

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 24 September 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: J. Albarracin, E. Asare, B. Bellott, C. Chadwell, D. Gravitt, D. Hunter, D. McArthur, A. Melkumian, B. Petracovici, J. Robinett, S. Turkelli, J. Walker, L. Wipperlind, E. Woell

SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: B. Brewer, E. Hamner, J. Hancks

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Allwardt, D. Brown, H. Elbe, B. McDonald, K. Wiseley

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

GUESTS: Andrea Alvashere, Lori Baker-Sperry, Tom Blackford, Zaire Bradsher, Amy Carr, Craig Conrad, Anita Hardeman, Sarah Lawson, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Jennifer McKenzie, Holly Nikels, Lorette Oden, Linda Prorise, Christopher Pynes, Ketra Roselieb

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. September 10, 2024

Corrections:

- FAFSA was spelled wrong on page 5. (Bower Sharpe)
- “were” was duplicated in the second paragraph in section D. (Bowers Sharpe)

The minutes were approved as corrected.

In the Executive Committee minutes, “average” was misspelled in the third sentence of the fourth paragraph from the top. (Hunter)

II. Announcements

A. Provost's Report

[**Note:** A Zoombomber interrupted the Provost’s Report, but once this was address by Chair Robinett the report proceeded.]

Interim Provost Mossman reported that the Founder’s Day celebration yesterday had good attendance despite the rain, and the post-event was well attended by students. On Saturday, September 28 there will a Family Day barbeque sponsored by the School of Agriculture before the first home football game.

Interim Provost Mossman reported that some legislators almost annually push to have community colleges be allowed to offer baccalaureate degrees, and this is occurring again now. He said

Interim Provost Mossman reported that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) plans to start considering accepting applications for three-year baccalaureate degrees. He does not think people know yet what the ramifications of this will be for four-year institutions, but he anticipates that there

will be significant opposition to this as well, probably from a very high level. Interim Provost Mossman related that 18 to 24 months ago, the Higher Learning Commission initiated a substantive change form which requires that any changes over a certain number of hours at any level has to be reported to the HLC and to the Department of Education. He said this HLC decision has the same kind of feel as the previous issue because their rationale is based on the recommendations of stakeholders' in the Department of Education, which is going to consider accepting three-year baccalaureate programs. Interim Provost Mossman said these three-year programs are common overseas but have not been allowed in the history of the United States and higher education. He thinks there will be significant opposition to this trajectory; in our region, the Big Ten schools oppose this substantive policy change. He said the Illinois Board of Higher Education has gotten involved in this discussion, and he suspects there will be the same sort of slow, years-long discussion, with higher education systems across the United States involved in the conversation. Interim Provost Mossman thinks Faculty Senate needs to know that these kinds of discussions are happening across the region and with the institution's accreditor.

Senator Albarracin asked if the three-year baccalaureate degrees are offered in any other states. Interim Provost Mossman replied that as far as he knows all baccalaureate degrees in the United States require 120 semester hours, which is the standard that all accrediting bodies and accrediting organizations recognize. He added that in India and some European countries this type of degree is much more common, so he suspects this is what HLC is trying to address.

Senator Hunter asked if the university is screening international students who apply with three-year bachelor's degrees before they are admitted to WIU. Interim Provost Mossman replied that WIU's policy is that if a student has a bachelor's degree, it is a bachelor's degree, but there could be a marked change in how bachelor's degrees are delivered in the U.S. in future. He thinks that WIU just needs to be aware that these are discussions that have gotten more traction than usual with accrediting bodies, who are trying to figure out how to give universities guidance, so it is something everyone needs to pay attention to.

Senator Gravitt asked if WIU is already basically offering three-year bachelor's degrees in some cases when it accepts so much dual credit for high school programs. She noted that these students still have to complete the same number of credit hours, but there is an accelerated time period for achieving the degree. Interim Provost Mossman explained that the difference would be that what is being proposed is a reduced amount of credit to ac

for this matrix, the administration agrees that it is a phenomenal thing that the report looks the way it does.

Dr. Baker-Sperry told senators the assessment reports were due July 1 to the Provost's office, and they have already been catalogued and are starting to be reviewed. She expects that these assessments will be as good on the whole, if not better, than the ones senators are reviewing today. She recognizes that assessment is difficult; WIU does not have a lot of money to fund external tests, so most of the assessments that programs do are developed in-house, and faculty, chairs, assistant deans, and assessment coordinators do all that work on the ground. She explained that the HLC requires that each program that offers a degree must have an acceptable assessment plan, and they must be in good standing, so most really work diligently to make that assessment meaningful.

Dr. Baker-Sperry admitted that the Provost's office is still working through what constitutes the difference between "meets" and "exceeds." She explained the fourth step is that HLC requires that programs use the data to improve student learning for each learning outcome in a continuous improvement model. She said what this means is that each program's report each year has to show that each learning outcome's data is being used, and that has to be documented, which is a big task. Dr. Baker-Sperry related the Provost's office works year-round with programs, and she is really proud of all the people who are involved in what has been submitted because there is a lot of unseen work behind it. She added that probably most senators are involved in their programs' assessment efforts.

Senator Gravitt asked what happens when

Fund, and Auxiliary Facilities System (AFS/Revenue Bonds/Restricted) Funds – represent the way that WIU budgets using these three “buckets.”

Ms. Roselieb noted that the Income Fund is mostly funded by state appropriations, which were about \$56 million this year, as well as tuition income. She said expenses paid by this fund must be related to educational expenses for WIU students; this fund is where the deficit is that efforts have been made to eliminate. Ms. Roselieb explained the Other/Local Fund, also called 3-accounts, includes mandatory student fees, such as for Beu Health Center, facilities enhancements, athletics, talent grants, and transit. She said this account also includes commissions, indirect cost recovery dollars from grants, and actual grants that are deposited on a reimbursement basis. Ms. Roselieb explained the third tier, Auxiliary or AFS, consists of three main entities: University Housing and Dining, the University Union, and Campus Recreation, which includes the golf course. She noted that these three entities are bonded together through covenants and have the ability to issue debt and pledge their revenues, which are received through housing and dining charges, student activity fees that go toward campus recreation or the University Union, and things similar to this. She told senators these three entities do not receive state money to build their facilities, nor can the revenues they receive go toward expenses that are related to educational opportunities. Ms. Roselieb added that when senators see the Board Book, it will include the All-Funds Budget, which is budgeted into these three separate categories.

Ms. Roselieb showed senators a bar graph of the historical revenues and expenses for the Income Fund. She noted that in FY 2021 this fund showed income of about \$102 million, and expenses were a similar amount, with revenue exceeding expenses by \$376,000. She pointed out that the deficit grew from \$4 million in FY 22 to \$12.4 million in FY 23, with an \$8.2 million deficit in FY 24. Ms. Roselieb explained that although she highlighted only these four years, she could take the graph much further back to show that the university has had a structural problem for quite some time, knowing that projections showed declining enrollments and not adjusting expenses quickly enough, which is very hard to do. She pointed out that WIU received some Covid relief funds, and during the pandemic it was difficult to project what WIU’s enrollment and the state support would look like in the future. She thinks that now there is a better trajectory that shows the need to turn the ship around.

Ms. Roselieb showed senators a chart illustrating the historical cash flow from FY 18 through FY 24. She explained that the budget provides guiding principles and should directly align with the university’s mission; the urgency to address issues is based on the cash flow. She noted that the cash in the Other/Unrestricted Fund and the Income Fund can be used interchangeably; things are accounted for individually in each of the two accounts, so from a financial reporting standpoint the university is in compliance, and there is some flexibility to use the cash in both of these accounts to pay for day-to-day expenditures. She pointed out that the Income Fund line dipped below the 0 point in FY 22 while the Unrestricted Fund line only dipped down slightly on the chart. She showed senators that the Income Fund was in deficit at the end of FY 2023, but the line showing the Income and Other/Unrestricted Funds combined remained just slightly above the 0 point for FY 23 and FY 24. She stressed, though, that the university does not have a significant amount of cash to begin operations for the new fiscal year, which has created the sense of urgency in the decision-making process.

Senator Gravitt related that it has been shared with her that the university’s cash flow is mostly identified and secure for this semester, but work is being done for the next fiscal year. (b) (5) -1.6 (c) (1) 105b2.9 (c) (1) tht o-1.aec

- UIC is considering developing a university-wide requirement involving civic discourse, training, and dialogue. Dr. Carr said they currently offer a 4 credit hour course which is not required except for one major, and UIC is thinking about how to integrate that into a requirement for all students.
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faculty librarian at Malpass Library, clarified that libraries pay for the number of people who are actually accessing their services, which is why they cannot afford for all alumni, for instance, to have access. She added that generally pricing is done on a tiered basis based on how many are using the services, so a smaller library would not pay the same amount as one at UIUC. Senator Gravitt asked if this refers to access to interlibrary loan or access to the library as a whole. Parliamentarian Bowers Sharpe responded she is referring to access to the database; anyone in Illinois can come into the library and check something out, but the issue is off-campus access. She explained that in order to access the database off campus, an individual needs an active ecom account, and the discussion of that possibly going away would not simply involve losing an email account but also would result in retirees or emeritus faculty members losing their ability to continue their research because they would not be able to access the databases unless they came to the library in person. Senator Gravitt asked if this would apply even if the retiree was teaching as an adjunct faculty member. Chair Robinett responded these are things the University Technology CIO Group is looking at; they have identified ways that anyone with a WIU ID number would be able to continue accessing

Dr. Baker-Sperry noted there is a kind of parallel example in the Student Learning Assessment Committee, a university-wide committee with representation from individuals across the campus who are very involved in assessment, including one Senate rep. She noted that the matrix which senators saw earlier is prepared by a group of about ten people, and it is provided to Faculty Senate, the Graduate Council, the Council on General Education, the Provost, and the President.

Dr. Baker-Sperry related that when she began working with FYE in 2018, there were two FYE committees – the Committee on Classes and the Leadership Committee – both of which had Faculty Senate representation. She said the two individuals who trained her in the position, Stacey Macchi and Nancy Parsons, recommended these two be merged because one committee would develop something that then had to be approved by the other, and sometimes initiatives died during this process. She added that shortly after merging the two committees, the pandemic occurred.

Dr. Baker-Sperry told senators the new CFYE will be co-chaired by her and Justin Schuch, Interim Vice President for Student Success. She said the intention is to pull people from across the campus who do FYE work and have a stake in it to serve on an advisory committee, because FYE and FYE students change every year so things have to be very nimble. She thinks the position is an important one and that Faculty Senate has an important role on this committee in terms of a voice in this process.

Senator Albarracin asked if the position could be for a faculty member in general rather than specifically for a student success professional.

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IV. Old Business

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

CIT Chair Andrea Alveshere explained the bylaws changes will allow the council to create a subcouncil on AI technology. She added the Faculty Senate would appoint 4-6 members outside of CIT, and CIT would populate the subcommittee with four members from that council.

Motion: To approve the bylaws change (Hunter/Melkumian)

MOTION APPROVED 13 YES (9 of those on Zoom) – 0 NO – 0 ABSTENTIONS

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary