, must come through payroll deferral; IRAs, on the other hand, are a private contract, and individuals may make contributions as desired.

Mr. Rupert stated that if a 403(b) has remained dormant for some time without contributions, it can be reinstated by providing authorization to the Office of Human Resources. Parliamentarian Kaul asked if the contributions can be made retroactively or only from the moment that participation is reauthorized; Mr. Rupert responded that authorizations made after the 15th of the month cannot begin until the first day of the following month for faculty who are paid monthly. Parliamentarian Kaul asked if "catch ups" are allowed. Mr. Rupert responded that "catch ups" are allowed under the Internal Revenue Code for those persons who are 50 years or older; for 2015, the law allows these employees to contribute \$6,000 above the maximum contribution allowable for those who are under the age of 50. He explained that this is not buying back time; this is intended to allow employees to "catch up" during the age when they have more disposable income and are moving closer toward their retirement dates. Chairperson Singh asked if WIU allows "catch ups." Mr. Rupert responded this is allowable for WIU employees. In addition to the additional \$6,000 allowance for those 50 and above, there is also a 15-year catch up allowed through deferred compensation. This is not included in plan documents because Mr. Rupert had concerns about the level of accuracy of the data on which the option was based. Western did allow those persons who were already participating in this plan up prior to 2006 to continue, but this option is now only offered through deferred compensation.

Provost Hawkinson asked what the maximum amount is that employees are allowed to contribute each year. Mr. Rupert responded that this figure changes from year to year; new maximum allowable amounts are announced every November. This year, employees under the age of 50 can contribute up to \$18,000, with an additional \$6,000 allowable to employees aged 50 or above; thus, an employee over the age of 50 could contribute \$24,000 to a 403(b). Mr. Rupert added that because of the 2002 Pension Protection Act, employees may contribute the same amounts to 457 plans.

Mr. Rupert encouraged faculty to go to the SURS website at www.surs.org and register as a member. He said the website will allow members to figure conservative estimates of what their annuity would look like if they retire on different dates and will model different time periods/length of service and their effect on retirement. He stated that the website has had a significant upgrade and will allow members to get a much firmer feel for what their post-retirement annuity might look like.

Parliamentarian Kaul remarked that he worked through the website recently and it estimated the same retirement amount for him before January 4, 2016 as after, even though the money purchase formula is scheduled to change on that date. Mr. Rupert responded that if the number is the same, there is lack of growth, and it is reflecting the actual reduction; in other words, the amount will stay the same for some period of time. He added that some individuals will see a reduction, but if they put in a date of retirement at least nine months beyond January 4, 2016, they will see the amount go back up. He suggested that faculty input a retirement date of December 31, 2016 and then put in the date January 1, 2017 in order to see how their figures can change and get a feel for how the system works. Chairperson Singh asked if faculty hired after 2005 no longer have the option to choose the money purchase formula; Mr. Rupert confirmed this is correct.

Chairperson Singh asked if individuals hired after 2011 are categorized as being under Tier 2 of the retirement planning system; Mr. Rupert confirmed this is correct. He added, though, that if faculty taught at a SURS-affiliated institution prior to that date and left money in the system, they could revert back to Tier 1. Chairperson Singh asked if benefits are shrinking for both Tier 1 and Tier 2; Mr. Rupert agreed with this statement.

Chairperson Singh asked Mr. Rupert to come back to Faculty Senate every term to update senators on what is changing for retirement pensions. He does not think faculty are as informed as they need to be about their retirements.

3. Elections Update

Chairperson Singh outlined the results of recent Faculty Senate elections for fall 2015 vacancies. In the College of Arts and Sciences, Jennifer McNabb and Tim Roberts, History, were elected to three-year terms and Christopher Pynes, Philosophy and Religious Studies, was elected to a two-year term. Ballots will be mailed on April 12 for the fourth Arts and Sciences seat, which is a two-year term. Those ballots will be due by April 2, and results should be able to be announced at the Executive Committee meeting of April 7.

Dean Halverson, Educational Studies, will represent faculty in the Quad Cities beginning this fall. Dennis DeVolder, Computer Sciences, was elected to represent the College of Business and Technology, and Kimberly Dodson, Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, was elected to represent the College of Education and Human Services. All will serve three-year terms.

Brian Locke, Music, was elected to a three-year term to represent the College of Fine Arts and Communication this fall. Dr. Locke is on sabbatical during fall 2015, so an election notice will be mailed seeking a COFAC representative to serve during his absence.

The deadline for the election for three at-large Senate seats was today; the winners of that election will be announced later this week via email.

Three-year terms on the University Personnel Committee have been advertised for the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Fine Arts and Communication, and Business and Technology. Chairperson Singh announced that two petitions have been received from COFAC, one from COAS, and it is hoped that at least one petition will be received from COBT by the deadline of Friday, April 13.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council on Admissions, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS) (Terry Solomonson, Chair)

1. Transfer Admissions Proposal

CAGAS on February 26 approved a request from the Office of Admissions to change the undergraduate catalog to read, “Students who have earned fewer than 24 semester hours (36 or more quarter hours) of college work and who meet freshmen admissions standards, but who are not in good standing at the last college/university attended, may be considered for admission by the Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards.” Dr. Solomon explained that CAGAS believes that students who may have had difficulty at their first institution should not be penalized for wanting to transfer to WIU. He added that other transfer admissions criteria will not be changed upon approval of this request.

Senator Roberts asked what it means for a student to be “not in good standing” at a previous institution. Admissions Director Andy Borst replied that an example might be a student with a 30 ACT and a 2.5 high school GPA who is unsuccessful during his/her first semester at the University of Illinois; if a student flunked out or earned below a 2.0 GPA during his or her first semester elsewhere, the student would currently need to be denied admission to WIU and then be advised to appeal to CAGAS. The proposal would allow CAGAS to consider these types of students without them first being issued an automatic denial. Senator Keist asked if this has anything to do with financial considerations; Dr. Borst replied that it is purely a question of academics.

NO OBJECTIONS

2. Request for Prerequisite Above a 2.0 GPA

- a) BIOL 281, Introduction to Science Teaching, 1 s.h.

CAGAS approved the prerequisite “At least one introductory level science course with a grade of “B” or higher or permission of the instructor” for this course. CAGAS must approve prerequisites of 2.5 or above.

NO OBJECTIONS

B. Council for Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI)
(Mark Bernards, Chair)

1. Curricular Requests from the Departments of Biological Sciences, Physics, Chemistry, and Geology

- a) Request for New Course

- (1) BIOL 281, Introduction to Science Teaching, 1s.h.

NEW COURSE APPROVED

- b) Requests for Changes of Options

- (1) Biology – Option E (Teacher Education)
(2) Chemistry – Option D (Teacher Education)
(3) Geology – Option C (Earth and Space Science Teacher Education)
(4) Physics – Option C (Teacher Education)

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

2. Curricular Requests from the Department of Art
 - a) Request for New Course
 - (1) ARTS 181, Introduction to Studio Art, 3 s.h.

NEW COURSE APPROVED

3. Curricular Requests from the Department of Psychology
 - a) Request for New Minor
 - (1) Psychology of Substance Abuse

NEW MINOR APPROVED

4. Curricular Requests from the Department of Kinesiology
 - a) Requests for Changes of Majors
 - (1) Athletic Training
 - (2) Exercise Science

CHANGES OF MAJORS APPROVED

C. Ad Hoc Foreign Language/Global Issues Committee
(Jill Myers, Chair)

1. Global Issues Transferability Proposal

Senator Myers informed senators that the proposal received unanimous approval from CAGAS and the Council for International Education. The rationale states that the proposal was also strongly supported by WIU academic advisors and admissions staff.

The proposal would mean that transfer students would no longer have to take a Global Issues course at WIU but could transfer in a course that matches a WIU General Education Global Issues course. It also clarifies that in order for students to use study abroad to meet the FLGI requirement, they must have *completed* a “program of sufficient length and breadth,” not just *participated in* one.

Parliamentarian Kaul remarked that while he does not oppose the proposal and thinks it is overdue, the Council for International Education may no longer be needed at some point because Global Issues will have no impact at the University. He predicted the FLGI requirement may be “on its last legs” within a year or two.

NO OBJECTIONS

IV. Old Business – None

V. New Business

A. Proposed Changes to Course Syllabus Policy

Chairperson Singh explained that the Executive Committee approved a request from Disability Resource Center (DRC) Director Tara Buchanan to revise the section of the Course Syllabus Policy pertinent to students with disabilities to reflect changes in procedures at the DRC.

Beginning fall 2015, students will be able to log onto STARS to notify faculty regarding accommodations previously approved by the DRC. Chairperson Singh related that Ms. Buchannan thinks this new procedure will provide a more secure, sustainable, and efficient notification process for faculty.

The following language, provided by the DRC, would replace #3 in the current policy:

“Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.”

Chairperson Singh explained that additional proposed changes to the syllabus policy were initiated by SGA representatives who are in the process of drafting a Student Bill of Rights. SGA representatives attended the Executive Committee meeting of March 3 to discuss this document. They expressed a desire for faculty to fully communicate their grading templates and return results of quizzes and assignments as quickly as possible in order to help students determine their grades. The Executive Committee proposed a revision to #6 of the syllabus policy and new item #7:

6. A statement indicating how the student’s final grade will be determined, including any minimum requirements, **grading schemas, and/or rubrics**. ~~Beginning in Fall 2010, WIU will utilize~~ **With the** plus-minus grading in undergraduate courses, ~~–it~~ **it** is imperative that students clearly understand how their final grades will be determined.

7. “Faculty will expend every effort to return assessment-based materials in a timely manner. Further, they will make every reasonable effort to communicate grading timelines to their students.”

Senator DeVolder stated that he understands how #3 and #6 will impact the syllabus and are appropriate in this policy, but he does not understand the relationship to #7. Chairperson Singh responded that #7 provides guidance encouraging faculty to communicate essential assessment-based components and the timely return of those items. Senator Brice asked if the changes become policy if approved as is by Faculty Senate. Provost Hawkinson responded that they will become part of the Course Syllabus Policy once approved by Faculty Senate and the President.

Senator Choi asked if #7, since it is in quotation marks, must appear as is on all faculty syllabi. Provost Hawkinson responded that the sentence encourages faculty to fulfill the spirit of what it states – that they will return exams and papers in a timely manner and will make reasonable effort to explain the timeline regarding when grades will be assigned. He added that both of these are conditional; the statement does not mean that faculty have to do this but encourages them to make this effort. Senator Choi pointed out that the beginning of the enumerated section states “Items that must appear in the syllabus include the following.” Provost Hawkinson reiterated that it is his understanding that the exact statement in #7 will not have to appear on faculty syllabi; rather, faculty are encouraged to provide information in their syllabi about when exams and papers will be returned. Senator Choi pointed out that #3 appears in quotation marks and is to be included verbatim on faculty syllabi; he wonders why #7 appears in quotes if it is not to be included verbatim as well.

Senator Brice communicated to a variety of constituencies today regarding the proposed changes to the policy. He received statements of extreme concern from five different departments regarding item #7. Regarding item #6, Senator Brice stated that faculty are concerned about the level of detail that would be expected if the word “rubrics” is included; students might expect very complex and detailed rubrics for some classes. Regarding item #7, 95 percent of those he spoke to were opposed its inclusion in the syllabus policy. He related that faculty feel that “in a

timely manner” is too vague, can mean different things for different professors, and could provide a means for the administration or chairs to use during evaluations of faculty. He added that the syllabus policy is perceived as mandatory, but the language in item #7 is vague and will result in greatly varied responses from professors.

Senator Cordes agreed that when a professor has 75 students, the definition of “timely” can vary from that of a professor with a class of ten students, and students do not understand this concept. He believes that if this statement is in a professor’s syllabus, and students are not clear about what “timely” is or is not, it could affect the student’s evaluation of a faculty member’s ability or dedication to the work and could potentially taint the scores. He pointed out that the definition of “timely” is ambiguous and can vary greatly across department or discipline. Senator Cordes pointed out that another ambiguous phrase in item #7 is “reasonable effort.” He pointed out that when he has two sections of 44 students it may take him two weeks to grade papers or tests, but when he has one section of ten students it may take only a week or less. He thinks inclusion of #7 would open the gateway to a lot of explanation about why graded materials take longer to be returned in one instance than in another and the definition of “timely.”

Senator Carncross asked how the policy revisions, if approved, would be communicated to faculty. Chairperson Singh responded that the changes would become part of the syllabus policy to which faculty refer when developing syllabi.

Chairperson Singh admitted that the points regarding item #7 are well taken. He stated that the Executive Committee decided to keep this statement deliberately vague for the very reasons alluded to by Senator Cordes. He asked senators to imagine the reaction if faculty were required to provide a timeline for return of graded materials. He also reiterated that the proposed changes to #6 and #7 come as a result of requests from SGA student representatives. Chairperson Singh explained that the intent was to convey a sentiment to faculty in terms of reasonableness so that failure to return materials in a timely manner does not impede student learning.

Senator DeVolder pointed out that the Course Syllabus Policy features a numbered list of items that must be included in the syllabus. He stated that #7 seems to be an expression of what is expected from faculty, but it has nothing to do with the course syllabus directly, and it would be inappropriate to include it on the Course Syllabus Policy. He thinks that it is a great point but should be included somewhere else.

Motion: To move #7 to the bottom of the document as a recommendation (Siddiqi)

Senator Siddiqi believes that including #7 in the numeric list will strain the relationship between faculty and students because some students will take it literally. Senator Siddiqi related that he has experimented with this by including timelines on syllabi, but whenever he is unable to meet the timeline it becomes grounds for students to complain. Senator Cordes pointed out that most faculty include on their syllabi a statement indicating that everything on the syllabus is subject to change.

MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF A SECOND

Senator Roberts remarked that the quotation marks around item #7 seem to indicate that it is to be included in the syllabus verbatim, as is #3. He suggested alternative wording that “Faculty will communicate when and how work assessments will be returned to the students.”

Chairperson Singh observed that certain themes have emerged from the meeting, and stated that he would entertain motions based upon them:

1) Item #7 does not belong in the syllabus policy, and Senator Roberts has provided an alternative.

2) Senator Brice asked that the word “rubrics” be removed from item #6 but had no objection to including the word “schemas.”

Motion: To craft or amend the syllabus policy as submitted with these two changes (Siddiqi/Brice)

Chairperson Singh asked for a vote that #7 be deleted but with the addition as suggested by Senator Roberts, for #6 to have the word “rubrics” deleted, and for the incorporation of the Disability Resource Center statement as provided.

MOTION APPROVED 15 YES – 0 NO – 4 AB

Senator Cordes observed that it would seem that the statement previously in item #7 should find its way into the Faculty Handbook in the section on rights and responsibilities of faculty. He noted that it is something faculty should follow but that it should not be made explicit to groups of individuals who may not understand academic freedom and faculty responsibilities in the classroom. Provost Hawkinson stated that he thinks the intent of the students when speaking to him, the Senate Executive Committee, and other groups was to express their concern that occasionally multiple exams and other graded exercises will be taken without having received any previous feedback. He explained that the idea is that feedback will be provided to prepare students for the next exam or assignment. The Provost explained that students wanted some kind of language which is conditional or encourages faculty to provide this type of feedback before students move on to the next level of their educational experience. He reiterated that students in no way expressed to him or to the Executive Committee the desire to take away any academic freedoms from faculty.

Senator Cordes stated that the question “Does the instructor return things in a timely manner?” is included on the evaluation form that he uses. He suggested that departments might want to consider including this in their next round of criteria in order to make sure that students have a chance of receiving materials back quickly without this having to be explicitly written into syllabi since students could take the definition of “timely” in different directions. He would like to see this become more of a supportive statement so that students see that they have a recourse to voice their opinions rather than have it tied to a document.

Senator Romano stated that the reason she was unable to vote for the document was the wording of #7, particularly the statements indicating that “Faculty will expend every effort,” because this is exaggerated and could be misinterpreted, and “faculty will make every reasonable effort.” Parliamentarian Kaul pointed out that this language was changed prior to the vote. Senator Romano asked what that language was changed to. Senator Roberts responded that he suggested the document include a statement to the effect that faculty will communicate in the syllabus how and when assessment-based materials will be returned. Senator Romano asked if that should be specifically stated on syllabi. Senator Roberts responded that it is not a direct quote or statement that must appear on syllabi; it is intended as a guideline, similar to item #9, “Additional fees or costs to be incurred by the student, if any.” Senator Romano said she did not understand that the original wording for #7 was changed to the statement provided by Senator Roberts: “Faculty will communicate how and when assessment-based materials will be returned to the students.”

Senator Choi asked what students think about this issue. Chairperson Singh responded that the initiative came from the students; it reflects what students wanted to include in their Student Bill of Rights. He asked the SGA Representative to Faculty Senate to further comment from the student viewpoint. Ms. Moreno introduced SGA representatives in the audience: Vice President Melanie Huettman, Speaker of the Senate David Giltzow, and Senator At-Large Jacob Tomlinson. She stated that all student leaders and most students in general understand that faculty are very busy, and students do not expect next-day turn-around for assignments. She believes, however, that putting a statement in the student handbook or moving it away from the syllabus defeats the students’ purpose for requesting this language. She stressed that students do want

transparency and want to get their assignments back. Ms. Moreno related that some students SGA has spoken to had instructors who held onto assignments all semester long, and students were unable to know their grades. She stressed that students would like to have a sense of where they are struggling and what areas they need to work on. She encouraged faculty to keep the statement as part of the syllabus policy, even though the wording may need to be “tweaked.”

Senator Cordes asked how Ms. Moreno would define “timely.” Ms. Moreno responded that she would personally define “timely” as up to three weeks, but it would depend on the length of the assignment, number of students in the class, type of class, and other factors.

Senator DeVolder stated that the reason he cannot support putting this statement in the Course Syllabus Policy is that this is an item of faculty responsibility. He has no problem with what the statement says, but believes that if this matter of faculty responsibility is included in the syllabus policy, then other items of faculty responsibility may be added until the document becomes a faculty responsibility policy rather than a syllabus policy. Senator DeVolder asserted that there is an appropriate place for the information in #7, but the syllabus policy is not that place. He added that faculty are free to put such a statement on their syllabi if desired. Senator Brice expressed his agreement with Senator DeVolder’s statements.

Senator Siddiqi expressed his agreement with sentiments expressed by the students. He related that when he served as English and Journalism Chair, he encouraged the more than 50 faculty in the department to return assignments within a week. He encourages students to read their rights and responsibilities on the University website because there is recourse if an instructor does not return materials in a timely matter. Senator Siddiqi asserted that he never takes more than a week to return quizzes or other assignments, and he believes most faculty do the same because their charge is to serve their students. Senator Siddiqi believes, however, that if this type of statement is put in faculty syllabi it will strain the relationship between faculty and students because students may misread its intent.

Chairperson Singh commended the student leaders who met with the Executive Committee. He stated that it was a treat to collaborate with them because they were articulate and professional. He thanked them for the passion that they bring to the cause they represent.

Motion: To adjourn (Brice)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Lee Brice, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary