

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Regular Meeting, 9 April 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom and in Union Capitol Rooms

ACTION MINUTES

SENATORS PRESENT IN PERSON: J. Albarracin, D. Atherton, B. Bellott, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, C. Chadwell, L. Ebert Wallace, H. Elbe, D. Gravitt, D. Hunter, K. Perone, M. Shamsuddoha, Y. Tang, S. Turkelli,

SENATORS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: S. Bailey, E. Hamner, J. Land, J. Sarra, K. Wiseley

SENATORS ABSENT: D. Barr, S. Ko, A. Lewis, B. Petracovici, L. Wipperling

EX-OFFICIO: Jeremy Robinett, Parliamentarian; Interim Provost Mark Mossman

GUESTS: Debra Allwardt, Edmund Asare, Ben Brewer, Amy Carr, Billy Clow, Dennis DeVolder, Patty Eathington, Peter Gloviczki, Jeff Hancks, Jeffrey Keith, Rick Kuracz, Blair McDonald, Alice Melkumian, Holly Nikels, Lorette Oden, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prorise, Alonzo Ruffin, Jr., Rashmi Sharma, Eric Sheffield, Jett Walker, Ed Woell

I. Consideration of Minutes

A. March 26, 2024

APPROVED AS DISTRIBUTED

II. Announcements

Motion: To reorder the agenda to consider the election of Senate officers and SNC members (II.D.2 and II.D.3.) first (Gravitt/Atherton)

NO OBJECTIONS

D. 2. Election of Senate Officers (*Reordered*)

a. Chair

Chair Albarracin stated that even though she has enjoyed serving as Chair this year, professional obligations, specifically the Rural Post-secondary and Economics Development (RPED) grant, will take so much of her time that she has decided not to run for re-election.

Motion:

There being no further nominations, Dr. Albarracin was elected SNC Chair.

A. Provost's Report

Interim Provost Mossman observed there is something going on at WIU every day or evening for the next month, and chances are strong that he or Mayor Inman will be in attendance. He related that, for example, the Minority Health Month

Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI)
Bob Intrieri, Ps

Outstanding Academic Advisor Award Committee

Rebel Mickelson, Theatre/Dance replacing Lori Smith Okon 2027 AT-LARGE

Parking Appeals Committee

Jiyoung Park, Kinesiology replacing Jobu Babin 2027 ALTERNATE

Provost's Advisory Council

Yong Tang, BC&J replacing Josh Averback 2026 AT-LARGE

Radiation Safety Committee

Senator Tang told senators he has some institutional knowledge on this subject. He recalled that when the Journalism program merged with Broadcasting in 2015, it was a top-down process. He said Journalism faculty was informed one day that they were going to merge with Broadcasting, which created a lot of resentment and anger in both programs. Senator Tang thinks the process this time is completely different; it has been a bottom-up process so that everyone in both departments was informed about this proposal, and there have been a lot of discussions about the school merger. He thinks the proposal is very complete and that it was created through a good process. Senator Tang noted that the Public Relations major was approved by Faculty Senate at its last meeting, and today the school merger is being discussed, so it looks like a lot of beautiful things are happening to Communication, Broadcasting, and COFAC.

Senator Tang asked for clarification on whether, if the merger is approved, there will still be two department chairpersons and what the role would be for the program coordinator. He asul(t)-4.6 (os.6 (s)-2-4.6 (o

Interim President Mindrup said she has been using her time on discovery: getting up to speed on the issues facing WIU, both the opportunities and the challenges, and getting very familiar with what is important to know about the university at this point in time so that she can respond to short-term needs as well as focusing and zeroing in on long-term plans. She promised to delve more into this at tomorrow's presentation to the university community but shared with Faculty Senate some initial priorities, which were developed from her experience during 27 years at WIU, from attending meetings with the Cabinet and the Faculty Senate, from the faculty presentations during the recent Board of Trustees retreat, from her connections with the Student Government Associations on both campuses, and from her interactions with staff members. Interim President Mindrup said these priorities are "initial" because everything is a process and is evolving, and WIU wants to evolve as an institution. She believes these initial priorities are situated in the university's most urgent needs and most immediate opportunities.

Interim President Mindrup said the first and foremost of her priorities is that everything at WIU needs to be built on the idea of an inclusive environment where faculty, staff, and students can thrive. She thinks this can be accomplished through programming, through how everyone acts with one another, through collaboration, and through communication. She hopes this will lead to an environment that really fosters teaching and learning while managing WIU with the realities and opportunities that are available right now.

Interim President Mindrup said the next layer of initial priorities involves fiscal sustainability, which she will speak more about at tomorrow's presentation. She noted that the budget has been an ongoing concern and topic of discussion for many years. She said that while everyone knows that WIU is currently operating under a budget deficit, she wants to take a deep dive into understanding exactly what that means. She intends to look at what things are structural and what the university can do internally to address the deficit. She stated that besides her own discovery process, the President's Cabinet will be working with the different units and individuals within each division to delve down deep in order to find out what that means for each area.

Another aspect of looking at finances that the President thinks may be an opportunity for WIU is "big project asks." She noted that there are a number of initiatives that WIU has been very successful with over the years, and she would like to see those highlighted. She mentioned that one recent accomplishment that should be highlighted is the RPED grant that Chair Albarracin and Justin Schuch, Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment, recently received, which was a really big coup; this is important because retention, besides being the right thing to do for students, also generates revenue for the university. Interim President Mindrup plans to invite the university community tomorrow to think about ways to generate revenue externally for WIU. She noted that one way might be leveraging the State of Illinois strategic document, "Thrive Illinois." She explained that a number of priorities are outlined in this document, including addressing the teacher shortage. She thinks the more WIU can align programmatic planning with the State of Illinois, the better university representatives can make those "asks" in a strategic way. She is aware that Interim Provost Mossman is working with the different areas of his division to see where that alignment happens and where the university is able to think about obtaining additional funding and support, whether through the state level or through different types of funding and philanthropic opportunities.

Interim President Mindrup pointed out that retention planning is another initial priority because keeping the students WIU already has is the best thing the university can do. She said work will be done internally as well as partnering with other institutions and agencies toward the

Senator Tang recalled that President Huang said he would never lay off any employees while he was at WIU, but in recent days he has heard some rumors that another round of layoffs might occur sooner or later. He asked if Interim President Mindrup can address this. Interim President Mindrup replied she cannot address this yet because the administration is still delving into the data and looking into the financial situation. She reiterated the administration

kinds of deficits can be addressed. She also stressed the importance of simultaneously looking for outside revenue and working with legislators to make WIU's case. She stated that legislators can

