

# WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 10 September 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

## ACTION MINUTES

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

**SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** B. Brewer, E. Hamner, J. Hancks, B. McDonald, K. Wiseley

**SENATORS ABSENT:** None

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

**GUESTS:** Sally Adams, Tawnya Adkins Covert, Marjorie Allison, Andrea Alveshere, Josh Averbeck, Lori Baker-Sperry, Greg Baldi, David Banash, Keith Boeckelman, Zaire Bradshaw, Julie Brines, Amy Burke, Amy Carr, Amy Carrigan, Scott Clarke, Craig Conrad, Kassie Daly, Drew Donahoo, Hunt Dunlap, Lora Ebert Wallace, Michael Eddy, Tara Feld, Rich Filipink, Doug Freed, Liz Gougeon, Anita Hardeman, Robert Hironimus-Wendt, Keith Holz, Pete Jorgensen, Lorrie Kanauss, Ashley Katz, Samantha Klingler, Rick Kuracz, Sarah Lawson, Sherry Lindquist, Alisha Looney, Patty Mason, Damon McArthur, Bridget McCormick, Ally McGee, Patrick McGinty, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Christopher Merrett, Emir Miranda, Kat Myers, Holly Nikels, Lorette Oden, Betsy Perabo, Kaycee Petermann, Ron Pettigrew, Jennifer Plos, Renee Polubinsky, Jackie Price, Linda Prosis, Christopher Pynes, Kate Romanaggi, Ketra Roselieb, Jim Schmidt, Justin Schuch, Byron Shabazz, Eric Sheffield, Amanda Silberer, Victoria Smith, Shannon Sutton, Clare Thompson, Katy Valentin, Oswald Warner, LeRon Williams, Joani Wilson

Chair Robinett announced that there was a quorum of senators present in the room which means that, because of the Motion Regarding Zoom Attendance approved last week, those senators attending remotely will also be included in the meeting. He reminded everyone that Faculty Senate meetings are recorded, including the chats, and asked everyone not to use the public chat as a method of communicating with the body; he recognizes that on occasion something must be quickly shared, which is why the chat feature is not disabled during meetings. Chair Robinett asked those on zoom to use the reaction feature to raise their hand if they wish to comment.

### I. Consideration of Minutes

#### A. August 27, 2024

The minutes were approved as distributed.

### II. Announcements

#### A. Approvals from the President and Provost

Chair Robinett noted that these approvals were primarily from last spring.

#### A. Approvals from the President

1. Change to admissions policy for Summer/Fall 2025
2. Creation of new School of Communication and Media
3. Reorganization Requests from the College of Education and Human Services
  - a. Move Sport Management program to Department of Recreation, Park, Tourism, and Hospitality

- b. Move PE Teacher Education program to School of Education
- c. Move Health Sciences programs to Department of Kinesiology

B. Approvals from the Provost

- 1. Requests for New Courses
  - a. ENG 382, Book Reviewing and Non-Fiction Literary Writing, 3 s.h.
  - b. MATH 489, Numerical Optimization, 3 s.h.
  - c. UNIV 102, Academic Refocus, 1 s.h.
- 2. Request for Change of Minor
  - a. Professional Writing
- 3. Requests for Changes of Options
  - a. Actuarial Science
  - b. Agricultural Business
  - c. Agricultural Science
  - d. Agriculture – Teacher Education
  - e. Data Science and Statistics
- 4. Request for Change of Emphasis
  - a. Big Data Technologies
- 5. Requests for Changes of Majors
  - a. Accountancy
  - b. B.A. in Economics
  - c. B.B. in Economics
  - d. Business Analytics
  - e. Business Core
  - f. Finance
  - g. Human Resource Management
  - h. Management
  - i. Marketing
  - j. Supply Chain Management

B. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Mossman said he was proud of the way the university handled the tragedy of last week [when two Macomb police officers were shot while in the process of serving a warrant]. He noted that while there are many things still lingering about the nature of the event, he without a doubt wants to raise up Office of Public Safety Director Derek Watts and his officers who did everything possible to make sure WIU students were safe. He noted that they made sure to follow protocol and got every student they could find into the residence halls or other safe spaces. Interim Provost Mossman thinks it was a very good decision to cancel classes and close the university the following day given the nature of the situation. He added that both Chief Watts and Interim Vice President for Student Success Justin Schuch constantly communicated with the Cabinet and with others across the campus in a calm way, and he thinks that communication really helped the Cabinet to make good decisions. He recognizes that it was a tragic event, and he is very glad there were no fatalities that occurred during it.

Interim Provost Mossman thinks it may be six weeks before the part that was destroyed in a lightning strike can be obtained and the problem to Horrabin Hall's air conditioning system repaired. He noted

that classes have been successfully moved, and although there have been some minor hiccups everyone has done their best to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible for the affected faculty, students, and administrators. It is his understanding that the WIU Infant and Preschool Center is still operating in Horrabin because it is only when the temperature goes above 78 degrees that they have to move, at which time there is room in the Head Start building, on the north side of campus, for them, including very accessible parking.

Interim Provost Mossman announced that with tenth day counts complete, there is a total headcount of 6,332 students and a full-time equivalent (FTE) headcount of 5,055. He thinks the most important number to note is the new freshmen headcount of 634, which is incredibly small – almost 35 percent below what it was last year and almost 41 percent below what it was two years ago, which is significant. He stressed the university must retain because with such low numbers of students coming in it is important to figure out how to get them to stay. He believes that if nothing is done in this regard, WIU is on the road to being a 3,000 student institution, which nobody wants. He asked Christopher Merrett, Dean for Innovation and Economic Development, to address this in more detail.

Dean Merrett distributed handouts from a PowerPoint he gave to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) in March advocating for support for rural, regional universities beyond what the IBHE is currently doing. Dean Merrett said he has been talking about this to people in both Sherman Hall and Springfield for years because he is not sure the extent to which people understand the context for rural higher education. His understanding has been developed as the Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA), so for the past almost 30 years he has explored the well-being and quality of life of communities in rural Illinois. Dean Merrett thinks IIRA has done pretty well through the years; some of their work has received positive coverage in *The New York Times* and on CNN.

Dean Merrett said some of the work of the IIRA has included starting up small grocery stores and launching small rural housing subdivisions. He noted that the fitness center on the northwest corner of Rushville emerged as a consequence of the planning work IIRA did in that town. He observed, however, that in every rural community in which IIRA has worked, the population has declined, which he considers a real problem when thinking about the metrics for the success of their efforts since typically those metrics include population growth, job growth, and wage growth. He noted that in some cases wage growth has occurred, but not population growth.

The map distributed by Dean Merrett shows the census year in which Illinois counties saw their peak populations. Dean Merrett pointed out that the peak population in McDonough County occurred in 1980, and it is completely surrounded by counties that peaked over a century ago. He pointed out that Warren and Fulton Counties saw their populations peak in 1910, and Hancock County, to the west, peaked in 1870. He noted the consequences of this for downstate and rural communities are that depopulation brings with it an aging population and declining rural tax base. Dean Merrett pointed out that one aspect of this on rural communities is the loss of the Main Street economy, which is felt locally by the recent loss of Chubby's restaurant and by the recent closure of the pharmacy in Galva, just north of Galesburg. He observed that a "negative narrative" or "psychology of decline" has affected much of rural Illinois, but the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs works to think of ways to turn that narrative around.

Dean Merrett pointed out that one-third of the counties in Illinois experienced their peak population many decades ago, which raises many questions about who understands rural development and, more broadly, who understands higher education in the state and who is listening because there are problems with getting WIU's voice heard. He noted that an Index of Age Cohorts for Illinois for the years 2000 through 2022 shows that the fastest growing age for Illinois residents is 65 and older, and the fastest shrinking age is under 20. He pointed out that under 20 is college age, and the rural cohort is shrinking faster than the urban cohort for this age group. He pointed out that these long-term demographic trends compound the "demographic cliff" for many parts of Illinois, which basically went over the "demographic cliff" decades ago.

Dean Merrett told senators he has not heard anyone in Springfield talking about this. He has spoken to the IBHE twice about these facts and was told by one person that he should not be sharing such negative news at an IBHE meeting, which Dean Merrett found a little disconcerting. He showed a headline from Paul Krug, *New York Times* columnist and Nobel Prize winning economist, stating that “Nobody knows how to reverse the heartland’s decline,” which seems to indicate the view from New York City is that there are systemic challenges confronting rural America. He showed another headline from *The National Review* that a prescription for impoverished communities, including rural communities, is “if your town is failing, just go.”

Dean Merrett believes that the work IIRA does is necessary but insufficient, and he does not think the state is paying enough attention to what they are doing in terms of rural development. He similarly believes that innovative academic programs and recruitment strategies are necessary but insufficient to increase enrollment and the rural population. He told senators the point is that macro scale processes are driving rural and downstate population declines; for example, agricultural technology means that fewer farmers are producing more on increasingly larger farms, so agricultural technology is driving deep rural depopulation. He noted that people in faraway places are making decisions that affect WIU’s local economy, such as the fact that Macomb used to have some national stores, such as JC Penney’s and Sears, which they no longer have.

Dean Merrett believes the remedy is to develop a macroscale policy to stabilize rural and downstate places. He believes that in addition to continuing to work locally, there is the need for more help from Springfield, particularly in regard to higher education. He stressed that higher education is absolutely part of the solution because it drives economic development. Dean Merrett related that he recently listened to a presentation from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs about the tens of millions of dollars spent bringing in businesses to Illinois and keeping existing businesses in the state, but Illinois is also losing tens of thousands of students every year, which should be treated similar to a business expansion and retention problem. He noted, though, that this kind of issue has to be driven by Springfield, and WIU really does not have much power over that.

Dean Merrett pointed out that when the University of Illinois gets a five percent funding increase, so does WIU, but really WIU should receive a 15 or 20 percent increase to deal with its different challenging geography and century of population decline. He observed that Champaign County saw its population peak in 2020, and they continue to grow as opposed to the western Illinois region of the state. Dean Merrett believes that ultimately Illinois should be a net importer of students because the state has a pretty good product, but that initiative needs to come from Springfield. He noted that more information on this can be found at [http://www.facibhe.org/documents/papers/IIRA\\_Intro\\_2023.pdf](http://www.facibhe.org/documents/papers/IIRA_Intro_2023.pdf).

Dean Merrett concluded that the peak population map has implications for WIU’s plans and expectations moving forward. He is surprised at how many important decision makers in the state do not understand these simple demographics and are making decisions based on trends they do not understand. He asked senators to think about the implications of the Macomb campus being surrounded by counties that peaked over a century ago and how that affects expectations for where WIU should be in two, five, or ten years.

Senator Wipplerling asked Interim Provost Mossman if the freshman population count included transfers. Interim Provost Mossman replied it does not; it only includes new freshmen.

Interim Provost Mossman told senators the inspiration for Dean Merrett to come to the meeting was a recent article about the failure of universities to be economic drivers in rural communities. He noted that Dean Merrett has provided a larger set of circumstances and macro trends that are shaping rural communities and which do not negate in any possible way the impact of WIU in a place like western Illinois, where there was peak population in 1910. He pointed out that there are people in western Illinois because WIU is here, so WIU has agency in this discussion and is helping to drive this economy. He thinks that if WIU recognizes there is a narrative that all rural communities in the country are failing, and looks at the new freshmen number of 634, there will be the realization that this is a number the university cannot sit on, and there is a need for that to increase. He does not believe this is anyone’s fault and thinks the Admissions team is doing everything it can, but there

needs to be an institution-wide commitment to increase retention and to make WIU a place where students want to come in order to increase freshmen classes and retention. Interim Provost Mossman noted that WIU's *modus operandi* is one of lots of small successes; for instance, the university's bridge program retained 26 of 29 students, but this is a small number and needs to be scaled up. He taught in a living-learning community with about a 90 percent retention rate from first to second year, but this is only 23 students, so the university needs to figure out how to scale up these successes. Interim Provost Mossman added that such a small number of new freshmen is terrifying to him, but he thinks there are many people with a commitment and love for this institution, and that WIU can get to the point of increased freshmen, transfers, and retention in order to build toward the type of institution everyone wants.

Senator Gravitt asked if there is any idea how the FAFSA crisis might have affected freshmen enrollment. She suspects the number might have been smaller anyway but wonders if the debacle about how FAFAS was rolled out this year was part of that problem because she read that it was going to affect universities across the country, and Western's students are largely financially dependent. Interim Provost Mossman replied that WIU definitely experienced a negative impact from FAFSA, but the institution simultaneously had a team that worked incredibly hard to minimize the impact. He does not think it is possible to say what the effect was in numbers, but he is sure there was an impact. He added that individuals at the university continue to work hard to address hiccups which also occurred on getting Pell grants delivered to students this fall.

Senator Albarracin said she was surprised at some of the statistics provided by Dean Merrett because she attended a recent presentation that showed the growth in the state of Illinois is coming from west central, central, and southern Illinois rather than from Chicago. Dean Merrett responded that recent data he has looked at absolutely runs counter to that.

C. Student Government Association Report  
(Zaire Bradshaw, SGA Director of Academic Affairs)

Chair Robinett introduced new SGA President Emir Miranda. He also introduced SGA Director of Academic Affairs Zaire Bradshaw, who will be attending Faculty Senate meetings and giving the report.

Mr. Bradshaw reported that SGA recently held its first meeting, so they are just getting acclimated. He said one topic of conversation was holding an informal town hall, and SGA is making plans and looking into a venue.

Mr. Bradshaw announced that SGA has filled its Cabinet and has created their committees to achieve SGA's goals and the needs of the institution. He stated that the next SGA general assembly meeting will be held at 3:00 tomorrow, September 11, in the Union Capitol Rooms.

D. Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Chair Robinett expressed his thanks to Financial Aid, Administrative Information Management Services (AIMS), Student Services, the Registrar's office, and Administrative Services for all the work they have been doing to navigate the myriad financial aid systems they have been working with. He recalled that at the last Faculty Senate meeting there was mention of a stop-gap solution that was put in place to connect WIU's financial computing systems. He recognizes that the employees in these offices have put in countless hours toward supporting students and making those systems work.

Chair Robinett also expressed his thanks to Human Resources, who hosted a memorial tree planting to honor employees who passed away in the last year. He added that there were no faculty were honored during the well-organized and thoughtful ceremony because none had passed away in that time period.

Chair Robinett met with Admissions Director Doug Freed and Kassie Daly, Associate Director for Recruitment and Outreach, recently regarding proposals they would like to bring to CAGAS. He

noted that while three of the proposals involve issues that CAGAS deals with fairly regularly (dual enrollment and appeals), the fourth was a new proposal that Chair Robinett thought needed to be better thought out before sending to CAGAS. He has shared information about these proposals with the CAGAS Chair, and once the Executive Committee has those, they will take appropriate action.

Chair Robinett informed senators that next week the Executive Committee will work with chairs of councils and committees to develop charges for their groups. He noted that the Budget Transparency Committee charge has been completed and was included in the Executive Committee minutes, and he anticipates there will be several others completed next week following ExCo's rather lengthy meeting last week to clarify some situations.

Chair Robinett reported that the WIU Leadership Team is reviewing the university's email policies. Chair Robinett was invited to a meeting of the State University Annuitant's Association (SUAA) Board where he shared talking points provided by Ketra Roselieb, Executive Director of Financial Affairs, and the University Technology CIO Group about the proposed changes to WIU email policies, and where the SUAA group shared their reactions and concerns. Chair Robinett told senators the key issue is that WIU must facilitate better security over its email accounts, but the question is how to find some balance to accomplish this a way that is usable for retirees and alumni. He communicated input back to the CIO Group and anticipates that Faculty Senate will hear more about this in the coming weeks. He said the CIO Group has spoken about coming to a Senate meeting soon.

Chair Robinett reminded everyone that Faculty Senate is the established government organization for faculty at WIU; the Board of Trustees (BOT) outlines procedures for staff and students to establish their governing organizations as well. He noted that each of these governing organizations has delegated authority to promote shared participation and wise decision-making and to ensure channels of communication.

Chair Robinett remarked that it is nice to see so many people in attendance and good to see everyone engaging and understanding, or seeking to understand, what is happening at the university. He noted that while guests will be invited to ask questions, senators and faculty will take precedence since this is Faculty Senate. He asked that those who wish to be recognized raise their hands, and he will try to acknowledge everyone in the appropriate order. Chair Robinett also reminded everyone that comments or questions should be relevant to the issues being discussed.

E. Other Announcements – None

### III. Reports of Committees and Councils

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

1. Pregnant and Parenting Students Policy Proposal

Dr. Filipink told senators that the proposed policy is similar to one already in existence for WIU employees with the addition of a students' rights section which discusses excused absences and the potential for getting an Incomplete on a course.

**NO OBJECTIONS**

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

1. Request for New Course

a. REL 100, World Religions, 3 s.h.

Keith Boeckelman, College of Arts and Sciences Interim Associate Dean, noted this is an introductory course. He explained that previously the department offered two introductory courses, for eastern and western religions, but with the declining size of the department they decided to consolidate these into a World Religions course. He said this type of course is more typical of smaller departments at other universities and gives the opportunity to cover religions outside of the “big five.”

**NO OBJECTIONS**

- 2. Request for Change in Minor
  - a. Religious Studies

Ms. Burke explained the request for change of minor is basically due to the change in the core.

**NO OBJECTIONS**

- J. Senate Nominating Committee (SNC)  
(Julia Albarracin, Chair)

- 1. Faculty Nominations

Chair Albarracin remarked that filling the vacancies is a little complicated because of some faculty colleagues being laid off now while others will be laid off next year.

**SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

Council for Instructional Technology (CIT)

Nilanjan Sen, Computer Sciences	replacing	Md Shahin Alam	2026	B&T
Mohammad Shamsuddoha, Mgt/Mktg	replacing	Donna Wienczek	2027	B&T

Council on Intercollegiate Athletics (CIA)

Steve Gray, AFED	replacing	Janice Gates	2027	B&T
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**UNIVERSITY COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

Intellectual Property Oversight Committee

Whitney Ashe, Music	replacing	Mei Wen	24-25	AT-LARGE
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Provost’s Awards Committee

Munia Cabal-Jimenez, For Lang & Lit	new		2026	A&S
Yu-Ping Hsu, Engineering & Tech	new		2027	B&T
Ben Brewer, LEJA	new		2027	LEJA
Suzanne Bailey, LEJA	new		2027	WIUQC

University Technology Advisory Group (UTAG)

Leaunda Hemphill, Engineering & Tech	replacing	Donna Wienczek	2026	B&T
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There were no further nominations, and the slate of candidates was declared elected.

- IV. Old Business – None

- V. New Business

- A. Proposed Bylaws Amendment from Council for Instructional Technology (CIT)

Chair Robinett explained that this is an informational first reading. He noted that, according to Article V of the Senate Bylaws, discussion and a vote will occur at the next Senate meeting. He added that bylaws amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote.

B. Request for Referendum of No Confidence on Interim President Mindrup

Chair Robinett told Interim Provost Mossman that if he wanted to stay, he was welcome to do so, but Interim Provost Mossman replied he did not think that would be appropriate and left the meeting.

Chair Robinett remarked that this discussion item was brought to Faculty Senate by a faculty member who followed the procedures outlined in the Senate Constitution and Bylaws. He warned that referendums of no confidence should not be taken lightly. He also noted that a vote of no confidence by the faculty has no binding authority on the administration or the Board of Trustees. Chair Robinett added that as former Senate Parliamentarian Dale Hample, the author of the informal parliamentary procedure guide used for Faculty Senate meetings, wrote, “The Senate only has final authority over itself and its subordinate parts, such as its councils and committees.”

Chair Robinett pointed out that Faculty Senate in 1984 passed a formal censure, in 2015 passed a protest resolution, and in 2018 initiated a vote of no confidence. He noted that the WIU Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws do not include specific procedures for conducting no confidence votes, but precedent has set that votes of no confidence should follow the procedures outlined in Article VII, the referendum section of the Senate Constitution.

Chair Robinett explained that Article VII outlines the two procedures by which a referendum can be held; the first involves a petition signed by 20 percent of the eligible faculty, and the second is by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate. He added that if a majority vote is not done in the Senate, the requesting party may still decide to pursue the petition route.

Chair Robinett related that some have suggested to him that Faculty Senate has been operating in a state of “no confidence in the administrative leadership of Western Illinois University” since a referendum was conducted in 2018 because Article VII, Section 4 of the Senate Constitution states that the Faculty Senate shall be governed by the results of the referendum. Chair Robinett said the person suggesting this to him was of the opinion that Faculty Senate would not be able to hold referendums of no confidence because they would still be governed by the 2018 referendum. Chair Robinett said he does not take such questions lightly, and after reviewing *Sturgis* with Parliamentarian Bowers Sharpe, he met with Dr. Hample and with the Senate Chair from 2018, Steve Rock. He said Dr. Rock’s understanding was that the referendum taken in 2018 referred to the Thomas administration, based on the discussion leading up to that vote. He said that while Dr. Rock noted that the ballot language was unclear, the discussion was focused on the administration at that time. Chair Robinett related that Dr. Hample’s position was that the 2024 Faculty Senate has the temporal authority to determine the issue. He said Dr. Hample also pointed out that “the administrative leadership” was named in 2018, whereas specific individuals are named in the referendums brought forward for consideration in 2024. Chair Robinett believes, after much reading and reflection, that the 2018 referendum does not restrict Faculty Senate from considering the referendums put before it in 2024.

Chair Robinett told senators that they may appeal his decision if they choose. He explained that a senator wishing to do so would simply say “I appeal the decision of the Chair.” He said after this there would be a discussion regarding sustaining or overruling the Chair’s decision, and at the conclusion of the discussion Senate would vote. Chair Robinett noted that if a majority voted to overrule his decision, the Senate would be governed by the results of the 2018 referendum. He asked if any senator wished to overrule his decision; there were none.

Chair Robinett stated that the Executive Committee put the referendums on the agenda in accordance with Article IV of the Senate Bylaws; they are not being brought forward to Faculty Senate as motions moved and seconded by ExCo. He added that these are discussion requests. Chair Robinett



explained that if Faculty Senate wishes to initiate a referendum, it will require a motion to initiate and a majority vote of the senators present. He added that if Faculty Senate does not choose to make a motion following discussion, or if no one seconds such a motion, then no action will be taken other than that of allowing the faculty member to present the agenda item. He noted that if Faculty Senate votes to initiate one or both referendums, the Executive Committee is tasked with conducting the referendum by mail or electronic ballot within 30 days and with communicating the results at the end of the voting period. Chair Robinett reminded everyone to be mindful that discussion on the referendums remain germane and focused on those requests.

Chair Robinett noted that Dr. Sherry Lindquist, who submitted the referendum requests, was not yet arrived at the meeting and asked if any other faculty members who supported the referendum wished to speak. Seeing none, he asked if any faculty would like to make comments regarding the referendum request.

Senator Albarracin asked what the process would look like and whether the person voting would receive all the verbiage in the resolutions or would simply receive a ballot asking for a vote of confidence or no confidence. She noted that the verbiage is very loaded, and as a social scientist she would not want to preface any of her surveys with something that would bias the respondents. Chair Robinett replied that Article VII, Section 1 states that “all petitions for referendum must include the precise language to appear on the ballot to be used in each referendum,” so what senators have in their folders is what would appear on the ballots. Senator Albarracin asked if the whole thing would be included; Chair Robinett confirmed it would.

Chair Robinett remarked that he believes the faculty member who brought the referendums forward has class right now and asked if there are any other questions or comments. Michael Eddy, WIU Insurance Risk Manager, observed that, as someone who has come to WIU after having lived in the community for a long time, the community has been asking the university to live within a budget for a very long time, and the previous administration literally skipped town and kicked the can down the road. He remarked that of the people he has spoken to in the community, the overwhelming majority support the Interim President and Interim Provost, and he hopes the BOT is watching this and will soon remove the “Interim” designation because this administration has had the courage to do what is needed to live within the university’s needs.

Chair Robinett stressed that the focus needs to be on item V.B., the request for a referendum of no confidence on Interim President Mindrup. He asked if there were any other questions or comments; there were none. Chair Robinett stated that at this point it would be up to the Faculty Senate if any action wished to be taken. After taking a moment to allow for any, Chair Robinett stated that, seeing none, he would move on to the next agenda item.

C. Request for Referendum of No Confidence on Interim Provost Mossman

Chair Robinett asked for any comments, questions or concerns from senators first; there were none. Lora Ebert Wallace, professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, remarked that, since Dr. Lindquist had not yet arrived, she would like to respond to Mr. Eddy’s comments. She noted that the resolutions, as they are worded, are not about the need to balance the budget and worry about the cash flow; they are about the way in which this is being done, especially on the academic side, which is within the purview of faculty. She stated that many faculty have been discussing and are baffled to see any logic in laying off the faculty librarians, for instance, since this is probably the most glaring thing that is really dangerous and has drawn national attention that is not favorable to our university. She also noted that faculty have been laid off in departments that have many students and try to hire faculty every year, such as the seven who were laid off in Computer Sciences. She related that people she meets in the community are frequently flabbergasted by these things.

Dr. Ebert Wallace stressed that from her perspective it is not about the need to lay faculty off; the point is that if faculty are to be laid off again, one wants to think it will be successful, and the way it is being done, in her opinion, will make the university less successful rather than more successful in the future. She believes the university is suffering through pain and doing things to weaken ourselves.

She thinks the administration may get to the number they want today, but in the future things will go in the direction they do not want them to go because of the way in which this has been done. She has not met anyone in the community or on the campus who does not agree with her on this point. Dr. Ebert Wallace noted that everyone has some significant part of the design of the cuts they do not understand, and she has not heard an explanation from the administration that would make her understand it, even though this should not be that difficult to do. She concluded that she just wanted to speak up generally in support of the resolutions.

Senator Wipperling stated that, speaking from her experience in the Department of Theatre and Dance specifically, and having read some of the past minutes of other experiences at WIU and from other universities where votes of no confidence have happened, if the administration were to have cut in order of hierarchy – where a Unit B person was laid off, then someone who was tenure track, and then a tenured faculty member – that would have made more sense. Senator Wipperling noted, however, that she is tenure track, but someone in her area who has been working at WIU ten years and just got tenure this past year was laid off, and Senator Wipperling was not, which does not make sense to her. She also noted that a specialty ballet instructor in her department was laid off, and even though this faculty member is in Unit B, losing her will make the BFA in Musical Theatre lose its accreditation next year. She stated that WIU is the only state institution with a BFA in Musical Theatre, and this specialized program is a good recruiting tool for WIU.

Chair Robinett reminded that the discussion is on the request for referendum of no confidence on Interim Provost Mossman. Senator Wipperling continued that she does not understand the order in which faculty were laid off, and she does not understand the logic of how that happened, so she is in favor of no confidence because she would like to understand the logic.

Chair Robinett reminded again that the Senate is discussing the request for referendum, pursuant to Article VII of the Constitution. Senator Hunter remarked that when he read through the requests for referendum, he decided he had his own feelings about them but wanted to talk to his constituents in the College of Business and Technology. He related that they are really split about the idea of referendums. He said two items came up quite often: 1) Shouldn't there be a referendum on the Board of Trustees rather than the Interim President and Interim Provost? and 2) Haven't we had enough bad publicity already, because this is really not going to make any difference other than getting into *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

English professor David Banash recalled he was a senator at the time the referendum of no confidence came up the last time, and it was an incredibly painful position to be in. He noted that it is a pretty momentous choice, and he would like to think about it in a couple of ways. He recalled that when he arrived at WIU in 2003, there were about 63 faculty members in his department who were split pretty evenly between Unit A and Unit B. He stated that in 2018, after previous layoffs, the Department of English lost what was left of its Unit B faculty. He related that was incredibly painful as about ten Unit B, many of whom were long serving, were let go, and subsequent to that the department lost eight Unit A faculty through attrition. Dr. Banash explained he brought this up because he has heard the Interim President and Interim Provost have showed favoritism toward the Department of English in the actions they have taken this time, and he wants to reiterate that is not true. He pointed out that the department has lost two-thirds of its faculty members over the 20 years of his career at WIU. He stated that it seems like a skeleton crew wandering around Simpkins Hall, and he sees all the empty offices where faculty are no longer present. Dr. Banash thinks people do not have a big overview of how different departments have been affected, not just in this round of layoffs but in the much longer narrative that he thinks any decision about this would have to be framed in, and he wanted to make that point.

Dr. Banash said he is sympathetic with the fact that former President Huang and former Provost Zoghi for almost three years let the problems with the budget, including problems with tuition discounting, fester and took no action whatsoever. He thinks that in a world where WIU has an incoming class of just over 600 students, everyone should be animated by the sense that this is a significant crisis. He suggested that Faculty Senate consider that a vote of no confidence speaks very, very loudly. He thinks these referendums of no confidence are misdirected because the impetus came

from the Board, who said to resolve the budget crisis by September, and the current administration has done that. Dr. Banash stated that if there is a vote of no confidence and the BOT removes Interim President Mindrup and Interim Provost Mossman, he does not see where that leaves the university, and he does not see any indication that the Board would do that.

Dr. Banash admitted he does not agree with every decision that has been made and is, like others, troubled by the decision to lay off all librarians, which seems somewhat not to have been well thought through. He pointed out, though, that there are other options which Faculty Senate might have. He noted that one of these might be to consider a motion of censure on particular issues, which is not a vote of no confidence and does not carry the same weight and sort of drastic nature. He explained this type of vote simply indicates that senators disagree with a particular decision that has been made and communicates that very clearly. He believes that a vote of no confidence on a president and provost who have barely been in those roles when it is the Board who is really making the decisions is simply misdirected.

Chair Robinett clarified that Faculty Senate has not been asked to take a vote of confidence or no confidence in individuals; it has been asked to consider the initiation of a referendum. He stated that since Professor Lindquist had arrived, he wished to give her the floor, explaining that the Senate has moved on to item V.C., the request for referendum of no confidence on Interim Provost Mossman. Dr. Lindquist said she lost confidence in both the Interim President and the Interim Provost for the reasons stated in the documents. She would like to make these documents available to the faculty as a whole in the form of referendums.

Patrick McGinty, professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, remarked that it is entirely possible, as pointed out by Senator Wipperling and other colleagues, that the processes that have brought about the question of referendums of the Interim President and Interim Provost are questionable. He agrees that there are no doubt a number of opportunities for censure if senators were to take the route offered by Dr. Banash. He also thinks there is little doubt that the other path that is offered is the very real possibility that the vote of no confidence belongs not immediately with any of the interim leadership but with the Board of Trustees. Dr. McGinty observed that, for those who have been paying attention the last couple of years, Trustees do not come prepared, are not actively and fully engaged in their meetings, and have effectively fallen asleep at the wheel. He noted they did not take action to ensure that the things they were calling for as trustees of the institution – the directions and encouragement they gave executive leadership – were followed up on. He observed the BOT has insisted time and again that they will not micromanage, but that is exactly what they appear to have done in requesting that interim leadership take action and have not hesitated to micromanage what those decisions have been. He added that regarding the suggestion of removing the interim titles, that is not how universities operate, and WIU has a long history of identifying interim positions and moving them up.

Chair Robinett asked Dr. McGinty to stay focused on the referendum. Dr. McGinty said the question is whether the referendum is misplaced, and it entirely possibly might be. He thinks the consideration for Faculty Senate should be whether a referendum focused on the Board of Trustees would be better placed.

Senator Gravitt asked if at this point the Senate is discussing whether to proceed with the procedure. Chair Robinett clarified that the Senate is discussing New Business item C., Request for Referendum of No Confidence on Interim Provost Mossman. He noted that if no senator makes a motion in regard to this item, it is a discussion item only; if a senator makes a motion which is seconded, that could then be something with Faculty Senate would discuss and debate. He added that the rules for initiating referendums are outlined in the Senate Constitution.

Senator Gravitt said she is not in favor of doing a referendum. Senator Gravitt stated that although she does not always agree with how decisions were put in place and does not necessarily like the lack of understanding for how these decisions came down, she believes that starts with the directors and deans who were proposing some of these changes. She has an issue with the lack of transparency but does not think that rises to the level of lack of confidence in the people who are finally making

decisions and moving in the directions the university needs to. She noted that others have not been willing to step up to do anything, so she is not in support of either of the referendums.

Senator Wipperling apologized for getting heated earlier and thanked Chair Robinett for stopping her. She understands that senators have a responsibility to the faculty members of the university to serve that population, and she believes that senators are speaking to their constituencies. Senator Wipperling believes there are a lot of people upset about what is happening and feels a responsibility to do something, but she does not know what that is yet. She agrees with Senator Gravitt that the current proposal is not the right thing to do. She does not know what the right thing to do is but is also in support of not having this be the thing that Faculty Senate does.

Dr. Lindquist told senators she came straight from teaching her class five minutes ago, but as a faculty member of WIU she wanted Faculty Senate to allow her to have a voice. She stated that a referendum is just allowing the faculty to weigh in, and she does not believe that senators should obstruct a referendum because she is just asking for a voice. She noted that if the rest of the faculty do not think the referendum is appropriate, everyone would hear back from them that they do have confidence in the Interim President and Interim Provost. Dr. Lindquist reiterated that she does not have confidence and is especially scandalized by the way curriculum has been taken away from the faculty experts. She thinks this has been a very top-down, not well thought out destruction of WIU's General Education program. She also does not think it is alright that this just came down over the summer because this should go through faculty committees. She remarked that there are minutes that basically show the Faculty Senate begging the Interim Provost to please send the changes through the committees and promising that they would look at it quickly. She thinks this was a destruction of shared governance and that faculty need to take a stand.

Dr. Lindquist thinks the way the layoffs were communicated has been terrible because faculty do not know why some were laid off while others were not. She said they also do not know why some programs were favored over others. She thinks these actions did not seem to be taken with reference to a vision or strategic plan for the university. Dr. Lindquist is also shocked that all of the librarians were laid off and, therefore, WIU students do not have access to basic services.

Chair Robinett reminded Dr. Lindquist to stay focused on the referendum request. Dr. Lindquist replied the part about librarians is in the referendum. Chair Robinett stated that the discussion is on the request for referendum of no confidence on Interim Provost Mossman. Dr. Lindquist apologized and said she thought the discussion was about both requests.

Senator Albarracin asked if it is too late to talk about the two referendums together since they are so connected. Chair Robinett replied that it is not. He explained that the Senate has moved on to the request for referendum of no confidence on Interim Provost Mossman, but since this is a discussion item senators may discuss it as they choose.

Senator Albarracin said she agrees with many of the things that were said, but she wants to reiterate her point that if a referendum is sent out on the Interim President and Interim Provost with all the language included, it would be trying to bias a response in favor of a vote of no confidence. She also does not see what is to be gained by the referendums. She agrees that the decisions were not solely made by the current administration, especially considering they are both interim; she thinks the actions were strongly influenced by the Board of Trustees. Senator Albarracin does not support either of the referendums because she does not think there is anything to gain from them. She believes that even if the referendums were stripped of all the language coming after the layoffs, thinking that faculty would give a vote of confidence would be, as they say in Spanish, as easy as taking firewood out of a fallen tree because no one would support the administrators right now since everyone is frustrated and angry. She suggested that perhaps Faculty Senate can be used to question the processes, but it is hard to get into the weeds about who was laid off because that information is confidential, and Faculty Senate is not the right forum to be discussing that. She would like to know that these conversations are happening with the Union because that is the right forum for those discussions. She does not think Faculty Senate should be discussing why one faculty member was laid off over another because they will not receive an answer.

Senator Gravitt remarked that after talking to everyone and hearing people's remarks at this meeting, it basically comes down to "people want to know why" – why did this happen? why did these people get laid off? why was this decision made over that decision? She thinks there are so many variables, including contracts. She related that at the UPI meeting last week it was stated that some grievances will be filed because they do not think the letter of the contract was followed in some places, but Faculty Senate cannot address those kinds of things. Senator Gravitt said she cannot support the requests for referendums because faculty want answers, and this process will not provide those answers.

Senator Melkumian remarked that she needs to speak even though this is only her second meeting as a new senator. She related that when she came to the meeting, she told Chair Robinett that she was in full support of the referendums for a vote of no confidence because of the need to give voice to the faculty since Faculty Senate represents faculty. She thinks the main issue is that faculty do not know how things happened even though they have been questioning the administration continuously. She said one of the questions she has never received an answer to is how the university went from a budget surplus three years ago to currently having a \$20 million deficit. Senator Melkumian is an economist who loves and works with numbers, but she cannot find an answer to this question anywhere in the published documents. She thinks that if the administration is not transparent and faculty do not understand what is happening, it is difficult to trust that administration to lead WIU into a better future.

Senator Melkumian asserted she understands the negative impact of a vote of no confidence because she has been at WIU for over 20 years, but she wonders if there is any other way Faculty Senate can express the great concerns of faculty that they are not being understood or not receiving explanations. She wonders if there is another way to indicate to the administration that because of this faculty cannot respectfully follow them into the future and, therefore, have no confidence in them.

Chair Robinett responded that Faculty Senate has found other ways of expressing some of these situations. He related that in 1984 there was a censure done related to these issues, and a protest resolution was passed in 2015. He will distribute those to senators so that they can see those historical documents.

Senator Hunter remarked he is really disturbed at the negative bias in the referendum that was presented to Faculty Senate and cannot support sending it to the faculty when every "whereas" is negative. He asked where the "whereas" is that indicates that the two administrators are interim and were "dumped on" and had to react. He reiterated that the referendum is too negative and biased in its present state for him to support it.

Senator Wipperling recalled that after the last Faculty Senate meeting in May, there was a conversation about having a meeting in the summer but not being able to achieve quorum so that Faculty Senate could make an official statement. She noted that Faculty Senate has quorum now and could draft an official statement that could be sent to the administration. She does not know if drafting a statement that indicates that Faculty Senate does not like that all librarians were fired would represent a censure but asked if that is something the Senate could do. Chair Robinett responded that the Senate does have the capacity to do motions to create resolutions; a resolution proclaiming what it is the Senate believes is something senators could create if they choose. He added that such a resolution would be brought forward as a motion, similar to the motion brought forward last week, which would then be voted on. He added that if there are senators who would like to create a motion, a censure, or whatever resolution they want, that is something that Faculty Senate could do.

Senator Gravitt asked if the Senate Chair could be given insight into some of the decisions that might have been personnel related so that at least the Senate Chair could have his questions answered and could convey to the Senate that he feels confident the administration made the right decisions in these cases. Chair Robinett responded that UPI has certain tasks that they are charged with, and Faculty Senate has others. He noted that the Board of Trustees has delegated authority to Faculty Senate, so as these decisions affect university curriculum it is definitely within the Senate's wheelhouse to ask

about and for the Senate's committees and councils to ask questions about. He pointed out that the most recent Executive Committee minutes show the Senate's officers asking questions about General Education and international education. He added that the Budget Transparency Committee will have several questions that they will be moving forward, but when it comes to personnel, that is not one of the areas that is prescribed to Faculty Senate.

Dr. Lindquist remarked she does not really understand why people do not want to acknowledge that decisions were made, and that the Interim Provost made a decision to undermine shared governance in General Education and the control of the curriculum. She asserted that Interim Provost Mossman is responsible for that decision, and there could be consequences for that decision. She stated that "the buck stops somewhere," those decisions were made by the Interim Provost and the Interim President, and she does not have confidence in them because they made those decisions. Dr. Lindquist also does not have confidence in the Board of Trustees and would be willing to draft a referendum expressing that. She does not understand why it would seem that the decisions made by the administration do not matter or that they should not have to hear negative things about those decisions which are impacting so many people and the community in very negative ways. She added that a vote of no confidence is a lot better than being laid off or having a program ripped apart.

Amanda Silberer, Chair of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, related that she sat on the Faculty Senate during the last vote of no confidence, and it was painful, horrible, and caused more damage than good. She reminded senators that the university is in a lot of trouble, and the administrators were put in their positions to make decisions; they are not the targets, and senators need to think long and hard about that because the university needs someone willing to make those decisions. Dr. Silberer related she told Chair Robinett before the meeting that if Faculty Senate wants to take a vote of no confidence, they should come after the deans and chairs because the university has been in trouble for a long time, and they have done nothing to right the ship. She stated that micromanaging did not happen, and the things that have been wrong are not the fault of Interim Provost Mossman and Interim President Mindrup. She also thinks a vote of no confidence would be presented very negatively in the newspapers, radio, and television and might result in WIU not attracting even 300 new freshmen next year.

Chair Robinett asked if there were any other comments about item V.C. in New Business. Hearing none and seeing that there was no action from the Senate, he stated that the meeting would move on to the next item on the agenda.

D. For the Good of the Body

Senator Brewer asked if the Senate website could be updated, particularly its list of new members. Chair Robinett replied that the Senate Office Manager and Recording Secretary has been very busy lately and will do it as she has time. He added that Ms. Hamm does a fantastic job.

**Motion:** To adjourn (Gravitt)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary