

# WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

## *Special Informational Meeting*

28 May 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

### ACTION MINUTES

**SENATORS PRESENT:** J. Albarracin, D. Atherton, B. Bellott, D. Brown, G. Cabedo-Timmons, C. Chadwell, H. Elbe, D. Gravitt, E. Hamner, A. Lewis, K. Perone, Y. Tang, L. Wipperling

**SENATORS ABSENT:** S. Bailey, D. Barr, L. Ebert Wallace, D. Hunter, S. Ko, J. Land, B. Petacovici, J. Sarra, M. Shamsuddoha, S. Turkelli, K. Wiseley

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

**GUESTS:** Mari Aanenson, Marjorie Allison, Andrea Alveshere, Kathy Artis, Ted Avtgis, Jobu Babin, P.K. Babu, Tiffany Bainter, Greg Baldi, Ashley Beardsley, Tom Blackford, Keith Boeckelman, Julie Brines, Tammi Leigh Brown, Rich Cangro, Chris Carpenter, Amy Carr, Sol Catala-Valentin, Gordon Chang, Jason Conner, Merrill Cole, Peter Cole, Jonathan Day, Rich Filipink, Redina Finch, Amy Ford, Patty Eathington, Jeanne Gage, William Gblerkpor, Jeff Hancks, Yuki Hasebe, Sarah Hill, Keith Holz, Michelle Howe, Randy Hyllegard, Jamie Johnson, Tim Johnson, Jennifer Jones, Pete Jorgensen, Lorri Kanauss, Casey LaFrance, Jim LaPrad, Ilon Lauer, Barb Lawhorn, Sarah Lawson, Tonya Little, Stacey Macchi, Patty Mason, Angela McClanahan-Simmons, Matt McConnell, Blair McDonald, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, Kathy McGuire, Shawn Meagher, Alice Melkumian, Kevin Menken, Nathan Miczo, Russ Morgan, Miguel Narvaez, Holly Nikels, Lorette Oden, Betsy Perabo, Cindy Piletic, Renee Polubinsky, Linda Prosis, Tyson Roan, Jim Schmidt, Mike Sharp, Emily Shupe, Krista Skein, Sebastian Szyjka, Erin Taylor, Julie Thompson, Craig Tollini, Casey Traveler, George Turner, Sadie Van Dyke, Alisha White, Beate Wilson, Phoebe Wilson, Dana Workman, Josh Wroblewski, David Zanolla

#### I. New Business

##### A. Discussion of Proposed Changes to General Education and Elimination of the Foreign Language-Global Issues Requirement

Chair Albarracin explained the meeting was triggered by a memo sent out by Interim Provost Mossman on May 17. She said after receipt of the email, the Executive Committee held a meeting on May 20 and, after multiple conversations with Interim Provost Mossman, decided to call a special meeting of the Faculty Senate. She stated that today's meeting is informational; even though the Faculty Senate encourages attendees to participate in any way, including proposing resolutions, senators will be unable to vote today because there is not an in-person quorum. She added that since this is a meeting of the Faculty Senate, priority will be given to comments by Senators and faculty members; if chairs and deans wish to express their opinions following those comments, they may do so as well. Chair Albarracin stated that Interim Provost Mossman will first be asked to present the proposed changes, then Chair Albarracin will state her position, followed by a statement from Vice Chair Everett Hamner. She remarked that other Executive Committee members were invited to provide their positions at the beginning of the meeting, but Parliamentarian Robinett has said his position was stated clearly in the minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting. [Senate Secretary Denise Gravitt was not yet present.] Chair Albarracin said that after these statements, other faculty may ask questions.

Interim Provost Mossman explained that an attempt is being made to solve a basic problem for our institution in the area of faculty capacity. He noted that for at least the past 15 years, the university has seen steady enrollment declines, but there have been steady declines in the number of faculty and staff as well. He thinks this does not make sense when a look at the fall schedule shows overload and a large number of adjunct faculty, along with, simultaneously, underenrolled classes. He believes the

way this occurred is that previous administrations have approached these problems as a problem with student credit hour (SCH), headcount, and programs which could be rectified with a program cut or something of that nature. He suspects efforts to address the problem through increasing SCH numbers has led to an increase in General Education to the point where almost half of the Gen Ed courses offered at WIU do not actually count toward the state Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) requirements. Interim Provost Mossman hopes that by getting more courses off the schedule, it will increase faculty capacity and encourage a robust enrollment in 100- and 200-level courses, which will in turn generate clear revenue and improve the overall health of the institution.

Interim Provost Mossman recognizes that enacting the proposed change will be “messy” on multiple levels and promises to use “maximum flexibility” when moving forward. He anticipates the change will lead to increases in faculty efficiency, the number of changes of majors, retention, and overall transfer accessibility for WIU. He believes there will be numerous benefits to this change.

Chair Albarracin stated that even though everyone may think that WIU’s General Education requires some revision, it is her position that these revisions should be done through working with the Faculty Senate and the councils that the Senate has for this purpose, including the Council on General Education (CGE), the Council on International Education (CIE), and the Council on Admissions, Graduation, and Academic Standards (CAGAS). She related that despite multiple conversations, Faculty Senate has been unable to convince Interim Provost Mossman that this would be the best course of action.

Senator Hamner thinks it is important to make a distinction today between the process involved regarding what has happened and the substance of the decision making. He believes the process was insufficient and cannot be treated as a precedent for a healthy WIU and its ongoing need for faculty government. He also thinks there is widespread agreement about this. He noted that Interim Provost Mossman has repeatedly acknowledged this and even apologized in writing for not engaging the Faculty Senate Executive Committee before making this move. Senator Hamner recognizes that senators can certainly have many conversations about this process element, but there is also the substance of what is being proposed and what is happening with that. He noted that Faculty Senate has recommendation rights; while Faculty Senate’s opinion does matter, it does not limit all possibilities. He understands that Interim Provost Mossman is stating that the university has to clean up some very problematic course offering patterns that are significantly impacting the university’s financial situation, but he has not been privy to that data. Senator Hamner said he has had a lot of conversations over the past couple of weeks with people who are in better positions to analyze that data, and he has heard from some trustworthy sources that there is more than smoke behind these decisions; there is real fire and problems that have to be cleaned up now. He is keeping this in mind when thinking about the substance of the proposal.

Senator Hamner related that the initial responses to Parliamentarian Robinett’s survey to senators prior to this meeting made it clear that it would be impossible to reach quorum in an in-person setting. He said this led to the Executive Committee’s decision not to attempt to make some sort of official statement because there would be no way to vote on it. He is aware of and appreciates various colleagues’ efforts to weigh in and try to understand what is going on, and he shares many of their concerns. He thinks that Faculty Senate in the fall will be in a position to both make those statements as desired and hopefully engage with its councils and committees, as well as the Senate as a whole, in whatever process is ahead. Senator Hamner added this is where he is with everything that has been happening and hopes that it is helpful to hear from someone who has been paying as close attention as possible to the happenings over the past couple of weeks.

English professor Merrill Cole, who will serve as UPI President next year, asked how these changes will grow revenue for the university and by how much. Interim Provost Mossman responded that the changes will normalize WIU’s General Education offerings in order to provide a better sense of how faculty capacity is working. He noted that currently WIU has a schedule that is very unbalanced, including Gen Ed offerings that the university cannot afford to make. He thinks WIU is a case study in faculty capacity; there are some faculty getting lots of overload while other faculty are not quite making their load as required by their contracts. He explained that what the direct outcome will be in

terms of cost savings will be determined after the changes have been implemented for a semester; while he cannot provide an actual dollar amount, he believes that what is being done will normalize the way Gen Ed offerings work on the WIU campuses. Dr. Cole asked if Interim Provost Mossman will make those numbers available to UPI when they are available; Interim Provost Mossman said he absolutely will.

History professor Rich Filipink, who chairs CAGAS, asked if Interim Provost Mossman can discuss the process behind the decision making for the proposal. He asked if it was a semester-long discussion, a month-long discussion, or a couple of weeks long. Interim Provost Mossman replied that this discussion, in his opinion, has been going on since he arrived at WIU in 2001. Dr. Filipink stressed that he meant this specific decision. Interim Provost Mossman replied the discussion began at least mid-point of the spring semester. He added there are a lot of initiatives being undertaken in the Provost's office, including the return to campus initiative and looking at the schedule. He related that a year ago, when he was Associate Provost, he asked chairs/directors and deans to look at the fall schedule and determine a way to reduce course offerings. He recalled that as that process unfolded it became clear that there are structural issues that deans and chairs/directors face when they put together a schedule, and part of it is that half of the university's Gen Ed offerings are ones that are not needed but that are included because they fit WIU's specific Gen Ed requirements. He added that it is not an offhand comment to say that this issue has been discussed for a long time.

Dr. Filipink explained that, as was stated at the CAGAS meeting earlier today, there are established policies and procedures for making this kind of change. He stressed that eliminating a graduation requirement and replacing it with a new graduation requirement is a process that has always gone through CAGAS on the road to approval. He pointed out that if the new policy has been under consideration since the middle of the semester, that would seem to have provided ample opportunity to bring it forward to CAGAS at some point. He noted that CAGAS has traditionally been responsive to requests for changes in policy and in graduation requirements. Dr. Filipink thinks that if the university is even going to pay lip service to shared governance, this would seem to be the minimal action undertaken on the part of Interim Provost Mossman. Interim Provost Mossman clarified that while discussions began in mid-March, they were not concrete at that time as to whether the policy was going to be implemented. He reiterated that there are a lot of things going on in the Provost's office, but he agrees that there could have been consultation with the Senate Executive Committee. Interim Provost Mossman recalled that someone has said that the process undermines *faculty* governance, but there is actually *shared* governance at WIU, and everything that is approved by CAGAS and Faculty Senate is ultimately signed off on by the Provost's office. [NB: According to Article V, Sections 4. and 5. of the Faculty Senate Constitution, the Provost only signs off on curricular changes or new curricular requests that are approved by Faculty Senate; the President signs off on all other items that Faculty Senate approves, including those coming to it from CAGAS.] Interim Provost Mossman stressed that his determination was that a decision needed to be made. He recalled serving on a committee in 2002 or 2003 which prepared a report on General Education in the College of Arts and Sciences, so his entire career has been about trying to figure out how to handle Arts and Sciences Gen Ed without there being any action taken.

Dr. Filipink said he needs to reiterate some of the things said at today's CAGAS meeting because the wider Senate needs to hear it. He does not think that something that happened 20 years ago is necessarily relevant to today. He reiterated that the process for creating or eliminating a graduation requirement involves taking it through CAGAS, a council that has traditionally always acted in an expedient fashion to discuss and vote on these kinds of matters, and he believes Interim Provost Mossman still needs to do this. Dr. Filipink believes that Interim Provost Mossman still needs to bring the proposal to CAGAS and that CAGAS needs to vote on it in order for it to go into effect. He does not think this change needs to be done unilaterally by Interim Provost Mossman if he is even going to pay lip service to the idea of shared governance because maintaining at least some procedures and processes would be in everyone's best interests. Interim Provost Mossman repeated for the wider Senate and university community what he said during the CAGAS meeting this morning: he has always valued CAGAS and recognizes that CAGAS does meet over the summer. He stated that there is a wide array of possibilities that will occur as the new policy is implemented, and he felt that a decision had to be made. He recognizes that some of these discussions occurred 20 years

ago, but it reinforces his point that things do not happen quickly at WIU. Dr. Filipink pointed out that the change that Interim Provost Mossman is proposing has now happened. He pointed out, as Interim Provost Mossman articulated in his memo, that existing students will follow through on their current catalogs, so there is no reason not to propose this requirement through the traditional method of going through CAGAS because doing so will not affect anything. He observed that if the students who are already enrolled in or attending WIU are going to follow the 2022, 2023, and 2024 catalogs anyway, there is really no legitimate reason not to send the proposal through CAGAS, as has always happened. He thinks this would at least anchor some of this process in shared governance.

Education professor Sebastian Szyjka said his comment may not favor one position or the other but is based on making the institution as prosperous as possible. He pointed out that part of the purpose of the Illinois Articulation Initiative is to create pathways for students coming from junior colleges who may not have thought about a particular major; the intention is to make the transition much easier for them to attend an institution like WIU. He observed that Southern Illinois University has increased its enrollment by four percent because they added 40 2+2 agreements. Dr. Szyjka thinks that streamlining WIU's General Education will open up and pave the way for more 2+2 agreements which will, in turn, lead to increased enrollments in WIU majors, so it is something WIU needs to do to move forward. He stressed the university should look into how many 2+2 agreements it is facilitating and that a lot of energy should go into setting these up so that students can start transferring in. He thinks the discussion is getting stuck in the weeds with considering what committee needs to approve things when the proposed change will benefit the institution and hopefully prevent a lot of bad things from happening years from now. Dr. Szyjka apologized if he misunderstood any of the issues, but from his point of view the 2+2 agreements are absolutely essential, and steps need to be taken to facilitate those kinds of transfers and the new students that they will bring in.

Parliamentarian Robinett asked if department chairs and directors, along with deans, have a say in which courses are allowed to be added to the schedule. Interim Provost Mossman responded that the department chairs or directors create a schedule pretty far in advance; it then moves through the dean's office and eventually to the Provost's office. He added that this used to be more stable when WIU had more stable and greater enrollment. He said it is also affected by the way that students enroll; students are tending to enroll increasingly later, and there are a lot of switches of modalities between online and face-to-face courses. He noted that these factors complicate what was always a very complicated schedule and make it difficult to have a stable schedule at the beginning of every semester.

Parliamentarian Robinett observed that if the issue is overload and that is where a lot of the university's costs are occurring, it would seem to be the responsibility of chairs/directors, deans, and the Provost's office to limit that from the scheduling rather than to make massive changes to General Education that have not been discussed. Interim Provost Mossman responded he agrees, to a limited extent, but in addition to all of the major complications typical in the schedule, WIU also has a structural requirement in Gen Ed offerings whereby chairs and directors have to offer a certain number of courses and categories per year. He said the proposal is an attempt to reduce the number of these courses on the schedule.

Interim Provost Mossman explained the proposed changes are also about enrollment: on average, IAI courses have 26-27 students enrolled in each course while there are 21-22 students in non-IAI courses. He remarked that since the pandemic – in his mind as well as the minds of a number of chairs/directors and deans – there has been the question of why WIU seems unable to achieve robust enrollments in 100- and 200-level psychology and biology classes, for example. He related that it was initially thought the problem was that too many sections were being offered, but he thinks the truth is that WIU has so many courses being offered despite decreasing enrollments that fewer students are being dispersed across many options of courses. He said the goal with the new policy is to reduce the number of courses in order to achieve robust enrollments in lower-division courses.

Amy Carr, professor in the Department of Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies and member of CGE, asked if Interim Provost Mossman could explain more about the elimination of the

Multicultural category of General Education and its replacement with a university-wide requirement through departments. She pointed out that IAI requirements require that at least one course be tagged with a D, or Diverse, designation, so if the idea is to actually abide by IAI, the university will still need something like that. She noted that a lot of the WIU Gen Ed courses that are not currently in IAI are in the Multicultural category and asked what the fate of those will be in light of the new university-wide requirement. Interim Provost Mossman thinks the D designation can be handled in a variety of ways and will go over that with Linda Prosis, Administrative Assistant to the Provost, in regard to the elimination of the Multicultural category and FLGI requirement. He said the idea is that multicultural perspectives will be expanded into and across the disciplines so that it is not just one particular Gen Ed category, which adheres with the Higher Values in Higher Education strategic plan, with Thriving Illinois, and with what the administration wants to do with the institution. He stressed that while it is the elimination of a category, it is also an expansion of multicultural perspectives by making it a major requirement of the university. Dr. Carr stressed that IAI expects one course to have the diversity tag, so if this decision is being made in the name of IAI that would be an inconsistency.

Art and Design professor Keith Holz, who serves on CIE and formerly chaired CGE, remarked that if this decision was made in mid-March, there was an interim president who came to the university after the interim provost made this decision, which is in the process of being consolidated. He asked when the Board of Trustees was apprised of this change and at what meeting that occurred. He wonders if it was reviewed and discussed by them and what their response was to the proposal. Interim Provost Mossman replied there has been no Board of Trustees meeting where this has been discussed at all. Interim Provost Mossman stated that his being an interim makes this an even harder decision to make, but it is in his opinion the right decision and what the university has to do. Dr. Holz related he was asked by another colleague to pose the question since both Dr. Mossman and Dr. Mindrup are interim and not voted in by the Faculty Senate, which he believes is, at some level, what is usually done for permanent provosts and presidents. Dr. Holz is struck by this and feels like the administration is skating on thin ice.

Dr. Filipink asked if Interim Provost Mossman can explain the process whereby he believes that the elimination of non-IAI-articulated General Education courses will automatically lead to increased enrollment in IAI-articulated Gen Ed courses. Interim Provost Mossman explained that each General Education category included non-IAI courses that WIU gives Gen Ed credit for. He believes that when these courses are not given Gen Ed credit, more students will go into the IAI courses. He thinks the effect will be fewer classes on the schedule and more robust enrollment in those IAI courses. Dr. Filipink is not sure this is a one-to-one process. He stated that since WIU will entirely have IAI-articulated Gen Ed courses, he suspects it is just as likely as Interim Provost Mossman's scenario that students will take these courses at community colleges, something they cannot do for a non-IAI-articulated WIU course which would guarantee the students' enrollment in the courses at Western. He does not believe that just getting rid of non-IAI-articulated courses automatically means that students are going to enroll in IAI-articulated courses at WIU. Interim Provost Mossman agrees this is a good and interesting point, but his perspective is that first-year students who have seen their advisors will be looking for Gen Ed courses in order to fill in their freshmen schedules. He thinks a very small percentage of those students will opt out and take those courses at a community college. Dr. Filipink pointed out that, by and large, non-IAI-articulated courses are not 100-level. Interim Provost Mossman pointed out that freshmen also take 200-level courses as they are looking to fulfill their Gen Ed requirements. Dr. Filipink said he is not sure the logic follows for this assumption. He is also not sure the logic follows that reducing the number of course offerings while asking every department to increase the number of courses taught by their faculty actually makes mathematical sense.

Biological Sciences professor Shawn Meagher stated that he was on the Biology majors panel as a WIU IAI institutional representative once for a long time but has never served on the IAI General Education panel, so he is unfamiliar with the proposals being discussed, although he has been hearing things about changing WIU's requirements and getting rid of classes. He asked if anyone has considered encouraging those instructors of WIU Gen Ed courses that are not IAI approved to try to get IAI approval for them or whether they have already tried to do so and failed. Interim Provost Mossman replied that this is certainly possible because IAI is an evolving thing, and this was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting.

Dr. Meagher wonders if the university gets rid of a bunch of classes that faculty routinely teach, whether that means that WIU no longer needs those instructors to teach things. He wonders what happens to those faculty members if the university gets rid of courses that are routinely taught because they do not fit a certain IAI criteria. Interim Provost Mossman replied that this is why past approaches to WIU's financial issues have always been problematic because the institution's faculty capacity has been really cloudy. He recalled that the Women's Studies major was eliminated because of low enrollment even when everyone knew the Women's Studies program was actually the leading SCH producer in the College of Arts and Sciences, so that was not a good decision. He said part of the work being done now is to get a handle on that exact question: where is the faculty capacity? He explained that the schedule is an important document regarding the health of the institution, and when looking at the ACE sheets and the schedule they show every possible scenario: deeply underenrolled classes, overenrolled classes, faculty working overload, and faculty scrambling because they cannot get enough ACEs. Interim Provost Mossman believes that until the university can determine a good faculty capacity, it is really operating in the dark.

Parliamentarian Robinett remarked he has asked frequently throughout this process when Interim Provost Mossman's use of "we" refers to the collective university, when it refers to the Provost's office, and when it refers to the President's Cabinet. He asked if it is correct to assume that everyone must wait until fall to find out what actual financial savings would come from this change because there is no predictive model at this point. He observed that everyone does not know the exact data to suggest that there will be increases in IAI-articulated Gen Ed courses and how this will affect overall enrollment this fall. Parliamentarian Robinett said he feels he must ask one more time where the empirical evidence is backing these proposed changes and the importance of them happening so quickly. Interim Provost Mossman thinks that the use of data at WIU is becoming a canard. He said the empirical evidence is that there are too many courses on the schedule, and 44 percent of the Gen Ed courses offered are not IAI so do not have to be offered, which is the starting point. He added that when he uses "we" it refers to the staff of the Provost's office.

Communication faculty member Tonya Little, who recently served on CGE, said her question concerns those Gen Ed courses that are not IAI-articulated but that have large enrollments and bring students into a major. She understands those courses will now, for the most part, be eliminated because if they cannot be taken for Gen Ed credit fewer students will enroll in them. She recognizes that some classes are not sufficiently full but wonders what happens to these courses that are full and which, particularly if they are also Y courses, students are commonly recommended to take. Interim Provost Mossman specified that these changes would not affect Y courses. He noted that rather than looking at one specific course, it is important to look at the whole picture which shows that the Division of Academic Affairs is not at faculty capacity. Ms. Little remarked that it feels to a lot of faculty like they are collateral damage as part of the effort to get rid of certain courses even though those faculty are doing their jobs of filling classes and bringing students in. She thinks the whole blanket of throwing out any courses that are not IAI will cause problems, too. Interim Provost Mossman replied there is no pleasure in doing any of this because these are hard things to work out.

Dr. Filipink remarked that one thing that makes WIU unique is having courses that cannot be taken at community colleges or for high school credit. He pointed out that the empirical evidence provided shows that these courses are sufficiently filled to make their enrollments on a consistent basis. He asked how eliminating them will benefit the university financially and how it will benefit the students in terms of the diversity of courses they are offered at WIU. He also asked how this change will square with Interim Provost Mossman's requirement to department chairs and directors to make sure faculty are reaching maximum, but not overloaded, ACE loads. He observed that only three faculty members had a problem reaching 18 ACEs, so he objects to this being made out as a significant problem. Interim Provost Mossman replied that the university cannot afford to have half of its Gen Ed offerings be extra to IAI requirements. Dr. Filipink suggested that Interim Provost Mossman could explain this by actually providing, as Parliamentarian Robinett requested, some sort of actual financial data to demonstrate that this will have any positive effect on the university and is not being undertaken just for the sake of doing something or to get the Board of Trustees off Interim Provost

Mossman's back. Interim Provost Mossman responded that the Board of Trustees is not involved in decision making, so that is a ridiculous statement.

Interim Provost Mossman stressed the purpose of the proposal is to create an efficient schedule because when the university has an efficient schedule it will have more resources to devote to first-year programming and retention initiatives, and it will make the university more transfer friendly. Dr. Filipink asked Interim Provost Mossman to define an efficient schedule. Interim Provost Mossman replied that the first step is having faculty teach to their contracts. He thinks the second step is not offering extra courses so that there is an efficient number of courses with good enrollments and every course is offered. Dr. Filipink pointed out that all of WIU's faculty teach to contract and none of them do not, so that is a non-issue. He asked Interim Provost Mossman to explain how this will make the university more efficient because eliminating courses that fill does not really smack of efficiency. Interim Provost Mossman pointed out that when Dr. Filipink says "teach to contract" he means 18 ACEs, but it is actually defined as 18-21. Dr. Filipink agrees that there is a range but pointed out that there is no requirement that any faculty member max out or min out. He said "teach the contract" means that faculty make their 18 ACEs or above; he noted that some are significantly above, which strikes him as more of a staffing issue than an efficiency issue. Dr. Filipink noted that Interim Provost Mossman has correctly pointed out that the university has experienced significant reductions in the number of faculty, advisors, office managers, building service workers, counselors, admissions counselors, and Registrar's office staff who provide the majority of support for WIU's students. Interim Provost Mossman noted that the university does not have the staff to support 44 percent of additional offerings in Gen Ed.

Chair Albarracin asked Senate Secretary Denise Gravitt if she has any statement she wished to make about the proposed changes. Senator Gravitt said she is in favor of the reduction in Gen Ed hours but does not necessarily agree with how this change is occurring outside of the normal procedures. She serves on the Senate's Budget Transparency Committee, and they had to submit a FOIA request to obtain salary information for this year; this was obtained in February, and they just received the appropriated budget for this year recently. She understands that part of the reason for the change is to reduce expenditures and overload, and part of the justification is to help the university budget, but she is not sure how the changes will reduce overload and asked if there is some kind of report which shows where all of the overload is being paid. She wonders if it is mostly being paid to a few people and some majors which do not have enough faculty, in which case reducing Gen Ed courses will not help unless those faculty members can also transition out of the courses with fewer students to teaching the courses where faculty are overloaded. She asked if a study could be conducted of where all the overload money is going and specifically target those areas where a lot of it is being paid instead of doing those things which, as Dr. Filipink pointed out, do not necessarily have a lot of data showing that this will be a targeted approach which will achieve the desired result. Interim Provost Mossman replied that overload, unfortunately, is pretty healthy across the institution, although there are areas where both overload and adjuncts are a little bit higher. He thinks the reduction needs to be made across the board and does not want to point fingers. He said the idea of having a more efficient, normalized General Education schedule is that the university begins to fix those issues of overload and inconsistencies across the schedule.

Associate Provost Holly Nikels remarked that one piece of the proposal is that it is a process, so once things get leveled out it will be possible to, for instance, identify areas with shortages of faculty in order to determine where the dollars need to go. She thinks that once the schedule is balanced out it will be possible to have a better sense of what the next step is. She stressed the proposal will not be "one and done and then everything's fine again" but rather step one of a bigger process.

Communication faculty member David Zanolla, who currently serves on CGE, asked if it is accurate to say that Y classes will not be impacted if it is a Y class that is being eliminated because it is not IAI-approved. Interim Provost Mossman said an example is COMM 130Y, which is offered for the first-year experience.

Mr. Zanolla asked why Interim Provost Mossman did not request that the Council on General Education convene a General Education Review Committee. He recognized that Interim Provost

Mossman said in his initial statement that these committees in the past have failed, in his perspective, but Mr. Zanolla thinks the charges to the review committee in the past were very vague and abstract and were more of a request to just “tell us what you think.” He asked if Interim Provost Mossman has looked into any other public universities in Illinois and their Gen Ed programs, whether any of them have followed the model of eliminating all Gen Ed courses except for those required by IAI, what that looks like compared to other state universities in Illinois that have not done that, and how that is going for both options. Interim Provost Mossman replied his position is that the entire institution needs to act, to make a decision, and to move forward on it. He does not believe WIU has another five years to debate the theory of General Education or another 25 years to talk about Gen Ed in Arts and Sciences. He stressed that the university needs to be more efficient in its scheduling of courses and its delivery of programs, which was a key part of his decision to move forward on this. He believes that this is shared governance, although as he told the Executive Committee and Chair Albarracin multiple times he wishes that he had reached out at some point in the process. Interim Provost Mossman believes that was an error, but he does not in any way regret the decision. He pointed out that if it proves to be a bad decision, he is an interim. He stressed that he is trying to do the right thing for the institution and move it forward to a better, brighter future.

Senator Atherton shared a graph illustrating the high school population “cliff” showing declines in numbers of Illinois high school graduates. He thinks it looks like a very serious problem. He recognizes that this proposal did not follow the normal process and noted that Dr. Szyjka brought up that Southern Illinois University has been “eating our lunch.” Dr. Atherton thinks that SIU and Iowa schools have been eating the School of Agriculture’s lunch because of this kind of thing, so he concurs with the proposed changes. He asked Interim Provost Mossman if this is the only trick in his bag of tricks because the situation will be getting much worse. He noted that while the process was not followed up to this point, Faculty Senate can give Interim Provost Mossman the opportunity now to share his other plans in addition to this one with senators. Senator Atherton added that if WIU had 14,000 students, he does not think this discussion would be occurring. Interim Provost Mossman agrees that WIU is in the midst of the demographic cliff that was predicted several years ago, and it was arguably sped up by Covid. He added that every institution in the country is dealing with this, and every public institution at every level is, in one way or another, experiencing some kind of financial pain because of the sudden scarcity of 18–22 year olds. He noted that the Northeast and the Midwest have been hit particularly hard; the South, Mountain, West, and West Coast regions have benefitted from migrations of people moving out of the Northeast and Midwest. Interim Provost Mossman said the strategy of WIU, and every other institution, is to develop new niche student markets. He noted that there are 39 million students who have started but not completed their college degrees, so Jeff Hancks, Director of General Studies, has been working on trying to revamp and rebuild that program for adult learners. Interim Provost Mossman observed that workforce development is a buzz word within Thriving Illinois, which he encourages everyone to read. He noted that workforce development and healthcare have been identified by the state as growth industries, so every state institution has been trying to determine how to align academic programming with those particular areas. Interim Provost Mossman added there is nonstop work every day trying to figure out how to handle the demographic cliff and retool WIU’s enrollment so that it includes students from multiple different kinds of populations and places. Senator Atherton asked if that means there will be no more surprises and this proposal was the only surprise. Interim Provost Mossman replied he does not anticipate any more surprises, just more of the usual. He noted that trying to figure out Quad Cities campus enrollment with workforce development has been a project for as long as he has been in the Provost’s office. He said other examples include online learning and modalities, which everyone has been engaged in.

Chair Albarracin asked whether, if the idea is that improved efficiency will attract transfer students, the university plans to have a more aggressive recruitment plan for transfer students or whether WIU will continue to stay with its backyard community colleges only. She noted that Illinois State is recruiting from Chicago area community colleges, not just in its backyard. Interim Provost Mossman agrees that recruiting from city colleges is essential. He stressed this change will help with transfer students as there will be no barrier for them in academic affairs. He agrees that WIU needs to increase its transfer students, especially on the Quad Cities campus.

Dr. Filipink remarked that, as Chair of CAGAS, he still does not see why Interim Provost Mossman could not, even at this point, follow through on regular procedures for a change that will not affect students who will start at WIU this fall. He is also not clear how the proposal squares with Interim Provost Mossman's maximization plan for faculty teaching. Interim Provost Mossman replied that his office is working on faculty capacity, and step one is looking at the schedule and seeing that it includes too many courses. He thinks it would have been unreasonable for him to suggest to deans and chairs/directors a year ago to try to condense and offer fewer courses on the schedule when there is a structural problem in the university's Gen Ed offerings. He believes this is the first step toward squaring the circle. He added it will be a process moving forward. Interim Provost Mossman stressed that he respects CAGAS and respects Dr. Filipink as a three-time chair of CAGAS and thinks he does good work. He added that he is hearing everything Dr. Filipink is saying.

Dr. Holz said he has questions about particular programs and how they will be impacted by the disappearance of Global Issues courses. He asked if their elimination will impact study abroad since many students meet their GI requirement in this way. He also asked if the General Honors courses are IAI-conforming. Interim Provost Mossman said that while he does not know the exact number of students who used study abroad to meet their Foreign Language-Global Issues requirement, he does not think it is significant. He added that Honors College Dean Lorette Oden is meeting with Ms. Prosis next week about the General Honors question. He understands that in the end it will become more of a transcript issue than anything else. Dr. Holz asserted there are a lot of students in the Department of Art and Design who meet their FLGI requirement through study abroad.

Beate Wilson, faculty member in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, asked, now that more is known about what is going on, whether there has been discussion about when Unit B faculty will find out if they have employment for next year. Interim Provost Mossman replied he does not know the answer to that question. He said the administration is working on the budget and reminded everyone that the university has over a \$12 million deficit. He stressed that all the Budget Office is working on is trying to balance the budget. He added the new policy is about developing faculty capacity in the future and not about immediate concerns.

Biological Sciences faculty member Mari Aanenson said this was her question also: how the changes will affect Unit B faculty because they are still in limbo. Interim Provost Mossman reiterated that the Budget Office is working on the immediate budget crisis, while the new policy pertains to the development of programming and course offerings in the future within Academic Affairs.

Honors College Dean Lorette Oden said she is concerned that as departments move to eliminate or change their Gen Ed offerings, she does not know what the impact might be on General Honors. She wonders, even though she is meeting next week with Ms. Prosis, if there is a way to give some information now to those departments so that they are aware of the potential to impact General Honors. She also wonders if departments should hold off on some of the things they are doing or if there is some guidance they should be following now pertaining to some of the General Education classes. Interim Provost Mossman replied that his understanding is that there will be no direct impact. He explained the issue will be in the way courses are transcribed in General Honors and the particular requirements that those courses meet. He noted, for example, that GH 180 is the English course, so Dean Oden will choose whether this will be transcribed as ENG 180 or 280 and clarify this early in the process. He added that he wants Ms. Prosis to work with Dean Oden because she is the expert on these kinds of issues.

English professor Alisha White, who chairs the Council on General Education next year, asked what Interim Provost Mossman sees as the role of CGE when applying for IAI designation or whether courses will bypass CGE. Interim Provost Mossman replied that courses should not bypass CGE; there are institutional reps for each discipline who should work with CGE as they bring forward courses.

Senator Atherton observed that WIU has 21 2+2 agreements and asked if Interim Provost Mossman will be working to get many more of them in place. Interim Provost Mossman replied that Academic Affairs serves a supportive role in this process, but he knows that Admissions and Enrollment

Management are working on this process. He added that they are working on “pathways” more than 2+2 agreements. His position is that there needs to be more summits with individual community colleges and more faculty and advisors meeting with them. He added that the School of Agriculture does a really great job of working with community colleges to get transfer students into WIU. Interim Provost Mossman thinks this needs to be a university-wide initiative, adding that the new Interim Vice President for Student Success agrees with this and will move forward in that way.

Kathy Artis, Admissions and Records Coordinator for the General Studies program, said she works with articulation for General Studies and is worried about how the proposed changes will affect students from outside of Illinois who do not come into Western with an AA or AS degree. She said that because they are out of state, these students are totally unaware of the Illinois Articulation Initiative coursework, and the likelihood of matching up these students’ prior coursework is slim. She thinks the WIU-specific General Education courses allow for a little more freedom of articulation; for instance, she might be able to assign an elective for one of the out-of-state students’ courses within that Gen Ed category. Ms. Artis understands, however, that there is no option for anything like that with IAI. She wonders how this will affect WIU student-athletes who come from California, Texas, and many other states. Interim Provost Mossman replied he holds the opposite position because he thinks this change will make transfers easier for student-athletes and others. He recognizes that everyone will need to use substitutions where possible, adding that when he was department chair that was one of the tools in his toolbox, particularly when students would transfer from DePaul University, which had a very different Gen Ed program and early major requirements in English. He said substitutions were able to be determined by looking at students’ syllabi and other things. He hopes that because WIU will no longer have extra hours attached to General Education, it will be easier to align those things, and if it is not then there will need to be extra work done on it.

Parliamentarian Robinett said he spends a lot of time working with WIU student-athletes in his role as NCAA Faculty Representative. He thinks one thing that will make this transition an adventure is that until it is known exactly how the extra six hours will be treated, it will be difficult to say how that will work. He noted that departments have not had time to figure out what they will do with those extra six hours – if they will be open electives, which some programs current do not have – and there will be a period of time when it is unknown how this will affect student-athletes as far as recruiting and bringing them in because it will largely depend on the number of hours in their majors and how it affects electives.

[**Note:** Linda Prosis asked that this response to Parliamentarian Robinett’s question be added to the minutes: “I am in the process of analyzing the degree programs in CBT, COEHS, and COFAC to determine the effect of the changes to General Education on each program. I will be working with the Registrar's Office to ensure that changes in the catalog and in the WARD programming are identical. It is crucial that we are able to conduct this analysis in detail to make certain that we consider all potential effects on each program. Please be aware that this is not a speedy process. By its nature, it must be detailed and deliberate, but we will proceed as quickly as we can. Once I have updated the catalog copy, I will typeset it and send the proofs to the Chairs/Directors as usual, along with a list of the specific changes resulting from the new General Education policy. I will also request that they share this information with faculty and advisors.”]

Chair Albarracin asked Ms. Hamm to share the minutes, once they are completed, with the faculty via email and not just with senators. She thanked Interim Provost Mossman for attending the meeting and attempting to answer everyone’s questions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annette Hamm, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary