

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 4 March 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: D. Allwardt, E. Asare, B. Brewer, D. Brown, D. Gravitt, D. Hunter, D. McArthur, J. McKenzie, A. Melkumian, J. Robinett, S. Turkelli, J. Walker, L. Wipperling, E. Woell

SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: B. Bellott, E. Hamner, B. McDonald, B. Petracovici, R. Sharma

SENATORS ABSENT: J. Albarracin, C. Chadwell, H. Elbe

EX-OFFICIO: Krista Bowers Sharpe, Parliamentarian; Interim Provost Mark Mossman

GUESTS: Tawnya Adkins Covert, Josh Averbeck, P.K. Babu, Tiffany Bainter, Greg Baramidze, Victoria Baramidze, Tom Blackford, Keith Boeckelman, Zaire Bradsher, Amy Carr, Katrina Daytner, Dennis DeVolder, Tara Feld, Rich Filipink, Renee Georges, Anita Hardeman, Malinda Harris, Pete Jorgensen, Lorri Kanauss, Kishor Kapale, Rick Kurasz, Sarah Lawson, Mike Lukkarinen, George Mangalaraj, Jim McQuillan, Kat Myers, Holly Nikels, Betsy Perabo, Kaycee Peterman, Jennifer Plos, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prosise, Christopher Pynes, Anjum Razzaque, Ketra Roselieb, Jim Schmidt, Nilanjan Sen, Eric Sheffield, Emily Shupe, Amanda Silberer, Torrey Smith, Anna Valeva, Linda Wade, Phoebe Wilson, Chunying Zhao

Chair Robinett said he appreciates all of the faculty and other guests present, but it is his understanding that some guests may be present because they think there will be a vote taken today on the reorganization/rebuild proposals, which is not the case; instead, he and Interim Provost Mossman will present information on what the process has been so far and what is planned for moving forward. He said there are no motions or items for consideration related to the proposals today, and individuals will have opportunities to share questions, concerns, and support for the proposals on a variety of platforms before a final reorganization plan emerges and is decided on. He added the purpose of today's discussion is to be transparent and share information so that people know what has and is anticipated to happen.

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. February 18, 2025

MINUTES APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Mossman met this afternoon with the Academic Program Elimination Review (APER) Committee. He thinks the group did an excellent job wrestling with difficult problems, considering various data points, and trying to make fair decisions. He said they have firmly handed off their recommendations to the Provost's office, who will now make their decisions, contact departments with programs that would be affected by those decisions, and hopefully report their recommendations to the Board of Trustees (BOT) at their March 20 meeting.

Senator Melkumian asked if Faculty Senate will see the report before it goes to the BOT. Interim Provost Mossman replied that it will be published in the Board book just prior to the meeting. Senator Hunter, who served on the APER Committee, stated that the UPI contract says that the BOT will see the report first. Senator Melkumian asked when senators will be allowed to ask questions about the recommendations. Interim Provost Mossman replied that there will be no report made to the Senate, only to the BOT. Chair Robinett reiterated that senators will not see the APER recommendations prior to them being published in the Board book, but one of the things that Faculty Senate does is review the

Board book so that if there are any issues or questions senators want Chair Robinett to bring up at the BOT meeting, he will do so.

Interim Provost Mossman said he would like to provide some context before talking about the rebuild project, then Chair Robinett would fill in some additional gaps. He related that the process started with the assurance argument made to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) five years ago. Interim Provost Mossman's job in the Provost's office at that time significantly shifted when he was brought in to be HLC liaison, which he thinks of as a great moment in his career. He had never delved that deep into every aspect of the university before, which was necessary because the liaison has to be prepared to answer questions from the HLC representatives. He said the assurance argument was accepted by the HLC, and the university got a very positive review from them; there were some questions about the university's finances, specifically about the submission of state audits which Interim Provost Mossman had been told were not available at that time, but that was a minor thing which was only met with general concerns. He noted that the university received four As and one C from the HLC visit.

Interim Provost Mossman recalled that in the past the HLC process began with former Vice President Joe Rives holding huge meetings where he would write everything down and then submit it to the HLC, but Interim Provost Mossman began with a small working group and then widened the circle with each iteration of the document. He said eventually the group created a website and podcasts to talk about the HLC process, which was very successful. He explained that in the course of these conversations there were also discussions about the university's strategic plan, and the following year the same sort of process was followed with an expanding committee group co-chaired by Pete Jorgensen to revise the first six pages of the strategic plan, the key part of the planned revision.

Interim Provost Mossman said that when the process was completed and the document presented to former President Huang, he added some initiatives stressing a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Interim Provost Mossman thought this would be followed by a serious look at the Division of Academic Affairs and creation of a strategic plan specifically for the division. He collected information and models from various schools, including the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and the University of Wyoming, and committee planning began, but when former Provost Zoghi was hired he sort of changed the direction so that the Academic Affairs strategic plan process was never started. Interim Provost Mossman noted that shortly thereafter the university fell into a serious financial crisis and all energy has gone into working on the budget, which has in turn led to the clear need to reorganize Academic Affairs.

Interim Provost Mossman admitted that he has wanted to delay this process until the university can turn the page on its financial issues, but he has come to see the real need to address administrative costs; although the need is not to address administrative costs exclusively, that part needs to be addressed to continue to stabilize the university's financial future. He began the process by forming a working group with representatives of each constituency and Academic Affairs, and they began to draft documents while committing to be as transparent as possible.

Interim Provost Mossman told senators the working group is pursuing a two-college model, but that is not set in stone. He would like to use the process that was so successful with the HLC: a small working group prepares initial documents, then larger communities review and revise those documents, and things are changed as they progress through the entire community. Interim Provost Mossman admitted a nervous fear that the discussions will only center on academic programs, which is natural and normal on a certain level because it is how everyone identifies where they are at, but if there is to be a rebuild plan there have to be discussions about other things, including the higher, comprehensive picture. He said this might include asking how the schedules work, how employees complete their work, and whether, for example, an assessment document really needs to be reviewed by seven different people throughout the process. He noted that although ACE sheets are extremely important documents on workload in departments, they are submitted seven or eight times and are constantly changing.

Interim Provost Mossman recognizes that everyone feels overwhelmed, and he thinks the university needs to become more efficient. He noted that when a contraction of the administration is being considered, everyone tends to ask themselves how they can do seven more jobs, but the problem is that

the current environment requires that 18 jobs be done when one would be sufficient. He believes the schedule is a real indicator of how the university is functioning. He pointed out that there has been a radical reduction in the number of undergraduate students – 75 percent since 2010 and over 50 percent since 2017 – which has significantly impacted the way the campus and its schedule works. He noted that no longer can Accounting students who have almost all their classes in Stipes be confident that the Gen ED Humanities class they need in Simpkins will have 14 sections to choose from because nowadays it will likely only have two. He noted that because there are not as many students, there are also not as many faculty, so these are things that need to be considered. He told senators that people have suggested four-day weeks or block scheduling where Gen Ed classes are offered at a certain time and major classes offered at another time, or some hybrid of these, and he thinks these things need to be considered and worked into the rebuild process. He suspects it may need to be completed in stages but thinks there needs to be that comprehensive level of planning.

Interim Provost Mossman reiterated that at this point things are at the planning stage, and there are different drafts of proposals. He said the working group has applied scrutiny to those drafts and continues to talk about the very large challenges that need to be addressed, such as how online teaching affects the schedule. He stated that it is not just about where a program sits, although that is vital and important to everyone; it is also about how everyone functions and works during the day.

Chair Robinett applauds that the university is tackling this. He has learned through countless meetings and conversations with the Provost and others about what state funding is likely to look like, enrollment trends at WIU and elsewhere, and the financial realities that institutions in the state of Illinois are facing that adjustments simply must be made. He pointed out that when looking at the footprint of the Macomb campus -- how much space is actually being used as opposed to how much heating, cooling, and maintaining goes into these building systems, and the cost of that -- the reality is that for the university to become financially viable, some of these things will have to be addressed. He thinks that otherwise WIU will continue to face situations where personnel, programs, and other things may become financially unfeasible.

Chair Robinett stressed the entire process has been focused on preserving as many programs as possible as well as on financial viability. He noted that looking at one model versus another in terms of number of colleges deals a lot with what the overall cost savings will be. He pointed out that for those concerned with summer school, overloads, adjuncts, and things like that, money saved on the administrative side may potentially free up appropriated state dollars and other funding that can go towards those things. Chair Robinett observed that, as the university moves into FY 26, there are still financial concerns that must be considered, and this process is one of the ways WIU can streamline policies and procedures as well as facilitate some opportunities for inter- and transdisciplinarity in the things the university does. He appreciates that this process has been shared with deans, directors, chairs, and now the Faculty Senate and encouraged senators to share the documents in anticipation of the website which Interim Provost Mossman plans to create, similar to the HLC process. He added that Interim Provost Mossman has indicated he will be meeting with the areas that report directly to the Provost's office in order to make sure they are also informed.

Chair Robinett related that in the working group, which includes a dean, a chair, UPI, academic advising, the Vice President for Student Success area, and the Provost's office, discussions have circulated around how to make this process meaningful and transparent. He stressed that all discussions have centered on proposals, not plans, which is an important distinction for people to understand. He said the guiding principles have been facilities and fiscal realities, both of which need to result in cost savings. Chair Robinett has stressed to the working group that this process needs to focus on purpose and pedagogy, not personalities. He believes that as WIU considers the most effective way to reorganize, the conversation should not be about who likes or dislikes whom but about how to create efficiencies and programs to benefit students and allow colleagues to benefit from the resources that exist. He said there has been a commitment throughout this process that shared governance procedures will be followed; Faculty Senate has procedures and forms in place that can lead to discussions, and official feedback can be given on these. He also related that it has been indicated in all of the working group's conversations that the UPI contract requires that any faculty member affected by reorganization must be notified and provided with information. Chair Robinett

pointed out that this is not something which has just emerged; anyone who has followed Faculty Senate knows that space and reorganization have been topics since the beginning of the academic year, and he has begged since August for this process to begin

Senator Gravitt recognizes it is early in the process but wonders whether and at what level faculty will be asked to give input on these proposals. Interim Provost Mossman replied that faculty will have opportunities for input as the proposals move through the process. He pointed out that there has not been a major reorganization or rebuilding in the Division of Academic Affairs since 1980; there was a reorganization in 1993, then nothing until now, although there has been a lot of reorganization within the colleges themselves. He recalled that when the School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration began discussions about being independent and the College of Education and Human Services reorganized last year, the discussion bubbled up that individual decisions were being made while there really needed to be work on the division as a whole. He thinks there needs to be a division-wide reboot.

Senator Gravitt remarked that it is important that faculty have agency and buy-in, too. She stated while finding one name that encapsulates everyone in a particular college can be challenging, at least if those in that college have a say in their name they will feel more invested. Chair Robinett stated that there have been some wonderful suggestions. He related that Interim Associate Provost Christopher Pynes has suggested that the webpage could be used as an interface in order to collect feedback. He admitted that the two-college model has been the focus of the working group from a cost-savings perspective, but everything else is living and subject to change.

Senator Alwardt asked about the anticipated timeline. Interim Provost Mossman thinks everyone needs to be committed to the process; Faculty Senate has processes in place to approve, among other things, any new college, and UPI requires, at minimum, a mechanism for comment. He stated that if the process is not completed by the end of the current academic year, it will have to wait for Faculty Senate to begin meeting in Fall 2025. He anticipates this will be a very big project that may require steps and stages of approval, although a massive amount of work toward reorganization has already been accomplished in a very short period of time. He noted that while reorganization has been discussed for quite awhile, the proposals were really developed in about a month; he is confident that progress is being made but is also aware that it could be impeded. He added that the goal is to have Faculty Senate vote on a proposal by May 14. Chair Robinett reminded senators that there may be the need for additional meetings as needed. He thinks it is important to have a summer schedule that will allow for conversations to take place and where senators can address some issues.

Senator Hunter observed that the College of Applied and Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the three-college model is perfectly aligned as a STEM college. Interim Provost Mossman related he told the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy yesterday that he thinks STEM is a larger issue. He related that Interim Associate Provost Pynes compiled, using IPEDS data, a comprehensive list of all the colleges and universities with enrollments similar to WIU's (about 5,000), and many departments are engaged in STEM; it has been the focus of education in the U.S. for 25 years, and STEM programs are in every college. He said the University of Illinois slightly changed the CIP code for some of its programs so that they would have a STEM CIP code and be more appealing to international students, so WIU started doing that as well. Interim Provost Mossman does not think that STEM is as "clean" as it used to be; even English now has Digital Humanities and is involved with AI. He thinks that many people at WIU already do interdisciplinary things in an environment that does not really allow for it or makes it hard to do. He stressed that WIU needs to concentrate on cost savings, and a two-college model saves about \$200,000 or more compared to the three-college model. He added that this is the beginning of the reorganization process, and the university could potentially end up with either model.

Senator Gravitt asked if there is a goal proportion of administration-to-faculty-to-students. She observed that Interim Provost Mossman speaks often about the faculty-to-student ratio, but she wonders about the administration-to-faculty ratio. Interim Provost Mossman replied that there is not; the working group has not thought in those terms. He pointed out that even when thinking about a student-faculty ratio, that is not a single metric but rather an informative metric, similar to a stress test. He noted that several years ago the way administrators are classified at WIU changed, and a lot of

employees formerly classified as administrative were moved into civil service, skewing the administrator count.

Senator Hunter pointed out that the administrative cost savings proposal does include a student-faculty ratio. Interim Provost Mossman clarified that he did not mean to say that such a ratio should not be used; he thinks the goal should be 15:1, adding that it is about 11:1 right now. Senator Hunter pointed out that the administrative cost savings indicates it should be 16:1 or 17:1. Interim Provost Mossman would like to see it get to at least 15:1 but agrees that it should probably be 17:1. He remarked it is fascinating to consider how the ratios actually work in the state of Illinois; some are much lower than WIU's, so they are all across the board. Senator Hunter observed that small student-teacher ratio used to be an advertising strong point for WIU, and at that time the ratio was about 16:1. Interim Provost Mossman replied that if WIU could get to 16:1 that would be tremendously positive.

Chair Robinett told senators that today is really meant as the start of a conversation about living documents that are only proposals at this point. He promised there will be a lot more information coming out and is happy for those with ideas, questions, or concerns to reach out to him as the university continues to develop whatever the resource will end up being.

Senator Hamner remarked he has heard a lot of debate in different contexts about the relative value of assigning all of the subcategories as "schools" versus having some departments mixed in with those designations. He asked if at some time Faculty Senate could discuss the upsides and downsides of each approach. Interim Provost Mossman replied that this has been a point of discussion in the proposals, and everyone has different perspectives. His initial perspective was that the university should develop an administrative framework that allowed departments to maintain their identity, especially publicly, after which the management aspect could be converted into different ways of doing things. He thinks WIU currently has a department head model, where everyone is called department chairs but they really function as department heads, and, simultaneously, some areas have school directors. He thinks that if one looks at the way WIU's colleges are organized, it seems that some disciplines have moved. Interim Provost Mossman observed that Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville has a one-college model with multiple different schools, even though they are twice WIU's size, and WIU's schools within business, education, and some other disciplines seem to be drifting in that direction. He explained that a classic department chair model is one where the chair does not lead faculty but is a faculty member; the process involves release time and supplemental summer contracts, if needed. He said this is direction he proposed with the two-college proposal, but other proposals argue that there should only be different schools under the colleges rather than departments and schools.

Chair Robinett remarked that the working group is very welcoming of issues that need to be considered, such as the one Senator Hamner just brought up, because this process is truly an Academic Affairs rebuild. Senator Hunter asked who the point of contact is if faculty have ideas they wish to bring up. Chair Robinett replied that he would be the point of contact for faculty; chairs or directors should communicate with Pete Jorgensen, Director of the School of Communication and Media; deans should share ideas with Billy Clow, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication; and issues specifically related to personnel and the contract should be communicated to Merrill Cole, UPI President. He noted that in this way everyone can effectively bring things together in order to streamline and be transparent with everyone.

Senator Asare asked if there is an approximate timeline for proposals or solutions. Interim Provost Mossman replied the work is being done right now with hopes to finish the bulk of it by the end of the spring semester. He added there is an awareness that things may need to be completed in stages, and there may be things that come up to impede this progress, but everyone wants to get this giant task completed. He admitted that the building situation alone is something that will not be solved quickly because it is a major issue; every building on the campus needs millions of dollars of work. He said WIU has half a million dollars of deferred maintenance, so if something goes wrong this spring, such as another lightning strike or serious issue, then the university will have very serious issues to solve. He stated that it would be foolish to say that all the issues will be solved overnight because of the importance of getting things right.

Rich Filipink, CAGAS Chair, pointed out that there is contractual language about the status of chairs as administrators and that they are equivalent to school directors. He added that this is something that will need to be worked out in terms of the retention, promotion, and tenure procedures at the institution.

B. Student Government Association Report

Mr. Bradsher reported that SGA's Speaker of the Senate, Winter Hurst-Leadicker, continues to work on the spring Town Hall event, which will be held on April 2 in the Union Lamoine Room at 3:00 p.m. He said invitations have been finalized, and President Mindrup and other administrators are expected to attend. He told senators there is an open invitation for faculty to attend any SGA Town Hall event.

Mr. Bradsher reported that SGA's Director of Technology, Stephen Druse, invited Ian Szechowycz, University Technology Digital and Learning Spaces Director, to speak to the SGA General Assembly tomorrow about tech project bills. He said Mr. Druse has also almost completed the University Codex on AI, but he got only about a 10 percent response rate from faculty.

Mr. Bradsher told senators SGA's Attorney General, Jeffrey Keith is rewriting the SGA Constitution and expects to be completed by April 19. Chair Robinett asked if elections for SGA and Trustee are this week; Mr. Bradsher confirmed this.

C. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Chair Robinett expressed thanks to Senate councils and committees for the work they are doing, which is not always seen. He noted that the Council for Intercollegiate Athletics is reviewing their operating papers in light of NCAA scheduling realities, which have changed quite a bit since the council's operating papers were put into place. Those proposed changes are expected to come to Faculty Senate this year. Chair Robinett observed that the Council for International Education is reviewing its operations to develop a process to approve Multicultural Perspectives courses. He said the Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction will have a large amount of curriculum coming up to review, and he asked senators to be sure to complete the Senate Nominating Committee's interest survey before noon on Monday, March 10.

Chair Robinett thanked Registrar Sarah Lawson for sharing information about early grade reporting, which were reported for 86.5 percent of WIU courses. He thanked those faculty who provided this information because it allows the student success coaches, academic advisors, and other student supports to step in if there are students who are struggling. He reported that 31.5 percent of WIU undergraduate students received an early warning grade (C- or lower) this spring, a decrease from 35.6 percent last spring; this spring about 47 percent of the early warning grades submitted were for failing grades, whereas last spring that figure was 48 percent, positives that the university can celebrate.

Chair Robinett reported that the ad hoc Committee on Responses to Federal Transitions met recently, and he thanked the faculty, staff, administrators, and students who attended that meeting. He said the clearest takeaway that emerged are that everyone should continue to work to fulfill the mission of the institution. He reported that President Mindrup engages in regular conversations with the Governor's office about how to best address issues. Chair Robinett said another key takeaway is that patience is needed; the institution will not be immediately reacting to any orders as they are issued but will make sure there is an understanding of the legal requirements and then respond accordingly. He said another point coming out of the meeting was the need to support WIU students; Leatherneck Care Referrals are one of the primary ways to link any issues faculty may hear of their students having – from nervousness to actual negative encounters – with the support that they need. Chair Robinett reported that Zach Messersmith, Director of Government and Public Relations, and Torrey Smith, WIU's legal counsel, attend the meetings to track issues and provide guidance to the administrative team. He added that future ad hoc committee meetings will be called as issues emerge.

Chair Robinett thanked Amy Carr, WIU's representative to the Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council, for information she provided in the shared drive about bills coming before

the state legislature. He noted that March is a very busy month for the legislature with many proposals on higher education that are moving forward.

Chair Robinett met with the University Technology CIO Group and reported that the ERP implementation is progressing. He pointed out that staff in the areas of Student Success, Human Resources, the Registrar's Office, administration, and other areas are working to implement the new ERP on top of the everyday jobs they are required to do using the current WIU mainframe. He noted that Financial Aid continues to navigate some challenges as they go back and forth between the two systems, but they are refining integrations in an effort to make this better for fall. He reported that, based on audit findings and industry practices, University Technology is looking into a variety of multifactor verification policies; they want to create something that can preserve needed security while also being effective and efficient for what the university needs to do. He added that this will be further discussed before anything current becomes inactive. He also pointed out that University Technology, like many areas of the university, will be affected by retirements at the end of this year.

Regarding space issues, Chair Robinett announced that there are no current building closures planned for Fall 2025, although the reality has to be faced that the campus will have fewer faculty and staff than in the past. He said a plan is being developed, keeping in mind the university's previous master plan and building audits, and will be shared as it is finalized. He pointed out that with \$500 million of deferred maintenance on the Macomb campus, even as money is received from capital development or other funding there are already plenty of needs which exist in order to keep the buildings working well.

Chair Robinett encouraged everyone to support Kim McClure, Psychology, this year's Distinguished University Professor, who will give her distinguished faculty lecture on March 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the College of Fine Arts and Communication Recital Hall.

E. Other Announcements

1. Ketra Roselieb, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Vice President Roselieb told senators she would like to have an open discussion about the FY 25 reality, FY 26 and beyond, and about what Governor Pritzker proposed two weeks ago and what it means for WIU. She showed senators cash flow for the past decade and described the income fund (tuition dollars, state appropriations) and the other/unrestricted fund (mainly local dollars), then showed how these two funds together represent the money that can be used for daily operations. She said while there are some other sources of funding, such as auxiliary funds, these are restricted to housing/dining, the University Union, and Campus Recreation operations; these operate as self-sustaining entities, so those funds cannot be used to, for example, fix an appropriated building or pay for an administrator or faculty member.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out on the chart that the state of Illinois budget impasse truly drained any cash the institution had on hand, and WIU was slow to recover from this to the point that the institution has not since reached the extent it was just a decade ago. She noted that if the combined income and other/unrestricted lines fall below zero, the institution would truly be out of cash. She noted that multiple years of income fund expenses exceeding income fund revenues has dropped that cash balance down to the level of urgency that President Mindrup acted upon recently.

Vice President Roselieb showed senators projections for FY 25 built upon assumptions of current enrollment and a 3 percent increase in personnel expenditures (because the university's largest contractual personnel obligation has a 3 percent increase this year). She noted that the projections take into account layoffs that have already occurred and salary savings through the end of the fiscal year. She explained that from an operating standpoint, the projections assume level spending from FY 24 to FY 25, with the exception of a \$5 million decrease in student financial aid, which shows up as a decrease to operating expenses. She said this decrease is due to some changes made to the Western Commitment and other scholarships and declining

enrollment. She pointed out that if there was a million-dollar expenditure from a facility standpoint that needed to be fixed, the university would not have the cash on hand to fix that.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out that in August and January the income fund fluctuates up since that is when the majority of tuition comes in. She explained the state reimburses the university for personnel expenditures on a month-to-month basis, so there is not a lot of fluctuation in cash flow since WIU pays the expense and then gets reimbursed. She warned, though, that if the state did not reimburse the university in a timely fashion, such as during the budget impasse, there would be additional pressure on these projections.

Vice President Roselieb showed senators a slide presented at the Board of Trustees retreat last fall showing tuition income over the past decade. She observed that the amount of tuition income has been depleted by 50 percent, and it is not anticipated that it will increase over the next five years, even with a moderate increase in tuition. She noted that with the overall decline in enrollment, and as larger classes graduate and smaller ones matriculate through, overall headcount is projected at around 5,000, which equates to about \$35 million in tuition income. She showed senators expense and income projections for the income fund for the next five years as well as a look at the past decade. She noted that the chart continues to assume flat funding from the state.

Vice President Roselieb related that her office was happy to hear that Governor Pritzker proposed a 3 percent increase for Illinois public institutions in his budget address, but it will not be known until May whether that becomes the final appropriation. She said there is also some question whether it would be appropriated strictly across the board, as has been done in the past, or by using the funding formula in some way to divvy the 3 percent out among institutions. She assumes there is still a lot of work to be done on the funding formula so that they will likely allocate the money directly across-the-board, which would mean a \$1.7 million increase for WIU.

Vice President Roselieb pointed out that the overall expense budget in FY24 was about \$113 million; that was brought down to \$102 million, but projected revenues are only \$93 million, so there is still quite a bit of work to do in FY26 and FY27 to get revenues in line with expenses. She believes that the university continues to do a lot of great work and was enlightened and glad to hear the conversation at Faculty Senate today because she thinks the reorganization is the right move for WIU from a financial standpoint and will hopefully also best serve students and the viability of the institution moving forward. She noted that there were announcements yesterday about some administrative reductions and changes that should assist the financial picture in the near future. She observed that the university is not done making changes and needs to continue to adjust; she wishes it was not on such a short timeline but realizes that everyone is trying to do the best they absolutely can to continue to serve students while making WIU financially viable.

Chair Robinett related that President Mindrup shared with him that the administrative realignment announced yesterday represents \$500,000 in savings. He asked if Vice President Roselieb could share how some of the other cost savings have been implemented this semester. Vice President Roselieb responded that the Unit B notices that were given in June 2024 amounted to a savings of \$1.6 million for FY25; the half-year notices for the remaining Unit B faculty who did not return for spring semester equated to a \$500,000 savings. She stated that civil service, administrators, and others affected by the August announcements amounted to \$1.2 million in savings; some have already come to fruition while others will not until FY26. She related that elimination of vacant positions, cost savings from realignments, and a reduction in adjunct contracts, summer contracts, and overloads resulted in a savings of almost \$5.5 million; some of that was just a budget reduction savings while some was a true year-to-year savings that the university has started to see this fiscal year. She added there is also \$900,000 in planned retirements at this time.

Senator Gravitt recalled that Vice President Roselieb in her visit to ExCo said that one reason the university struggles more in April is because overload hits at that time. Vice President Roselieb admitted that overload does hit in April, but once the university gets to February there is no additional income arriving while larger expenses still remain, which is where the downward slide truly happens. Senator Gravitt did not think overload pay comes out until May and shows up in June. Vice President Roselieb clarified that cash actually leaves the university's bank account at the end of April, but that is not the main reason for the dip on the chart; it is that expenditures are fairly consistent throughout the remainder of the semester, but income is not.

Interim Provost Mossman observed that the university has seen significant advocacy at the state level for various proposals; veterans dollars will potentially be coming into the university, and the Foundation and Innovation Campus bills are moving through the state level. Vice President Roselieb clarified that none of those bills are built into cash flow projections at this time because that is nothing that the university can control. She acknowledged that the \$7.2 million Quad Cities Innovation Campus bill, which is currently in committee, would help WIU's cash flow situation immensely.

Vice President Roselieb told senators that another bill would allow WIU to draw a line of credit from its Foundation for up to \$2 million, which is something that would be used only if absolutely necessary. She said this represents a loan which would get the university through until it could see longer-term savings; it would accrue 1 percent interest and would not have to be paid back until FY27. Chair Robinett asked if it is true that that loan of Foundation dollars would in no way come from donor funds, such as if an individual gave a specific gift; Vice President Roselieb confirmed this is true. She added that is why there is a cap on the amount; that is the amount Foundation has available as unrestricted or not specifically directed. Chair Robinett said faculty have done great jobs working with their alumni and emeriti faculty for donations, and they were concerned how those dollars would be used and whether they would continue to be allocated for their specified purposes.

Senator Gravitt asked whether the \$7.2 million bill, if passed, would come to WIU all at once or would be parceled out like a paycheck, in which case it would not necessarily help the university immediately. Vice President Roselieb is not sure yet; she hopes it will be passed in one fell swoop and the university would be able to request reimbursement for the \$7.2 million if it were added to this year's appropriation. She said the university absolutely has more eligible expenses that can be vouchered to the state; WIU has received \$58 million at this point, so that would hopefully go up by \$7.2 million.

Senator Hunter was disturbed to read about the veterans funds being withheld. He asked if they are being withheld at the state or the federal level and who should be contacted to complain about this. Vice President Roselieb responded they are being withheld at the state level. She explained the Illinois Veterans Grant and the Illinois National Guard Grant are both unfunded mandates by the state of Illinois, meaning that WIU completely waives those to the tune of \$1.1 million, and in prior years it has been up to \$2 million because of the number of veterans WIU serves. She said that while the state has appropriated dollars to be allocated for this, it is only \$6 million for the entire state. She is not sure what WIU's share of that will be, but it is hoped the university will receive \$200,000 toward reimbursement. Vice President Roselieb remarked that it is frustrating that the appropriation was announced in Governor Pritzker's last budget address, for the FY25 budget, but nothing has been received so far. She said the reimbursement is being administered through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC); they are doing calculations to determine how much each university will get and are expected to inform them in late May or June. Since she does not know how much or when those funds will be received, that was not included on the cash flow projections chart.

Vice President Roseleib related that the administration is working closely with the state to receive some reimbursement on deferred maintenance expenditures incurred over the past few decades. She said the university has had to fix what it considers capital expenditures that the

administration believes should have been paid for by the Capitol Development Board. She noted that WIU went many years without a significant deferred maintenance appropriation and right now has an appropriation of \$13.8 million. She explained there are only certain projects the Capital Development Board will handle and only a certain timeline for those projects, so the university has asked, given WIU's financial situation, for reimbursement for projects that were done in-house, which if approved would result in a reimbursement of about \$2.2 million based on the projects the Capital Development Board has said would qualify. She added that conversations continue to occur on this between the WIU, the Board, and the Governor's Office for Budget and Management.

Senator Gravitt asked where the money comes from when the water leaks at Stipes Hall or there is a lightning strike at Horrabin Hall and whether those types of things can be billed back to the state. Vice President Roselieb replied that these are the types of projects the university is trying to bill back to the state right now, but on a day-to-day basis these must be paid from WIU's own operating expenses. Senator Gravitt asked if the state has reimbursed WIU for these types of things in the past; Vice President Roselieb replied that they have not, but they do appropriate some emergency capital for those kinds of events. She added that universities still have to go through the Capital Development Board process, and their office manages it, which is not always feasible in emergency situations. She noted that steam lines, roof work, and similar things are funded through the Capital Development Board. Chair Robinett remarked that one thing he has learned while chairing Faculty Senate is that the Capital Development Board and others provide universities with buildings, for which WIU is very thankful and appreciative, but that does not mean they will provide the funds to manage them, keep the lights on, clean them, and keep them going. He thinks everyone needs to be aware of this when talking about funding.

IV. Old Business - None

V. New Business

A. Elimination of Y Graduation Requirement

Chair Robinett explained there was a misunderstanding at the previous Senate meeting on when the Provost's office was going to share the administration's logic in requesting the elimination of the Y graduation requirement. He stated that while as a general practice Faculty Senate actions on approved items should not be reconsidered, the Executive Committee, in order to demonstrate good faith and as a practice of shared governance, would like for the Provost's office to have the opportunity to address the Senate on this topic. He explained that once the Provost's office has concluded their presentation, there will be time for questions and comments – first from senators, then faculty, then moving on to remarks from other guests – and at the end of the discussion, if any senator feels that the Senate should reconsider its approval of the CAGAS report rejecting the elimination of the Y graduation requirement, there can be consideration of how that procedure would work. He said that if no senator moves to do something after the discussion, the previous approval of the CAGAS report will stand.

Interim Provost Mossman thanked Faculty Senate for reconsidering the elimination of the Y graduation requirement. He explained his plan is to provide an outline for context and will rely on Interim Associate Provost Pynes to provide the details and fill in the gaps. His understanding is that only one of the individuals serving on CAGAS had actually taught a Y course, so he suspects there is a lack of familiarity with how the First Year Experience (FYE) program works. When Interim Provost Mossman was hired into the Provost's office, one of his charges was to revise the FYE program. He stressed that he is deeply committed to the FYE program and thinks the university has to have it, so the elimination of the Y graduation requirement is not a signal that WIU is going to eliminate FYE. He noted that, given the university's student profile of first-generation students, it is absolutely crucial to have the level of intervention which is characteristic of a First Year Experience program because all the data shows that it leads to retention, and he wants it to be clear that FYE will not be eliminated.

Interim Provost Mossman explained that the current FYE program in terms of its curriculum is divided into two courses: UNIV 100 and a Y course. He recalled that when he came into the Provost's office in 2018, there were issues with both of these courses: students did not like the UNIV 100 course because they thought it went on too long, and while some faculty, including Chair Robinett and Craig Tollini, were teaching the UNIV 100 course, they were unable to get most faculty to buy into it. Interim Provost Mossman said instructors who taught Y courses were able to have smaller class sizes, but there was not a lot of faculty buy-in for the Y course either. He said one of the intentions for the revision of FYE at the time was to really increase the university's investment in the teaching of Y courses, so the peer mentorship system was developed (which later became the Leatherneck Leadership Group). He recalled that residence halls were connected with Y courses, and other structural things were added to make the Y course more of an environment where the student benefitted from a lot of intervention from the university. He noted that students were attending these classes with their freshmen peers, they had the benefit of peer mentors, which they had not had before, and they had investment from their residence hall.

Interim Provost Mossman related that by 2019 the FYE program was also offering workshops for faculty; Vice President for Student Success Justin Schuch was one of the presenters, and Betsy Perabo, Amy Carr, and Greg Baldi were some of the faculty who participated in them. Interim Provost Mossman thinks the university was making significant progress on FYE when the pandemic knocked the model sideways because everything went online. He thinks this, coupled with basically the defunding of the FYE program, meant that coming out of the pandemic the university could increasingly not deliver the Y course the way it was intended. He said the Provost's office could no longer attach large numbers of services to the course; there was only enough money to pay for UNIV 100 instruction by staff members, so the Provost's office went to other areas of the university to cobble together resources. He said this was positive because all areas of the university got involved in the FYE program, but in reality there were just not enough resources.

Interim Provost Mossman related that a couple of years ago, he and Lori Baker-Sperry, FYE Faculty Associate, came to Senate to explain that the FYE program had less than \$19,000 in its account for the year whereas previously it had been funded at over \$500,000. He said they explained that FYE was simply not being allocated the resources to offer the kind of Y course they had in the past. He thinks that, simultaneously, the Provost's office has done a fantastic job with UNIV 100, including shortening the course to eight weeks. He said there has been a lot of intense research on how UNIV 100 was working; he thinks when he began working with FYE the U100 course had too intense of a relationship with Cengage, but it has now become more of a Western-oriented course.

Interim Provost Mossman told senators the Provost's office has decided that the best step forward at this time is to eliminate the Y graduation requirement. He thinks that once the university becomes fiscally sound the Provost's office can turn to the FYE program again and try to make it more successful. He recalled that the FYE program was an initiative of former President Al Goldfarb in 2003; in 2009, he wanted to make completion of Y courses a graduation requirement. Interim Associate Provost Pynes said that he was a senator at the time this was proposed and either voted against it or abstained because he was opposed to making it a graduation requirement. He recalled that at that time the university was spending half a million dollars on the FYE program, and Unit B faculty were hired to teach the UNIV 100 courses. He stated that this spring semester, though, there were only three sections of Y courses – one music and two sociology. He noted that as enrollment declined across WIU, fewer departments offered Y courses because there were fewer students and less benefit to some departments because they did not have the adjuncts to teach them. He added that there were also no longer peer mentors.

Interim Associate Provost Pynes remarked that in 2009, CAGAS rejected President Goldfarb's request to make a Y course graduation requirement, but Faculty Senate overrode CAGAS's rejection and approved creating the graduation requirement. He recalls that CAGAS's objection at the time was based on there being no evidence that FYE works. He noted that this time when he went before CAGAS to tell them that Y classes have essentially become a requirement of a couple of small disciplines that students have to take because there are not a breadth of classes, and that there is no money to support peer mentors, a faculty member who served on CAGAS but is no longer at the

university demanded evidence that the requirement is not working. Interim Associate Provost Pynes said this is a huge debate in FYE literature because it is difficult to determine if taking an FYE class with Dr. Pynes on Tuesday/Thursday retains students because there are so many other factors affecting whether a student retains. He stated that the vote at CAGAS was 5-3-2 not to eliminate the Y class graduation requirement. He said part of the problem was that the faculty member wanted evidence, and there is no such evidence, but the fact remains that the university does not have the number of students needed nor the number of course selections. He said the request to eliminate the requirement is not really for efficiency's sake or for student choice but because this particular graduation requirement is not the kind of thing that has been working for 30 years, it has been defunded, and now departments have chosen not to offer Y courses so students do not have choices.

Interim Provost Mossman noted that a characteristic of a lot of research into FYE programs involves trying to attach data to them. He recalled that former Associate Provost Nancy Parsons and Dr. Baker-Sperry were frequently asked about this by Faculty Senate and tried to attach assessment data to figure out how to assess these courses. He agrees that it is extraordinarily difficult because of the number of variables affecting whether a student retains. He supports FYE programs because he instinctively thinks they do help with retention because interventions do matter; he does not want to abandon the idea of a WIU FYE program, but he does not think there is sufficient reason to have this particular course at this particular time as a graduation requirement.

Senator Gravitt does not think her program has an FYE requirement; Interim Provost Mossman responded that not all programs have a Y course, which was Interim Associate Provost Pynes's point. Interim Associate Provost Pynes noted that only two people on CAGAS had taught a Y course: Chair Rich Filipink, but he did not vote, and a Biology professor, but none of the other nine. Interim Provost Mossman stated that most Y courses were in the College of Arts and Sciences; the Provost's office would typically run 43-46 Y courses in the fall, and 36-40 of them would be in Arts and Sciences. He recalled these courses were primarily spread over social sciences and the humanities; even the STEM disciplines in Arts and Sciences did not offer these courses in general. He admitted there were a few exceptions; the College of Business and Technology at one time offered a Y course in business, and Chair Robinett taught a number of Y courses in the College of Education and Human Services, but the bulk of them were offered in Arts and Sciences.

Interim Associate Provost Pynes told senators that 98 Y sections were offered in Fall 2012 and 74 sections in Spring 2013; a decade later, 48 Y sections were offered in Fall 2023 and 10 Y sections in Spring 2024. He pointed out that of the three Y sections this spring, the music section was reserved for Music students, so freshmen had to basically take their Y class requirement from whatever department happened to offer one, which is not an efficient way to deliver this curriculum to the student population at the university right now.

Dr. Filipink stated that since the Provost's office was allowed to interject, he would also like to be allowed to speak, as the Chair of CAGAS, before a lot of questions are raised. He explained that, to address the last point first, the reason there were so many more Y courses in 2012/2013 than now is because FYE was reduced from a two-course requirement to a one-course requirement, which led to an immediate decline in the number of courses. Interim Provost Mossman asserted this is incorrect because UNIV 100 was a requirement when he came into the Provost's office, but that requirement was removed so that the course is now only required for REACH students. Chair Filipink clarified that in 2009, at the beginning of the FYE graduation requirement, freshmen were required to take *two* Y courses; that was reduced to one Y course and UNIV 100, then the UNIV 100 component was made optional, and finally it was required for REACH students only. He wants to make sure Faculty Senate has the history of this requirement correct. He related that when the requirement was reduced to one Y course and the UNIV 100 requirement was removed, most of the Y courses were advertised, as the still-extant FYE flat sheet shows, as General Education courses, which is why they are mostly in Arts and Sciences and Music. He said that in this way students could double-dip their requirements.

Interim Provost Mossman said he does not disagree with what Chair Filipink is saying, but the point is that the university no longer has the student population. He pointed out that freshmen enrollment for

Fall 2024 was 634, and some Y sections cannot be offered. Chair Filipink clarified that the information he provided is just for historical background, to explain how the university got to this point.

Chair Robinett asked if there is anything else Chair Filipink wishes to share as CAGAS Chair before allowing other comments. Chair Filipink said he counted the CAGAS vote as 4 for rejecting the proposal from the Provost's office, 1 in favor of the proposal, and 4 abstentions, but the CAGAS Secretary counted it as 4-2-3 so he will defer to her account. He added that, as always, the CAGAS Chair does not vote except to break a tie.

Registrar Sarah Lawson asked to provide Faculty Senate with the process that is in place right now related to registration. She explained that advanced registration begins March 17, the Monday after spring break; registration basically occurs based on seniority, with seniors and graduate students registering first and current freshmen registering the following week. She said any student who has not yet completed the FYE requirement will be forced by the system to enroll in an FYE course first, before they take anything else. She said that while there is a way to waive this, the system is programmed to do this, and waivers would have to be done manually, one-by-one at this point. She added that new freshmen coming in next year would also be forced to register for an FYE course first. She told senators that whatever they decide today, she will take action on to make sure that the system can be updated to eliminate a roadblock for students registering if that is what needs to happen.

Chair Robinett remarked that Faculty Senate has heard a lot about the schedule, so he wonders what communication has happened between the Provost's office and different departments related to scheduling FYE courses. Interim Provost Mossman replied that departments know about this meeting and this debate. Interim Associate Provost Pynes added that the Provost's office advised departments not to offer FYE courses. Interim Provost Mossman said this is because it is easier to add something to the schedule than to remove it. He thinks Registrar Lawson's point is a good one that there has to be a decision so that the schedule is correct when students register, although there is some lead time because freshmen register later. He remarked there has always been issues with students not meeting their Y requirement, but they have gone directly to the Provost's office where a decision was made whether to waive it; he noted that it has often happened with Fine Arts students, so there is precedence. He thinks in general everyone is aware of this discussion and that a decision has to be made.

Senator Hunter recalled that in the CAGAS report they indicated the council had requested a cost-benefit analysis to justify the request to eliminate the requirement, and the lack of this is why they rejected the request. He noted that the Provost's office has provided historical analysis today and asked if CAGAS was aware of that information at the time; Interim Associate Provost Pynes replied that they were. He related that he gave CAGAS the history of the requirement and the breakdown of every department and section of Y courses for the past ten years, so they got a whole bunch of stuff.

Senator Woell asked what will happen if Faculty Senate does not approve elimination of the Y course requirement and whether it will occur anyway. Interim Provost Mossman replied that the Provost's office will make a decision but will respect shared governance.

Senator Gravitt asked if the FYE requirement applies to every student or only to students in certain majors because she does not think her students have a Y requirement in her major. Registrar Lawson replied that FYE is a graduation requirement; any student who comes to WIU as a full-time freshman in their first semester and brings in fewer than 24 semester hours is required to take one FYE course to graduate. She added that it applies to all majors, but it depends on how the student enters Western.

Senator Melkumian asked if she is correct in assuming that this discussion is not about eliminating the FYE program but only eliminating the Y requirement for graduation; Interim Provost Mossman affirmed that is correct. Senator Melkumian asked whether students could still take those courses if the requirement is eliminated. Interim Provost Mossman replied they can, and there will still be residential events tied to the UNIV 100 course that will continue.

Chair Robinett clarified that at the present moment, from a parliamentary procedure standpoint, Faculty Senate accepted the report from CAGAS, which was not to eliminate the Y graduation

requirement, so at this point that is where things stand. He stated that as senators continue to engage in discussion and ask questions, if a senator would like to move to rescind that approval, then senators can have that discussion and move into whatever recommendation comes forward. He clarified that to rescind just means that senators would take back the action that was taken at the last meeting.

Motion: To rescind (Hunter/Asare)

Chair Robinett told senators they can now discuss whether they want to rescind their previous approval. Senator Hunter stated that, based on what Registrar Lawson related, it would ease the burden on students if they did not have this requirement in the fall. He noted that Engineering and Technology students do not take an FYE course within their department, and he would not want his students not to be able to graduate because they had not taken a Y course or to have to take one their last semester. Chair Filipink pointed out that all students who come in to the university with fewer than 24 hours are put into an FYE course by their advisors, so all the students in Senator Hunter's and Senator Gravitt's department take an FYE course. He noted that they are almost entirely Gen Ed courses, so they will probably take their social science, humanities, or fine arts Gen Ed by taking a Y course. He added that no student will be forced to take an FYE course during their senior year; they are all put into these courses their freshman year by their advisors.

Chair Filipink cautioned senators against it becoming a precedent-setting decision to revisit these kinds of already-made and already-completed actions by the Faculty Senate. He said bringing the topic back to give the Provost's office time to speak about it is one thing, but bringing back actions, rescinding them, and revoking them is a slippery slope if this becomes a precedent-setting action. Interim Provost Mossman does not see this action as a precedent; the Provost's office was going to speak to the issue when the vote was initially taken, but there was an error in communication, and it did not happen because of that. He thinks this is an attempt, with respect and a commitment to shared governance, to allow that discussion to occur because it did not happen during the original vote. He stressed that all the Provost's office wanted was for this discussion to happen, and ExCo kindly agreed, so this is not some kind of change in policy or protocol but is rather promoting the values that everyone shares.

Senator Gravitt did not understand the implications of the proposal until she heard that this was just getting rid of the requirement, not removing the courses. She stated that there was a misunderstanding, not some sort of hidden agenda, and she does not think there is any intention to set a precedent. She believes it is more a matter of allowing fairness for people to truly understand what is at stake and what is going on. She added that senators did not hear from the Registrar last time in terms of impact, so it is a good thing the item was brought back so that everyone has a better understanding.

Chair Filipink clarified that if this graduation requirement is eliminated, there will be no further Y courses offered. He believes the Registrar was trying to make this clear earlier; elimination of the graduation requirement will end the Y courses because there would be no reason to have them going forward. He added that whether or not this is intended as a precedent, it can be utilized that way by future administrations and Faculty Senates. He said this is just a cautionary point about the law of unintended consequences, especially in so far as Senator Woell's question would become the operational one as to whether or not, even if the Senate does not rescind this action and continues to accept the CAGAS report, the Provost's office is going to eliminate the graduation requirement anyway. Interim Associate Provost Pynes pointed out that CAGAS originally voted not to approve the Y class graduation requirement, and Faculty Senate voted to overturn it because the President at that time wanted to do it. He added that CAGAS is a council of the Senate, and the Senate Chair and ExCo can do whatever they want. Interim Provost Mossman clarified that the courses will still be offered as Gen Ed courses but will not have a Y attached to them. He explained the courses will still stay; the Provost's office is at this time asking that the Y portion of FYE be eliminated until the university is able to fund it appropriately because it is not doing what it is supposed to do. Chair Filipink clarified that he was responding to Senator Gravitt's question and did not mean to suggest that the university would eliminate teaching the courses as non-Y courses. He said he was just explaining that they would not be taught as Y courses going forward.

Chair Robinett observed that some people have indicated the FYE requirement is broken based on a variety of different things. He noted that Interim Provost Mossman has mentioned several times about the importance of retaining freshmen. He asked if the university eliminates something that is intended to try to retain freshmen, whether there will be something else that tries to do this. Interim Provost Mossman replied that there has been significant investment in UNIV 100 over the past five years, as well as creation of UNIV 102, a course taught by Dr. Baker-Sperry and Vice President Schuch as a GPA-recovery course that is offered in the spring. He stated that students who are in danger of flunking out and on probation have the option to take this course. He hopes that funding can be reallocated in FY26 to support retention initiatives and academic affairs. He thinks this would involve having a budget above the previous \$19,000 and being able to hire peer mentors and do the other things that model institutions, such as the University of South Carolina, do. He stated that until those resources are available, though, the university has a shell of FYE and should shore up this issue now.

Chair Robinett understands that students joining prior to FY25 would have a Y graduation requirement depending on when they started, but students coming in Fall 2025, based on what the Provost's office is asking, would not have a Y requirement at some point. He understands that a proposal would come forward or something would happen reinstating some level of FYE at some time. Interim Provost Mossman admitted he does not know if it will be another Y course, but just as the Provost's office did at the end of 2018 they would come before Faculty Senate with a proposal on how things should change. He does not know what that will look like but does not think it will just be a reboot of the Y course requirement. He thinks the FYE program needs to be retooled and that there needs to be faculty investment. He noted that one of the intentions of focusing on the Y course was, because they are General Education courses that faculty would already be teaching, faculty members would be invested in them. He thinks the FYE program needs to keep working on investment from faculty.

Chair Filipink observed that there are no UNIV 102 courses scheduled for spring semester or any UNIV 100 courses scheduled for next fall. Interim Associate Provost Pynes replied that a UNIV 102 course was scheduled, but it did not make. Interim Provost Mossman added that UNIV 102 is a voluntary rather than a mandatory course. Chair Filipink asked if UNIV 100 is being dropped, too, since there are no UNIV 100 courses on the Fall 2025 schedule. Interim Provost Mossman replied that they are not; they just have not been put up yet. He added that there are usually 11 or 12 – a Quad Cities section, an online section, and 8-10 face-to-face courses. Interim Associate Provost Pynes added they depend on the size of the REACH class. Interim Provost Mossman stated that if the university expects a freshmen class of 800 students with 50 REACH students, that will change the dynamics of the scheduling.

Senator Hunter asked what percentage of Gen Ed courses are FYE. Interim Provost Mossman replied it is very small. Chair Robinett explained that a course would already exist, then a department would schedule a Y section that would be specifically intended for freshmen. He said it could potentially be any Gen Ed course. Senator Hunter remarked this would seem to limit students' selections. Interim Provost Mossman remarked that is one of the Provost's office points. He noted that when the number of students declines, the options become increasingly smaller. He recalled that in 2010, during the heyday of FYE when he chaired the Department of English, they could offer three sections of Intro to Poetry with 35 students in each section, but if he decided to turn one of those sections into a Y course, that capacity would be reduced to 15 seats and restricted to freshmen. Chair Filipink remarked, as a final historical point to Senator Hunter's observation, that when the university stopped peer mentors, Y courses were mostly promoted as double-dipping for Gen Ed. He also observed that the FYE flat sheet talks about pre-professional courses, but by and large they have been Gen Ed courses for the past five or six years. He said departments no longer felt the need to offer Y courses and found this to be an easy way to get their students to complete their Gen Ed requirements at the same time.

There were no more questions, so Chair Robinett explained that what senators were to vote on was whether to rescind Faculty Senate's former acceptance of the CAGAS report. He said that if the vote is to rescind, that will bring the report back to the table as New Business.

MOTION TO RESCIND APPROVED 12 YES (10 in-person, 2 zoom) – 2 NO (1 in-person, 1 zoom) – 4 ABSTENTIONS (3 in-person, 1 zoom)

Chair Robinett announced that the report is now back on the table, and a motion needs to be made regarding what action the Senate wants to take.

Motion: To restore the report to the agenda (Gravitt/Melkumian)

MOTION TO RESTORE THE REPORT APPROVED 14 YES (11 in-person, 3 zoom) – 1 NO (1 in-person) – 2 ABSTENTIONS (1 in-person, 1 zoom)

Motion: To remove the Y graduation requirement for all new students beginning Fall 2025 (Gravitt/McArthur)

Chair Robinett turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Brewer. Senator Robinett said he has spent a lot of time giving thought to this issue. He recalled that when he first began to work with FYE he asked Interim Provost Mossman for data before coming to the conclusion that, because of the number of confounding variables, it is difficult to find. Senator Robinett does not have a financial stance as to how the Y graduation requirement works, but he echoed Chair Filipink's concerns that senators need to commit to making sure of their decisions at the time they are making them. He thinks it is vitally important as senators look at curriculum and the recommendations coming forward from councils that they be attentive to the incredible amount of work Senate councils and committees are doing. He said that whether senators decide to vote for or against what has been proposed, he would like them to be mindful of the decisions Faculty Senate will be called upon to make this year. He noted that Senate councils will be bringing forward information on a variety of things, so senators need to be attentive.

Senator Robinett said he does not feel comfortable with the motion, so he will be abstaining. He thinks CAGAS did an incredible amount of work with what they were looking at, and he also appreciates Interim Provost Mossman explaining the logic the Provost's office used for their proposal. Chair Robinett took the gavel back.

Senator Allwardt asked if there has been any information provided as to whether elimination of the Y graduation requirement would result in a financial cost savings. Interim Provost Mossman replied that it would because of faculty capacity issues. He said that while that is not the only issue, the university does need to have as robust enrollment as possible in each section. He noted that when looking at the ACE sheets for department workload, one can see that it would have at least some impact, albeit possibly minimal. He added that while elimination of the Y courses would affect the way course assignments work in departments and will result in faculty potentially teaching more students, that is not the only reason why the Provost's office proposed it.

Senator Gravitt asked how many people elimination of Y courses would affect this current semester. Chair Robinett reminded Senator Gravitt that her motion was to make the elimination effective in Fall 2025. Senator Gravitt explained she is just trying to get an idea of impact because if the requirement is not eliminated, the number of people it affects would be similar. Registrar Lawson replied that it will affect most of the freshman class and about 100 students already at WIU who have not yet completed their FYE requirement. She said for those students the Registrar's office would waive the graduation requirement and they would simply not take the Y course. She said it will affect a very high percentage of the freshmen who will be joining WIU in the future.

Interim Associate Provost Pynes remarked that elimination of the Y graduation requirement will cost the university less. He noted that one reason there are fewer FYE classes being offered is that after the 2015 round of layoffs and program eliminations, departments realized that student credit hour (SCH) production was one of the measures used to determine whether or not they were efficient. He said that even though criteria says that participation in General Education matters, departments started self-selecting to offer fewer Y courses, which is one of the reasons students have fewer Y offerings. He asserted that it would save money because there will not be a bunch of classes with 15 or 20 students, so it is a faculty capacity issue, but how much savings it is hard to say. Interim Provost Mossman added that there are a certain number of students who need these courses, but it undermines the entire course when enrollment is increased in these sections. He recalled that in August of many years he has

had to call chairs to explain that there are not enough Y sections and ask if they will increase enrollment to 20 or 25; while departments gain SCH by doing this, it undermines the entire point of the Y course.

Senator Hamner echoed Chair Robinett's comments about his logic for abstaining. He admitted feeling torn between hearing logic for real change and concerns about senators deciding fairly quickly on overturning a recommendation by a Senate council. He wonders if senators read through the comments from various individuals about eliminating the requirement and considered the issue carefully in the same way as CAGAS did.

Senator Hunter said his concern is that one of his students may be forced into a poetry Y course because the history course they wanted to take is not a Y course.

Senator Gravitt asserted she reads all the material for the meetings, but her understanding is often sparked and expanded upon by the conversations at Faculty Senate. She does not think Senate ran through this item quickly at the last meeting, but, because of a lot of different things, Faculty Senate did not thoroughly discuss the item, which would have expanded her understanding, and she would have voted in this way then. She understands there is the potential for precedent but does not think senators should not do something for that potential reason and make the wrong decision due to fear of what might happen going forward and how people might view it. She thinks senators have the potential to correct something they may have done wrong before it becomes a bigger issue. She thinks Faculty Senate is trying to redress something that could have or should have been done two weeks ago but for whatever reason was not.

Senator Woell remarked that he has taught a lot of FYE courses, and for him the biggest value is the fact that they are capped at a low number. He thinks that is important because it has issues for retention, and the university's goal or orientation nowadays seems to be to build up the retention rate. He thinks that it may cost less to eliminate Y courses, but it will also have implications in terms of retention. He observed that there is nothing being offered as a replacement for Y courses which will have smaller class sizes, particularly for incoming freshmen, and there is a lot of evidence to show that class size matters when it comes to retention.

Senator McArthur took an FYE course at a small liberal arts college as an undergraduate which was instrumental in setting him up for success. Although he was not a REACH or at-risk student, this course introduced him to the university and was absolutely important to his university experience. Senator McArthur also taught a number of sections in FYE's heyday when it was funded better, but the seriousness around the program seemed to gradually become less. He recalled that his FYE class at that time involved things such as having pizza with your professor, small class size, a seminar class, having experiences outside the classroom, but when he taught an FYE course at WIU recently it was nothing like that, although it might have been a slightly smaller class. He agrees with Interim Provost Mossman that the problem is funding and thinks that if WIU is to do FYE it needs to do it right, with lots of sections and lots of options, so that a student does not have to take poetry if they really want to take history. His department, Art and Design, does not offer any of these courses anymore, which Senator McArthur suspects is because of the reasons Interim Associate Provost Pynes mentioned. He agrees with Senator Woell that it can be an amazing course, and it probably is in his hands, but it sounds like for a lot of current situations it is not a really effective tool because it's not funded and there are not enough choices. He added that the university is not offering enough sections for the student who has zero interest in poetry and who is really interested in history to take a history Y course because it does not match their schedule, and he thinks there needs to be a lot more buy-in.

Chair Robinett announced that the time was 6:00 p.m. and asked if any senator objects to continuing the discussion. Senator Woell expressed his objection due to the length of the meeting.

Motion: That Faculty Senate continue the meeting until 6:30 p.m. (Robinett/Gravitt)

MOTION APPROVED 15 YES (11 in-person, 4 zoom) – 2 NO (2 in-person) – 0 ABSTENTIONS

Senator Wipperling only abstained for the last two votes because she still had reservations and questions, and she is glad that the discussion is occurring. She thanked everyone for the input they have expressed so far. Senator Wipperling has not taught an FYE course, but she has taught General Education acting courses for non-majors which are open not just to freshmen but might be equated to an FYE course. She thinks the freshmen, who are less equipped for college, need more mentoring and time, and putting them into a class with others takes more of the faculty member's effort. She would imagine that having a Y class for freshmen not only helps them with small class sizes but also helps professors by allowing faculty to give these students the time and effort that they need. She imagines that increasing class sizes and taking away the Y designation would stress faculty out a bit. She is concerned about eliminating the Y courses for that reason, but she understands the benefit of allowing freshmen the ability to take whatever option is available. She sees positives in both and does not know which is better as long as the university does not get rid of more General Education sections because so many were lost between last year and now, making fewer options for students to take. She fears that eliminating Y courses may result in students having even fewer Gen Ed courses to choose from to fulfill that requirement, which is why she has been abstaining.

Senator Gravitt remarked that the Provost's office gets to decide where the money is allocated, so she wonders if it is not also up to the Provost's office to set aside money for this kind of thing. Interim Provost Mossman agreed that is correct. He observed that WIU has an antiquated budget model, and there was a \$22 million deficit at the start of this year, so there is no money to move anywhere really. Interim Provost Mossman stressed that he is committed to reallocating funds for retention initiatives, to fund the operations of the Goldfarb Center for the Performing Arts, for classroom enhancement, and all those kinds of things. He noted that it has been very hard for previous administrations to do that because the budget model makes it very hard to move money from one line to another, but it is possible, and he is committed to doing that. Senator Gravitt said the point is that even if the Y criteria is not removed, there will be no money to fund it; there is no money now, and there may not be, whether the Y designation is removed or not. Interim Provost Mossman remarked that if the Y designation is retained, it will not necessarily solve the problems brought up by Senators Woell and Wipperling because of the decrease in freshmen and faculty, as well as the concentration of Y courses into a handful of Arts and Sciences disciplines. He reiterated that there are fewer departments willing to offer a Y class, and in August he or one of the associate provosts will have to ask for the enrollment to be increased from 15 to 20 or 25. Interim Provost Mossman related that his first job at a small liberal arts college involved teaching English to in their FYE program, and it was incredibly successful; he had a class of only three students one semester. He stated, though, that WIU's program is nowhere near that and does not have the funding to get to that point, so there is no reason to have this requirement at this point because it is not doing what it is supposed to do.

Senator Petracovici asked if the action would be only for Fall 2025 or whether it would carry over into Fall 2026. Chair Robinett clarified that the motion is to remove the Y graduation requirement effective Fall 2025. He added that students in the current catalog years would continue to have a Y requirement, but, as Registrar Lawson pointed out, if those courses are not offered, then those approximately 100 students would have to receive a waiver for that; then from Fall 2025 on, there would be no requirement. Senator Petracovici said he is not comfortable with that; he would be more comfortable having it temporary. He stated that if there could be a temporary stop for three or four years until the university is back on even footing, he would prefer that because the philosophy of the program is sound. He noted that the university is at a crossroads now and too financially strapped to continue the program, but in a couple of years there might be the chance to rethink the requirement when the money is available rather than having to revoke or bring back to the table something that was eliminated. He believes the requirement should not be cut off completely but that elimination should instead be temporary for two or three years. Chair Robinett told the senator that he could offer an amendment to the motion.

Interim Provost Mossman told senators that when the university has the stability to reinvest in the FYE program, it may not involve bringing back Y courses. He stated that in 2018 he came to Faculty Senate with a proposal to heavily invest in the Y courses, but the funds are no longer available to do that, so it is essentially not what it was. He thinks it is likely there would be some kind of two-course model because of the nature of the university, but he is aware that there are other models and wants to make

that clear. Senator Petracovici said it feels like the university is abandoning freshmen by doing this, which makes him uncomfortable. He would feel more comfortable if there was language indicating that this requirement will be revisited, so that it is not one step and then never look back. He thinks there needs to be language indicating that the university will revisit its position of supporting freshmen for them to be more successful, or something similar, because the way the motion is worded is very final. He realizes that it will be up to the administration to come back with a similar plan, but if there is language that kind of forces the administration to come back with something, in whatever form, that would be a positive step.

Senator Hamner recognizes that this is so complex, and he understands the desire to pursue some kind of in-between solution rather than setting aside a requirement that would, if removed, leave no expectation that the university in the near future will restrict freshmen courses to 15-20 students. Interim Provost Mossman remarked that UNIV 100 has restricted enrollment. Senator Hamner understands that UNIV 100 is primarily taught as an orientation to the university and often by staff as opposed to faculty. He thinks this matters really significantly. He asked if only REACH students are required to take UNIV 100. Interim Provost Mossman confirmed that is correct but noted a significant increase in the number of honors students taking the course voluntarily over the past several years.

Senator Hamner asked if there is any option, within the next 18 minutes unless the meeting is extended further, for an outcome other than a yes/no, eliminate the option completely or insist that it remain. He does not think that action taken at the next Faculty Senate meeting on March 25 could be helpful given the information from Registrar Lawson, but he wonders if senators have to make a yes/no decision right now and there is no option for a hybrid proposal, such as what Senator Petracovici is asking about. Chair Robinett said it sounds like Senator Hamner is asking what happens when students begin to register if Faculty Senate does not take action on this today. Registrar Lawson replied that her office could do a temporary waiver for students and keep a list to put the requirement back in if the intent is to change the action after March 25. She anticipates there would probably be some students by then who would be blocked from registering; her office has already been asked to load waivers but has not been doing that yet. She added that it will directly affect students.

Senator McArthur recognizes the need to retain students, as Senators Petracovici and Woell have pointed out, but there have been discussions during Faculty Senate meetings about early warning grades, student success coaches, Leatherneck referral services, more advisors, and adequate mental health counseling, which are efforts that are being made to not only serve students better but to retain them as well. He does not see the FYE program as being the only thing in place or disinvesting in retention because there are retention efforts happening on a lot of fronts. He said that while he is not disinterested in the idea of bagging the program for now until the university can stay afloat, the program is not being run properly and does not function the way it is supposed to.

Chair Robinett asked if Senator Petracovici wanted to offer any kind of amendment for consideration related to a timeline. Senator Petracovici said his concern is not really a timeline but more that this idea of having freshmen cohorts in a course needs to be revisited and stay alive after the financial hurdles have passed. He does not know what that timeline is because it depends on so many factors, but he wants this to be temporary and maybe improved. He likes the idea of the Y courses, would like to see them better than they have been, and does not want them to die.

Senator Gravitt suggested that Senate can call the vote to see if the motion passes, and if it does not pass then they can discuss further options.

MOTION TO REMOVE THE Y COURSE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT EFFECTIVE FALL 2025 APPROVED 10 YES (8 in-person, 2 zoom) – 1 NO (1 in-person) – 7 ABSTENTIONS (5 in-person, 2 zoom)

Chair Robinett expressed his appreciation to all the individuals on CAGAS who did a tremendous amount of work in order to bring this item forward.

B. For the Good of the Body

Senator Hamner thanked Chair Robinett for forwarding the email last week about a petition in support of SB 1308, which would provide \$7.2 million for the Quad Cities Innovation Campus. He said that it continues to gain momentum; there are 250 signatures now, and he hopes it will continue to grow because that is the route forward that is before the university. He expressed appreciation to anyone who is willing to sign it and anyone who is willing to forward it to others in their networks to help build support. Chair Robinett expressed his thanks to the faculty who are doing a great deal of advocacy to try to get additional support from the state. He thanked Senator Hamner for his leadership of the Quad Cities Faculty Council

Motion: To adjourn (Wipperling)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary