

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
Special Meeting, 3 May 2016, 4:00 p.m.
Capitol Rooms - University Union

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: S. Bennett, V. Boynton, J. Brown, A. Burke, G. Cabedo-Timmons, D. DeVolder, K. Dodson, R. Hironimus-Wendt, K. Kapale, C. Keist, B. Locke, N. Lino, J. Myers, K. Pawelko, C. Pynes, T. Roberts, T. Sadler, B. Siever, A. Silberer, T. Solomonson, T. Westerhold
Ex-officio: Kathy Neumann, Interim Provost; Janna Deitz, Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Halverson, S. Holt

GUESTS: Mark Boley, Andy Borst, Rick Carter, Katrina Daytner, Angela Lynn, Sara Lytle, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Kyle Mayborn, Russ Morgan, Nancy Parsons, Bill Polley, Bill Pratt, Dovile Svirupskaite, Bill Thompson, Sarah Thomson, Lora Wolff

I. Announcements

A. Approvals from the President and Provost

1. Approvals from the President

- a. Disruptive Student Behavior Procedure

2. Approvals from the Provost

- a. Requests for New Courses

- (1) CHEM 241, Chemical Calculations, 2 s.h.
- (2) CHEM 425, Biochemistry of Human Disease, 4 s.h.
- (3) GEOG 309, GIS Data Integration, 3 s.h.
- (4) HIST 323, The Crusades, 3 s.h.

- b. Request for New Minor

- (1) Military History

- c. Request for Changes of Minors

- (1) Chemistry
- (2) Forensic Chemistry
- (3) Professional Writing

- d. Requests for Changes of Majors

- (1) Chemistry (Option A – Chemistry)
- (2) Chemistry (Option B – Biochemistry)
- (3) Chemistry (Option C – Pharmacy)
- (4) English
- (5) Geography

- e. Request for Inclusion in General Education

- (1) ENG 281, Writing and Social Action, 3 s.h.

f. Request for Discipline-Specific Global Issues Designation

- (1) EIS 428, English Language Learners and Bilingualism: Theory, Policy and Practice, 3 s.h.

B. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Neumann announced that WIU has received the recently-announced stop-gap funds and partial MAP funding for FY16. She reported that the amount was a little higher than anticipated at \$20.8 million.

President Thomas, Interim Provost Neumann, and Budget Director/Interim Vice President for Administrative Services Matt Bierman travel to Springfield tomorrow to testify before the legislature. WIU representatives were previously scheduled to testify at an earlier date which was rescheduled due to the negotiations over the stop-gap funding.

Interim Provost Neumann asked Admissions Director Andy Borst to provide an update on projected fall enrollment figures. Dr. Borst told senators that the freshman 2016 class is projected to be about 1,350 to 1,400 students, down 150 to 200 from the fall 2015 enrollment of 1,530. He said this is still better than some of Western's peer institutions. Dr. Borst is optimistic because that number includes several Linkages students, who primarily attend Spoon River College but take one WIU course and live in the residence halls, which helps WIU's headcount enrollment.

Dr. Borst is seeing increases in undecided, Management, Music, and Kinesiology majors in the incoming freshman class. He reported that Psychology, Biology, and Chemistry are on track with last year's enrollment figures. Dr. Borst stated that he is optimistic about new transfers, which are maintaining their numbers from last year overall; although numbers are down about 15 percent from the Chicago area, they are up about 12 percent from local community colleges (John Wood, Carl Sandburg, Spoon River, Blackhawk, and others).

Numbers for returning students are down about 14 percent across the board, both for undergraduates/graduates and by class; returning juniors are down about ten percent and returning sophomores are down about 18 percent. Admissions counselors asked students why they are not returning to WIU and were surprised that the reason is apparently not because of a lack of MAP or state funding. Instead, students think that classes are not going to fill so there is no rush to register early, which is frustrating for everyone.

Dr. Borst reported that the number of potential freshmen who are "on the fence" about whether or not to attend WIU in the fall is shrinking. He told senators that Admissions has been tracking numbers of students who have said they are definitely going to enroll, those who have indicated they are still deciding, and those who have given some indication of interest – such as a visit to campus or signing up for a SOAR date – but have not done anything substantial after that point to indicate that they actually plan to attend. Calls and text messages which have gone out to on-the-fence students from admissions counselors, members of Faculty Senate, and currently enrolled students have reduced their number from 1,000 to 300. Potential students are being pushed to make a decision. Most institutions set May 1 as their deadline date for fall enrollment, but WIU's deadline is June 1; after that date, students will no longer receive a refund on their deposit, which is a pre-payment on their tuition.

Registrar Angela Lynn admitted that a 14 percent drop in retention rates sounds bad; however, two weeks ago the rates were down by 20 percent, and last week they were down by 18 percent, so at least the University is heading in the right direction. Lists of currently enrolled students who have not yet registered for fall semester were sent to deans and lead advisors last week. A list of those who were freshmen in fall 2015 was sent to Jessica Butcher, Assistant to the Vice President for Student Services in charge of Community Relations. Lists were also separated by residence hall so that some targeted gentle pressure can be applied to students who live on campus. Dr. Lynn said it is unsure whether the decrease in the number of students not yet committing to return in the fall is

due to the contacts being made or just a result of students realizing that the end of the semester is nearing quickly and they need to register before going home. She plans to send another round of emails on May 6 so that those who receive them can see that progress is being made. She told senators there is now also a way that advisors who hear from students that they are not coming back to WIU in the fall can communicate that information via MVS where it can be tracked; advisors can also indicate why the student has decided not to return, such as family issues, transferring to a community college, financial issues, etc. It will also be possible to track where former WIU students are requesting their transcripts be sent.

Chairperson Pynes asked if WIU's graduating class is larger or smaller than normal. Dr. Lynn replied that it is smaller this year; about 60 fewer students are anticipated to graduate on May 14. She said that the large groups of graduates have pretty much moved through now, so smaller graduating classes will become the norm.

Senator Hironimus-Wendt observed that faculty have one or two more contacts with students before summer. He thinks it would be helpful for deans to tell faculty to reassure students that WIU will be open for 2016-2017 because he thinks it sounds like students are giving up, even though there is no reason to do so. Dr. Lynn responded that her office is not hearing that; the Registrar's office is hearing that students are procrastinating and delaying action as long as possible. Ms. Svirupskaite stated that the students she has talked to now understand that WIU is not closing despite the budget crisis, especially now that the stop-gap funding has been received, so there is not as much worry as there was two or three months ago. She agrees that students are likely just procrastinating getting registered.

Senator Roberts asked whether the Provost has a perspective on why legislators did not give WIU proportional funding in relation to other troubled institutions across the state. Interim Provost Neumann replied that legislators conducted an analysis of how much each institution needed to be able to reach the fall semester, which is why Chicago State got a larger amount of funding.

UPI President Bill Thompson announced that negotiations between the Union and WIU administration were completed today. A message will go out to the bargaining unit regarding an election to be held on May 5 and 6. Polls will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days in the Union Algonquin Room on the Macomb campus and from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on May 6 in the Quad Cities. Interim Provost Neumann stated that conversations between the local bargaining unit and WIU administration were previously completed, but legal counsels for both sides had to work on the legalese, which was completed this morning.

C. Student Government Association (SGA) Report
(Dovile Svirupskaite, SGA Representative to Faculty Senate)

The last SGA meeting will be held this evening. SGA will hear recommendations from the Council on Student Activities Funds for funding for clubs and programs. Ms. Svirupskaite stated that many groups will get less funding next year. Chairperson Pynes announced that Ms. Svirupskaite was elected SGA President for next year.

D. Other Announcements

Chairperson Pynes recognized the chairs of Senate councils and committees for their hard work and fantastic job this year, particularly Drs. Wolff and Rock representing CCPI and CAGAS. He also expressed his appreciation to the Executive Committee and added that ExCo could not do the amount of work it does behind the scenes without the assistance of Parliamentarian Janna Deitz and Recording Secretary Annette Hamm.

II. Reports of Committees and Councils – None

III. Old Business

Dr. Wolff told senators that representatives from CCPI, the College of Business and Technology, and the College of Arts and Sciences met after last week's Faculty Senate meeting and came to the CCPI meeting last week, and she believes that previous issues regarding the Engineering curricula are resolved.

A. Curricular Requests from the School of Engineering

1. Requests for New Courses

- a) ENGR 322, Mechanical Design II, 3 s.h.

ENGR 322 APPROVED

- b) ENGR 452, Geotechnical Engineering, 3 s.h.

Senator Bennett remarked that he does not object to the proposal, but some of the things done in ENGR 452 are also done in Geology. Engineering Director Bill Pratt stated that he believes an Engineering faculty member contacted the Chair of Geology, but Senator Bennett remarked that there was no letter from the chair included in the materials.

ENGR 452 APPROVED

2. Request for Change in Major

- a) Engineering

Dr. Wolff pointed out that new symbols have been added to indicate additional language pertaining to the request, and emphases that were removed by CCPI prior to the last Faculty Senate meeting because the included courses had not yet been approved have been added back in without those courses.

CHANGE IN MAJOR APPROVED

3. Request for New Major

- a) Mechanical Engineering

Senator Hironimus-Wendt observed that the Other Courses section of the proposal specifies 15 s.h. of required math (MATH 133, 134, 231, 333) and 15 s.h. of physics and chemistry (PHYS 211, 213, CHEM 201), with PHYS 212 and MATH 311 noted as "highly recommended." He observed that there are 27 hours recommended of a total of 30 required hours, but another six hours of coursework is listed as "highly recommended," which seems awkward. Dr. Pratt explained that PHYS 212 is highly recommended to fulfill the "one additional Physics or Chemistry course" requirement. Senator Hironimus-Wendt asked if MATH 311, Linear Algebra, would replace MATH 133 if it was chosen; Dr. Wolff replied that this was part of the compromise between the two colleges. Dr. Pratt added that the Department of Physics wanted Engineering to recommend that students take MATH 311, but it is not a required course. Senator Pawelko asked if the "highly recommended" courses become suggested electives. Dr. Pratt replied that they do not; they are just recommendations.

NEW MAJOR APPROVED

Chairperson Pynes expressed his thanks to those involved for working in a spirit of cooperation and togetherness.

B. Proposed Changes to English Proficiency for International Student Admissions

Rick Carter, Director of Distance Learning, International Studies, and Outreach, told senators that the proposal was reviewed by Department of English Chairperson Mark Mossman, Western English as a Second Language (WESL) Institute Director David Bell, and WESL Assistant Director Sara Thomson. Chairperson Pynes told Dr. Carter that questions arose at the last Senate meeting about the differences between Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores of 73, which is being proposed, and 79, the current requirement; why a score of 73, which is the average of WIU's peer institutions, is considered to be proficient; what the University expects to achieve by changing the requirement; and what faculty might notice that is different in a student admitted with a score of 73.

Dr. Carter told senators that his purpose is to address what he sees firsthand when trying to recruit international students; when potential students see WIU's TOEFL score requirement, they often simply move on to the next booth. Dr. Carter wants the University to be able to be as competitive as possible during a time when WIU needs students and is trying to reach out to students around the world. He stated that international students may have high GPA scores as well as TOEFL scores in the mid-70s, but they are discouraged by WIU's TOEFL requirement of 79. He explained that not all international students need English proficiency, but students from any country that does not have their first language as English have to have a TOEFL score or go through the WESL program as a condition of admission to WIU. Dr. Carter believes that lowering the requirement to a TOEFL score of 73 will allow WIU to open the door a little wider to international students without taking the requirement down to 61, as have some state institutions. He thinks that a score of 73, while slightly lower than the current requirement, will not compromise the integrity of the institution. He asserted that the change will not have any effect on the academic performance of international students because admission is also based on students' academic transcripts, and those requirements have not changed. He reiterated that the proposal is intended only to entice students to come to WIU from other countries.

Dr. Carter told senators the recommendation to lower the TOEFL score requirement came about after consultation with the Director and Assistant Director of WESL. Requirements at other state institutions, WIU's peer institutions, and institutions similar in size around the country were considered for comparison. Of these, 80 was the highest score required and 60 the lowest. Dr. Carter stated that he and the representatives from WESL tried to find a number in the middle with which they could be comfortable.

Senator Roberts asked what the correlation is between TOEFL scores and performance. He noted that the University of Illinois-Springfield requires a score of only 61, which is substantially lower than WIU's requirement. He asked why WIU does not also drop to the floor in order to encourage greater enrollment if the University is primarily banking on student transcripts. Dr. Carter admitted that some institutions have done this. He explained that WIU is different because of its solid, premiere WESL program. Dr. Carter would compare WIU's WESL program to that of any of its peer institutions; he thinks WIU's program is one of the best in the United States. He said that he would be unwilling to propose changing TOEFL score requirements without talking to WESL representatives because they know what those numbers mean in terms of listening, speaking, writing, and they evaluate those things very carefully. He stressed that those in the WESL Institute want WIU's international students to be successful, and they do not recommend that the University drop its requirement below a score of 70; consideration was given to recommending a score of 73 or 71, but 73 was felt to be the better recommendation. Dr. Carter realizes that some schools are greatly dropping their TOEFL requirements in order to increase recruitment, but he believes that widening the door just a little would be a better compromise.

Senator Boynton understands this proposal applies to undergraduate students only; she asked if freshmen admitted with scores of 73 would go through WESL or through ENG 100 or 180. Dr. Carter replied that any international student with a score of 73 or above would go directly into English courses and not into WESL, which is why he consulted with the Chair of the Department of English. Senator Boynton asked if students with scores below 73 would go into WESL first; Dr.

Carter responded affirmatively. Dr. Carter informed senators that many international students do not choose to take the TOEFL test or do not wish to spend the \$250 necessary to take it, so they automatically apply to WESL. Senator Boynton asked if any data is available on how students will do coming in with a score of 73 versus a score of 79; Dr. Carter replied that no data is available because WIU has not yet made this change.

Senator Hironimus-Wendt appreciates the data in the tables provided by Dr. Carter and is glad that comparisons with institutions in Western's athletic league was provided merely for reference. He told senators that Dr. Carter addressed his concerns about lowering the requirement to target athletic recruiting prior to the Senate meeting. Senator Hironimus-Wendt observed that of the 14 peer institutions for which numbers were provided, seven have scores of 79 or above, including Illinois State University. He pointed out that since WIU currently requires a score of 79, the University seems to be in the category that is chosen by most of its peer institutions; only four peer institutions require scores of 61. Senator Hironimus-Wendt has not taken the TOEFL test and is not familiar with what it tests, but finds it concerning to drop from the top half of Western's peer institutions to the mid-range. He would like to be convinced that 73 is a good compromise and not just a lowering of standards to attract more international students to WIU.

Dr. Carter assured senators that the integrity of the institution will not be compromised by approving the proposed change; as a faculty member, it is very dear to his heart that the academic component of the University not be lessened. He stated that the intention is to recruit students that may not have practiced as much so did not get as high of a score on the TOEFL test, or whose English courses are being taught by nationals in their country so their skills are not as good as they might think. Dr. Carter told senators that these kinds of students may come to WIU a little below the current standard, but once they arrive he is confident that a student with a score of 73 will be able to communicate sufficiently strongly to be successful at the University. He pointed out that these students will be immersed in English from their arrival in the residence halls and classrooms and will get lots of practice right away, so he and WESL representatives are convinced that they will be successful. Dr. Carter stated that if that turns out not to be the case, he is not opposed to coming back to Faculty Senate in one or two years and admitting that he was wrong, but he is betting that international students who score 73 or higher will be able to perform well and will result in some different populations of WIU students in future.

Senator Locke observed that the academic scores that will be reflected on the transcripts of international students will be for courses taught in their home language, not in English; Dr. Carter confirmed this is correct. Senator Locke stated that this would not be a true marker of success at WIU where classes will be taught in English. He expressed agreement with Dr. Carter that WIU's WESL program is very good but noted that students admitted to WIU with scores from 73 to 79 would no longer have to go through that program, so fewer students will be routed through WESL and will instead be routed straight into academic programs. Dr. Carter explained that currently WIU is not getting any international students with scores between 73 and 79; he plans to target a population that WIU currently does not attract and will not attract without a change because they are choosing to go to other institutions that accept scores below a 79.

Senator Locke asked what the difference is in the ability of a student getting a 73 on the TOEFL test and one getting a 79. He stated that the difference is quite crucial and observed that senators have not yet heard about it in a concrete way directly from WESL representatives. WESL Assistant Director Sara Thomson explained that the test is worth 120 points. She told senators she has taught a lot of TOEFL prep classes because it is a test that is not intuitive, so it is important that students learn testing strategies specific to the exam. She thinks that if the test were more intuitive it would be a better measure of English proficiency, but instead it is the kind of test for which students have to study how to take the exam. Ms. Thomson pointed out that many students are not good test takers, have test anxiety or nervousness, or simply are not good at analyzing. She thinks the difference between a score of 73 and 79 is simply how good the student was feeling on test day or whether the student studied the test taking strategies specific to TOEFL. She stated that even if a student has excellent English proficiency skills, it is no guarantee that the student will receive a high TOEFL score. Ms. Thomson told senators that TOEFL is a standard in the field and

something that many schools use for determining entrance, but she does not think it is the most accurate measure of English proficiency; the best measure of English proficiency is to interview a potential student face-to-face. She added that there are ways to cheat the TOEFL test by analyzing certain essay responses so that students can spit them back out on test day. She stressed that the difference between a score of 73 and 79 is not great enough to affect the academic standards of the students admitted with the lower score.

Senator Roberts expressed his support for the proposal. He asked what ways or forms of measurement will be used to determine if this is a successful experiment and having the desired effect. Dr. Carter responded that one of the key things to determine the success of international students is to keep an eye on their grades, academic ability, and graduation rates. He stated that international student success must be tracked for many reasons, ranging from homeland security to “because it’s the right thing to do.” There are currently less than 500 international students at WIU, but Dr. Carter would like to see that number grow to 1,000. He noted that international students spend a lot of money and time to come to the United States for college, so their investment is huge; they do not come to WIU with the intention to just visit or try it out but with the intention of succeeding and graduating. Dr. Carter promised to continue to monitor the success of international students closely, even if the number reaches 1,000 students. He told senators that it is rare that a problem occurs with international students at WIU in any academic form, but when it does occur his office tries to handle it quickly, and if it is found that lowering the TOEFL requirement causes any issues, the decision will be revisited right away.

Senator Cabedo-Timmons took the TOEFL test many years ago and found it very stressful. She does not think the test is a very successful measurement of student success, nor does she think lowering the score will hurt WIU academics. She stated that international students may have difficulty at the beginning of the semester understanding the professor, but usually they do better than non-international students in classes. She added that TOEFL scores are not equivalent to an A-F grading scale but indicates how well the student can speak English; the 120 top score does not equate to an A, and Senator Cabedo-Timmons does not think that any senator would achieve a score of 120 on the test. She does not think a score of 73 will negatively affect WIU and it may bring in better students because doors have been closed to many due to the current requirement.

Senator Hironimus-Wendt told senators that he was originally opposed to the proposal but now plans to vote in favor of it. He said he knows Dr. Carter to be a man of integrity, and since Dr. Carter has said that he would be willing to come back to Faculty Senate in two years and revisit the proposal’s success, Senator Hironimus-Wendt is willing to vote in favor of it. He would like to see Dr. Carter provide information about the effects of the proposal after two and four years of its implementation.

Senator Pawelko said it is helpful to know there will be some measurement of student success during this trial period. She asked if the difference between a score of 79 and 61 can be described. Ms. Thomson responded that the difference between scores is more face value than actual, but lowering the requirement from 79 down to 61 would not look good for the University; it might be perceived as lowering WIU’s standards, and she does not want that perception. She stated, however, that lowering the requirement from 79 to 73 opens doors just wide enough that it will allow more international students to attend WIU; while 61 would allow even more students to attend, she is not comfortable with that change. Senator Pawelko asked if she has heard whether institutions with a requirement of 61 have had problems with their international students; Ms. Thomson responded that she has not.

Chairperson Pynes asked what the average TOEFL score is for WIU students. He also wonders about how many students Dr. Carter thinks that lowering the score to 73 would net. Chairperson Pynes observed that it appears WIU is trying to get students from Eastern Illinois University, the University of Central Missouri, the University Nebraska-Kearney, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Dr. Carter asserted that he is not trying to recruit from those schools. Chairperson Pynes responded that it appears to be the case because it has been stated that WIU is losing students to schools with scores lower than 79. Dr. Carter stated that often the first question

from international students at recruitment events is what the TOEFL score requirement is, and when they see that WIU's requirement is a 79, they move on and shop elsewhere. Dr. Carter wants to be able to pull in students with TOEFL scores of 75, but he is unable to do so currently. He recruits from whatever country he happens to be visiting at the time; if they are good students and will represent their country in a positive manner, he would like to be able to recruit them for WIU.

Chairperson Pynes observed that another measure of success of the program, in addition to how well the students do academically, is how many additional students can be recruited with the change. He asked how many additional students Dr. Carter expects if the proposal is approved. Dr. Carter responded that he would like to see 1,000 international students at WIU. He understands that it may take three to five years to reach this goal, but he has already been working toward it at a gentle rate, and international enrollment has grown from about 200 to about 500 over the past three years. He stated that the University keeps sharpening its efforts to target international students and promote specific programs. Dr. Carter added that he is pursuing many different avenues of reaching this goal, and approval of the proposed TOEFL change is just one step.

Senator Dodson asked what TOEFL actually measures, adding that she needs something more concrete to understand what the tradeoff is for the six point difference in the two scores. She wonders why WIU is using TOEFL scores as the standard if it is not understood what it measures in terms of student success. She believes that other institutions must be tracking this type of data and that web searches could provide data on student success with different TOEFL scores. She asked if the reduction may mean that international students will take longer to graduate or whether the University will be less likely to retain them. Dr. Carter is unaware of any actual empirical evidence, but he does not believe there will be any academic difference in students admitted with a score of 73 versus those with a 79. He observed that some students spend a number of years in WESL building their language skills, and if they took the TOEFL exam they may only get a score of 20. He said that there are other scores that test English proficiency, but WIU uses the TOEFL as the benchmark for measurement to determine what the best fit is for the University.

Motion: To approve the proposal (DeVolder/Hironimus-Wendt)

MOTION APPROVED 15 YES – 5 NO – 1 AB

IV. New Business – None

Chairperson Pynes recognized those senators whose terms expire and will not be returning in the fall semester: Senators Bennett, Burke, Cabedo-Timmons, Holt, Myers, Pawelko, Siever, Silberer, Solomonson, and Westerhold.

Motion: To adjourn (Kapale)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Jeff Brown, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary