WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, *22 April 2025*, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

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

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: D. Allwardt, E. Asare, C. Chadwell, H. Elbe, D. Gravitt, D. Hunter, D. McArthur, A. Melkumian, B. Petracovici, J. Robinett, S. Turkelli, L. Wipperling, E. Woell

SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: B. Bellott, B. Brewer, E. Hamner, B. McDonald, J. McKenzie, R. Sharma, J. Walker

SENATORS ABSENT: J. Albarracin, D. Brown, H. Mason

EX-OFFICIO: Krista Bowers Sharpe, Parliamentarian; Holly Nikels, Interim Associate Provost

GUESTS: Marjorie Allison, Andrea Alveshere, Greg Baramidze, Victoria Baramidze, Keith Boeckelman, Amy Burke, Amy Carr, Jongnam Choi, Merrill Cole, Katrina Daytner, Dennis DeVolder, Rich Filipink, Anita Hardeman, Lorri Kanauss, Rick Kurasz, Mary Lane, Sarah Lawson, Patrick McGinty, Jim McQuillan, Kat Myers, Rafael Obregon, Jose Pavez, Betsy Perabo, Jennifer Plos, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prosise, Anjum Razzaque, Jim Schmidt, Eric Sheffield, Emily Shupe, Melissa Telles, Sam Thompson, Craig Tollini, Anna Valeva

Chair Robinett asked senators and guests to take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous losses suffered at WIU last week on April 17 when Billy Clow, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, and Amanda Schultz, Associate Director of Graduate Studies, passed away. He requested a moment of silence to express appreciation for all the contributions they made to WIU and to their communities throughout their careers.

Chair Robinett stated that today's meeting will include a discussion of the structural considerations of the Academic Affairs rebuild effort with a focus on the models. He said that Interim Provost Mossman is unable to be present for the meeting to answer questions because he needed to be in Springfield to advocate with the legislature for WIU and for increased funding. Chair Robinett stated that if questions are asked today that cannot be answered immediately, the answers will be brought back as soon as possible.

Chair Robinett reminded everyone that the Academic Affairs rebuild is broken into three phases: Phase 1, which will be discussed today, focuses on the structure of Academic Affairs, which will hopefully be determined by the end of this academic year and implemented in Fall 2026. He said Phase 2 will begin in earnest this fall when Academic Affairs reviews and revises policies and procedures with UPI and other affected groups to develop work structures and processes that are more aligned with WIU's current faculty, staff, and student numbers. He said Phase 3 will begin in Fall 2026 and will comprise the full implementation of Phases 1 and 2. Chair Robinett has been assured that there will be collaborative adjustments made throughout the rebuild process as issues are identified that were either previously unthought of or emerged during the process.

Chair Robinett explained that during the Announcements part of the meeting, the proposed structures will be reviewed and questions addressed from senators and guests. He asked that comments and questions in this section be germane to the structures. He noted that the exact details of job descriptions for chairs, directors, and deans will be negotiated once a decision is reached about which structure will be implemented. He added that no more than 30 minutes will be allocated during Announcements to discuss the rebuild, but if additional time is necessary to continue the discussion, this can continue during For the Good of the Body at the end of the meeting. He explained the reason for this is because colleagues have completed a great deal of curriculum and other work in their councils, and the Senate needs to be respectful of that.

I.   Consideration of Minutes

        A.   April 8, 2025

II.   Announcements

    A.   Approvals from the Provost

        1.   Requests for New Courses

            a.   COMM 360, Media Literacy, 3 s.h.
            b.   ECON 409, Fundamentals of Intermediate Economic Theory, 3 s.h.
            c.   SPA 333, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Regulations, 3 s.h.
            d.   SPA 339, Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 3 s.h.
            e.   SPA 489, Clinical Fieldwork in Speech Language Pathology, 1 s.h.

        2.   Requests for Changes of Majors

            a.   Anthropology
            b.   Psychology
            c.   Sociology
            d.   Speech Pathology and Audiology

        3.   Request for Change of Minor

            a.   Social Media

        4.   Request for Additional Option

            a.   Speech Language Pathology Assistant

        5.   Requests for Changes of Options

            a.   Forensic Psychology
            b.   Psychology

        6.   Request for WID Designation

            a.   SPA 333, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Regulations, 3 s.h.

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        5.   Requests for Inclusion in General Education

            a.   PHYS 114, Applied Physics I, 4 s.h.
            b.   PHYS 115, Applied Physics II, 4 s.h.
            c.   PHYS 211, University Physics I, 4 s.h.

    B.   Provost's Report - None

    C.   Student Government Association (SGA) - None

    D.   Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Chair Robinett thanked Amy Mossman for her work on the Higher Learning Commission "Open Pathway" four-year review on behalf of the university. Dr. Mossman met with Faculty Senate during Fall 2025 to explain how that pathway worked for WIU's accreditation process. Chair Robinett strongly encouraged senators and faculty to read WIU's assurance argument on the Provost's website: https://www.wiu.edu/provost/accreditation.php. He noted that the assurance argument contains a great deal of information about WIU, even to the level of detail of what meetings the Faculty Senate Chair

gets to attend. He learned a lot from the document about things colleagues were doing of which he was unaware and thinks the document is definitely worth reading.

Chair Robinett thanked senators for their willingness to do their part for shared governance by attending beyond the regular Faculty Senate meeting schedule this spring. While this was originally scheduled to be the last Senate meeting, two more meetings have been added this year. Chair Robinett stated that Faculty Senate will meet on Tuesday, April 29 to accommodate the tremendous amount of curricular work that has been completed; he expressed his thanks to CCPI and the colleagues working on these curricular changes for all they are getting accomplished. He expects that May 13 will be a short meeting in order for senators to consider the creation of new academic units; this proposed restructuring will be the only item on the May 13 agenda. He pointed out that this is in accordance with Faculty Senate policies and procedures for creating new departments and schools and will provide the Board of Trustees (BOT) with the faculty governance that is required whenever they create a new academic unit. Chair Robinett stressed that while Faculty Senate has the opportunity to provide guidance during this process, it is ultimately the Board that makes the decisions.

Chair Robinett explained that feedback will be collected from faculty colleagues that will be used during the creation of these new units; using Qualtrics, a survey will be emailed to full-time Unit A and B faculty who are eligible to serve on the Senate. He said the survey will ask four multiple choice questions related to which academic unit, department, or school faculty belong to (with a drop-down menu), if the faculty member is Unit A or Unit B, whether the faculty member supports the college to which they would belong after the restructuring, and whether they support creation of the school to which they would belong, if applicable. He said this short survey will allow Faculty Senate to obtain an awareness of where faculty colleagues stand in relation to creation of new units. He added that there will be space provided for additional comments so that senators can see what faculty think about the creation of the new units.

Chair Robinett went over the timeline for this process: next week the feedback survey will be distributed to all Faculty Senate-eligible faculty; at the April 29 Senate meeting senators will see the Creation of New Unit forms, without the survey feedback, so that any issues can be navigated; the feedback survey will close on May 5; and Faculty Senate will consider creation of new units, with all of the survey information available, on May 13. Senator Hunter asked if a time has been determined for the May 13 meeting; Chair Robonett responded that he would propose 4:00 p.m. He asked that if senators have strong feelings about that time, they let him know. Senator Gravitt asked if there will definitely be a quorum for a May 13 meeting. Chair Robinett responded that there will be the required in-person quorum based on the responses to a survey he sent out to senators.

Senator Wipperling remarked that while faculty will be asked about departments, schools, and colleges on the survey, she wonders if they will be asked to vote on the structure first since the structures are different for those things. Chair Robinett responded that he and Interim Associate Provost Nikels will go through this more during the Rebuild Discussion. He noted that the purpose of today's meeting is to gather comments and feedback for the constituent committee, which includes UPI President Merrill Cole, who is in attendance. He appreciates that there have been over 150 views of the rebuild video on the website (https://www.wiu.edu/provost/rebuild/) and that feedback has been submitted there. He explained that Interim Provost Mossman will make a decision between Model 1 and 2, and that is what faculty will be voting on creation of new units within.

Senator Chadwell remarked that one of his colleagues expressed concern about the closure of the Music Library in Sallee Hall and its move to Malpass Library. Interim Associate Provost Nikels responded that if there is insufficient time to discuss this today, she would be willing to stay after the meeting to talk to Senator Chadwell about this.

E.   Other Announcements

1.   Rebuild Discussion

Chair Robinett showed senators slides of the two proposed Academic Affairs organizational structures. He explained that Models 1 and 2 both start with the Provost at the top, followed by the two colleges. He noted that under the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Education in Model 1, there would be the School of Music, the School of Education, and the Departments of English; Foreign Languages; History; Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies; Art and Design; Museum Studies; Theatre and Dance; Political Science; Psychology; Sociology and Anthropology; Biological Sciences; Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences; Mathematics and Philosophy; and Physics, all of which would be independent departments working directly with their dean.

Chair Robinett noted that one of the strengths of Model 1 is that it follows some traditions that have existed at WIU and other institutions in regard to the independence of those particular departments. He related that some individuals have commented that they would like to have direct access to the dean for their department, and this accomplishes that. He said another strength is that it moves many K-12 teacher education programs into one college; there was a belief that this might make things easier for licensure, curriculum, and other activities to occur.

Chair Robinett noted that the College of Business, Technology, and Pre-Professional Programs in Model 1 would include the Schools of Agriculture; Applied Health; Nursing; Business; Communication and Media; Engineering, Information, and Technology; and Public Safety. The School of Applied Health would contain the Departments of Health and Wellness; Speech Pathology and Audiology; and Counselor Education, College Student Personnel, and Social Work. The School of Business would include Accounting and Business Administration, and Recreation, Park, Tourism, and Hospitality. The School of Engineering, Information, and Technology would have under it the Departments of Computer, Informational, and Data Sciences; Cybersecurity; and Engineering, Engineering Technology, and Construction and Facilities Management. The School of Public Safety would include the Department of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, Fire, and Emergency Management.

Chair Robinett recognizes that some of the names in the models do not correspond to the current names of departments and schools, which could be adjusted moving forward, but the intention was to give an idea of which areas would be where. He stated that many of the programs under the College of Business, Technology, and Pre-Professional Programs have indicated that this type of structured model allows them better access to resources, encourages interdisciplinarity, and is more aligned with how their particular fields work.

Senator Petracovici observed that both models include a Department of Computer, Informational, and Data Sciences, but the only data science program at the university is under the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy, so he does not know how that name came about. He added that data science is a math-based program within Mathematics, and not in the College of Business, so he would suggest changing that name.

Senator Gravitt asked if the only purpose right now is to lock down organizational structures and not to finalize names and which groups will finally be put together since feedback has not been gathered on all of this yet. Chair Robinett clarified that today is just for discussing, but issues that are brought up will be considered, and there will be space on the ballots for faculty to provide additional context. He has been told by the Provost's office to anticipate there may even be some minor changes made to the structure in order to meet people's needs.

Senator Brewer observed that the paramedic program is not included under the School of Applied Health on the Provost's website, and it is also colored blue while everything else is gray. Chair Robinett explained that since this is a singular program, it could not be included in this overall structure and would be something that would have to be discussed next year.

Senator Hunter asked if the two models will have different leadership structures since Model 1, with so many departments and one dean, seems overwhelming, whereas with individual schools in Model 2 there would be directors who could coordinate with the dean. He

understands that faculty may want to go straight to the dean, but there have been schools in the College of Business and Technology for quite awhile, and he feels very comfortable approaching both the previous dean and the current interim dean, so he thinks this works well. He would like to see more rationale between the two structures. Chair Robinett responded he would like to complete talking about Model 1 first and will address that question after moving to discussion of Model 2.

Senator Hunter asked what the structure is for leadership in Model 1 specifically; he wonders if it will be one dean and an associate dean, or one dean with an associate and assistant dean. Interim Associate Provost Nikels stressed that none of this is set in stone, and everything is in draft form, as she has had to emphasize in many meetings. She said the constituent committee has currently been considering an assistant and associate dean for each dean position; the associate dean would deal primarily with issues internal to the college, and the assistant dean would primarily deal with accreditation, community outreach, and those sorts of things. Senator Hunter asked if the associate dean would be comfortable handling 15 departments and two schools. Interim Associate Provost Nikels responded this is a really good question that she has asked as well, but she does not know who that person will be yet. She does think this is something that should be strongly considered.

CAGAS Chair Rich Filipink remarked that if faculty will be asked to vote on anything, the Provost's website needs to be updated to what is being shown at Faculty Senate because currently they do not match. Chair Robinett replied that is a reasonable request.

Rafael Obregon, Director of the School of Engineering and Technology, remarked that the fields of Computer Sciences and Engineering and Technology, which are linked in the proposals, have nothing in common. He noted that computer science and cybersecurity deal mostly with codes, software, and languages; if it was computer engineering, which would involve designing circuits and systems, it might be a different story. He thinks it would be challenging to group Computer Sciences with Engineering and Technology and link everything together. Dr. Obregon noted that the current https://www.wiu.edu/faculty_senate/documents/index.php College of Business and Technology has streamed down, reviewed, unified, and merged things for the past decade, and he does not see how the college can keep going in that direction. Interim Associate Provost Nikels suggested that Dr. Obregon write this out and put it in feedback that the constituent committee could discuss because those are the kinds of things the committee wants to consider and make decisions about.

Senator Gravitt asked if there has been any consideration given to fundraising and those types of things. She recalls that the College of Business and Technology used to have an individual who did outreach with alumni and raised funds for the college. Interim Associate Provost Nikels replied that while this has been peripherally mentioned, efforts have really been focused on determining the big structure before starting to put the little pieces in place. She added that although this has been a topic of conversation, the committee does not have a sense of where this will fall, so feedback about this would be helpful as well. She recognizes that it is of huge importance to a lot of areas in different ways and definitely something to be considered, but it also falls a little bit outside of Academic Affairs, and Amy Crosby currently oversees that area so it is not a decision the Provost could make. She added that the Provost's office will work in concert with that area to determine what would work best.

Senator Hamner remarked that one concern he has about both models, which would not rule either out but is something he would urge everyone to think hard about, is an implicit and explicit bifurcation between historic liberal arts and sciences disciplines and pre-professional disciplines. He noted that the renaming of the College of Business, Technology, and Pre-Professional Programs in the version being shown to senators as compared to the version on the Provost's website right now implies that the programs in the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education are not pre-professional. Senator Hamner said he does not mean to invite that debate but rather to encourage everyone to resist the temptation to treat any

discipline as inherently likely to create career opportunities and any other discipline as less likely to do so. He thinks the university badly needs more transdisciplinary thinking that gets all students skills that the job market wants in the very near future and broad backgrounds that prepare them for the whole of their lives and careers. Interim Associate Provost Nikels responded that the Provost's office is in agreement with that, and this is why it is updated on the Provost's website. She noted that all WIU students are training for professions of some sort, which is why it was changed, although that still might not be the final name. She stated that the term "pre-professional" is certainly not something that would receive Provost's office support because all WIU students are professionals in training. Senator Hamner asked if the version on the Provost's website is the more recent name for that college; Chair Robinett responded that the last version that Interim Provost Mossman shared had the name he shared with senators. Interim Associate Provost Nikels promised to follow up with Interim Provost Mossman about this. She noted that, as an English professor, Interim Provost Mossman would argue that English students are becoming professionals as well.

Dr. Filipink reminded Interim Associate Provost Nikels that under Model 1 there would have to be significant negotiation with UPI about the retention, promotion, and tenure process that is in the collective bargaining agreement. Interim Associate Provost Nikes responded that she realizes this and is in complete agreement. Dr. Filipink noted that the Provost's website indicates that Phase 1 of this process, the structure, will be completed by the end of this fiscal year when it has not even begun yet. Interim Associate Provost Nikels responded there is no way that can be done. Dr. Filipink thinks this needs to be changed on the website or to have at least begun because otherwise it seems to tip the hand of the Provost's office that they are intending to choose Model 1, especially considering discussions of reductions from chair to school director and summer contracts within that context. Interim Associate Provost Nikels said she will fix that because even if it was begun tomorrow there would be no way to resolve this issue by July 1.

Senator Hunter asked if there is a solid date as to when a written proposal will be made available that would include the rationale for both models and would have the names set so that faculty can vote on them. Chair Robinett responded that faculty will be voting on structure, so if the names need to change during the 2025-26 academic year, that can happen. He pointed out that there will also need to be revised mission statements for the two colleges, promotional materials, and a wide array of things that will have to be addressed. He noted that, as the university moves forward, there needs to be a placeholder, which is what these names are, and if there needs to be adjustments, those can certainly be done.

Senator McArthur asked why Music and Fine Arts are separated. Interim Associate Provost Nikels replied she asked the same question because it made sense to her to have them together, but she was told these two are historically separate because they are different disciplines, so that is where the discussion lies right now. Senator Chadwell agrees they are pretty distinct disciplines. Senator McArthur observed that some universities group them together, although he does not know the motivation. Senator Chadwell added he does not know the differentiation between a school and a department at other institutions, so he would have to look at that; he is not sure what a School of Fine Arts would have versus a School of Music.

Chair Robinett explained that Model 2 includes the same two colleges but the departments and programs would be housed in schools. He noted that the School of Humanities and Social Sciences would contain the Departments of English; Foreign Languages; Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies; Political Science; Psychology; Sociology and Anthropology. The School of Natural Sciences would house Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences; Mathematics and Philosophy; and Physics. The School of Fine Arts would include Art and Design; Museum Studies; and Theatre and Dance. Chair Robinett added that there would also be a School of Education and a School of Music within this college. He noted that the second college would contain the School of Agriculture and the School of Nursing and that Schools of Applied Health; Business; Public

Safety; Engineering, Information, and Technology; and Communication and Media would all contain the same departments as in the previous model.

Chair Robinett promised to make sure the Provost's website matches what is being shown to senators. Interim Associate Provost Nikels remarked the Provost's website shows the most recent update as April 8, and she does not see the reference to "pre-professional" on it. Senator Chadwell pointed out that on the Provost's website, Model 1 shows the April 8 version, but if it is clicked it shows a different version. Interim Associate Provost Nikels agreed that is the source of the confusion.

Senator Gravitt asked if every *program* will have its own "box" under these structures because the School of Engineering, Information, and Technology shows the Cybersecurity program from Computer Sciences while most of the other gray boxes contain departments, not programs. Chair Robinett responded that in these models, whatever a department/school is right now, it will remain. He said the Registrar has pointed out that the new Colleague system does not allow schools to be located within schools; that is an internal function that would have to be worked out as the university moves through the next year. He added that programs will be within the schools or departments that they currently are within the models. Senator Gravitt pointed out that in this case, a program within Computer Sciences is broken out as if it is its own department, whereas all of the programs within Engineering and Technology, for example, are lumped together under that title. She wonders if programs will be broken out as if they were separate departments. Interim Associate Provost Nikels responded that the committee is trying to show people who might not be familiar with the different schools what falls under them currently. She noted that one example of this is that the Department of Recreation, Park, Tourism, and Hospitality is currently under the College of Education and Human Services but could potentially move into the School of Business, specifically for Sports Management. She said there have been a lot of questions in the feedback about why certain disciplines are being moved; she reads the feedback daily and appreciates that people continue to provide it. She noted that the School of Education has a lot of programs which are not listed out, although programs are in other cases; she would like to see more programs listed out because she thinks that would be helpful, but this is just a draft of where the university might be.

Senator Hunter remarked that he has worked within departments before and is now in a school which consists of four former departments, and they coordinate among themselves more than ever. He noted that they collaborate on joint grants, offer joint classes, and are able to meet with peers from other disciplines to share interesting thoughts. He thinks this is a good strength of working in a school rather than a department.

School of Music Director Anita Hardeman asked if the differences between Models 1 and 2 are only on the liberal arts and sciences side rather than the business and pre-professional side. She stated it appears that the only difference is that in Model 1 the liberal arts will be two schools and a large assortment of departments whereas in Model 2 they will all be grouped into schools. She asked if she has understood the fundamental difference correctly and whether there are really two models or just one model with two different stages of implementation. She noted that other than the grouping of the schools, the essential fact seems to be that there is a desire to have two colleges. Chair Robinett responded that the two colleges structure has already been decided; the Provost's office has indicated that there are going to be only two colleges. Dr. Hardeman responded that there would be no point, then, in faculty voting about whether or not they want only two colleges. Chair Robinett responded that the programs and academic units contained within these two colleges is what faculty will be voting on as well as, if applicable, creation of new schools. Dr. Hardeman asked what will happen if faculty vote against the creation of the two colleges. Chair Robinett responded that vote would be moved forward to the Provost's office and would be included in the consideration by the Board, who has the ultimate decision-making authority. Dr. Hardeman asked if there is a minimum amount of faculty participation that is required in order for this to be considered an effective survey of faculty sentiment on this matter. Chair Robinett responded that there is not.

Marjorie Allison, Chair of the Department of English, agrees there really is only a difference in the structure of the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Education, the left side of the organizational chart versions. She asked why those faculty in this grouping should not just decide what they want to do because the other college structure is not changing. She suggested that perhaps only those faculty who will be affected should vote because some of those under the other college may have strong feelings about being in a college rather than a school which are different from those in liberal arts, sciences, and education. Interim Associate Provost Nikels pointed out there are some changes that would potentially occur in the other college; for example, RPTH would move from one college to another, and there are changes proposed to the School of Engineering and Technology.

Chair Robinett announced that this conversation will reconvene when the meeting reaches For the Good of the Body at the end of the agenda. He encouraged everyone to provide feedback on the website because that is read daily and promised to get the Provost's website updated as soon as possible.

Senator Hamner asked if everyone is clear about what will be voted on next week, either by what has been screen shared, what is on the landing page of the website, or by clicking on the website image because he thinks that includes divisions that were from an earlier stage of the conversation. Chair Robinett responded there should not be anything on the website that include divisions because that idea is gone. He asked that as people notice things like that they point them out to the group so that they can make the adjustments that need to be done. He noted that one reason the vote has been delayed is to make sure that people have the correct information before asking them to vote; this is one of the reasons the committee wanted this to come before the Senate today. Chair Robinett said he has been a bit forceful in making sure these discussions are happening and has greatly appreciated the spirit of collaboration. He added that Linda Prosise, Administrative Assistant to the Provost, oversees the website; he is sure she has taken copious notes during today's meeting, and he will coordinate with her tomorrow. He expressed his thanks to everyone participating in today's meeting, noting that this is the kind of important conversation that should occur about the institution, its programs, and understanding the uniqueness and traditions of its disciplines.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Council for Instructional Technology (CIT)
(Andrea Alveshere, Chair)

1. Response to Charge from Executive Committee

Dr. Alveshere told senators the council was given five charges at the beginning of the academic year from the Executive Committee:
- To explore operational definitions used at Western Illinois University related to online and online-only programs;
- To explore trends in course modality offerings at WIU in comparison with similar schools (i.e., use of traditional, livestream, hybrid, asynchronous online);
- To meet monthly with Online Teaching and Learning to learn about recent (2022-2024) initiatives and existing university policies;
- To work with Online Teaching and Learning and UPI to develop recommendations for enhancing students' experiences in online classes; and
- To work with Online Teaching and Learning and UPI to develop recommendations for enhancing students' experiences in online-only programs.

Dr. Alveshere stated that each member of the council was assigned a peer benchmark institution and compiled information on a spreadsheet; the council also met with

other constituencies, as directed. She said that normally CIT meets once a month, but since this was not something they could tackle in that timeframe, they created an ad hoc Online Teaching and Learning Subcouncil with people who are really interested in these issues and met weekly. She noted that CIT had already created an AI subcouncil last year, so that group looked specifically at any recommendations touching upon AI.

Dr. Alveshere related that the council came up with a set of priority recommendations which were shared with the Faculty Senate last month, but they felt that they wanted more feedback, particularly from students currently enrolled in online courses, so they created and distributed a survey that really honed in on some of the specific questions the council had about how they could do things differently or things they would recommend doing. She thought the survey was very helpful.

Dr. Alveshere presented CIT's seven recommendations:
- *Create a permanent online teaching subcouncil for the University Technology online teaching and learning (OTL) staff in conjunction with CIT.* Dr. Alveshere said this was requested by OTL staff who liked the ad hoc group and would like to continue to work directly with CIT to get more collaboration with the staff in that office.

- *Require a universal course navigation and interface shell for all online courses.* Dr. Alveshere noted this is something OTL staff have been requesting for a long time. She explained it would organize the course material so that the navigation bar across the top in WesternOnline would be consistent, with all the same menus for the dropdowns for all online classes, and pages would be formatted in a similar way. She said this was reinforced by responses to the student survey; many students indicated they struggled to find what was needed or when things were due because things were set up so differently from course to course. Dr. Alveshere noted that there is a template available for online courses, but faculty are not required to use it, and there is not a lot of uniformity. She added that those who do use the template sometimes modify things that were not intended to be modified. She noted that Desire2Learn, the platform that WesternOnline is built on, has announced they plan to make changes to what is available in 2026, including a slightly different format, so the proposed course navigation and interface shell is built to try to anticipate those changes. She added that the way faculty would transfer in course material would remain the same, but the way things are organized may change somewhat. She offered to let any interested faculty preview the course navigation and interface shell; she can provide access to a draft course for faculty to look at and provide feedback to OTL staff, who plan to spend this summer creating training materials for these changes and next year getting faculty up to speed on them with the goal of implementation in 2026.

- *Regular and substantive interaction (RSI) compliance required for all online courses.* Dr. Alveshere noted this is already a federal law which went into effect in 2021, but a lot of WIU's online courses really need to work on this to be in full compliance. She said OTL staff are preparing online training for all faculty members with the goal that following the training each instructor would submit an RSI plan for each course that could be checked to determine that it meets the standards appropriately. She said this could involve discussions, feedback on assignments, and other kinds of interactions that should be happening between faculty and online students. She noted that the plan would be kept on file and could be updated by faculty as desired but would also be available in case of an audit. She added that the RSI plan

should also be included in faculty syllabi for online courses. More information is available on the RSI page within University Technology's website:
https://www.wiu.edu/university_technology/digital_spaces/online_teaching_and_learning/teaching-online/rsi.php

- *Create a review and revision process for all online courses.* Dr. Alveshere commented that the process currently in place for getting courses approved for online delivery is not working very well; there are a lot of courses that are submitted for approval at the last minute or that are not submitted for approval at all but get offered online anyway. She observed that there are only three people in the OTL office, and they need a longer timeline to be able to look through proposals and make sure that courses meet the standards. She said OTL staff would like for the council to create some kind of process that is consistent for all courses; faculty on CIT agree that makes sense, would be appropriate, and is supported by results from the student survey. Dr. Alveshere noted that new federal accessibility requirements will need to be met by 2027; some other institutions have gotten big grants to address this looming set of requirements. She explained that everything online would need to be able to be read by a screen reader, all videos will need to have captions, and everything will have to be made accessible. She acknowledged that this will be a big task for each individual instructor and is not something that the three people in the Online Teaching and Learning Office can really support, so this needs to be addressed.

- *HyFlex course option.* CIT recommends WIU "offer an additional course modality type, consistent with what other universities term Hybrid Flexible or HyFlex." Dr. Alveshere explained this would be a face-to-face and asynchronous course instead of face-to-face and live stream. She noted that if a student was unable to attend the Thursday classes for a TTh course because of work, for instance, they could watch the recording at a time convenient to them. She said students indicated in the survey that they want face-to-face classes because they moved to campus and are paying to be here, but many classes they need are only offered online. She noted that many faculty have also had their classes moved to online because there were not enough students to make a face-to-face class. She thinks HyFlex would serve the needs of all types of students in one course. Dr. Alveshere noted that CIT does not recommend that faculty be forced to offer HyFlex classes, and they may not be suitable for every potential course offering, but numerous members of CIT liked the idea and would be interested in doing it.

- *Artificial Intelligence.* Dr. Alveshere related that CIT approved recommendations from its AI subcouncil. She noted that the AI detector, Turnitin, has a lot of problems, such as false positives; groups of students who have English as their second language or are on the autism spectrum often are falsely flagged as having used generative AI. She noted that it is a FERPA violation for WIU faculty to upload students' material to any other kind of plagiarism or AI checker; only Turnitin is allowed because the university has a contract with them. Dr. Alveshere related the AI subcouncil provided specific recommendations about defining and using terminology in syllabi, providing students with the tools to check their own work, and encouraging discussions with students if they do get flagged to figure out what caused it and provide them with an opportunity to learn from their mistake.

Chair Robinett thanked CIT for their incredible amount of work responding to the Executive Committee's charges and addressing some issues that have been discussed for years but not necessarily as in-depth as now. Senator Hunter thanked CIT for sharing the student survey because he found a lot of information on there, particularly on how to improve interactions with online students.

Senator Gravitt asked if the new accessibility standards will only be required for online classes or for any online material, even voluntary rather than mandatory resources. Chair Robinett replied this is an issue that institutions across the state and the country are navigating. Interim Associate Provost Nikels believes that this covers everything, including a university's social media posts; if a department has a social media page, which may not even be controlled by someone at the institution, it will still need to be accessible. Senator McKenzie observed it could be viewed as discriminatory if faculty did not have everything they were giving to students in an accessible format, even if the material was not required. She noted that if a student is told that some material would be helpful to their assignment but is not required, but they cannot access that material, that could be viewed as discriminatory and against that particular law. Senator Gravitt said she provides material in WesternOnline for students in her face-to-face classes to access and wonders if she would be held accountable for this if it was not accessible, even though it was intended for a face-to-face class rather than an online one. Dr. Alveshere said she just looked at the federal requirements and they seem to cover everything the university might put online. Chair Robinett pointed out that this is not something faculty will be expected to do tomorrow; there will be educational opportunities available. He encouraged senators to look at the resources provided in the CIT report so that they can start phasing things in and moving towards what they should be doing.

Senator Asare asked how long faculty have and when the accessibility laws will take effect. Dr. Alveshere replied the accessibility laws are scaled based on the size of the community served. She said there has been some confusion, since WIU is a state institution, whether this would be the population of the state or the population of Macomb, but the determination seems to be that for WIU it will be in April 2027.

NO OBJECTIONS TO THE REPORT

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

   1.   Request to Change School of Nursing Admissions Standards

        Chair Filipink reported that the primary thing being proposed by Nursing is a change from standardized testing-based admissions standards to GPA-based standards since the university no longer requires that students take a standardized test for admission into the institution. Nursing proposes to change its criteria to a high school GPA of 3.75.

        Chair Filipink said the other part of the request deals with an accreditation issue whereas the School of Nursing is not allowed to portray themselves as having direct or early admissions. He said they will slide around this problem by "savings spaces" in the nursing program if students meet the admissions requirements for the major.

        Senator Hamner remarked that he is so excited about the change in admissions standards that he would like to formally include in the minutes an encouragement to take this further. He thinks a 3.75 seems, based on his understanding of high school GPAs and the wide variety in how they are calculated, to be unnecessarily high, even for an early admission standard, and he thinks it might be worth considering something like a 3.5 GPA. Chair Filipink replied that this

would be up to the School of Nursing, but he thinks they want to see what their admissions look like based on this initial offering, which was modeled on similar ones across the state.

NO OBJECTIONS TO THE REPORT

C.   Council on Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID)
(Nathan Miczo, Chair)

1.   Request for WID Designation

a.   CS 320, Ethical, Social, and Legal Issues in the Digital World, 3 s.h.

Senator Petracovici observed that the syllabus indicates that there will be a minimum of four office hours per week, but only three hours are listed.

WID DESIGNATION APPROVED

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

1.   Curricular Requests from the School of Computer Sciences

a.   Requests for New Courses

i.   CSEC 376, Windows System Administration, 3 s.h.

CSEC 276 APPROVED

ii.   CSEC 199, Independent Study, 1-3 s.h., repeatable to 3 s.h.

Senator Hunter asked if high school students are coming to Computer Sciences with ideas or if Computer Sciences is recruiting high school students and freshmen for these courses. Computer Sciences professor Jim McQuillan replied that Computer Sciences professor Tahir Khan participated in some summer camps where high school students expressed interest in learning more about cybersecurity. Dr. McQuillan related that Dr. Khan suggested that Computer Sciences follow the model of Physics 177 by offering independent study courses that high school students could take in order to work one-on-one with a professor. He added that with the addition of these courses, if there were any interested students, Computer Sciences could do that in the fall, spring, or summer semesters.

Senator Hunter observed that the Redistribution of Teaching Load section indicates that no ACES will be assigned, but he thought that teaching a certain number of independent study courses resulted in an ACE for the professor. Dr. McQuillan responded the school planned to follow the WIU-UPI contract where it talks about independent study with no ACEs. Chair Robinett asked roughly how many students Computer Sciences anticipates would take advantage of this opportunity. Dr. McQuillan responded that Physics typically has a couple per semester with different faculty mentors; Computer Sciences is thinking about a small number, very possibly in the summer, with three or four students and one or two faculty mentors, so not a big group.

Senator Gravitt remarked that if Computer Sciences is thinking about offering this in the summer, with restricted summer school budgets and contract issues, she wonders how that will work with UPI, even with zero ACEs. Dr. McQuillan noted that Dr. Khan, who is Interim Director of the Cybersecurity

Center, is interested in this, and there are some faculty who are teaching online over the summer who would be eligible to supervise an independent study course.

CSEC 199 APPROVED

UPI President Merrill Cole remarked that this issue is already on his radar. He is not comfortable with any course being offered without any kind of support and plans to talk to his leadership team about this. Chair Robinett reminded senators that Faculty Senate has curricular responsibility and supports UPI in their role of managing collective bargaining in regard to pay structures and contract negotiations with the institution. He thanked Dr. Cole for having his eye on this and being aware of the situation.

iii.   CS 199, Independent Study, 1-3 s.h., repeatable to 3 s.h.

CS 199 APPROVED

iv.   IS 199, Independent Study, 1-3 s.h., repeatable to 3 s.h.

IS 199 APPROVED

b.   Requests for Changes of Majors

i.   Computer Science

COMPUTER SCIENCE CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

ii.   Cybersecurity

Senator Gravitt preferred the former model of combining the options, minors, etc. with the major onto one form. She noted that now multiple forms have to be opened and compared back and forth. She understands that separating the options and emphases out makes the forms shorter but thinks it is a little burdensome on the people reviewing the documents, even though it makes them a little easier to fill out. Chair Burke said she understands Senator Gravitt's point, and it can be confusing, but it looks best on the forms. Dr. McQuillan remarked that Computer Sciences is following the CCPI model that was approved last year, and Ms. Prosise prepared some forms for them to use. Chair Robinett thanked CCPI for their work revising the forms last year because it was a herculean task.

CYBERSECURITY CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

c.   Requests for Changes of Emphases

i.   Cybersecurity

CYBERSECURITY EMPHASIS CHANGES APPROVED

ii.   Information Systems

Senator Hunter thanked Computer Sciences for including a note that "Faculty Senate approved a change to the BS in Information Systems and a change to the Information Systems Emphasis as well on December 3, 2024" because this really helped.

Senator Petracovici remarked that CS 484 in Directed Electives should have SAME across from it in the proposed column because nothing changed with it. That revision will be made before the request goes forward to the Provost's office for final approval.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS EMPHASIS CHANGES APPROVED WITH REVISION

2. <u>Curricular Request from the Department of Theatre and Dance</u>

    a. Request for Change of Major

        i. Theatre

            Senator Hunter expressed confusion about the rationale for the change. Senator Wipperling, professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance, explained the minor was 16-24 credits and is now being reduced to 16. Senator Hunter observed that no change of minor form was submitted; Senator Petracovici explained it applies to any minor. Ms. Prosise added that she has been trying to clean up the catalog to eliminate as many semester hour ranges as possible, and this is part of that effort.

            CHANGES TO THEATRE MAJOR APPROVED

3. <u>Curricular Requests from the School of Engineering and Technology</u>

    a. Requests for Changes of Majors

        i. Construction and Facilities Management
        ii. Engineering Technology
        iii. Mechanical Engineering

        CHANGES OF MAJORS APPROVED

4. <u>Curricular Requests from the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy</u>

    a. Request for New Course

        i. MATH 495, Senior Project in Data Science, 3 s.h., repeatable to 6 s.h.

        MATH 495 APPROVED

    b. Request for Change of Major

        i. Mathematics

            Senator Gravitt noted that some Engineering and Technology courses are being added to the Math major, which received support from the Engineering and Technology Director, Rafael Obregon. She asked if this means someone from Engineering and Technology has to teach those courses or if a faculty member from Mathematics would teach those Engineering courses; Senator Petracovici responded that Engineering faculty would teach them. Mathematics and Philosophy Chair Victoria Baramidze added that these are existing Engineering courses already being offered; they were included in the option because there are several students who are double majoring in Engineering and Mathematics, and these courses are appropriate substitutions.

CHANGE OF MATH MAJOR APPROVED

    c.   Requests for Changes of Options

          i.   Actuarial Science
          ii.   Data Science and Statistics
          iii.   Mathematics
          iv.   Mathematics – Teacher Education

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

5.   Curricular Requests from the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences

    a.   Requests for Changes of Majors

          i.   Geographic Information Science
          ii.   Meteorology

CHANGES OF MAJORS APPROVED

    b.   Requests for Changes of Options

          i.   Geoenvironment and Planning
          ii.   Geospatial Science
          iii.   Applied Meteorology
          iv.   Operational Meteorology

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

6.   Curricular Requests from the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences

    a.   Request for Change of Major

          i.   Liberal Arts and Sciences

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

    b.   Requests for Changes of Options

          i.   African American Studies
          ii.   Paired Minors

          Senator Gravitt asked what a paired minor is; Chair Burke replied that students take two minors at a time along with the rest of the requirements.

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

E.   Council on General Education (CGE)
       (Alisha White, Chair)

    1.   Requests for Inclusion in General Education

         a.   MUS 196, Music in the Rock Era, 3 s.h.
         b.   MUS 197, American Country Music, 3 s.h.
         c.   MUS 198, K-Pop, J-Pop, and C-Pop, 3 s.h.
         d.   MATH 206, Mathematics for Elementary Teaching II, 3 s.h.

e.   MATH 255, Discrete Mathematical Structures for Computer Science, 3 s.h.
f.   ANTH/REL 225, Myth and Ritual, 3 s.h.
g.   REL 111, Introduction to Western Religions, 3 s.h.

REQUESTS FOR INCLUSION IN GENERAL EDUCATION APPROVED

F.   Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)
(Julia Albarracin, Chair)

1.   Faculty Nominations

SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS)

Lu Lu, Accounting/Business Admin	replacing	Bret Bogenschneider	2026	B&T

Council on General Education (CGE)

Bridget Sheng, Education	replacing	Sebastian Szyjka	2028	AT-LARGE

UNIVERSITY COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES:

Provost Awards Committee

Leigh Ann Fisler, Psychology	replacing	Munia Cabal-Jimenez	2025	A&S
Nilanjan Sen, Computer Sciences	replacing	Yu-Ping Hsu	2025	B&T

Student Laureate Selection Committee

Katherine Perone, CECSPSW	replacing	Kristin Wiseley	2026	E&HS

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

IV.   Old Business - None

V.   New Business

A.   Resolution in Support of Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act

Resolution of Support for Illinois SB 13/HB 1581 Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding

Whereas the percentage of state revenue spent on higher education in Illinois is significantly lower than the national average spent by other states; and,

Whereas the state appropriations to higher education institutions in Illinois, adjusted for inflation, have declined 24% over the past twenty years; and,

Whereas, as a result of the decrease in state appropriations for institutions, tuition for Illinois public universities has increased to cover this deficit; and,

Whereas the traditional base-adjusted model used to fund public higher education institutions in Illinois does not consider the number of students enrolled or the unique needs of the diverse student populations at these different universities; and,

Whereas the increasing cost of attendance and the decreasing state investments have led to a pattern of Illinois students choosing to attend colleges out of state or not at all; and,

Whereas attending college should be attainable to all Illinois residents, regardless of their economic status; and,

Whereas the proposed funding plan detailed in SB 13/HB 1581 will provide a funding system that provides equitable, adequate, and stable funding for public universities in Illinois;

Be it resolved that the Western Illinois University Faculty Senate supports the proposed bill SB 13/HB 1581 Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act.

Chair Robinett told senators the senates of several Illinois institutions are being asked to consider resolutions very similar to this one. He said the purpose is to demonstrate to legislators that faculty across the state support the intent of the Adequate and Equitable Public University Funding Act. He added that the motion has been moved and seconded by the Executive Committee, so senators can move directly into discussion followed by a vote. There was no additional discussion on the floor.

RESOLUTION APPROVED 18 YES (13 in-person, 5 zoom) – 0 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

B. For the Good of the Body

Chair Robinett asked if there is any additional discussion desired on the rebuild models. Senator Melkumian asked for clarification on what faculty will be voting on. Chair Robinett replied the voting will occur next week in hopes that faculty will go into the Provost's website to provide additional comments, feedback, and questions. He stressed how important that feedback is. He explained that one thing the university requires when there is a proposed creation of a new academic unit is feedback collected from the faculty. He stated that while there has not previously been a Creation of a New College form, the existing Creation of a New Department or School form will be used, and the Provost's office is collaborating with Faculty Senate on this. He noted that the form is available on the Faculty Senate website under Documents and Forms (https://www.wiu.edu/faculty_senate/documents/index.php).

Chair Robinett explained that Faculty Senate will ultimately to be asked to vote on two of these completed forms, based on information gathered from the votes that the faculty at-large will be providing. One vote will be on creation of the two new colleges; faculty who will be within the College of Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Education will be voting on the creation of that college, and those who will be under the College of Business, Technology, and Pre-Professional Programs will vote on creation of that college. He said this is one set of data that will be collected from faculty colleagues and which the Senate will use to vote on the creation of these two new academic units.

Chair Robinett explained that the next vote depends on whether the Provost's office recommends moving forward with Model 1 or Model 2. He noted that if Model 1 is chosen, faculty would not have as much to vote on because their departments would remain much the same; they would just be voting on creation of that college. He said that if Model 2 is proposed by the Provost's office, faculty will vote on creation of the various schools.

Senator Melkumian asked how it will be made known which model will be chosen. Chair Robinett responded that he will bring forward the Creation of New Department or School forms for the Faculty Senate meeting of April 29, so Senate will be aware of that by then, but he will not have information on vote tallies because the faculty will still be voting at that time.

Senator Gravitt asked if this means that if she was from the School of Agriculture, she would vote on her college but would then have nothing else to vote on since the School of Agriculture is proposed to stay the same as it is currently. Chair Robinett responded this is correct. Senator Gravitt asked if this means that only if a school or department is moving or combining would they have to vote on more than the college; Chair Robinett agreed that is correct.

UPI President Merrill Cole expressed his thanks to Chair Robinett for this upcoming vote. He was concerned when looking at the Provost's webpage because, while he liked the opportunity for

feedback, he did not understand that people would be able to respond from their own disciplines. He thinks this is an excellent solution to that problem.

Senator Hunter remarked that, being colorblind, he appreciates the contrasting colors on the proposed organizational charts. Senator Gravitt asked if this is part of the online accessibility efforts. Chair Robinett responded that actually the chart colors represent the branding standards of WIU.

Motion: To adjourn (Hunter)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary