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Minutes

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate

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Agenda & Minutes

October 10, 2023

Faculty Senate 2023-2024

Members Present: Jeff Stowell (vice chair), Nichole Mulvey (recorder), Teshome Abebe, Steve Brantley, Matthew Inverso, Alicia Neal, Jeanne Okrasinski, Andrew Parrish, Md Farhadur Reza, Steve Scher, Larry White. There is an open College of Education seat.

Guests: Ryan Hendrickson, Michael Gillespie, Christopher Laingen, Carlos Rodriguez

- I. Senator Parrish made a motion to approve the minutes from September 26, 2023, and Senator Inverso made a second. The vote to approve passed unanimously.
- II. **Announcements:**
 - a. *Celebration of Scholarship* event is October 25, 4 PM, Doudna Concourse
 - b. *Investiture of Dr. Jay Gatrell, 12th President of EIU* November 15, 1 PM, Dvorak Concert Hall
- III. **Communications:**
 - a. *IAB Report:* Senator Stowell asked if there was any discussion regarding the 2022-2023 IAB report that was shared prior to the meeting. There were no questions.
- IV. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. Executive (Bruns/Stowell/Mulvey)
 - i. EIU Think Tank (Bruns)
 1. Call for nominee to replace Sace Elder who requested to step down from the committee. Senator Bruns asked Senator Stowell to nominate Dr. Nikki Hillier to replace them as the Faculty Senate appointee for the remainder of Sace Elder's term. Abebe seconded; all voted aye.
 2. Senator Bruns had reported that the think tank met on October 4th and they appointed a chair (Dr. Michael Gillespie) and set meeting times. They also discussed items for the year. Issues to discuss will include: Retention vs. Rigor; Immigration documentation and OISS; Artificial Intelligence challenges and opportunities.
 - ii. Shared Governance Chairs (Bruns) - No report.
 - b. Elections and Appointments (Stowell) - No report.
 - c. Awards (Scher) - Deadline for Luis Clay Mendez award is this Friday, October 13th. We would like to see more nominations for deserving colleagues.
 - d. Budget Transparency (Parrish) - No report.
 - e. Faculty Forum (Abebe) - Next week, Tuesday October 17th, Faculty Senate will host the Fall Faculty Forum focusing on artificial intelligence (AI). Information has been shared through email with all faculty. The session will be recorded, and a Zoom option is available.

- f. Student and Staff Relations (Brantley) - No report from staff senate. Senator Brantley will be meeting with Kim Pope from staff senate to share information. Student Government representative Carlos Rodriguez was able to attend and introduced himself. He had no report this time.

V. Provost's Report

- a. Provost Hendrickson discussed the recent successful homecoming weekend and highlighted how many students, faculty, staff, and alumni were able to attend some events.
- b. FDIC grants that are new this year (20 \$1,000 grants for a variety of things professional development goals) are available and due soon. Faculty are asked to please share information with colleagues and encourage application.
- c. At the last meeting, Dr. Reza asked about the process and funding for faculty searches, specifically for Unit B. Provost Hendrickson reported that the deans are doing everything they can to support Unit B searches, and there are some differences across the colleges, but in general there is not funding to support unit B searches. The trend has been to have many interviews only via Zoom. Departments can use highered.com to advertise searches at no cost.

VII. Old Business

Senator Stowell noted that several Old Business agenda items have been on the agenda for some time but have seen no action, suggesting that they be removed from future agendas if no action to address them is planned. A few senators disagreed stating that the topics were still relevant and need to be addressed. Senator Stowell then suggested that we plan for specific dates and individuals to lead discussion regarding the topics so some action can be taken. Given we already have planned speakers coming to the Senate meetings for this semester, Senator Stowell will discuss the items with the executive committee to generate a plan. Items for later discussion include:

- a. Grading: Pass/Fail
- b. Grading : +/- versus whole grades
- b. Writing-in-Major
- c. Gen Ed Changes

VIII. New Business

- a. Faculty appointment process for IAB, IRB, IACUC (Scher/Stowell)
 - i. Senator Stowell shared some history of how the appointments of these committees were altered. He is sending minutes from previous Faculty Senate meetings for all to read prior to the next meeting so we can discuss.
- b. IGP approval process – Faculty Senate Review (Abebe)
 - i. Senator Abebe discussed how and when an IGP is altered and that it is approved by the President's Council. He noted that there are never opportunities for Faculty Senate to provide input or ask questions about IGPs that ultimately affect faculty. Senator Parrish discussed how other universities have faculty handbooks (with processes and procedures) which are often approved by shared governance bodies. We do not have that structure here, so it was suggested that moving forward, Faculty Senate should have an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on IGPs before

they are passed. It was noted that there are sometimes IGPs that must be developed and passed quickly due to legal issues that arise. The Faculty Senate decided to draft a resolution to address these concerns.

- c. The following items were not addressed due to the arrival of guest speakers and will be moved to the next agenda:
 - I. Proposal to update Faculty Senate By-Laws regarding digital archiving (Bruns)
 - II. Faculty Senate *Policies & Procedures Manual* (Stowell/Bruns)

IX. **Guest Speaker 1:** Dean of Student Success Dr. Mona Davenport

- a. Dean Davenport discussed her new position and many recent changes to the Student Success Center. She emphasized that one goal of her office is to work with students in the first two years of college (1000 and 2000-level courses) to increase retention. Today's college students require more assistance to learn how to be successful in the higher education environment. Different offices/areas of focus under her leadership include academic advising, the Gateway program (lower standards/GPA), Trio (first gen, low income, disability) program, Accessibility and accommodations office (serve 300-350 students), Testing and Evaluation office, and Academic Support Center. Because Gateway and Trio are federally funded, they can only serve around 175 students, and they can stay in the program all 4 years. In addition to support student success in those programs, they also offer various activities to enhance students' understanding and appreciation for higher education, include college tours for graduate programs and cultural enrichment, (Hamilton, opera, etc.). There are 12 GAs working throughout these offices, most of whom work directly with undergraduate students. The office also contracts out with KNACK, a tutoring program for online students. This tutoring is available for any major, and any student who has at least a B in a 1000/2000 course can be hired as a tutor.
- b. Dean Davenport also discussed challenges, especially within the Early Alert process, which starts when faculty enter students having a problem. Housing assigns a grad assistant to work with that student (assigned by residence halls). GAs will knock on their door to check on them and see what help they need. Dr. Davenport reported that students sometimes have no idea they are having academic problems. She asked faculty to please let students know if they are having problems and that they are making an early alert referral. Senator Reza stated that he thought it was required to contact students first, and he can't initiate early alert until this happens. Dr. Davenport stated that emailing students without getting a response does not count. For faculty, the principle is sound, but it is often difficult to get a response from a student before we initiate an early alert. In addition, Dean Davenport reported that less than 30% of faculty participate in responding to academic support progress reports. If you are getting an email from Academic Support, please make sure you are responding. Dean Davenport also suggests that faculty hold mandatory office hours so students know they should attend and get assistance. Also, more faculty are needed to

teach a 1 credit hour university foundations courses so students can learn how to 'college'.

- c. Further discussion was held about graduation rates, progress toward graduation, relationship between advising and faculty, feasibility of placement testing, feasibility of suggesting a slower progress toward graduation for underprepared students.
 - d. Provost Hendrickson commends Dr. Davenport for completely transforming the Office of Student Success and all the good work being done for our students.
- X. **Guest Speaker 2:** First Year Experience/Student Success Librarian, Assistant Professor Amy Odwarka
- a. Ms. Odwarka's position came about as part of strategic plan and seen as needed to on-board first year students. Research tells us that students using libraries or having a connection with a librarian have a tremendously higher rate of retention than those who do not. Dr. Davenport has been helpful to Amy in making connections to first year students.
 - b. Libraries provide support from an academic support standpoint, but also a community building standpoint, and Ms. Odwarka wants to help students find that third place, where you find community. Libraries can be that third place for students. In her position she invites students to the library for them to find "their people" and create support systems. Ms. Odwarka has planned multiple avenues and events to supply this support:
 - i. RES (residence hall) nights that focus on both fun and learning. Activities included Booth BINGO, how to get support, etc. The first event saw 175 students attend.
 - ii. In the fall and spring semesters, the library will host a 3-part series, Empowered Researcher, which will be topic specific. Most incoming freshman don't know the terminology of academia. Ms. Odwarka has had great success with BUS 1000.
 - iii. Group activities also include Write nights and Study Buddies. They encourage students to come. There is food and "goody" bags available.
 - iv. The Library Advisory Board is a student-run group advising the Dean of Library Services on how to make the library more inviting.
 - c. Ms. Odwarka discussed how library anxiety is a real phenomenon, and with K-12 schools losing libraries as well, so many students have no experience in a library at all. She suggested one way faculty can support the library's efforts is by having faculty require librarian consultations for credit, or as part of the process of a research assignment.
 - i. Senator Abebe asked if faculty can hold office hours in the library in a private space (to bring students into the library) and Ms. Odwarka confirmed this can easily be done and CMN 1310, for example, does this several times a semester. Senator Brantley asked if faculty can create content in courses to do library work

outside of class time and Ms. Odwarka confirmed this would be another way to get students to experience the library.

Senator Abebe made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Senator Okrasinski providing a second. The vote to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously with the meeting ending at 3:35 p.m.