

**Faculty Senate Agenda  
Friday January 20<sup>th</sup> 2012  
2-4 pm in UC 2206**

Meeting Secretary: TBA

Minutes from Faculty Senate meeting on January 6th, 2012.

Update from Dr. Ron Rochon, Provost.

Update from Dr. Kent Scheller on Commission for Higher Education.

Report from Dr. Steven Williams, Acting Faculty Senate Chair.

Unfinished Business

1. Charge: Midterm Grade Reports
2. Charge: Domestic Partner Benefits

New Business

1. Report from Ethel Elkins on Commencement Committee
2. Senate Governance Structure discussion

Next Meeting: February 10 at UC 2206.

Adjourn.

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**January 20, 2012**

**Present:**

Cindy DeLoney-Marino, Ethel Elkins, Brandon Field, Shannon Hall (guest, The Shield), Jesse Hellman (guest, The Shield), Brian Posler, Kent Scheller, Daria Sevastianova, Maria Shirey (acting secretary), Jennifer Williams, Steve Williams (interim chair), Stephen Zehr

**Call to Order:**

Interim Chair Steve Williams (serving for Adrian Gentle while on sabbatical) called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Kent Scheller made motion to approve Faculty Senate minutes from the January 6, 2012 meeting. Brandon Field seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

Maria Shirey and Ethel Elkins volunteered to assume the secretary function. They will cover the secretary function for the rest of the Spring 2012 semester.

**Update from Provost Ron Rochon:**

Brian Posler presented the following report for Provost Rochon:

- Full Professor Luncheon

The Professor luncheon was held today. Statistics were shared with the group documenting that less than 11% of full-time faculty at USI currently hold the rank of Professor. There currently are approximately 41 full Professors. Questions were raised as to what the university can do to increase the number of individuals pursuing professorship.

The group discussed the current process and asked whether adding an external review component would help. Should Associate Professors review the portfolios of those aspiring to full Professor? Does existing criteria provide adequate specificity to facilitate movement to the Professor rank?

Jennifer Williams added that she attended the luncheon and found it constructive and beneficial. She reported that each Dean will put forth the names of two Professors per College and the individuals will move forward on sub-committee work to address the issues discussed. The sub-committee will then share its ideas with the full Professor group.

- Bills in the Legislature

There are currently two bills in the Indiana legislature which affect higher education and we are monitoring:

1. Senate Bill 182. This bill requires the Commission of Higher Education to develop a common course numbering system across all state campuses. The proposed legislation is aimed at seamless transfer of students. Purdue and Indiana Universities

have been working on amendments to this bill. No vote in committee has taken place regarding this bill.

2. Senate Bill 392. This bill addresses state educational course grading practices and mandates this report be submitted to the legislature. The bill entails examining course grading practices to look at grade distributions and potential grade inflation, especially at the undergraduate level. This bill is currently pending in committee and has not yet had a vote.

### **ICHE Update from Kent Scheller:**

Kent Scheller reported on the following:

- House Bill 1220  
Kent Scheller reported this bill from the Governor regarding credit creep gives the Commission authority to both approve and remove courses. The bill has not been pulled for consideration.
- Reaching Higher and Achieving More  
Development of the strategic plan draft continues. The group meets again February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

Kent reported the impetus for the legislature's increasing involvement in higher education is that it costs 100% more to go to a university than it did 10 years ago.

### **Report from Faculty Senate Chair:**

Interim Chair Steve Williams reported on the following:

- Meetings  
Steve Williams indicated all Faculty Senate meetings will be in UC2206 except on April 13<sup>th</sup> (room to be announced).
- Agenda and Updates to Faculty Senate website  
Steve is working to ensure our Faculty Senate agendas and updates are posted to the website in a timely manner.
- Vacant Liberal Arts Faculty Senate Position  
Steve reported Stephen Zehr sent a call to fill a vacant Liberal Arts position. The deadline for nominations is January 20, 2012.
- Standing Committee Governance  
Steve has contacted chairs of the standing committees who have yet to submit their proposals for their Standing Committee governance structures. The chairs are to submit reports by February 3<sup>rd</sup>, before we hold our next governance meeting.

- Registrar's Office Communication

Steve received communication from the Registrar's Office regarding The Shield's request for access to grading distributions by faculty. Steve reported he sought clarification as to the need for this data and discussed with Jessie Hullman from The Shield. Steve indicated the motivation for obtaining this information was not at the request of the full student body, but rather something Jessie indicated could help with her stories.

A group discussion ensued regarding Steve's report and the following points were made:

1. Utility. The problem with the data is that they are not conclusive and thus not useful. Brandon Field suggested an alternative used by another institution, which predated Rate Your Professor.com and included providing an "Incomplete List of Outstanding Instructors" could be considered.

Daria Sevastianova indicated the College of Business has held discussions related to this topic and concluded many factors go into grade distributions. The grade distribution alone is meaningless.

Maria Shirey indicated the grade distribution would likely vary based on whether the individuals taking the courses are graduate or undergraduate students. For example, Dr. Shirey teaches doctoral students who are required to have a B grade (minimum of 83) in a course, otherwise they are not able to remain in the graduate program. This type of requirement motivates students to achieve higher grades. Additionally, because these students have rich experience bases and previous graduate education, they are able to master course content more readily thus achieving higher grades. Given that the grading distribution for graduate versus undergraduate students will likely be different, viewing the distribution in isolation represents just one data point.

Brandon Field mentioned that class size mattered and thus could affect the grading distribution.

Stephen Zehr indicated Department Chairs might look at faculty grading distributions but not use these in isolation for decision-making.

2. Disposition. Following discussion, Steve Williams indicated an action to collect faculty data would require faculty to make a formal charge. Currently, there is no compelling reason to track the data and make available.

### **Unfinished Business:**

1. Mid-Term Grades

Kent Scheller moved and Jennifer Williams seconded that the Mid-Term Grade Reports charge be forwarded to Faculty Affairs.

Discussion ensued with Brian Posler reporting that less than 30% of full-time faculty members currently submit mid-term grades to MyUSI. The current policy is a deficiency policy which means that at mid-term, faculty members are encouraged to make mid-term

grades available but are only expected to report deficiency grades of D or F. The proposed charge aims to improve student success.

Kent Scheller indicated the 30% figure cited does not imply that the remaining 70% of faculty members are not keeping students abreast of their grades. In fact, many faculty members, especially those who use Blackboard, have an electronic grading center where students can monitor their own grades.

A vote was taken on this charge and 8 voted to forward to Faculty Affairs with 1 person opposed.

2. Domestic Partners

Stephen Zehr moved and Jennifer Williams seconded the domestic partner charge be referred to the Economics Committee. Discussion followed with Dr. Zehr suggesting that the way the charge is currently written is not clear. The “current policy section” needs to be consistent and as is, the charge appears confusing.

A vote was taken and it was unanimously decided to forward the charge to the Economics Committee.

**New Business:**

1. Commencement Committee Report

Ethel Elkins reported the Commencement Committee continues to meet and there are five graduation ceremonies planned for Spring 2012. The committee’s timeline has implications for faculty advising. If an advisor has graduating students, March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the last day for students to register and participate in graduation. Ethel asked that faculty send an email to their advisees reminding students of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline.

2. Senate Governance Structure

a. Model Type

Kent Scheller indicated he had spoken with his colleagues at the Pott College regarding the various models Faculty Senate is considering. Given his discussion, Kent would again like our group to consider his previously proposed 4x2+3 model. This model entails four colleges electing two senators, plus a three person executive committee elected at large and made up of a chair, chair-elect, and one at large role.

Brian Posler indicated the at large representation should include the university division as well as librarians.

Stephen Zehr advocated for a model that is proportionate to the size of each college.

Maria Shirey indicated proportion by college size could present decision-making which may be skewed as a result of one college having larger representation.

Kent Scheller strongly opposed a representation based model.

Stephen asked: Would having two large and two small colleges create colleges that would feel disenfranchised with a representation (as compared to senate) model?

Maria responded: Yes, this arrangement would create perceptions of being disenfranchised.

Steve Williams, Interim Chair, at the request of Kent Scheller, called for a straw vote for pursuing either a representative or a senate governance model.

Cindy DeLoney-Marino asked if we had a quorum. Steve and Kent confirmed that yes, we have a quorum.

Steve Williams conducted the straw vote with the outcome favoring a senate model with equal representation from each college.

b. Board Size

Regarding any model we use, board size matters. We do not want the board to be so large that it loses its ability to be productive.

Maria Shirey indicated there is evidence to suggest that a large board size interferes with efficiency and decision-making productivity. As a general rule, a board size greater than 15 may be too large.

c. Composition

The group is currently looking at a senator model that is not too large. The decision to be made involves a choice between two options:

- i. The first option entails maintaining the status quo, which would be retaining the current governance model (4x2+2). This 10 person board has no provisions for at large elected leadership.
- ii. The second option represents a change from our current structure and is the 4x2+3 governance model Kent Scheller suggested. This 11 person board addresses leadership continuity and requires that the three person executive committee be selected via an at large election.

To proceed with the second option, there will need to be a faculty-wide vote. Change in the faculty governance model is an issue addressed in our Constitution.

Brian Posler informed the group that the process for change requires an amendment to the Constitution. The amendment must first pass with a two-thirds vote of its elected membership; needed to pass are seven votes. The general faculty will then be given two weeks to review the proposed amendment, and achieve a majority vote to pass.

To move closer to action with the composition issue, Kent Scheller volunteered to work with Brian Posler and draft a written amendment advocating for the 4x2+3 governance model.

At our next meeting, we will discuss the topic of governance for all standing committees. We will add the proposed 4x2+3 Senate governance amendment to our agenda.

**Next Meeting:**

- February 10<sup>th</sup> (Special meeting to discuss Standing Committee Governance structure) in UC 2206.

**Adjournment:**

Kent Scheller moved to adjourn the meeting and Brandon Shield seconded. No discussion followed and the group unanimously agreed to adjourn at 4:10 PM.