

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, 16 May 2023  
4:00 p.m. – Via Zoom

ACTION MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Thompson, Chair; Yong Tang, Vice Chair; Julia Albarracin, Secretary  
ALSO PRESENT: Manoochehr Zoghi, Provost; Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager  
ABSENT: Craig Whetten, Parliamentarian  
GUESTS: Trustee Polly Radosh; CAGAS Chair Julie Cox, Associate Provost Mark Mossman, Registrar Sarah  
Lawson, Admissions Director Doug Freed, Vice President for Enrollment Management Amber Evans

The Executive Committee convened a special meeting to hear concerns about students admitted at the lower end of the GPA scale expressed in an email from Trustees Kisha Lang and Polly Radosh. Chair Thompson stated that in order to further this process with additional clarity, various stakeholders involved were invited to attend optional admits during the pandemic, WIU also made this change, which meant that admission decisions were based solely on GPA. The regular and REACH admissions criteria were modified during that process to coincide with just using GPA. Vice President Evans said that when she arrived at WIU, she felt that this was not a strong enough predictor of college success. She recommended, based on the literature and best practices at other campuses, that the university adopt a process used with success by Northern Illinois University and elsewhere. She related that the decision was made to modify the conditional admissions program to incorporate William Sedlacek's research on cognitive variables as opposed to using the previous REACH admissions process. She recalled that Admissions Director Doug Freed presented the transition to the cognitive variables process to CAGAS, who approved the change because of the research it is based upon.

Vice President Evans explained that there is a workflow associated with the cognitive variables process that was presented to CAGAS at that time. She stated that students who enter with a 3.0 GPA or better are automatically admitted to the university while students with GPAs of 2.75 to 2.99 are automatically admitted to the REACH program. Vice President Evans noted that in the past this group of students would have been automatically admitted rather than admitted to REACH, which led to some of the retention issues being seen right now since those students who need wraparound services are not getting them. She stressed that the change will impact students entering WIU in Fall 2023 and not the students who were admitted previously. Vice President Evans said that students entering with GPAs of 2.0-2.7 are placed under review, which includes answering non-

she is performing this review. Students scoring below the average on the test are denied even if their GPA would previously have allowed them to be admitted.

Vice President Evans said that WIU is in a unique situation because the university was yielding more students in the lower GPA bucket that what has occurred at other institutions and what is occurring in the literature. She said WIU students with 2.0-2.4 GPAs responded to the cognitive variables test at a very high rate; she suspects other institutions must have either changed their criteria or not have given these students a chance. She stated that when Enrollment Management and Admissions realized this, they had to go back because WIU currently does not have sufficient services to support a large number of these academic profile students. In March, Vice President Evans made the decision to change the lowest GPA allowed for review to 2.25 rather than 2.0, and students below a 2.25 were automatically denied based on the large number of students already admitted in this GPA bucket. This change (from a baseline of 2.24 rather than 2.0) has not yet been reviewed or approved by CAGAS or Faculty Senate, but Vice President Evans stated that sometimes admissions decisions must be made quickly, and based on conversations she had with CAGAS members she did not anticipate opposition to shifting this number up. Vice President Evans stated that the university will see a higher percentage of students admitted with 2.0-2.75 GPAs this coming fall than have been seen in past years, but this does not mean that the university is admitting more students than in the past.

reinstated. She worries about this population of students





CAGAS Chair Julie Cox asked what the timeline is for providing this report. Chair Thompson replied that it will not be reported to Faculty Senate until fall. The Executive Committee discussed the charge to CAGAS with Dr. Cox and the Registrar.

Senator Albarracin remarked that she believes the university should increase the access to higher education, and many of those students with low GPAs are students of color who have no other resources. Dr. Cox remarked that some students with the lowest GPAs are some of the best humans who will do the greatest work in their fields. She said they sometimes have to be taught how to think, but they are wonderful people who need support along the way. Chair Thompson remarked that once students get through their sophomore year, WIU retains them at a pretty good rate; the first two semesters are the most challenging.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Office Manager  
and Recording Secretary