

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 12 November 2024 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON:

hoped to complete all the meetings in fall semester, but it appears that the meetings will continue into

students, as it should. He noted that this institutional support changes from not having a cap on the number of waged hours if students have a graduate assistantship to offering six semester hours of tuition free classes to them in the summer. Interim Provost Mossman stressed that the institution should build in discounts for its graduate students, but WIU is at the point where there needs to be an appropriate ratio for undergraduate to graduate programs. He noted that when a university is in a fiscal spot, it does not help to have too many graduate programs that the institution is paying for.

Senator Wipplerling asked if “low enrolled” means that the number of students that is expected to be in a program is not being met. She noted that some programs in the Department of Theatre and Dance only want to have three graduate students because that is the number of assistantships they have. She asked if this would be considered to be a lower-enrolled program, even though it was meant to be that way, because it only has three students enrolled. Interim Provost Mossman responded that the administration is certainly paying attention to enrollment, but it is not the only metric that is being used in any evaluation of any kind of program. He noted that for the past administration PER consideration was based entirely on headcount; they used the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) low-enrolled programs report, which is where that phrase comes from. He explained dozens of these reports are filed every two years by all state universities in Illinois. Interim Provost Mossman understands that it is nature of certain programs, particularly in the studio disciplines, to have low-enrolled programs, so that is not the exclusive, only metric being used. He explained that other metrics being considered will include overall student credit hour (SCH) production, past layoffs, how class sizes match SCH production, and how department workload equivalents are divvied up in departments so there are a whole set of things that will need to be analyzed.

Anna Valeva, professor in the School of Accounting, Finance, Economics, and Decision Sciences (AFED), asked Interim Provost Mossman why the Master of Science in Applied Statistics and Decision Analytics, which is the second largest graduate program in the university, is de facto being eliminated. She stated that, as a graduate advisor, she knows how many assistantships students receive, what they are billed, and what they pay the university, and she does not think this program is a losing one. Interim Provost Mossman asked if this is coming from College of Business and Technology programs revisions. Dr. Valeva responded that the program has been reduced to such an extent that it will be impossible to deliver and will basically be “beheaded.” Chair Robinett remarked that this does not sound like a question that Interim Provost Mossman will be able to answer at this time; Interim Provost Mossman agreed that he would need to follow up on this and obtain specifics. Dr. Valeva remarked that if decisions of this enormity are going to be made, everyone wants to see the financial data behind them. She thinks they must exist and can be anonymized if there is a question of privacy. Chair Robinett remarked that at this point Faculty Senate needs to do the things that are germane to the conversation.

in cash. He related that the university is working on a variety of external funding options to assist with cash flow. Senator Walker told senators projections for the next five years are based on the assumptions that: 1) state support will remain level, 2) WIU's enrollment and retention will stabilize and remain at this level, and 3) there will be some moderate tuition fee increases.

Senator Walker said that while the administration has mitigated cash flow for the fall semester, there are still concerns for the spring, so Vice President Roselieb especially emphasized not spending unnecessarily. He related that FY 26 moves the university toward a balanced budget, then FY 27 should hopefully see the university breaking even based on those projections.

Senator Walker said the committee also discussed the impacts of layoffs and retirements on FY 25, 26, and 27. He related there is anticipated to be \$2 million in retirements, and it is unsure right now how many of those will be replaced. He stated that while no future layoffs are planned, that does not mean there will not need to be some in the near future. Senator Walker related that the next BTC meeting will dig deeper into how overload, summer school, and adjunct pay is determined. Robb advised senators to reach out to BTC members if they have specific questions they want them to ask o

University Technology Advisory Group (UAG)

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through the dean's office. She concluded that, without a director, without a line to hire a director, and with the need to consolidate down, the College of Business and Technology is asking that the two be moved into one unit.

Motion: To approve the proposal (Gravitt/Melkumian)

Senator Gravitt expressed her approval for the name change. Interim Dean Feld agreed, remarking that the name tag for the AFED Graduate advisor read School of Accounting, Finance, Economics, and Decision Sciences, Graduate Advisor for the Master of Science in Applied Statistics and Decision Analytics, which is practically the size of a poster board. She noted that while the new will be more concise, it will also be more reflective of the curricular offerings within the new unit while still providing some distinct designation for the Accounting program, which maintains its own separate accreditation. Senator Gravitt added that it may also make it easier for students to find information when they are searching for programs.

Senator Hunter asked how much jeopardy the college is in of losing students from its nationally recognized MBA program. Interim Dean Feld responded that as long as the college maintains its AACSB accreditation, she believes the online MBA program will be fine. She noted that what has to be given up is the campus-based version of that because the new UPI contract forces the distinction between face-to-face and online classes, with more multimodality, so that means that every class has to be delivered in one of the two modalities, and there is insufficient staff to do that. She estimates that the

recently attending a meeting of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and this was a topic at that meeting as well. She noted that Visa concerns are a consideration, as well as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) population specific concerns for particular student groups who are feeling uncertainty. She remarked that these are the things higher education will need to be focused on moving forward as the country prepares for the transition.

Interim President Mindrup said another topic on the radar for the University Presidents and Chancellors Group is the equitable funding formula. She noted that this is one area of advocacy for which everyone is collectively committed; UPI, the administration, student organizations, all support the equitable funding formula that the state has put together as a way to more appropriately and adequately fund higher education.

information coming from UPI that there is an ~~appetit~~ fund this initiative. She stressed that even though it is located geographically on the Quad Cities campus, the concept of an innovation university has programmatic benefit across WIU; it has the opportunity to become a central point for additional ~~venue~~ generation opportunities. She told senators the administration knows that through the Illinois Innovation Network and the Quad Cities Manufacturing Initiative – the initial investment can generate partnerships and visibility at the statewide level in a way that will bring additional investments into the institution. She noted that, in the spirit that WIU is taking care of itself and not solely dependent on the state, this is an initiative that leads the university in that direction.

Interim President Mindrup shared that one of the priorities she has highlighted over the past few months is an inclusive campus. She had a great conversation with the Black Faculty and Staff Council recently about how best to structure ~~in~~ the institution so that inclusion can be a priority, particularly with initiatives in human resources, academic programs, and student experiences. She plans to continue to work with this group and would like to infuse their insights into the conversation around how WIU can best be ~~structured~~ to continue inclusive efforts, particularly related to any potential changes that might be seen in January, while continuing to make sure that WIU is serving its mission. Interim President Mindrup stated that Honors Council Dean Lorette Oden and ~~Cu~~ Williams, Director of Student Services on the Quad Cities Campus, ~~lead that~~ g4.6 (h)2.3 (8l)-2.6.pu1-4.7 (e) -4.7 (e)

- x 60 percent of respondents indicated they approved strongly or approved somewhat of how the Faculty Senate are handling their duties.

Chair Robinett added that 13 percent of respondents indicated uncertainty of how Faculty Senate are handling their duties. He thinks it is important for senators to consider ways in which Faculty Senate may better express what it does to the faculty across the campuses.

Chair Robinett told senators that comments related to the performance of duties highlighted strong dissatisfaction with recent decisions related to governance and resource prioritization. He said several respondents critiqued Faculty Senate not being assertive in challenging recent actions, especially related to curricular issues and shared governance.

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more important that the faculty be heard about what has happened here, especially regarding the past several months.

institutions eliminate entire programs, but every effort was made to ~~as a~~ retain as many programs as possible.

Interim Associate Provost Pynes realizes that many are upset with the reduction in General Education. He related that the administration also tried to deal with several narrative problems, such as the narrative in community colleges that WIU is not transfer friendly. He stated ~~one~~ way to counter this is to eliminate the things that are not automatically transferrable. He said that since 36 percent of

Senator Melkumian responded that transparency in this case is not related to expecting the administration to explain how they picked the people to be laid off. She said transparency is in relation

has already divided the resolution into three – the conversation related to the Board of Trustees, that related to the layoffs, and the third related to General Education. He said the second option is that a senator can ask for a discussion among the Senate to determine the division. Senator Gravitt replied she can support the three divisions already determined by Chair Robinett.

Chair Robinett shared the documents on the screen. He noted that for “division of question” it is necessary to keep the language the same and look at whether the different parts can be divided out without there being meaningful change to what was produced. He briefly read through each document for senators.

Senator Gravitt observed that it was almost 6:00 p.m., senators were going through the documents