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Faculty Senate

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FACULTY SENATE MINUTES FOR 25 October 2011 (Vol. XXXV, No. 5)

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Note: These minutes are not a complete verbatim transcript of the Senate meeting.

I. Call to order by Chair Andrew Methven at 2:00pm. (Booth Library Conference Room)

Present: A. Adom, J. Coit, S. Knight-Davis, A. Methven, M. Mulvaney, K. Padmaraju, A. Rosenstein, G. Sterling, J. Stowell, L. Taylor, D. Viertel, A. White, J. Waller. Excused: T. Leonce, M.-L. Li
Guests: John Best (Psychology), Bonnie Irwin (Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities), Blair Lord (Provost), Jeanne Snyder (Associate Dean of the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences), Karla Sanders (Director of the Center for Academic Support and Assessment), Rebecca Throneburg (Communications Disorders and Sciences).

II. Approval of the Minutes of 11 October

Senator Sterling recommended revising minutes to be consistent regarding using “Brenda” at times and “Major” in other instances. Chair Methven identified a few editorial issues that he would discuss with Recorder Coit. Senator Viertel indicated the date at the top of the minutes needs updated from 8/30 to 10/11. Senator Stowell (Rosenstein) moved to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Announcements

IV. Communications

- a. Memo of 11 October from Karla Sanders re: CASL Executive Summaries
- b. Memo of 20 October from Judy Gorrell re: 21 October CUPB meeting

V. Old Business

A. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee: Chair Methven reported on the most recent meeting. President Perry stated that the shared governance committee report should be sent to Senate by end of October. The search for a new head football coach has been posted. Methven stated the new appointments to the EIU Board of Trustees had not been announced by the meeting time. Lord stated the appointments are now on the Governor’s website: William Dano (Oswego) who has worked sales management for 20 years for companies including Extreme Networks and AT&T; Joseph R. Dively, the President of First Mid-Illinois bank, and an Eastern alum; Bob Webb, who was reappointed; and Rene Hutchinson, an EIU alum who has worked in business management). The continuing trustees are Roger Kratochvil, Kristopher Goetz, Leo Welch, and Jarrod Scherle is the current student trustee. The appointments must be approved by the Legislature.

Methven stated that President Perry has discussed plans to replace the turf and track at O’Brien Field, and the project will cost an estimated \$3 million. Coit stated that the Illinois High School Association, which holds their state track championships at EIU every year, has apparently voiced the need for a new track to continue holding the event here. Senator White stated that the track bubbled on the ends soon after it was installed, and asked why the University hasn’t gone after the company to replace or fix it. Senator Rosenstein asked if the cost includes the on/off areas for emergency vehicles, does it include everything inside the fence? Lord stated that the primary surface replaced will be the track and field, and that part of the higher price resulted from the necessity to redo the field’s drainage.

2. Nominations Committee: no report
3. Elections Committee: no report
4. Faculty – Student Relations Committee: no report
5. Faculty – Staff Relations Committee: no report

6. Awards Committee: Stowell stated the committee received a number of competitive applications for the Luis Clay Mendez Distinguished Service Award, and that the committee has nominated Dr. Kathleen Shank (Special Education) to receive the 2011 award. Rosenstein (Adom) moved to accept the nomination. Motion passes unanimously

7. Faculty Forum Committee: Senator Padmaraju stated there has been some discussion about a spring forum topic, with the possibility of co-sponsoring an event with Faculty Development.

8. Other Reports

a. Provost's Report

Lord stated the College of Science Dean search committee is working on winnowing down, and that the Director of Human Resources search hasn't yet begun.

EIU has contracted with Noel Levitt to consult in admissions, recruitment, and retention. We have received a multipage research request from them, that's in the works.

The Distance Education Committee had its first meeting, Senator Stowell is the convener. Stowell state that the committee is in the data gathering phase, and will be meeting again next week.

Senator Sterling asked if the six names Gov. Quinn appointed to the board are the only six people on the board. Lord stated that for over 2 years, the Board has only had 2 people on appointments confirmed by the legislature. Leo Welch was reappointed two years ago, and the his and the student's appointments, were the only bona fide appointments. The board needed six new people, I don't know if they're going to stagger those or have these massive turnover of Boards every two years.

b. Budget Transparency Committee: no report

c. Other

B. Other Old Business

VI. New Business

A. Karla Sanders and Rebecca Throneburg, CASL

Rebecca Throneburg distributed and discussed CASL's Executive Summaries. Throneburg began with a discussion of CASL's Executive Summary (by College) for Undergraduate programs. Data was provided for three of the four university learning goals – average speaking scores; average EWP scores, and average Watson-Glaser critical thinking scores. The fourth university learning goal, Global Citizenship is missing because CASL can't get it down to one measurable item. Throneburg identified inconsistencies in assessment (at the Departmental level) for some of the four learning goals as some Departments have not organized or collected data for all four learning goals. Throneburg and Sanders also suggested a self-study team will likely be formed in 2013 for the purpose of university re-accreditation. Throneburg stated the Executive Summaries this year also include data from the previous three years. Charts and graphs summarizing this data was also discussed/presented by Throneburg.

Senator Adom stated that most Department have increased the number of learning goals adopted, but a few Departments have declined. Senator Adom was curious of the reason for these declines. Sanders indicated that some of these reductions can be attributed to Departmental curricular restructuring in response to changes in Departmental-level accreditation standards. Sanders also stated that only data for majors was included.

Throneburg then reviewed and discussed the graduate-level Executive Summary. Throneburg stated most graduate programs have adopted the four learning goals: knowledge (100% of programs); communication (100% of programs), scholarship (100% of programs), and critical thinking (83% of programs). Sanders stressed that the Executive Summary is a "boiled down" version and snapshot of the four learning goals. Sanders encouraged everyone to visit CASL's website for the complete data.

Sanders shared her observations regarding evaluations of critical thinking skills. She stated that the results of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) (provided by the testing firm) are somewhat limited. Sanders stated that the CLA uses their ACT score for their prediction model. Throneburg also stated that the results of the CLA are posted on the website for interested students to review as they consider EIU.

Senator Stowell asked what is the correlation between ACT scores and the University's performance on the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking test. Sanders stated that we have not done that correlation, we do the Collegiate Learning Assessment, we haven't taken students' ACT scores and compared it to the Watson-Glaser results. Methven asked if the CLA's finding that that 22% of graduating seniors are well above expected, is that based on their entering ACT scores? Sanders stated that we give the test to 100 freshman and 100 seniors, and send in their ACT scores, and the CLA show where our students should be given where they came in.

Sanders stated that this is last year of EIU will be using this version CLA, because there is not enough information given to us about what we are doing wrong and how we can fix it. They have since changed the report that we receive and the data we receive, CASL had examined other methods and we were ready to bolt. The new report gives us a narrative and percentage of students. There's a whole rubric behind, telling us where our students are, and will give us comparative data and suggestions on we can do to improve students scores. We are giving the exam in English 1001, 7 sections, but will begin giving it

differently, last year the exam was given to volunteer students, and this year faculty will volunteer entire classes. This spring we will give the assessment in selected senior seminars. Rosenstein noted that the assessment won't be a true random sample and asked if faculty will be given a copy of that rubric? Sanders once we get the report then we'll distribute the rubric. Throneburg noted that John Best is involved with all four assessments CASL does, and Best wants feedback from faculty about what we think critical thinking is and how we approach it. We need to figure out a better way to measure it, and to have some discussions on campus about what we think critical thinking is. Rosenstein stated that she is in year 5 and didn't know about University-wide assessment. As a university no one's ever approached me about assessment, and I've never gone to that site and didn't know to be doing this. Throneburg stated that this is part of the discussion about assessment on CAA.

Methven asked if we have that kind of data to compare EIU's performance with other institutions. Sanders stated the CLA does not show how we compare to particular institutions, only how we compare with everyone that took the test. Methven asked how many other institutions are using the CLA. Sanders stated that the last time she looked there was no list, and we won't know until the results are published. Adom asked what kind of steps are you taking to make sure we are not comparing apples to oranges. Sanders stated that she could not answer, because she didn't create the CLA, we give them what they ask for, we are told by the CLA that we have to have 100 freshmen, new freshman, and have to have ACT scores. All the students that we test have to meet this criteria. All seniors have to be leaving, but different students have different numbers of EIU credit hours. Throneburg stated that the CLA uses ACT scores to compare apples to apples. This allows them to look at freshman, and assess what level of students we are dealing with. The results show how much better students are at critical thinking given the ACT score at your school. Adom asked if the CLA test is comparable to ACT. Throneburg stated that the test involves reading, critical thinking, and writing.

Sterling stated we've been pointing out that there are problems with all the data, Watson-Glaser is not a perfect instrument, that it is hard to compare EIU to other universities because a lot of universities don't use it, but if you put the data together, we are on a decline. The CLA shows 62% of EIU graduates are below average, and when EWP readers read portfolios, the weakest part is forming an argument and critical thinking. Any one of those assessments has problems, but EIU has a serious problem in teaching critical thinking. There are no general education courses that teach critical thinking in any consistent way. We have writing classes for writing, we don't just tell all faculty to teaching writing in all their classes, why do we tackle critical thinking by informally telling faculty members in different disciplines they should teach critical thinking. We have faculty who specialize in teaching critical thinking.

Rosenstein stated that she feels a need to defend our students, no data is perfect, we may be using ACT scores, but we may not be looking at our seniors, but also transfer students. What they've had or not had might make a difference. Throneburg stated that there is not a big difference between transfers and non-transfers in their performance on these evaluations. Rosenstein stated that if you asked our seniors in Special Education to content analyze student work, and identify what the patterns of data suggest they should teach next, they will do very well. Is the critical thinking assessment so abstract that our students have difficulty because students spend their junior and senior years thinking in really specific terms? Best stated that I appreciate the point, and defending the students a little bit. On all these tests there's no real performance incentive for the students. Throneburg noted that in the College of Education, one area students are doing poorly in their Basic Skills Test is their reading comprehension, where the tasks are asking for inference. Rosenstein stated that the Basic Skills tests measures skills they learn before they are ours, that means their high school educations. Sanders noted that they are still Eastern students. Senator Waller stated that if the results are down because there are no performance incentives, shouldn't you be able to measure that, give some groups performance incentives and see the difference. Best stated that cognitive psychology has conversations about domain-general versus domain-specific skills, and critical thinking is a domain-general skill, which would allow someone to succeed regardless of the domain, in any environment. The question is how come the students aren't popping out the domain-general critical thinking, when we all see all of our students doing critical thinking in our classes. The principles seem to be breaking down. Do we want to try to tackle that, or is that not what we are designed to do, and we are here instead to put content in people's heads. Sanders stated that what Throneburg is trying to say is not that the College of Education students are bad, but that like the rest of our students, they are having trouble in those critical thinking kinds of tasks, and they are coming here with issues and leaving us with them. Coit stated that all of the problems raised with the assessments would apply to all universities and aren't unique to EIU. He also stated that assessment sounds like it is about our students, but we are actually

assessing the university as a whole and not students. Gonzalez stated that she is a transfer, and in the current year's courses, I have been asked to memorize facts and repeat them, all my tests have been multiple choice. I transferred here, and thought maybe there'd be more writing to the coursework, but it has been mostly memorizing information and repeating it on the test. Sanders on the National Survey of Student Engagement data, some of it was positive and some of it was negative. 63% of seniors answered very much or quite a bit, to the question of how much have they been required to memorize facts and repeat them. We are kind of on par with other institutions in Illinois. 88% of our students stated that Eastern contributed to their thinking critically and analytically. Best stated that might get back to domain-specific vs. domain-general skills, that students are doing that within their major, then we get this different level of performance. It's going to be on us to create opportunity to students to learn this kind of stuff. The writing and speaking courses are domain-general. If we want domain-general critical thinking skills, we may well have to do some scaffolding. Waller stated that doing critical reasoning skills seems to be extremely important today, when you cannot know which situations you will be in and which information you will analyze. We can do this, philosophers do this, we have a domain-general logic. These results seem to say we should do it. Sterling stated that if you gave me a group of senior philosophy students and said to me, these students are really good at analyzing and thinking critically about a work on philosophy, but if you gave them data in the sciences, they have difficulty, I would not say, that's ok, I want domain-specific skills. We're talking about a general education goal and we wouldn't accept in writing, that yes this student can write, only as long as they are asked to write about their specific discipline. If we're not looking for that as a general goal, we should drop it. Rosenstein stated I think if students can think critically outside of our discipline it will make them stronger within their discipline, build on that general critical thinking. Has the NSSE data changed since we began the Integrative Learning initiative? That's a system-wide, conscious effort to think about learning outside the classroom, in terms of projects, community service, and cross-curricular activities. Sanders stated the NSSE was given once, and will be given again in Spring 2013, that's the requirement set up by NSSE and that will be our first trend data. Rosenstein asked if we can offer incentives for participation in that? Sanders stated that the CLA will be done in whole classrooms. The NSSE is all online, we give IUPUI a list of our students and then they do it. They do email blasts to get students to take the survey, and we don't choose the dates. Methven stated that he agrees with the comments about performance incentives. We administer a field test, on a voluntary basis on a Saturday morning, and which students show up, your better students, so your scores are going to be skewed. If it is incorporated into a class some students will just put the letter B on anything. What really concerns me was the conversation we had two weeks ago, that employers want critical thinking skills, and if on our website, it tells students that if you graduate, you won't have skills employers want to have.

Sanders presented the results from the Electronic Writing Portfolio review. Viertel asked if there is any incentive for students to turn in a decent paper to the EWP, I was under the impression that if they received a satisfactory it doesn't count. Sanders that there is no penalty for submitting a paper which receives a 1 or 2. Throneburg stated that we talked about this when implementing the changes to EWP in 2007, if there was a lot of low ratings students would need additional coursework, but the number of students getting low scores is not enough to trigger that. If you have to have two 4s and one 3.5 then you get notation on your transcript, notation that your EWP was superior. With the new system, we want to know if they are getting those ones. Sanders stated that we say, talk to your faculty members before you submit. Rosenstein asked if there is data from faculty about how they respond to EWP requests, I don't have Writing Intensive courses, but before I allow students to submit they have to have a grade, and if I demand rewrites they have to do rewrites before they submit. Sanders stated there is no data, practices are as varied as faculty members themselves. Throneburg stated that if we try to enforce specific steps we get lots of negative feedback. Methven stated that this may explain why a lot of students don't ask me because I require a draft and rewrites. Mulvaney asked if external reviewers have noticed any trends beyond 5 years? Sanders stated that the first year for reading completed portfolios was 2005 because there were no completed portfolios before then. Mulvaney stated that the data doesn't seem to suggest any glaring trends. He stated that you hear rumblings here and other institutions about the written communication skills of the next generation of students, but approximately 80% of the portfolios are adequate or strong based on external reviewers. Sanders stated that is what we're seeing. Readers report that students are especially good at informative writing, they run into trouble making and developing arguments, supporting what they have to say, stating a thesis, and drawing conclusions. In the longer report, you see much more fluctuation. When we look at is seven different traits rather than overall portfolios, the results are very different than overall.

Throneburg stated that students are not using a lot of references or outside sources. Students are doing pretty well on the writing portion of the basic skills.

Sanders presented the results of the Public Speaking assessments performed by freshmen in CMN 1310 freshman and seniors in Senior seminar.

Sanders presented the results of the assessment of the Global Citizenship objective. She stated that this is the least well understood goal. We assess this goal through indirect measures only, we give a survey in senior seminar and at freshman orientation. The survey was created by a faculty member years ago, and is all self-reported data. The report does not reproduce answers to every single question, instead we tried to pull out trend data which showed a marked difference between freshman and seniors, looking at freshman summer of 2007, and seniors this past academic year. Throneburg stated that the results show that seniors don't drastically change their beliefs but tend to have stronger opinions.

B. Request for Information Regarding Recruitment and Retention

Methven asked for clarification about questions submitted by Senator Sterling relating to admissions, enrollment, and retention. Do they concern the enrollment "funnel," which students are recruited by or investigate EIU, how many of those then apply, are admitted, enroll, and are retained? Is that what we are trying to get a handle on?

Lord stated that in addition to the funnel, Sterling's request also asked for some demographic information. Ultimately some of these things some terms are not defined in our process, for example economic need is not a defined terms. Senate would have to define what data it wants under those terms. Noel Levitz will generate some of this data, and we did ask them to give us some advice for the 2011 class. They are going to have to do some of this request quick and dirty, there may be two timelines to fulfill this request. Methven stated that, with some of the data requests, EIU may not necessarily have it. There may be a limitation with some of this data. Lord stated he had talked with Mary Herrington-Perry and Jerry Donna, and a good bit of information will be generated, we will need a contact when we get some of these informations. Methven volunteered to be the contact

Viertel (Mulvaney) moved to request the information. Senator Taylor asked who would be doing the statistical analysis. Methven stated we haven't got it that far. Sterling suggested we look at the raw data, maybe the answers will be obvious, if they are not, then we'll do something else. Methven asked if it is possible to have this data as well as retention data in the spring. Rosenstein asked if students' status as children or other family relationship to alumni, could be included as a variable. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. Adjournment at 4:06pm

Future Agenda items:

Electronic Materials for Teaching and Learning, Carol Miller (TRS), Dan Nadler (VPSA)

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Coit
November 5, 2011