

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Additional Meeting, 29 April 2025, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: D. Allwardt, E. Asare, C. Chadwell, D. Gravitt, D. Hunter, H. Mason, D. McArthur, J. McKenzie, A. Melkumian, B. Petracovici, J. Robinett, R. Sharma, J. Walker, L. Wipperling, E. Woell

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

SENATORS ABSENT: J. Albarracin, B. Brewer, D. Brown, H. Elbe, S. Turkelli

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

GUESTS: Marjorie Allison, Dan Barclay, Tom Blackford, Keith Boeckelman, Tammi Bories, Amy Burke, Amy Carr, Rich Filipink, Doug Freed, Jeff Hancks, Sue Hum, Lorri Kanauss, Kishor Kapale, Tahir Khan, Jim LaPrad, Sarah Lawson, Heidi Lung, Kat Myers, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Jennifer Plos, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prosise, Tim Roberts, Jim Schmidt, Justin Schuch, Eric Sheffield, Sharon Stevens, Alisha White

Chair Robinett expressed his appreciation to senators for being willing to attend two meetings beyond their regular schedule this spring, today's meeting and the meeting of May 13.

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. April 22, 2025

- The last name of Amanda Schultz is misspelled in the first paragraph of page 1 (Bowers Sharpe)
- Chair Robinett's name is misspelled on page 2 (Bowers Sharpe)
- On page 12, D.1.a.i. should say "CSEC 376 APPROVED" (Bowers Sharpe)

MINUTES APPROVED AS CORRECTED

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Mossman stated that Zach Messersmith, Director of Government and Public Relations, sent an email to the university community about submitting witness slips in support of the equitable funding formula bill. He noted that President Mindrup will be present in Springfield for a discussion of the funding formula bill tomorrow, although there will be no actual vote. He added that if the bill passes, it would be a game changer for WIU.

Interim Provost Mossman apologized for missing the previous Faculty Senate meeting but was in Springfield that day with President Mindrup, Vice President Schuch, Vice President Roselieb, and others to testify before the Senate on behalf of WIU. He said the primary topics were the equitable funding formula and the Quad Cities Innovation Campus, and WIU representatives did an excellent job advocating for the institution. He related that President Mindrup has had constant meetings over the past couple of days, talking about issues such as the community college baccalaureate proposal, which is still being discussed; she will be in Springfield again tomorrow to speak to the significance of the proposed funding formula. Interim Provost Mossman told senators the latest metrics show that Western is the most inadequately funded of the public universities in Illinois, so clearly passage of the funding bill would really help to address a number of WIU's budget issues.

Chair Robinett related he received an email from his alma mater, the University of Illinois, today, requesting that recipients submit witness slips against the equitable funding formula bill, so it becomes even more important for individuals to reach out to support it.

Senator Wipperling remarked she did not receive an email from Zach Messersmith. Senator Hunter noted that Senator Hamner sent out Mr. Messersmith's email. Chair Robinett clarified that Senator Hamner sent out a different email regarding the petition for the Innovation Campus. He offered to forward Mr. Messersmith's email to senators following the meeting. Senator Wipperling said she would like to receive this because she did not know about filling out a witness slip. Interim Provost Mossman said his understanding was that Mr. Messersmith sent the email to everyone in UPI, but he will check on that.

Senator Hamner remarked that if there is interest in seeing *The Quad Cities Times* reporting from yesterday on the Innovation Campus, he is happy to forward that to senators. He only has access to a listserv which covers the Quad Cities but would be happy for Chair Robinett to distribute this further. Chair Robinett will forward Senator Hamner's email to senators as well as Mr. Messersmith's following the meeting.

B. Student Government Association (SGA) - None

C. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Chair Robinett thanked Gordon Pettit, Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Mathematics and Philosophy, for representing faculty on the Policy Advisory Committee, looking at policies and procedures and what the processes for those are. Chair Robinett and Dr. Pettit had a good meeting with Interim Associate Provost Holly Nikels today in order to address some concerns regarding policies.

Chair Robinett expressed thanks to the Senate councils and committees, who do an incredible amount of work, adding that senators will be seeing two of their reports on today's agenda. He pointed out that while the Senate has seen formal reports from some councils in response to their charges from the Executive Committee, the Budget Transparency Committee has followed up on their charges by reporting directly to the Senate at meetings throughout the semester. He expressed appreciation that Ketra Roselieb, Vice President for Finance and Administration, has joined Faculty Senate both semesters this year to address specific questions that the Budget Transparency Committee had been asked to follow up on. She has informed Chair Robinett that she will continue to do that next year.

Chair Robinett explained the Council on Intercollegiate Athletics will not respond to the charges from the Executive Committee this semester because of the every-changing terrain of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA). He said there are possibly hundreds of bylaws that will be changed by the NCAA between now and next fall, and the council will provide their response to those changes in their fall report.

Chair Robinett reported that the ad hoc Committee on Responses to Federal Transitions will meet on Thursday, May 1, to receive updates and ask questions related to federal transitions. He feels confident, based on regular updates from Zach Messersmith and President Mindrup, that administrators are staying aware of issues and addressing them in a timely fashion. He said there is a lot being done behind the scenes to provide support to WIU students affected by recent federal decisions. He asked that if faculty become aware of a student being affected, they submit a Leatherneck Cares referral to get them the care that they need.

1. Creation of New Unit Forms

Chair Robinett related that a survey was sent to all Faculty Senate eligible faculty (full-time Unit A or B) yesterday; adjunct faculty or chairs are not eligible for Faculty Senate so did not receive the survey. He met with Pete Jorgensen, who represents chairs on the rebuild constituent committee, to talk about the survey, and Dr. Jorgensen sent a Google form out to the chairs for guidance. He has been made aware by Rick Kurasz, who represents deans on the

constituent committee, that the deans have already met. Chair Robinett related that 23 percent of faculty have already responded to the survey as of 3:00 p.m. today, and will have until Monday, May 5 at 4:30 p.m. to respond.

Chair Robinett appreciates that a collaborative process is being used for the university's reorganization and rebuild. He said Ms. Hamm provided him with documentation about the last time reorganizations or rebuilds had occurred, and they have not always followed this process; this has been more inclusive of faculty than some of the others.

For the Faculty Senate meeting of May 13, Chair Robinett plans to provide the number of faculty who voted Yes and No to the creation of colleges and schools. He will also provide senators with a document listing all of the comments faculty are sharing on the survey to help them contextualize the votes. Chair Robinett stated that, at the request of the deans, the document provided to the Senate will also include the anticipated number of faculty in each unit for next fall, as provided by Interim Associate Provost Nikels.

Senator Hunter requested more information about the statement regarding the number of faculty in each unit as of Fall 2025. Chair Robinett explained that the number of faculty on the form that he shared with senators shows the number of faculty as of three weeks ago, at which time 333 faculty were Faculty Senate eligible. He said it is anticipated that by this fall that number will be closer to 270, based on faculty who have received layoff notices but have not yet been laid off and those faculty who are retiring. He added that Interim Associate Provost Nikels is providing those anticipated numbers so that senators will have a better understanding of what the fall semester may look like. Chair Robinett also noted that some changes in student numbers are expected since graduating classes are larger than incoming ones, and some changes to potential international students are expected.

Senator Hamner asked if this is a good time to engage in a brief discussion about the details involved in the proposal or whether that is something that should wait until the May 13 meeting. Chair Robinett replied that he believes in the transparency of communication, so while he would not want to open up a whole discussion on this since it will be discussed on May 13, he encouraged Senator Hamner to proceed. Senator Hamner asked if, without weighing in on or advocating for one position or the other, Chair Robinett and Interim Provost Mossman could speak to Pat McGinty's email that went out yesterday. He said the email requested consideration of a School of Humanities and a separate School of Social Sciences as opposed to a combined School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Senator Hamner related he spent some time with the math involved and tried to get his head around the potential logic in each direction, but he thought there might be things that Chair Robinett and/or Interim Provost Mossman could say that could help shed light on why the proposal was presented as a combination of the two. Chair Robinett said he did not receive that email so he is unable to respond to it; Interim Provost Mossman said he did not receive it, either.

Interim Provost Mossman reiterated Chair Robinett's statement that the approach has been collaboration, flexibility, and being reasonable, so he thinks this suggestion could be something taken under consideration moving forward. He noted that what is being considered currently is the structure of the reorganization. Interim Provost Mossman said he is very much a process thinker, and things cannot really be fully understood until in the midst of them and doing them, at which time some other things appear. He believes that the rebuild has to allow for flexibility, revisions, and those kinds of things as the university moves forward, but he did not see Dr. McGinty's specific arguments for his position.

Senator Hamner said the email was addressed to Senators and Friends, so he assumed it had gone out to the Faculty Senate as a whole. He related the question is basically about the optimal size. He noted that there is a lot of variety in the different schools regarding the number of undergraduates, grad students, and faculty they would have, but there was a suggestion that in this case there should be consideration given to two schools rather than one, particularly given the number of departments underneath the proposed School of Humanities

and Social Sciences. He asked if any background could be shared about the thinking that already has gone into deciding on this route.

Interim Provost Mossman said he would be happy to entertain this possibility and is happy to share his initial thinking about this. He noted that when he was Chair of the Department of English, he often worked closely with chairs in the Social Sciences, such as Keith Boeckelman, who at the time chaired Political Science, so he thinks there are natural connections there. He noted that one of the ideas of the reorg inside of the larger rebuild is to promote that kind of collaboration. He added that there will also be a significant reduction in the number of students, which is another factor to take into account.

Senator Hamner asked when senators will know the updated projections for number of faculty this fall. Chair Robinett replied his intention is to get this information to senators as soon after the May 5 vote deadline as possible so that they can have conversations with the areas they represent in order to make the most informed decision possible. He reminded senators that Faculty Senate is responsible for providing feedback on the proposed reorganizational structure but is not the determinant vote on that; that power resides with the Board of Trustees. He said the idea is to get information on the proposals to everyone in plenty of time to engage in conversations, which is why Chair Robinett plans to share the comments as is. Senator Hamner asked if faculty will have the list of projections for how many faculty are expected before they vote. Chair Robinett reiterated his goal is to have the projections to *senators* shortly after faculty voting is completed on May 5 so that they will have time to review them prior to the next Senate meeting.

Senator Gravitt asked if the current model is the only one that is going forward at present; Chair Robinett confirmed that is correct. Senator Gravitt asked if there is the potential for changes going forward from this model. Interim Provost Mossman responded that he would expect so because there must be flexibility moving forward if the intention is to be collaborative. Senator Gravitt said she was initially confused about the ballot that went out because it only included one model rather than two. She asked how many people actually voted to determine the final model. Chair Robinett replied there was no vote to get from two models to one model; the constituency committee met, reviewed the feedback that came in, and made the decision based on that feedback, the variety of data collected across time, information from the Higher Learning Commission, financial considerations, and pedagogical concerns expressed through feedback on the website indicating that the current model, with independent departments housed within administrative schools, promoted the best chances for efficiency, as well as providing opportunities for interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. Senator Gravitt asked what vote it was that she took online. Chair Robinett replied that she voted on whether she approved her college and her school within the model. Senator Gravitt asked if the upcoming vote is different than that one. Chair Robinett explained that the vote taken on Qualtrics was Senator Gravitt's vote as a faculty member on her college and school; the vote that will be taken at Faculty Senate on May 13 will be her vote as a senator on the creation of new colleges and schools. Senator Gravitt asked if that means senators have to vote twice; Chair Robinett confirmed this is correct. He explained that senators will vote once as a faculty member within their areas, then will vote again to fulfill the Faculty Senate's role in the faculty governance process. He added that the form is just intended for senators to vote on.

Senator Petracovici suggested it might be a good idea to indicate on the Provost's website that the first model is no longer being considered because if people go to that page they will see that it is still there. He suspects keeping it up there might cause some confusion.

D. Other Announcements

1. Justin Schuch, Vice President for Student Success

Vice President Schuch told senators he plans to present the background of the Division of Student Success, as well as an update, overview, and discussion on enrollment and some

things on the horizon. He noted that the division formerly known as Student Services housed much of the enrollment management offices, but when the university created a Division of Enrollment Management, some of those branched out into that area. He said many of those offices came back to Student Success this past year, and as the university has gone through some other restructuring it seemed like a good time to provide a general overview of what the division is, how their restructuring came together this year, and the focus for the coming year.

Vice President Schuch related that this year a group was asked to review the division and gather feedback from the staff and teams on what the overall mission should be in order to really focus in on what Student Success should rally behind to support WIU students. He said the mission the group came up with, which the division is moving ahead with, is: “The Division of Student Success strives to support students by fostering meaningful connections, promoting inclusive well-being, and empowering students to build their future capacity. Through these efforts, the division equips students with the skills, knowledge, and resilience needed to thrive.”

Vice President Schuch stepped into the role of vice president on May 1, 2024. He related that last year the division went through a reorganization focused on how they should align their services and show support for WIU students in meaningful ways. He related the division was reorganized into three major areas: Access and Support, Connection and Engagement, and Health and Wellness.

Vice President Schuch explained that Access and Support represents some of the functions that would have been in the former Division of Enrollment Management; this group is focused on how to get students to WIU and help to support them in their first transition, as well as providing some of the ongoing support that students need. This area of Student Success includes the Offices of Public Safety, Undergraduate Admissions, University Marketing and Communications, Veterans Resource Center, New Student and Family Programs, and Leatherneck Athletics. Vice President Schuch noted that Athletics provides a great recruitment opportunity for the university, so aligning them directly with Undergraduate Admissions is very helpful. He explained that New Student and Family Programs is the new student orientation operation; they have been able to produce some family-focused events this year. He said Marketing and Communications came into the Division of Student Success recently, which provides a good opportunity to align overall messaging with recruitment efforts. He added that all of the functions in this area report directly to the Vice President’s office; this group is focused on how the university recruits and helps to transition students to be successful at WIU.

Vice President Schuch explained that the Connection and Engagement area is a group of offices focused on the student experience outside of the classroom, how to get students engaged in the campus community and with each other. Vice President Schuch related he often speaks about the connections mapping program and the importance of getting students connected early in the semester, and this is the first time these offices have been aligned in this meaningful way. The offices in this area of Student Services include the Multicultural Center, Office of Student Engagement, Student Rights and Responsibilities, University Housing and Dining Services, and the Golf Course. Vice President Schuch said these large programmatic groups are all under the leadership of Assistant Vice President Joe Roselieb. He said this group’s efforts will be very apparent in discussions of the first four days and first four weeks in the fall semester; some of that experience has been redesigned, and Vice President Schuch is looking forward to that continuing to evolve.

Vice President Schuch explained that the area of Health and Wellness includes Beu Health Center, Campus Recreation, the University Counseling Center, and the Student Development and Success Center. He noted that this functional unit is led by Samantha Klingler, Executive Director of Student Success and Wellness. He said this area has seen some really strong successes this first year of working together, including grant opportunities and new kinds of health and wellness programming that will be expanded into next year.

Vice President Schuch remarked that student recruitment efforts will be a major area of focus for the Access and Support area next year, including how the university provides direct student support and increasing university retention buy-in. He stated that the team will focus on rebuilding trust, educating the campus community, and communicating WIU's brand. He related that this will involve rebuilding trust within the local region among area high school and community college counselors, who are strong partners to WIU. He said these efforts began this year with returning to the division's roots and holding some focused events with high school counselors, and he thinks the Admissions team is doing an excellent job with this effort. Vice President Schuch said events were held in Springfield, the Quad Cities, and Chicago, which was remarkably successful. He related that tomorrow morning the group will host a breakfast for Macomb and Central Illinois high school counselors to spend some time talking about what is happening at the university, hear what people are saying about WIU, and to acknowledge that the university has had some struggles this past year, particularly with financial aid, but WIU has worked through those struggles and now has some exciting things happening. He believes it is important to rebuild some trust with these partners so that WIU can get back to some incoming class sizes that everyone can be excited about.

Vice President Schuch related the next piece involves educating the campus community on how the university recruits students – not just what Undergraduate Admissions does, but what everyone else can do to help and to understand the recruitment funnel and process. He said this effort begins tomorrow with an Insights and Innovation event at 3:00 p.m.; those who have not preregistered for the event can just show up in the Sherman Hall Auditorium on the third floor. He related this event is intended to set the tone, explain some of what is being done in the recruitment tunnel, and get some initial ideas. He said the event will be highly conversational and will be followed up with some direct sessions on how the university actually recruits, such as what individuals can tangibly do when they see a group of students taking a campus tour or if they are working a table for a student event. He thinks the division needs to take some time to educate people on what recruiting actually is for students, particularly because current students are different than students were pre-pandemic or earlier.

Vice President Schuch related the third piece involves communicating WIU's brand in terms of student recruitment efforts. He noted that with University Marketing and Communications now a part of the Division of Student Success, they have been spending some significant time discussing "how we talk about our institution." He believes that everyone has generally done a really good job talking about WIU and the experience students can have here in a very upbeat way, and that needs to be continued. Vice President Schuch noted that, traditionally, conversations about WIU have led with "You can have a great experience at this institution," and in the background has been "And you're going to get an amazing degree." He said that while this model worked for students who were going to college ten years ago, today's students are more interested in knowing "What is my really awesome degree? How can I get it? And will I have a good time?" Vice President Schuch thinks discussions need to focus on degree completion at the front end while still acknowledging that students can also have a fun time here. He stated that conversations will continue on how to communicate WIU's brand.

Vice President Schuch noted that one thing that will help with these conversations is that WIU was recently admitted into the Carnegie classification focused on student access and earnings; WIU is both an institution of access as well as being in the category of institutions whose students, eight years after graduation, have very high earnings relative to their peers. He noted that of all public institutions in Illinois, WIU provides the most access and the highest earnings relative to the students that are recruited to come here, which is something that everyone should be talking about. He remarked that the institution is lifting students into areas and opportunities they may not have gotten to experience because WIU is "high access," and the institution is also ensuring that students are getting degrees and focused positions that are enabling them to earn more than their peers. Vice President Schuch thinks it is great that the Carnegie classification helps the institution to put a little meat behind what WIU really is, and this is what everyone needs to be talking about when they talk about Western. He said Student

Services plans to move in a strong way to communicate that WIU is an institution of access where students can earn an amazing four-year degree that will hopefully help them get to where they want to be earnings-wise and compared to their peers in the state. He added that WIU is an opportunity college, and only 16 percent of universities in the country can claim this designation. He added that this bears out the two years of high-level rankings in the area of social mobility that WIU has achieved from *The Wall Street Journal*. He noted that while the university undoubtedly has issues with retention, the lives of the students who graduate from Western are absolutely transformed in terms of earnings.

Vice President Schuch observed that the focus area of Direct Student Support includes some initiatives both inside and outside of the Division of Student Success. He thinks there is a need to think about entry-level student support positions because as the university has had to make some decisions based upon a number of things, it has not reinvested in frontline support in many areas, including Student Success. He noted there are just not as many people in the areas that work directly day-to-day with students, such as the Multicultural Center, the Office of Student Engagement, or the Student Development and Success Center. He thinks this is a real need, which is behind some of the regrouping that occurred in the division; Student Success is busy all the time, but some offices have flow periods where they could provide some support to those that are busier at those times. He stressed there just needs to be more hands involved in the conversations with and support for WIU students.

Vice President Schuch stated that as part of Direct Student Support, the division will continue to look at student aid and financial assistance because WIU is an institution of access and opportunity. He noted that WIU has traditionally had a pretty competitive scholarship program; while that has been adjusted for a number of reasons over the past few years, it is important that WIU maintain the status of being an affordable institution. He said this does not mean that WIU is a “cheap” institution, and sometimes people have wanted to lean away from this designation, but it is a place where students can get a great affordable degree. He thinks that leaning away from this focus in regard to student recruitment efforts was perhaps not a good idea for the institution, and WIU should again embrace being an affordable university where students can have an amazing experience and get an excellent degree.

Vice President Schuch said the third piece of the Direct Student Support initiative is student communication. He said the division is spending some significant focus time on how they are communicating with students, including the emails they are sending out. He related that the university developed a new email system a few years ago so that everyone would stop sending so many direct emails to students, but people shortly found a way around this and continue to do so. He noted that now everyone wants to text students, so the division is working to figure out what that looks like over the flow of the year and what might be a better way to communicate with students.

Vice President Schuch related that the final focus area is University-Wide Retention Buy-In. He hopes the division can develop an all-in approach to retention by infusing efforts throughout the university. He noted that there are many individuals from every division, office, and area of the university who care about retention efforts, and those individuals need to be lifted up. He pointed out that WIU no longer has individuals who are focused solely on retention efforts at the institution, but fortunately some of those offices have been consolidated into other things. He thinks there really needs to be an all-in approach in order to have a fuller conversation about what retention really means at WIU; retention should not only be a concern at the end of the school year when everyone is thinking about students registering for fall classes because that is the outcome of what individuals have been doing all along. He believes that retention should be a part of the very first steps a student takes at WIU and should then be infused throughout the university as individuals ask how everything they are doing impacts the student experience. Vice President Schuch noted that Facilities Management has amazing connections with many students, especially in the residence halls; the maintenance team are some of the first people that students see in the morning. He suspects there needs to be more

done to equip everyone at the institution to think about retention in this way and what those types of interactions mean.

Vice President Schuch said the division plans to revisit the University Retention Plan, a large plan that some individuals present at this meeting helped to create. He said Student Success has been looking at a number of different institutions and seeking information from current faculty and staff, alumni, students who retain, and students who did not retain to work toward putting together a plan. He noted that things the division has been working toward can be seen on their website by clicking through the existing Retention Plan, but it was developed about four and one-half years ago. He thinks it is important to consider what needs to be reinvested in and what things are different, particularly since students today are different than they were four years ago. Vice President Schuch said the division plans to continue to remind everyone that Their Potential is Our Purpose, and everyone needs to be focused on what students need to be successful, which might be easy to forget about in day-to-day work.

Senator Gravitt pointed out that the Access and Support section of the PowerPoint did not specifically address transfer students having their own focus or support systems, which was one thing brought out during the one-year Aspen-AASCU Transfer-Intensive Think Tank she [and Senator Albarracin] participated in. Vice President Schuch said his division has talked about the Office of New Student and Family Programs focusing particularly on the transfer student experience while Undergraduate Admissions would focus on the recruitment efforts for them. He added that the division is not in the place where it would be able to create a new office for this effort. He explained that New Student and Family Programs leads transfer student focused programming while Undergraduate Admissions is focused on pathways for those students to graduate.

Vice President Schuch said a focus list has been created with Spoon River College, who participated in the Aspen-AASCU Think Tank with WIU, to identify what steps can be taken to increase transfer rates and transfer completion from Spoon River to WIU. He said the first step is establishing a financial aid agreement between the two institutions; a consortium agreement is going through the signature process right now which will allow Spoon River College students to be able to leverage their financial aid package more completely. Vice President Schuch explained that currently if students are taking most of their classes at Spoon River College and one class at WIU, they cannot leverage all of their financial aid because Spoon has a different level of aid that students are able to get there. He said there just needs to be some formal agreements in place between the two institutions to create a pathway between them. He stated that every step of the transfer process will involve thinking about new pathways that need to be considered, such as how often the faculty of both institutions should discuss their programs and students, and WIU and SRC are just now trying to get some of these things established.

Vice President Schuch noted that the current conversations around community colleges being allowed to offer baccalaureate degrees has not paused this process, but the university is approaching with a little bit of timing in mind. He believes that it benefits both institutions to have a consortium agreement, and they are fully moving ahead with it. He said the agreement might involve such things as a Spoon River College student living in a WIU residence hall while taking one or two classes at WIU. He said this kind of agreement was available in the past, but there was no consortium agreement in place that allowed students to leverage all of their financial aid, so the burden of living on campus was put entirely on the student's shoulders. He said SRC and WIU have agreed to collaborate a little bit on these types of things after what has been a year's worth of meetings and reports. He hopes that once this is implemented it could become the model for other institutions, and WIU might be able to craft a similar agreement with Black Hawk or other community colleges.

Senator Hunter asked if, along that line, there has been any discussion of transfer student scholarships. Vice President Schuch replied that there has been, including significant discussions about aid during the Aspen program. He noted that WIU has a commitment

program for transfer students right now that was refreshed a year ago based on some feedback, and Vice President Schuch is interested to see how that will function. He stressed the importance of making sure that WIU is an affordable option for transfer students as well as for undergraduates. He noted that it has been taking longer than anticipated for transfer students to complete their degree programs at WIU, and they have been running out of financial aid eligibility, so the biggest hurdle has been time to completion. He thinks there needs to be a close look taken on what happens during a transfer student's first year at WIU that is preventing them from earning enough credits to progress toward their degree. He added there has been significant thought given to what needs to be included in a financial aid transfer student package that is attractive to students while also being affordable for the institution.

Senator Hamner is very happy to see the shift in messaging emphasis and looks forward to seeing the impacts of that. He is aware that there is a lag between WIU's overall setting and the impacts on students, so he thinks that shift in messaging will eventually pay off. He recognizes that right now the university is looking at losses in retention and asked if Vice President Schuch can share the range, low end to high end percentage wise, of how that is looking at this stage. Vice President Schuch replied that he is happy to provide some context about the incoming class and what things are shaping up to look like, although right now these are just projections. He related that the goal at the beginning of this cycle was 800 freshmen and 600 transfer students. He acknowledged that getting award letters out to students has continued to be somewhat of a struggle, but they are out as of last week. He related that an email was sent out in the past couple of days informing potential students that they need to look at their award letter, so if any student thinking about coming to WIU says they do not know what their award might be, Student Success needs to know about that. He added that they will also get a printed copy in the mail, which will hopefully help.

Vice President Schuch told senators that right now the freshmen class is not on track to reach 800; they are about 14 percent below where the numbers were at this time last year, and last year the end of cycle figure was 634, which is not where the university wants to be. He noted that award letters were not sent out at all last year, so this week is an important time for enrollment. He observed that transfer students are harder to project because staffing is down on the transfer processing team, and they are working to get caught up as fast as they can. He said that while May 1 is considered Decision Day across the country, WIU does not hold students to a May 1 decision, but this is the time period where students try to decide where they are really going to attend, so it was vital for WIU to get the award letters out now so that potential students have in their hands how much it will cost them to come to this institution. He added that it is important that WIU do everything possible to have some good news come out of the institution over the next few weeks as students are thinking about where they see themselves being for the next four years.

Vice President Schuch remarked getting good news out is also important during the summer Leatherneck Launch, where students attend orientation prior to being locked into one institution. He noted that it is not unusual for students to attend multiple orientations at different institutions because they are still making their decisions. He believes that WIU must approach summer orientation from a recruitment mindset, so significant adjustments have been made to what summer looks like in that vein to get students what they need. He stressed that everyone needs to have a recruitment mindset all summer long and up to the tenth day.

Vice President Schuch stated that in addition to undergraduates being down about 14 percent from last year at this time, there are adjustments being made to graduate school, and some large class sizes are graduating out, so it is anticipated that overall enrollment will be down this fall. Vice President Schuch talks to Vice President Roselieb every day about what the projections look like, and they are building models off of that. He admitted it can be tempting to project the number of students that the university would like to have, which is much higher, but, given the number of students who are graduating out and where incoming classes stand right now, the university is looking at a low 5,000 enrollment for fall. He added that there are a number of people who do projections for Student Success, including some at today's meeting,

and they have been asked to run their own models, which are done separately so as not to influence one another, so he anticipates that he will have a better overall guess in about two weeks.

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

Dr. Carr related that the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) met last Friday, April 25, at Joliet Junior College, the oldest community college in the country, established in 1901. She said their President since 2022, Clyne Namuo, has a background in cybersecurity and a son who at the age of 15 helped with the development of ChatGPT. She told senators that President Namuo has an AI version of himself in development which will be programmed with the history and initiatives of Joliet Junior College so that people with questions can feel like they are talking with the president through his persona. She asked President Namuo if he thought it would still be important for students to be able to read and write in light of AI, and he responded that students will still need to discover their humanity because he hears from company leaders that companies want people to show they are human.

Dr. Carr related that President Namuo encouraged faculty to defend higher education, including academic freedom and equity; he thinks there is an opportunity to embrace the current tension and discourses because that is what faculty and academics are all about. She said he pointed out that most of President Trump's executive actions are being challenged in court and that the Trump administration is unusual in having introduced no new legislation as of yet but is acting only through executive orders, but he noted that the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has not changed even as federal interpretations have. She said he also pointed out that the Higher Learning Commission is bigger than all other accrediting bodies combined and has affirmed its own commitment to equitable outcomes and inclusive spaces. She added that President Namuo has a background in administration in some Arizona schools; he noted that faculty autonomy is less clearly defined in non-union states such as Arizona, but he finds that Illinois is more collaborative due to its unions.

Dr. Carr shared with Faculty Senates a summary of bills moving through the state legislature prepared by Mike Phillips, legislative liaison for the FAC. She said he points out that even though the deadline was April 11 for a bill to move out of committee, it is possible to extend the deadline, or to gut and replace a bill using a shell or similar bill.

Dr. Carr stated that the next meeting of the Coalition for Transforming Higher Education Funding will be held on May 7, and on May 8 the Higher Education Appropriations Committee is going to meet.

Dr. Carr related that Jill Gepke, IBHE Staff Liaison, announced that there is now a new public university faculty representative to the IBHE who will attend the next meeting in June. The new representative is an assistant professor of Communications from Eastern Illinois University.

Dr. Carr said Ms. Gepke told FAC the Illinois Student Assistant Commission (ISAC) has sent a letter to federal financial aid offices about timely delivery of aid to institutions. She said the letter expresses concern about loans moving to and being administered by the Small Business Administration. She added that ISAC meets with FAC occasionally and does a lot of work connecting potential and current students around the state to financial aid.

Dr. Carr related that Ms. Gepke also spoke about the updates to the Carnegie classification system and emphasized that the system is not so much about rankings as it is about sharing the different missions and scopes of institutions that reflect the same types of degrees and fields of study.

Dr. Carr related that the Faculty Advisory Council engaged in a long discussion about a draft statement from the Early College Working Group. She said the main thing to come out of this is that the FAC will probably be supporting a change to the Dual Credit Quality Act that would urge all community colleges who are partnering with high schools to be accredited through the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. She noted there are only two community colleges in the state that are currently accredited through this body, one of which is Elgin Community College. She said an Elgin representative to the FAC related that they require things like producing artifacts, having real partnerships between community college faculty and high school teachers, and the high schools allowing visits. Dr. Carr stated that because the FAC has community college members as well as representatives of four-year institutions, dual credit is discussed a lot, and there can be real problems obtaining access to be able to assess dual credit courses taught at high schools by high school teachers. She said one question that has been raised is how high school teachers shift to college-level coursework when teaching a dual credit course where some students may not be taking it for college credit. Dr. Carr told senators it was pointed out that the same could be asked of undergraduate university courses that might also have a student taking it for graduate credit, although there can be pressure on high school teachers to make a course easier in order to have higher pass rates, plus high schools have workload limitations, so there are some structural limitations. Dr. Carr noted that the Post-Secondary Workforce Development Act requires students in eighth grade to start developing a sense of their future direction, and some of the pressure to offer dual credit courses in high schools may be linked to this.

Dr. Carr related it is a statewide concern that rates of international enrollments have already started to dip. She said Germany and Canada are encouraging international student enrollment, France has opened up spaces for 300 scholars who do not feel safe in the United States, and Fulbright scholarships to the U.S. are receiving fewer applications. She added that one FAC member from Rockford said that half of their nursing students come from Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Carr informed senators that the university senate at Illinois State University has adopted a new General Education program. She explained students may complete the Gen Ed Common Core using the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI), which is the faster path, but Illinois State also spent a lot of time thinking about what kind of Gen Ed structure they want, which has nothing to do with IAI. She related that Greg Ferrence, the ISU FAC rep, said the intention was to remove silos to focus on learning objectives rather than areas and to move beyond courses in the liberal arts and sciences. Dr. Carr said ISU's Gen Ed requires 33 semester hours divided into the following categories: information fluency through writing; communication inquiry; applied writing inquiry; quantitative literacy; scientific literacy; exploring the human condition; creative arts; individuals in society; science, technology, engineering, and math; experiential learning and civic engagement; and general education elective. She added that ISU will be working this out over time.

Regarding the proposed rebuild model, and as a follow-up to the earlier conversation, Dr. Carr remarked that she would prefer to keep Humanities and Social Sciences together because some faculty are in departments that contribute to both, including her Department of Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies. She thinks it would be difficult to split up these kinds of departments, and to keep the two disciplines together feels more like the current College of Arts and Sciences.

Senator Gravitt remarked that ISU's General Education will now be down to 33 semester hours. Dr. Carr said the key thing she wanted to point out is not the numbers but that the model is not structured around the categories of humanities and social sciences. Chair Robinett noted that Illinois State does not have a faculty senate but a university senate, which includes students, faculty, and staff, so that is different model. He noted that there is an academic unit that operates within that senate, but it operates a bit differently than WIU's.

Senator Gravitt pointed out that WIU's General Education will now be 37 hours, and Illinois State just dropped theirs to 33; WIU will still require four more hours than ISU, even though

WIU just dropped its requirement. Dr. Carr agreed, adding that ISU also restructured how they are doing Gen Ed.

Chair Robinett observed that the Council of General Education submitted their end-of-year report, which is on today's agenda. He expressed appreciation for the wonderful work they have done this year and for providing data for senators regarding what other institutions are doing with Gen Ed. He noted that there is a wide array of how many hours different schools require across the state in different ways. Chair Robinett thanked Dr. Carr, remarking that the amount of time she spends in these meetings and bringing back useful information is appreciated.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

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

1. Curricular Requests from the School of Education

a. Requests for New Courses

- i. EDS 410, Senior Seminar in Education, 0 s.h.
- ii. SPED 407, Law and Special Education, 3 s.h.
- iii. SPED 465, Fieldwork in Special Education III, 4 s.h.

Senator Hunter reiterated his earlier comment about many requests failing to fully complete the question about library resources. Chair Robinett recalled that Senator Hunter had earlier expressed concern that the CCPI forms ask about library resources, but departments and schools frequently move these forward without actually indicating what library resources are needed, so perhaps councils and committees should be looking at this closer.

NEW COURSES APPROVED

b. Requests for Changes of Majors

- i. Educational Studies
- ii. Elementary Education
- iii. Middle Level Education
- iv. Special Education

CHANGES OF MAJORS APPROVED

c. Request for Change of Minor

- i. Educational Studies

CHANGE OF MINOR APPROVED

d. Requests for Changes of Options

- i. Early Childhood Education
- ii. Elementary Education
- iii. English as a Second Language Education
- iv. Multilingual Education

Senator Wipperling asked what "specialty courses" refer to. Education professor Sharon Stevens responded there are a wide list of degrees in the

School of Education, and the school worked with the Registrar's office to make sure the options appear in the catalog in a consistent way with consistent headings. She said these include the core, specialty courses, subject area courses, preclinical fieldwork, and clinical fieldwork. She noted that the specialty courses are those within the specific field, within their specialty.

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

2. Curricular Requests from the Department of Health and Wellness Services

- a. Request for Change of Major
 - i. Exercise Science

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

- b. Request for Change of Minor
 - i. Coaching

CHANGE OF MINOR APPROVED

3. Curricular Requests from the Office of the Provost

- a. Request for Change of Major
 - i. General Studies

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

4. Curricular Requests from the Department of Biological Sciences

- a. Requests for Changes of Majors
 - i. Biology
 - ii. Clinical Laboratory Science

Senator Gravitt remarked that some of the totals in the Biology major do not seem to be correct. After discussion it was determined that an earlier version of the form was inadvertently uploaded, but Ms. Hamm has the correct version which will go forward to the Provost's office after Senate approval. Senator Hunter remarked that some forms did not have the typed approval date in the CCPI line; Ms. Hamm apologized, stating that she thought she had dated all of those but with the condensed Senate meetings it was quite a crunch of time to get them all uploaded. Chair Robinett remarked that faculty do a fantastic job creating all of these curricular forms, and CCPI and UAAC double check them, but it commendable that senators are also being attentive to the requests to make sure that Senate is doing what it needs to in relation to curriculum.

Senator Gravitt pointed out that PHYS 114, 115, and 211 are missing the pound signs to indicate that they are Gen Ed courses in the Clinical Lab Science request. Ms. Prosis explained this is because this request began going through the curricular process before these courses were reappraised for Gen Ed, but she will make sure this is designated in the catalog.

Senator Petracovici remarked that some of the requests, including Clinical Lab Science, include a one credit hour open elective. He asked if there are any one hour courses listed that would fulfill this requirement. Biology professor Sue Hum responded that there are one credit hour seminars, special topics, and research courses that students can take to fulfill this requirement.

CHANGES OF MAJORS APPROVED

- b. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. Environmental Biology
 - ii. Medical Sciences
 - iii. Microbiology
 - iv. Biology – Teacher Education
 - v. Zoology

Senator Gravitt asked on the Medical Sciences option if both courses need to have Gen Ed credit if students can choose between MATH 137 and 133 because currently 137 does not. Ms. Prosis responded they do not because if what was intended was a choice between two Gen Ed courses it would be in the Directed Gen Ed portion of the form.

Senator Gravitt remarked that Environmental Biology, Microbiology, and Zoology will need the pound signs added to the Physics Gen Ed courses, some of the Microbiology courses should be aligned better, and Microbiology and Zoology have a redundant 6 s.h. notation. Ms. Prosis remarked that CCPI had to let some things go through at its last meeting that would have been nice to have made prettier, but there was so much curriculum to consider that in the interest of time they did not insist these be changed.

Senator Petracovici observed that the science elective in Biology – Teacher Education has one credit hour indicated and adds GIS and Meteorology to the list of possible courses. He asked if there is a one credit hour class in GIS and Meteorology. Dr. Hum replied she is not sure, but students can take the electives in any of these departments, and Biology certainly has one credit hour courses available. She added there may be seminars in those areas as well. Senator Petracovici asked if students might be forced to take a three-credit hour course to fulfill this; Dr. Hum replied it is possible, but Biology did have all of the science education departments take a look at the request, and they were okay with it. Chair Robinett said this was the kind of thing he often asked when serving on CCPI, so he appreciates this question, but it speaks to the importance of academic advisors on campus that they work with students to develop degree plans that will streamline some of these things.

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

5. Curricular Requests from the Department of History

- a. Request for Change of Major
 - i. History

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

- b. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. History

- ii. Pre-Law
- iii. History – Teacher Education

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

6. Curricular Requests from the Department of Physics

- a. Request for Change of Major
 - i. Physics

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

- b. Requests for Changes of Options
 - i. Engineering Physics
 - ii. Standard Physics
 - iii. Physics – Teacher Education

CHANGES OF OPTIONS APPROVED

7. Curricular Requests from the School of Communication and Media

- a. Request for Change of Major
 - i. Broadcasting and Journalism

Senator Petracovici observed that the minor has been removed. He asked if there can be majors without a minor if they are not comprehensive. Chair Robinett noted that the request includes 48 hours for the major, 18 hours taken outside of the discipline, and 14 hours of open electives. Ms. Prosise pointed out that the cutoff for non-comprehensive versus comprehensive is 47-48 hours, so with 48 hours this is a comprehensive major. Chair Robinett noted that this is why a minor would not be required. Ms. Prosise added that a comprehensive major requires a minimum of 15 hours outside of the major discipline, so those hours do not count as part of the major.

CHANGE OF MAJOR APPROVED

- b. Requests for Additional Emphases
 - i. Multimedia News
 - ii. Sports Broadcasting

ADDITIONAL EMPHASES APPROVED

Chair Robinett commended Chair Burke and CCPI. Chair Burke said she appreciated CCPI members, as well as Ms. Prosise and Ms. Hamm who attend those meetings, for staying as long as the meetings went to get all of the curriculum approved this semester. Chair Robinett noted that some CCPI meetings have been going two hours or more, and they meet pretty regularly, so he appreciates everyone going above and beyond.

B. Council for International Education (CIE) (Tahir Khan, Co-Chair)

1. Response to Charge from the Executive Committee

The Council presented senators with a report on study abroad trends, including enrollment trends at WIU, its peer institutions, and at the national level; analysis and duration of study abroad; departmental participation and fields of study; student profiles; and recommendations. There were no questions from senators.

CIE REPORT APPROVED

C. Council for General Education (CGE)
(Alisha White, Chair)

1. Response to Charge from the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee charged the council to report on the impact of recent changes to General Education, including a comparison with the approach of other state institutions to Gen Ed. Senator Gravitt asked if the report captured Illinois State's reduction of their General Education to 33 hours. Chair White responded that this came out after the report had already been completed and delivered to Chair Robinett but she could revise the report if desired. Chair Robinett responded that this will be noted in the minutes, and Chair White can include it in the information presented to Faculty Senate in CGE's annual report in the fall, but revising this report is not needed. He commended CGE on a thorough response to the charges.

Senator Gravitt asked if the information could be put into a matrix format showing information on university and college Gen Ed in 2023, 2024, and 2025 so that trends can easily be seen in one table. Chair Robinett asked if Senator Gravitt objected to the report or was indicating something she would like to see in future. Senator Gravitt replied it is just a request because it would make comparisons easier to see. Chair Robinett related that CGE invited him to participate in some of their meetings, and different institutions have different categories for their General Education, so it is not like comparing apples to apples. He noted that creating a table would require having information about the specific units those institutions use; where WIU may say that a course falls within the Natural Science and Mathematics category, some schools may have it in a different category, and some institutions have gone to competencies rather than designated categories. Senator Gravitt noted that at least if total numbers were available, senators would be able to see trends of where things are going. Chair White suggested she could share the document that the ad hoc committee used when pulling together information for the report if that would be helpful. Chair Robinett asked that this be included in the fall CGE report as well, and it can be uploaded to the Senate folder at that time.

Senator Gravitt expressed frustration that WIU keeps reducing its Gen Ed requirement, then the institutions that WIU competes with reduce theirs further, so it is a never-ending battle. Parliamentarian Bowers Sharpe related she served on the General Education Review Committee in 2017-18, and they had the same issue. She thinks some institutions word their General Education requirement so that it appears that there are less hours required than there really are. She does not think there is really a way to put this into a table because it is impossible to know exactly how to interpret another institution's Gen Ed. Chair Robinett clarified that a graduation requirement is not the same as a General Education requirement, and how those are categorized and separated at various institutions is what makes it difficult to do bucket to bucket comparisons.

Senator Asare asked what the steps are after a report has been accepted, whether Faculty Senate would do anything with the recommendations or just keep them as a report that has been submitted. Chair Robinett replied it depends on what is included in the report. He noted that last week the Council for Instructional Technology included seven recommendations for issues related to online courses which were forwarded on to the President with a letter saying that these recommendations are supported by Faculty Senate and asking the administration to move

forward with implementation, in cooperation with Interim Provost Mossman and the appropriate campus bodies. Chair Robinett noted that CAGAS Chair Rich Filipink brought forward last week recommendations related to admissions standards for Nursing, which were sent forward so that they can be enacted. He noted that most of the council reports received recently in response to charges from the Executive Committee, however, are informational; the Executive Committee wanted senators to become more informed and educated about how certain things are working, how WIU compares to other institutions, and the ways that Faculty Senate can, as a body, be more engaged in the faculty governance process with correct information. He said this is the same reason that IBHE Faculty Advisory Council representative Amy Carr educates Faculty Senate about what is going on with that body or Vice Presidents come to Senate meetings to share information. He added that many council reports are informational unless the councils are specifically asked for recommendations.

Senator Gravitt highlighted that CGE in their report said they found no other universities who are using IAI to limit their General Education requirement. While she kind of understands why WIU went in that direction, she also suspects the university may be shooting itself in the foot by limiting ourselves when other universities are not limiting themselves to those courses. She thinks this course of action does not allow WIU to be unique. Chair White remarked this is exactly what CGE heard from multiple stakeholders that they spoke with. She said many were concerned about the courses dropped from Gen Ed because they had not previously gone through the IAI process, many of which were courses that programs would use for recruitment because WIU was the only institution to offer them. She said these courses would bring students in who were interested in those particular topics, and a lot of them were dropped. She added that in conversations with Interim Provost Mossman and Interim Associate Provost Pynes, CGE has been told they cannot add any courses that have not been approved by IAI. Chair Robinett thanked Chair White for being thorough and collecting that information for Faculty Senate. He thinks these are the types of discussions Faculty Senate needs to have.

CGE REPORT APPROVED

IV. Old Business - None

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Senator Hunter asked if the May 13 meeting is intended just to discuss reorganization. Chair Robinett clarified it is intended for senators to vote on the rebuild. He will send the information out to senators as soon as possible after May 5 so that they have plenty of time to review what they will be voting on. He asked for anyone who cannot attend on May 13 to let him know.

Motion: To adjourn (Gravitt)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary