

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
Regular Meeting, 27 September 2022, 4:00 p.m.
Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT: J. Albarracin, D. Atherton, S. Bailey, D. Banash, B. Bellott, M. Bernards, L. Brice, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, A. Carr, C. Chadwell, D. Hunter, J. Land, T. Lough, S. Macchi, K. Perone, B. Polley, E. Shupe, B. Thompson, J. Wroblewski, Y. Tang
Ex-officio: Jeremy Robinett, Acting Parliamentarian

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Barr, L. Ebert Wallace, B. Petrocovic

GUESTS: Tom Blackford, Munia Cabal-Jimenez, Craig Conrad, Julie Cox, Katrina Daytner, Guiyou Huang, Rich Filipink, Rick Kurasz, Ray Lawson, Sarah Lawson, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, Patrick McGinty, Christopher Merrett, Kristi Midrup, Russ Morgan, Mark Mossman, Lorette Oden, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prosis, Jim Schmidt, Amber Schultz, Joseph Zaylik

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. September 13, 2022

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

A. Approvals from the President

1. Request to reduce the GPA gateway for acceptance into the TEP program from 2.75 to 2.5 for the Elementary Education: Elementary option, Middle Level Program, and Special Education Program

B. Provost's Report

1. Follow Up on Provost's Travel Awards (*Postponed*)

C. Student Government Association (SGA) Report
(Joseph Zaylik, Vice President for External Affairs)

Mr. Zaylik reported that this year the Student Government Association is focusing on collaborations between SGA and organizations on campus. He said SGA wants to create more of an awareness about their existence so that more students can know who to turn to if they are feeling overwhelmed, confused, or just need assistance.

There was no SGA meeting last week. Tomorrow (September 28), SGA will hold a meeting about parking issues and expects a big student turnout. Chair Thompson asked what it is about parking that students are concerned about. Mr. Zaylik responded that student parking is being shifted because of pending construction in the lot next to Brown and Memorial Halls. He said students feel there has been a lack of communication about what this is about, so Parking Services representatives are being invited to SGA to explain the situation. He added that parking for Corbin/Olson Halls is being affected, and students from those residence halls will be present to express their concerns. Chair Thompson asked if students feel like they are losing their parking in the lot across from Corbin Hall, which they pay a fee to use; Mr. Zaylik replied this is correct. He explained that students think the way parking was shifted around was unnecessary and are frustrated because Corbin/Olson Hall lots are often full when students return late at night and now they will be losing more parking spaces there. He said students want to know why these parking changes are needed.

D. Other Announcements

1. President Guiyou Huang (Postponed)

This agenda item was postponed pending the President's arrival from another meeting.

2. Amber Schultz, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Vice President Schultz told senators that, due to demographic decline, there is fierce competition to attract and retain students. As a result, Enrollment Management is attempting to implement best practices across all areas. Vice President Schultz pointed out that, in the area of recruitment this past year, this strategy worked: there was a 2.5 percent enrollment increase overall and a nearly 17 percent increase for new entering first-year students. She said this is the result of changing a lot of best practices; for example, prior to Vice President Schultz's arrival at WIU recruitment focused predominantly on high school and community college visits and college fairs. She said that while these efforts are still ongoing, admissions procedures have evolved over time to where these events are no longer central for recruitment. Vice President Schultz explained that, instead, Enrollment Management focuses on the entire ecosystem of recruitment, including improved texting, "influencing the influencers," and phenomenal campus experiences. She felt that, prior to her arrival at WIU, the institution's message about why to choose WIU was overly focused on affordability. She said messaging now tries to articulate much more loudly and clearly the value proposition of choosing WIU, so there has been an emphasis on the quality of academic programs, the student experience, and what makes WIU unique. Vice President Schultz thinks this is all-embodied within the "We Are Leathernecks" campaign introduced this fall because the ethos of the entire campus community is being a Leatherneck, with all the grit, determination, and passion that this evokes. The messaging has been changed to show that WIU wants to help those students who want to excel to be able to do so. She stated that while affordability is still discussed, it is no longer "front foot forward" since the focus has been changed to highlight academic and student experience.

A Campus Visit Advisory Board, which is representative of the campus community, was created last spring and will meet again this fall. Vice President Schultz related that the Board last spring made phenomenal recommendations on how to improve the campus experience, and some of those have already been implemented. She said Enrollment Management plans to maintain those efforts toward continuous improvement.

Vice President Schultz related that an excellent Retention Initiatives Team met all last year to prioritize a large variety of tasks, partnering across campus to address issues of campus health, student health, financial health, and a welcoming/belonging mindset. She said this year, with the arrival of Provost Zoghi, the Retention Initiatives Team is applying the work they did last year and working with the deans because the Provost's work is aligned with that of the Retention Initiatives Team.

Chair Thompson had asked the Vice President to discuss what faculty can do to help Enrollment Management achieve its goals. She said in this respect retention is more important than recruitment because if students decide to come to WIU, the key is to keep them here, and faculty have the most impact on the student experience, both in their classrooms as well as by engaging students outside of the classroom. She noted that because WIU has a large population of first-generation students, it also has a population that are questioning whether they should have gone on for higher education at all. She stressed the importance of making students feel as though they belong and that they made the right choice, especially when things become challenging, and that they are given the opportunity to succeed and excel at WIU.

Vice President Schultz told senators that if faculty want to help with recruitment, Enrollment Management shares lists with academic chairs and directors on a regular basis. She said her office is trying to bring about some sophistication regarding how that communication will occur in the coming months. She recognizes that many faculty regularly reach out to new WIU

admits in order to congratulate them on their admissions and welcome them to WIU and to their academic departments. Vice President Schultz noted that faculty also participate in the campus visit experience, both through Discover Western and by allowing potential students the opportunity to meet with faculty. She hopes to increase the volume of daily campus visits and noted that the first Discover Western for this year will be on October 10. Chair Thompson asked how Enrollment Management chooses the faculty to meet with students. Vice President Schultz responded that Eiron Saucedo-Rodarte, the Assistant Director for Events in the Admissions Office, oversees faculty scheduling, but he normally reaches out to chairs/directors, who then delegate those interactions. Chair Thompson asked if faculty have to wait until chairs approach them if they want to participate. Vice President Schultz responded that usually the determining factor is who is available at the time of the campus visit in the student's area of academic interest.

Chair Thompson asked what Vice President Schultz sees as the biggest challenges from an enrollment perspective and from a retention standpoint. He noted that enrollment is up and wonders where the university should now put its attention. Vice President Schultz responded there is no silver bullet; there are a wide range of areas that need attention, but successful onboarding of new students makes a massive difference. She related that students have said they need and want more in-person experiences, which Admissions has worked to provide; additionally, reinforcing to students that they made the right choice during their first four weeks and four months at WIU is important. She said Enrollment Management is continuing to improve onboarding of new entering students to make sure that first-year students are retained. She related that a lot of the conversation last year among the Retention Initiatives Team involved adjustments to Covid learning loss, which includes a number of things being experienced nationally, such as compounding mental health problems and issues related to social interactions. Vice President Schultz thinks students need more assistance onboarding to campus – not only adjusting to college life but also to life after Covid and how to interact at this point in time. From a recruitment standpoint, Vice President Schultz reiterated the constant fierce competition.

Senator Carr asked if it would be a good idea to gather the First-Year Experience (FYE) faculty together mid-semester every year. Since Senator Carr was on sabbatical last semester, this is the first semester she has noticed the effects of Covid on her students; early in the fall, students were really shy, and some have stopped coming to class while others have warmed up. She thinks one of the biggest obstacles to retention is that students have not learned the habits of going to class and doing the daily work, which is really important, but there is only so much faculty can do about that. Senator Carr is starting to meet with those students that respond and want to come to work with her, but a third of her class is not showing up or staying connected. She would encourage FYE faculty to meet with students the second or the fifth week of classes because, while it is time intensive, there might be a way to work with individuals in the FYE Program and retain those first-year students. Vice President Schultz said she has made note of this idea and will discuss it with others. Associate Provost Mossman stated that there is usually a meeting with FYE faculty the second or third week of October which usually involves a larger discussion about how things are going in general. He said the meeting sometimes includes presentations, such as a presentation on the profile of first-generation students. He agrees it makes sense to think about retention initiatives and stated that next month's meeting will include hands-on work with the American Council on Education (ACE).

Senator Benards asked what students think about the first-four-day initiative and other things that are new this year. Vice President Schultz related that Justin Schuch, Executive Director of Retention Initiatives, and Michelle Janisz, Director of the Transition and Academic Skills Center, really took off with the "first four" initiative. She explained that students receive a lot of information during the summer new student registration process, but studies have shown that they do not retain it well. Vice President Schultz explained this information is grouped into academic experience, student experience, belonging, and student financial health. Retention Initiatives then determines at what point students really need this information and deliver the information when it makes the most sense for students. The first four days focuses on the belonging mindset, welcoming students to campus, and getting accustomed to college life. Vice

President Schultz says the idea is to continue to partner across campus to affect the first four weeks, then the first four months, and on to four-year graduation. Vice President Schultz recognizes that although academics was part of the first four days of activities, the experience was not consistent across the board, and Enrollment Management would like to work on making this a more consistent experience and is already starting to plan onboarding for next year.

Senator Albarracin noted that the faculty-student ration has often been used against faculty, but she always thought it should be used to recruit students who want a more personal college experience than they might get, for instance at the University of Illinois. She asked if small class size is being used as a recruitment tool. Vice President Schultz responded that this information is included within statistics, but a slightly larger faculty-student ratio is reflected than where the university currently sits because students also want to have a robust experience with intense and rich conversations in courses. She said that instead of highlighting faculty-student ratio, Enrollment Management tries to evoke an emotional response through storytelling by using examples of student-faculty interactions that show how students benefit from choosing WIU. She said Enrollment Management and Admissions representatives have met with many academic departments about what they do and want to rely more on their stories than on statistics to paint a picture of what students actually experience at WIU. Vice President Schultz elaborated that if a really low faculty-student ratio number is highlighted, it could lead potential students to compare WIU to a smaller college, but students typically want an institution that is more middle of the road in size. She added that students are more likely to remember the stories than the numbers.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils

A. Senate Nominating Committee (Dave Hunter, Chair)

1. Faculty Nominations

SENATE COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Council on General Education (CGE)

Bill Knox, English	replacing	Barb Lawhorn	Spr 23 only	Basic Skills/Writing
--------------------	-----------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

Council for Instructional Technology (CIT)

Hunt Dunlap, Library	replacing	Feridun Tasdan	2023	A&S
----------------------	-----------	----------------	------	-----

Council for International Education (CIE)

Edmund Asare, For Lang/Lit	replacing	Julia Albarracin	2023	A&S
Natalie Landowski, Music	replacing	James Land	2025	FA&C
Sanjeeta Ghimire, Engineering & Tech	replacing	Anna Valeva	2023	B&T

UNIVERSITY COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES:

Bureau of Cultural Affairs

Lysa Fox, Theatre/Dance	replacing	Barb Lawhorn	Spr 23 only	At-large
-------------------------	-----------	--------------	-------------	----------

Diversity Council

Monica Rouse, Education	replacing	Jennifer McGarry	2023	WIUQC
-------------------------	-----------	------------------	------	-------

Radiation Safety Committee

Kenny Lee, Music	replacing	Philip Entzminger	2024	At-Large
------------------	-----------	-------------------	------	----------

University Technology Advisory Group (UTAG)

Krista Bowers Sharpe, Library	replacing	Krista Bowers Sharpe	2024	Library
-------------------------------	-----------	----------------------	------	---------

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

B. Council on General Education (CGE)
(Barry Birnbaum, Chair)

1. Request for General Education Designation

a. SPAN 320, Spanish for Heritage Speakers, 3 s.h.

Chair Thompson asked if the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has an estimate of how many heritage speakers there are on campus. Munia Cabal-Jimenez, a faculty member in the department, responded that about 12 percent of the students on campus are heritage speakers. She noted that this class, taught since 2009, is the only offering by the department up to this point that is specifically for heritage speakers. Dr. Cabal-Jimenez explained the reason the department decided to propose requesting Multicultural Gen Ed is because students from other colleges have told her they heard of the class and think it would be interesting, but it would not count toward anything for their majors. After talking to the Chair and recognizing that the course has been successful for a number of years, Dr. Cabal-Jimenez decided to propose that it become a Gen Ed course so that students in other colleges can have access to it.

Chair Thompson asked if the 12 percent represents only Spanish speaking students; Dr. Cabal-Jimenez confirmed that it does. Chair Thompson asked if there are any plans to offer classes for other heritage speakers. Dr. Cabal-Jimenez responded that Dr. Edmund Asare in her department has communicated with a community of French speakers in towns near Macomb, so she thinks there is potential for creating a class for French heritage speakers in Beardstown and Rushville. Chair Thompson thinks it would be interesting to know how large other heritage speaking groups are and if other curricula could be designed for them as well. Dr. Cabal-Jimenez noted that there are many students who speak Japanese or Chinese at WIU, so there might be potential for those languages, too, but the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures lost its instructor for these languages in the layoffs of a few years ago.

NO OBJECTIONS

C. Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS)
(Julie Cox, Chair)

1. Proposed Changes to Freshmen Admissions Policy

Dr. Cox related that under the proposal from Admissions, recently approved by CAGAS, students with GPAs of 2.75 to 2.99 would be offered Reach Program admission and the extra support that is currently only offered to students with lower GPAs. She said retention data shows students in the 2.75 to 2.99 range could also use a little more support. Chair Thompson asked if it is expected that approval of this proposal will result in an increase in the number of Reach students and whether this will also result in an increase in the number of Reach advisors. Vice President Schultz responded this is definitely an area her office is paying close attention to. She said the model is working for this fall, and Enrollment Management is trying to determine how they will meet student needs when the numbers increase next fall. She thinks the staffing issue will need to be resolved before next fall and stated that solutions are already being considered but reiterated that current staffing is sufficient for this academic year to meet student needs. Chair Thompson asked what kind of retention increase is expected as a result of this change. Vice President Schultz responded the goal is to increase retention by one percentage point per year. She explained that there is a retention algorithm that assesses a variety of characteristics of incoming classes to make predictions on their retention, and Enrollment Management's goal has been to do better than these predictions, which will mean that their efforts are paying off. She noted that retention last year beat the algorithm prediction by one percent but was down from the previous year; the previous year's predicted retention

was 72 percent, and retention ended up at 71.9 percent, while this year the algorithm predicted 66 percent retention, and retention from spring to fall was 66.9 percent. Retention for the coming year (the class that arrived this fall) is predicted to be even worse, so if Enrollment Management can beat that algorithmic prediction by a couple of percentage points, Vice President Schultz will be very excited.

Chair Thompson asked if the predicted “even worse” rate is because the Reach Program will not be available to these students. Vice President Schultz responded that there is a larger population in the 2.75 to 2.99 bucket who will not be eligible for Reach this year, compounded by the impacts of Covid learning loss, both of which contribute to that algorithm. Senator Bernards observed that Reach student retention of 68 percent is better than the overall university retention rate of 66.7 percent. He asked if retention is being lost in the group that is 3.0 and above because normally the retention rate would be better than these rates show. Vice President Schultz replied that, generally, the higher the GPA, the better the retention, but the university does lose a few with GPAs at 3.0 and above because GPA is not the only reason students leave; there are also personal issues, homesickness, financial considerations, and belonging mindset. She observed that the students coming in with GPAs of 2.74 and below have retained stronger than those with GPAs of 2.75 to 2.99 because those with 2.75 and below get an extra level of wraparound Reach services, which is why Enrollment Management and Admissions wanted to propose this change for next year. Senator Bernards asked if the fall retention of 72 percent for 2020-21 was just for this population or for the whole campus. Vice President Schultz responded that the 72 percent reflected the Fall 2020 cohort, and the Fall 2021 cohort retention rate was 66.7 percent. Senator Bernards asked if these figures were just for students within the lower GPA range or for the whole student body. Rich Filipink, who serves on CAGAS, replied that the overall retention for the student body from 2020-2021 was 72 percent – 70 percent for the cohort below 2.75 and 68 percent for the cohort entering with GPAs of 2.75 to 2.95.

NO OBJECTIONS

II. D. Other Announcements (Continued)

1. President Guiyou Huang

President Huang arrived at the Faculty Senate meeting following his zoom meeting with state chancellors and university presidents. He observed the semester started on a strong note with good enrollment numbers thanks to the efforts of faculty and staff, Vice President Schultz’s team, and Associate Vice President for Global Studies Randy Glean’s team. The President noted that enrollment stands at 200 more than last year at this time, which gives him confidence that WIU is doing the right things. He added that this is the first time in five years that enrollment has shown a significant increase.

President Huang informed senators that the comprehensive campaign was kicked off on Friday evening, September 23, with a goal of \$100 million. He related that the kickoff was very well attended; 350 donors, potential donors, Trustees, Alumni Council members, Foundation representatives, local dignitaries, and other supporters of the university were in attendance, and there was a lot of good energy. President Huang explained that the “silent phase” of the comprehensive campaign has been going on up to this point and has already raised \$42 million, so an additional \$58 million needs to be raised within the next five years. The President recognizes that this is a pretty ambitious goal but thinks it is achievable. He noted that \$11 million was raised this past year alone, the second-best year of fundraising in the history of WIU despite the severe effects of Covid last year. President Huang has sent personal letters to members of the Board of Trustees, Alumni Council, Foundation Board, President’s National Advisory Council, and President’s Leadership Team. He hopes to see a 100 percent contribution rate in the campaign from all these leaders, and related that some checks from individuals in these groups have come in already. President Huang sent in his check yesterday afternoon and is encouraging his colleagues at the cabinet level to follow suit if they wish.

President Huang has not heard anything new about the Center for the Performing Arts. He related that the Governor's Office took over coordination and announcement of the project, and the President is waiting for a date when they will announce the groundbreaking. He noted that the area was demarcated by a fence about a week ago so that everyone can know the exact location of the construction, and President Huang saw it for the first time a couple of hours ago. President Huang feels comfortable saying there is light at the end of the tunnel after the 16 years this building has been in the works.

President Huang said Chair Thompson and UPI President Patrick McGinty have asked him what is new this academic year. The President is focusing his attention on the comprehensive capital campaign and institutional distinctiveness – how does everyone work together to make WIU and its programs more distinctive. He stressed that this initiative will be accomplished with no sacrifice of any other programs. President Huang acknowledged that this year the university is operating under financially challenged conditions but stressed that his position to not cut programs or lay off employees for the foreseeable future has not changed. He noted that during the last two years the university received over \$20 million from the government to cover Covid needs, but this year these dollars will not be forthcoming. President Huang noted that WIU grew its enrollment this year by a notable margin, and the university's bond rating improved a little bit; last year the university was rated BBB with a stable outlook, but this year it was upgraded to BBB with a positive outlook. President Huang said that while this does not mean a lot in terms of numbers, it does make a statement. The President will meet with deans tomorrow and the Chairs' council in the near future to share his thoughts regarding the university's financial condition, the university distinctiveness initiative, and other topics.

President Huang told senators that retention is an area that must continue to improve because it is an important indicator of student success. He said that the success of an institution should be reflected in retention rates, four-year graduation rates, and six-year graduation rates, so this is an important initiative, and there is currently room for improvement.

President Huang announced that the Board of Trustees at its meeting last week approved the FY 23 all-funds budget and the administration's recommendations for the FY 24 budget. The President stated that these budgets will be sent out to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the legislature, and the Governor's office. He has an upcoming "big picture" budget meeting with the IBHE soon and feels very confident about it while recognizing the challenges WIU is facing in the next few years. The President noted that the Board of Trustees will hold a retreat in a couple of weeks; the BOT normally meets quarterly and in between holds a retreat which allows them to focus on important issues such as financial sustainability, the comprehensive campaign, recruitment strategies, distinctiveness, and other topics. President Huang is working on the agenda for the retreat.

Chair Thompson asked if President Huang is anticipating another increase in the university's appropriated funds as part of the proposed operating funds budget. President Huang responded affirmatively, adding that he recommended this as part of his budget request. He noted that other universities have submitted much lower budget requests, but he stands by WIU's proposal. The President related that he participated in a very positive zoom meeting ten days ago with Illinois's Deputy Governor regarding WIU's enrollment growth and what WIU is trying to accomplish in the next couple of years. He hopes WIU will get some sort of increase for the next fiscal year.

Chair Thompson asked how President Huang's service on the Illinois Commission on Equitable University Funding might help WIU. President Huang explained that every president of the four-year public universities serves on this commission along with reps from some state agencies, so the total membership is over 40 people. He related that over the summer the commission was broken into several working groups, and WIU serves on one of these, even though President Huang argued that the university should serve on two. The President told senators the commission will hold three or four meetings of the full body this academic year with the goal of determining a funding formula by the end of Summer 2023 which could be implemented soon thereafter. President Huang explained the commission's purpose is to find a

way to determine a formula to fund Illinois public universities adequately, equitably, and stably (the three-pronged mission). He stated that while the commission has not developed a new formula yet, he feels positive about the effort because 1) the commission recognizes the need to hold universities harmless; what universities already have will not be taken away, and 2) of the three-pronged mission, the commission emphasizes equitability, which is important for universities, like WIU, with a higher proportion of minority students.

Senator Carr asked the President to say more about the adequacy piece of the mission. She related that at a recent IBHE Faculty Advisory Council meeting, Jena Delany, the public university representative on the IBHE Board, shared a public comment she had made regarding concerns about overly applying K-12 approaches to funding rather than thinking about the kinds of disciplines, fields, and scholarship of higher education as a center for funding discussions. President Huang said the commission may have looked at the best practices of K-12 education, but he does not see a lot of that. He related that during the last academic year there were presentations on the way funding formulas are structured in several other states, including Louisiana, where President Huang worked for several years. He told senators that the commission is looking at funding formulas from four states – Colorado, Oregon, Louisiana, and Tennessee – so the models are coming from higher education. President Huang related that the technical working group will look at the pros and cons of the different formulas preparatory to creating their own. The President thinks there is real interest in funding public higher education in Illinois right now and reiterated that the Deputy Governor spoke very positively about WIU.

Chair Thompson asked if the leaders mentioned by President Huang as being encouraged to raise funds for the comprehensive campaign, such as the Trustees, have an assignment, such as that each member is asked to try to raise a certain amount of dollars. President Huang replied that the Board of Trustees does not have an assignment to raise funds because they are a governing board, not a fundraising board. He worked at two private universities in the past where fundraising was the lifeline of the university, but those types of universities tend to have much larger boards of trustees; both ones he worked with had over 30 board members. He stated that WIU’s Board members are very generous, and almost all of them have donated at different levels. The Board of Trustees retreat occurs in three weeks, and one of their topics will be how to use the Trustees as influencers to expand the WIU’s donor base with people the Trustees know. The President said Trustees’ good fundraising ideas will be taken down and implemented. The President anticipates 100 percent participation from the Trustees and noted that student Trustee Cody Cornell has already donated even though he is a very new member of the Board.

II. B. Provost's Report (Continued)

1. Follow Up on Provost’s Travel Awards

Provost Zoghi was unable to attend the meeting but provided a report from Ray Lawson, Director, Distance Education and Support, in response to questions raised at the last Faculty Senate meeting regarding the number and amount of awards during the past few years:

This report presents the number of faculty that received the Provost Award for Travel and the program expenditures for the last 4 years.

Fiscal Year	Number of Awardees	Program Expenditures	Notes
2022*	45	\$ 20,730.51	8 awards processed in Fall 2021 and 37 in Spring 2022
2021	No program administered due to COVID-19		
2020·	36	\$ 24,979.72	26 processed in Fall 2019 and 10 in Spring 2020
2019·	60	\$ 28,067.82	48 processed in Fall 2018 and 12 in Spring 2019
2018·	109	\$ 50,200.10	34 awarded in Fall 2017, 68 in Spring 2018 and 7 in Summer 2018

- The data for FY 2022, 2020, and 2019 were computed from the budget transfers spreadsheets received from the Budget Office.
- The data for FY 2018 were computed from CITR Budget 2017-2018 spreadsheets.

Chair Thompson remarked on the significant decrease in travel dollars and expressed his hopes that this trend can be reversed. Dr. Lawson remarked that \$25,000 has already been received for Fall 2022, and he hopes the university has enough money so that more can be put toward the travel awards. He said the announcement went out this morning, and already a number of applications have been received. Senator Brice said he did not receive today's announcement and asked if the information is available on a website. Dr. Lawson replied that priority is being given to tenure track faculty, so the email went out only to these faculty, who have until October 4 to submit their applications; after that date, an email will go out to the rest of the faculty. Senator Hunter remarked that if the number of applicants and the number of awardees stay equal this year as they were in past years, he would support Provost Zoghi's proposal to increase the amount of the awards from \$500 to \$600. Dr. Lawson responded that the email sent out around noon today informed tenure track faculty that the award has been increased to \$600 for this fall and next spring.

III. Reports of Committees and Councils (Continued)

C. Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS) (Julie Cox, Chair)

2. Proposal for AA/AS Degrees to Equal Completion of All General Education Requirements

Dr. Cox related that this proposal, that students coming to WIU with AA/AS degrees from community colleges be admitted as juniors with all of their Gen Ed requirements met, was brought to CAGAS early in the semester, but the council was deadlocked on this issue. She noted that currently when some students transfer to WIU they are missing some Gen Ed credits that the university requires and they must complete these; Associate Provost Mossman told CAGAS there are oftentimes 6-9 semester hours that must be taken at WIU, which can be a barrier to transfer students wanting to come here. Dr. Cox related that some members of CAGAS thought the council should just be pragmatic and realize that the university could lose students, and that this may be the trend that WIU needs to follow. She said the other side of the discussion centered on the value of General Education and making sure that WIU graduates are well rounded in Gen Ed. Dr. Cox said the vote on the proposal at CAGAS resulted in 3 yes – 3 no - 2 abstentions. She said after the tie vote, CAGAS decided to bring the proposal forward to Faculty Senate for a broader discussion. She added that since the proposal went forward, more data was provided by the Provost's office and Enrollment Management that CAGAS did not have when it made its decision.

Associate Provost Mossman expressed his thanks to Vice President Schultz for the data provided by her office. He explained the proposal is intended to expand nationwide the existing policy, which only applies to the state of Illinois and some select schools in Iowa. Under the proposal, students with an AA or AS degree from an accredited community college would have their Gen Ed requirements waived when transferring to WIU. Associate Provost Mossman believes this change would increase accessibility to WIU because the current focus on transfers from students within the state of Illinois does not equip the university to grow transfer enrollments in the coming years. He reminded senators that the U.S. will see a steep decline of students in 2026, particularly in New England and Midwestern states, and there will be fewer students in Illinois to transfer to WIU. Associate Provost Mossman explained that expanding the current policy beyond Illinois will enable WIU to develop partnerships with accredited community colleges across the United States. He told senators this is part of a larger initiative to make WIU more transfer friendly by removing barriers and increasing accessibility to students. Associate Provost Mossman stated that many other state institutions are implementing similar policies; Eastern Illinois already has this policy in place, while both Southern Illinois campuses, Northern Illinois, and Chicago State allow the AS degree to count for Gen Ed because those students are going into STEM disciplines. He added that all the four-year public universities in Iowa are now accepting AA or AS as completed degrees which meet the

requirements of General Education at their institutions. Associate Provost Mossman stated that students transferring to WIU with an associate degree expect that they have completed their General Education. He thinks that if the university wants to increase, or even to maintain, transfer enrollment numbers, WIU needs to have the agility to reach a larger number of students than is possible with the existing policy.

Vice President Schultz said she would like to drive home that there is a massive demographic decline that will impact all of higher education and will hit Illinois particularly hard because Illinois is the second highest exporter of students after New Jersey. She said Illinois loses students to Iowa and other surrounding states, and Enrollment Management is trying to get students to come back to WIU in a transfer market where WIU is somewhat branded as not transfer friendly, partly because several other universities accept AS degrees as meeting Gen Ed requirements and WIU does not. She explained that the recruitment funnel starts with a large number of leads which are then hopefully converted to enrolled students, but when it comes to transfer enrollment, WIU is not able to generate enough leads or enquiries because its competitors are more transfer friendly in that they accept more credits than WIU. She said not only the demographic decline but also severe competition from other institutions is impacting WIU's transfer enrollment numbers. Vice President Schultz stated that many of the community colleges closest to WIU are AA-granting institutions and are being hit hard by the demographic decline, although the College of DuPage actually saw their enrollment increase this year, so WIU will be trying to strongly recruit there. She noted, though, that many students are transitioning to AS tracks, which are being promoted heavily by community colleges, so that is the degree that transfer students want to bring to WIU. She said that if WIU's competitors will accept this degree with no problems, that is where students will go, which makes it difficult for WIU currently to populate the top of the funnel and achieve its transfer goals.

Chair Thompson remarked that it seems like the administration is building a case against WIU's current General Education. He noted that when talking about accessibility and barriers, it seems that General Education is being defined as one of those barriers. Chair Thompson is getting a general feeling from the administration that they would rather see a smaller Gen Ed program than the one WIU currently has and asked if this is an accurate assessment. Associate Provost Mossman replied that he does not agree with this statement, adding that he does not want to see a reduced Gen Ed program. He stressed that reduction in General Education is a different issue, and he does not think this issue speaks to that one. Associate Provost Mossman explained that the administration is not arguing for a reduced Gen Ed but is saying that if a student meets 60 hours of coursework at an accredited community college and is told it is the equivalent of Gen Ed, then WIU should accept it as such.

Senator Banash remarked this is a confusing issue, and he does not think he has the information to make a decision; he is sympathetic to those on CAGAS who abstained from the vote. He wishes senators had better information and more context. Senator Banash thinks it is obvious that WIU has completely lost control of the distinctiveness of its General Education program because of the articulation agreements that the university has made. He stated that, for example, if WIU could develop a brilliant program to deal with the issues facing the university, such as retention, it would be impossible to implement because no changes can be made to Gen Ed due to the articulation agreements that tie the university's hands. He thinks articulation agreements tend to take away faculty control while, at the same time, Gen Ed courses being offered at high schools are eating into WIU's program, and now faculty are being hit with another thing. Senator Banash said Chair Thompson's question makes sense to him: it seems to Senator Banash, with all due respect to Associate Provost Mossman, that there is not a lot of belief in Gen Ed any more at WIU, which seems to have devolved to checking boxes rather than the institutional distinctiveness of the program. Senator Banash asked for clarification that WIU is already doing what the proposal outlines for students from Illinois and waiving the extra three or four Gen Ed courses. Associate Provost Mossman responded this is correct, which goes back to Senator Banash's previous comment about the university's hands being tied in many ways, preventing WIU doing a lot of innovative work in General Education because that would really set up barriers for transfer students in Illinois. He said that a problem solving model for Gen Ed, using multiple disciplines, such as Chair Thompson described, is very difficult to do

because there is already an “Introduction to Disciplines” model of General Education in place that is connected through Transferology in the state in order to allow students to have ease of access through public state institutions. Associate Provost Mossman said his point, however, is that this is not the subject of this proposal; the proposal is intended to expand what the university is currently doing so that there is more access for transfer students because 1) students should have this access and 2) the state of Illinois is running out of potential transfer students.

Senator Banash remarked that transfer students are generally short three to six classes, and he wonders what those classes are. He said certain programs are really important but are being choked off of students and majors because of these types of decisions. He said the Humanities are top of the list for this, and he wonders if this proposal would disproportionately affect them in particular. Senator Banash thinks that the response to this question could affect how senators feel about the proposal. Associate Provost Mossman responded that his sense is that most of these transfer students are getting their AS degree, so that would not necessarily impact the Humanities. He explained the student market is very variable and hard to predict exactly; there are many variables affecting what a student’s schedule would look like when transferring in and how that affects their decision about whether to transfer to WIU, EIU, or Northern. Vice President Schultz asserted that the current policy is costing WIU students in general, so they are just not going to come here if WIU continues to not accept the AS degree as meeting Gen Ed requirements. She stated that this is not disproportionately impacting the Humanities; the current policy is just costing WIU students in general because they can go to competitor institutions much more easily. Vice President Schultz asserted that the current policy amounts to just lopping off the top of the funnel and saying that WIU does not want those students. She explained that this means WIU is not able to meet its transfer student goals because in the community college environment there is little differentiation between the AA and the AS, but WIU is one of the few institutions that is differentiating and telling students that they do not get the package deal.

Senator Banash asked if Enrollment Management knows this is why WIU is losing transfer students and how it can be known that this is the issue rather than some other issue. Vice President Schultz responded there are a variety of issues, but what her office hears anecdotally on the road is that WIU is not transfer friendly, and this is one of the examples that community college advisors point to. Associate Provost Mossman added that there is no silver bullet; there are variables in any decision made by students, but this is one of them.

Dr. Filipink asked how many community college students outside of Illinois apply to WIU and how many enroll who are not from Illinois or Iowa border counties. Vice President Schultz replied that out-of-state students yield at a much lower percentage than overall. She stated that the transfer student yield is actually pretty high for WIU, but her concern is that potential transfer students do not apply in the first place. She reiterated that WIU is losing the top part of the funnel, so the university cannot get students through the rest of the process because they do not even apply, choosing instead to go to WIU’s competitor schools. Dr. Filipink remarked this seems to be a solution in search of a problem: if the university is not getting significant numbers of students coming from out-of-state community colleges, it is not clear to him that this change is necessary. Vice President Schultz stressed that WIU does not get these students as leads in the first place. She stated that WIU has an opportunity to expand its geographic reach, but Admissions cannot go after these students until this issue is addressed. Dr. Filipink remarked he has heard no compelling evidence that if a student from California wants to come to WIU, this policy is preventing them. Vice President Schultz responded that if a student is transferring for another reason, such as to participate as a student-athlete, this policy does not prevent those students who really want to be here, but the existing policy does not allow WIU to be competitive in the marketplace. She explained that students can still transfer here and take extra classes that they would not have to take elsewhere, but this policy is why Admissions is not getting the leads in the first place. Dr. Filipink observed that this seems to contradict Vice President Schultz’s and Associate Provost Mossman’s statement that transfer decisions are based on multiple factors. Vice President Schultz agrees there are multiple factors but stressed that when Enrollment Management tries to expand WIU’s geographic reach, they hear that this

is the problem preventing that. Dr. Filipink asked if taking two additional classes really prevents students from transferring to WIU. Vice President Schultz responded that it does because that is money these students do not have to spend elsewhere. Dr. Filipink stated he does not think the proposal is very clearly articulated and the evidence is not provided. He noted that it appears that most other universities, with the exception of EIU, do not accept the AA but accept the AS; Vice President Schultz clarified that every institution accepts the AA. Associate Provost Mossman added that the AS degree is more easily articulated because more students coming from community colleges have achieved an AS degree, and it fits some disciplines, such as Engineering, in better ways. He noted that disciplines such as Engineering are always concerned about the number of Gen Ed hours and are trying to fit those into their large programs.

Dr. Filipink remarked that a question was raised at CAGAS about whether majors with requirements within Gen Ed would run into difficulties if this policy is approved. Associate Provost Mossman replied that this is one of the variables where disciplines would have to decide whether to waive particular requirement for a student; it will be up to the individual disciplines whether a combination of courses the student took at a community college, for example, would justify waiving the additional Gen Ed. He added that this is already occurring, typically for international students.

Senator Carr is struck by how there appears to be two tracks for WIU students. She said one of these is the track for students who attend WIU for four years, which includes a lot of the university's stated institutional mission, such as the Multicultural category of Gen Ed and social justice-oriented commitments. She is surprised at the acceptance of the difference between transfer students and four-year students. She was under the impression that the proposal was primarily about accepting out-of-state Gen Ed, but it seems to be also about accepting in-state. Associate Provost Mossman clarified the proposal is about out-of-state students, and the alternative to this proposal is to not have these transfer students. Associate Provost Mossman understands that students starting as a freshman at WIU will have a different experience with Gen Ed, but right now the university prohibits many transfer students from coming to WIU at all. He believes that opening up the possibility of having more transfer students at WIU outweighs the fact that the institution cannot control the experience of these students during their first two years, wherever they are. Senator Carr wonders how comparable these students' General Education is and what kinds of courses are taken in different states versus what is required at WIU. She asked whether WIU does not currently accept AS degrees from in-state, so that part of this proposal is about Illinois institutions. Associate Provost Mossman clarified that this is not correct; WIU does accept AS degrees automatically from in-state community colleges; this proposal is exclusively about out-of-state associate degrees.

Senator Polley remarked that Iowa is by far the largest source of out-of-state applications, and those have been decreasing for the last few years. He asked if the fact that Iowa accepts these transfer students as having completed their General Education requirements is a long-standing policy in that state because that seems to be the main difference between nearby competitors and WIU. Vice President Schultz responded it is a fairly recent phenomenon, although it differs from institution to institution. She added that this conversation started nationally about ten years ago.

Parliamentarian Robinett remarked that the statement in the proposal that "Students being admitted with an Associate of Art or Associate of Science from any community college (nationwide, no longer just Illinois and select Iowa schools) be a) accepted with junior standing and b) be considered to have completed the General Education requirements at WIU" would seem to answer the question about whether WIU accepts AA degrees because he had thought what was being asked earlier was whether WIU accepts all AAS degrees. Associate Provost Mossman clarified that WIU cannot accept AAS degrees because that is the Applied Associate of Science.

Senator Brice remarked he has a number of problems with this proposal. He recalled that he said it was a "silly" policy as written at the Executive Committee meeting, and he still thinks

that. He is concerned with the language in the policy that states transfer students “will be exempt from all Gen Eds.” His concern is that the way this is written it does not seem to take into account that the College of Arts and Sciences has its own Gen Ed policy. He thinks this vague and blanket language would allow incoming transfer students to argue that they are exempt from all General Education courses at the university. Senator Brice thinks a further clarification is necessary to address this. He related that members of ExCo received an email this afternoon from Patty Mason clarifying this, but he thinks it would be good to have it clarified on the floor of the Senate. He asked what will happen to departments, such as his own in History, that have General Education courses as prereqs for capstone courses; he wonders if transfer students will be able to get out of taking those. Associate Provost Mossman responded that individual departments would have to determine if the Gen Ed course is required for the degree or if certain prerequisites have been met. He added that he is happy to change the language so that this is more explicit. Senator Brice replied that he realizes that is what the administration keeps saying, but if senators were to approve the policy as written it would leave an extraordinarily vague and blanket statement in it. Associate Provost Mossman asked if the policy could be approved pending revision; Senator Brice replied he would not support this.

SENATOR BRICE OBJECTED TO THE REPORT

Parliamentarian Robinett explained that, since the report has been objected to, senators can make a motion to bring the topic back to the current agenda (which requires a two-thirds vote of the senators present) or table it for discussion later.

Motion: To table to another future meeting to give the administration time to repair the proposal in the manner Associate Provost Mossman indicated he was willing to do (Brice/Hunter)

MOTION APPROVED 12 YES – 0 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

IV. Old Business

A. Election of Senator from College of Arts and Sciences to Serve Two-Year Term on the Budget Transparency Committee

There were no volunteers from the College of Arts and Sciences; thus, as discussed at the Executive Committee meeting, Chair Thompson will serve as both the ExCo representative and the representative from Arts and Sciences on this committee.

V. New Business

A. For the Good of the Body

Senator Banash related that as a follow up to a previous discussion of the status of the *Western Courier*, he sent an email to Will Buss, faculty member in Broadcasting and Journalism and advisor to the publication. Senator Banash observed that the *Courier* seems to have dropped out of sight; it is available on a website, but a lot of students do not see it anymore. He related that Mr. Buss has made some commitments to trying to get the *Courier* back into circulation but needs more student writers. Senator Banash has created extra credit assignments in his classes that allow students to earn points for *Courier* articles; one of his students is writing about parking issues. He encourages faculty to support the *Courier* as they try to get back on track and have their students get in touch with Will Buss because he desperately needs student coverage to make the publication happen.

Chair Thompson announced that the second faculty social will be held on Thursday, September 29 from 2:30-4:00 p.m. in the Union Sandburg Lounge. Casey LaFrance from Political Science and Holly Mason from Education will briefly present on their research interests.

Motion: To adjourn (Brice)

The Faculty Senate adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Julia Albarracin, Senate Secretary

Annette Hamm, Interim Faculty Senate Recording Secretary