

Minutes  
University of Southern Indiana  
Administrative Senate  
Wednesday, May 6, 2020  
3 p.m. Virtual Zoom Session

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Britney Orth, Chair; Jake Hansen, Vice Chair; Ingrid Lindy, Past Chair; Brandi Hess, Secretary/Treasurer; Jennifer Garrison; Ashley Evaritt; Nick Bebout; Juzar Ahmed; Rustin Howard; Steven Stump; Sarah Adams; Stacy Draper; Taylor Gogel.

Kat Draughon, Liaison

**ABSENT:**

Angel Nelson, Senator  
Steve Bridges, Liaison.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

April 1, 2020 minutes approved. (Bebout motioned, Adams 2<sup>nd</sup>). Motion passed.

**REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

**Chair:** Britney Orth

Strategic Plan Coordinating Committee has not met during the working remotely time.

4/2/20 – Enrollment Management Update Zoom Meeting

Rashad Smith did an excellent job of explaining where we are as far as enrollment numbers and how employees can help. Much of what was shared in this meeting had been discussed during the employee Zoom meetings with President Rochon and other university leadership.

4/7/20 – President and Provost Zoom Meeting with the 3 Governance Groups Chairs

Starting on April 7, 2020, the three Governance Groups Chairs have had bi-weekly meetings with President Rochon, Provost Khayum and Carey Beury and Nita Musich. These meetings have been check-in meetings and an opportunity for each of us to share concerns, updates, and upcoming decisions. While the schedule has been bi-weekly, this group can be convened sooner than bi-weekly if something comes up.

4/8/20 -- Administrative Senate Executive Committee Zoom Meeting

We discussed business items to bring up during the May Administrative Senate Zoom meeting

- Bylaws change – Executive Committee Member Requirement (two years as a senator)
- Additional Parent Leave
- Administrator and Supervisor Evaluations and Process
- Sick Time Pools
- Admin Senate Executive Committee has had a couple of check-in meetings and discussions via email or Teams during this remote working time.
- We will be discussing some of these items during our Unfinished or New Business.

Orth submitted a budget request to Mary Hupfer to determine if we can encumber expenses for the Milestones events, so that it comes out of the 2019-2020 budget versus the 2020-2021 budget. At this point in time, it is unknown whether or not a carry-over from this year's budget to next year's budget can occur. Mary will keep me updated about our request when we get closer to the year-end.

Thank you to all of our awesome committees, as all of you continue to work hard and make the best out of this uncertain time. Orth is very proud of the work that all of you have done and the collective work of this year's Administrative Senate, which includes an Inaugural Admin Senate newsletter, changes to our Elections process, first-ever Water cooler meeting, an innovate way to hold our Milestones event, close looks at our Sick Leave and Flex Time policies/processes, and well-developed presentation to help employees deal with uncertainty in positive ways! This has been a challenging and rewarding year – thanks to all of you!

4/8/20 - President's Zoom meeting with Alumni and Donors and 4/15/20 - President's Zoom meeting with Employees.

Orth attended the Alumni and Donors and then the Administrators Zoom meetings. During the Administrators Zoom meeting there were a lot of questions about what's going to happen during the Fall as far as the budget and budget cuts. It was apparent that employees are concerned about that unknown and President Rochon wants to keep employees whole. He also does not want to share information that's not been decided upon yet and he also doesn't want to make promises. The Board of Trustees have approved President Rochon to use this budget until June 30, 2020.

The Alumni and Donors Zoom meeting was similar to the employee zoom meetings with President Rochon and other University leadership. The biggest differences were the focus on most of the questions – how can we help the students and the University? It was very positive and it shows how much our alumni and donors care about the University and want to make a difference.

4/21/20 - Extended President's Council Zoom meeting - During this Zoom meeting, we listened to a Webinar on what are the worst and best ways to make decisions during this type of scenario, which the presenters compared it to the Recession in 2008. This webinar came from the Chronicle of Higher Education and it was very well done. The presenters all had varied experiences in working in higher education – faculty, student affairs, administrative/budget type positions and all of them currently hold or have held upper administrative positions where they actually have had to make tough decisions as the primary leader or with other University leadership. They discussed what decisions should be made in a time of crisis and what to focus on. There needs to be a shared Governance – which Dr. David Rice created the foundation for, Dr. Linda Bennett focused on while she was President, and Dr. Rochon has expanded upon those definitions during his time as President. The presenters' advised institutions to focus on your institutions' mission, vision, values, and goals, what sets you a part from any other institution and makes you special, and to strategically put your money towards these things, and make decisions based on data. Do not make your first decision be about cutting positions. One presenter gave the analogy that if you cut off branches from a tree now when things are tough, then when you are in a better place, it will be difficult for those branches to grow back. Invest in your people and then when times are better, those branches will be able to grow back and sprout additional branches and flower. If something isn't working, let's make changes and if there is a way to automatize certain functions for the whole University, let's put resources towards that. She also heard go back to your roots and what you do well. This webinar really focused on how our University has and currently views things and that people – prospective students and parents, current students, staff, administrators, faculty, alumni, and community members - are very important. Listen to what those who are "outside" of the University are saying – they can also help us to do better.

These are the messages that Orth took away from this President's Council meeting and the Governance Groups meeting that followed: Let's be positive and innovative. Negativity will not help us now or in the future. Let's all work hard together and let's be creative and look past our particular role, our department, and our division. Are there some things that we can work together on to make USI better? Let's do what is best for USI. What keeps President Rochon up at night is working about the people – and keeping all of us whole.

4/29/20 and 4/30/20 - As you know, there is a COVID-19 Task Force and also supplemental committees who will discuss and bring forth suggestions to the larger Task Force to help in making decisions on how we as a University Community move forward and when will that take place. Currently, we are working remotely through May 15, 2020 and the plan is that we will return to campus starting on May 18, 2020. These committees' discussions and work will help the Task Force make a recommendation to President Rochon on whether or not employees will return to campus on May 18 and how that transition may look. It could be that the recommendation is that a return date is after May 18, 2020. Anything could happen during this pivotal time. May 18, 2020 is the earliest that this transition will occur.

Here are the committees:

- SC Steering Committee
- AAC Academic Affairs Committee
- SAC Student Affairs Committee
- OLC Operations & Logistics Committee

Orth will serve on the Student Affairs Committee. Brandi Hess, Admin Senate Secretary will also serve on a committee focusing on communications, which she can share more with you about during her report. If you have questions that you think any of the committees should try to address or ideas, thoughts, etc, please share those with Orth and she can move them forward to the appropriate chairs of the committees.

During the May 5, 2020 President's Council meeting, all of the chairs of the COVID19 Task Force, committees, and teams gave reports and updates on what their groups have been working on.

All of the different groups are really looking closely at various aspects of employees returning during the summer and a plan for students and employees all returning for the Fall 2020 semester.

The AAC Committee has thirty-one (31) members and therefore is divided into five (5) different committees all working on different topics.

Orth reported she is really impressed by the Safety Team and the Operations and Logistics Committee's robust recommendations. These two (2) groups will be the ones to most likely set the recommendations for all of the other teams and committees and determining our plan to return to campus.

With all of the unknowns and anxiety, it made me feel better to hear what has been worked on by these groups.

President Rochon and the rest of our University leadership will continue to hold informational sessions with employees as they have done on April 29 and the sessions prior to that one.

5/1/20 - Board of Trustee's Zoom meeting -- I attended this Zoom meeting and there were a few pieces of business that was discussed and approved.

A couple of the items were brought up by Faculty Senate related to changes to their Bylaws – one being a period of time needed to occur before the outgoing Faculty Senate Chair could be elected as Vice Chair. This was approved by the Board of Trustees despite there being jokes about Dr. Kenny Purcell needing to be reelected as Faculty Senate Chair for the following year 2020-2021.

A touching moment occurred when the President's Medalist was announced – John-Marie Umwimana. John-Marie was actually present for the Zoom call and he spoke about how much USI has impacted him. This is a student is a very involved student and has a double-degree with a 4.0. It was very sweet to hear him speak about his experience at USI. John-Marie also mentioned wishing that he could receive multiple President's Medals to give to everyone who made a difference in his life as there would be many, however, since he can only have one – he will accept it in honor of his mom.

Orth asked Past Chair Ingrid Lindy who was also on the Board of Trustees Zoom call if there was anything else that she thought should be brought up. Lindy shared that the Board of Trustees shared how impressed that they were at how well staff, faculty, administrators, and students handled this challenging and unforeseen situation this semester. They were very appreciated of everyone's hard work. President Rochon thanked the Board of Trustees' Chair and other membership on their support.

**Vice Chair:** Jake Hansen

Hansen will be discussing the Bylaw changes in New Business.

**Past Chair:** Ingrid Lindy

No Report.

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Brandi Hess

No changes to the budget since last month. Balance at \$916.80.

## **REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Employee Benefits** – Sarah Adams, Chair / Juzar Ahmed, Vice Chair

The Employee Relations and Benefits Committee did not meet again after our April 1 meeting. The ERB Committee has submitted the Sick Leave Pool Policy Proposal to Administrative Senate for discussion during this meeting. The ERB Committee will meet next at some point in May over Zoom.

**Employee Events** – Ruston Howard, Chair / Steven Stump, Vice Chair

The committee met to discuss the Milestones events. They decided to host a virtual Milestones event on June 10. They will still solicit information from the honoree and from their supervisor. They met with Tri-State Trophies to discuss award options and a virtual method to send those out to people.

**Employee Outreach** – Stacy Draper, Chair / Taylor Gogel, Vice Chair

The Employee Outreach Committee met on April 9, 2020. During the meeting the committee reviewed and drafted the first admin senate publication. The publication was approved and sent to the Senators for distribution on 4/27/20. The next publication is targeted for June 2020. The Outreach committee is scheduled to meet again on 5/19/20.

**Nominations and Elections** – Ingrid Lindy, Chair

No report.

**Professional Development** – Jennifer Garrison, Chair / Ashley Ewearitt, Vice Chair

Last Thursday Ashley Ewearitt presented on behalf of Administrative Senate “Uncertainty, Anxiety and Working Virtually during a Pandemic”. There were 94 people in attendance and she received several requests for the recording (which was not recorded) or to repeat.

**Liaisons** – Kat Draughon / Steve Bridges

Draughon reported that campus has been busy with Pass/No Pass options for students. She’s sent a student survey out today with already 600 responses asking about their online experiences. A positive trend is that students are planning to return in the fall. Some students were okay with the move to online, some expressed difficulty. There should be great feedback for use to use going forward. Another survey for employees will go out to ask about how to move forward. The campus recently found out of our first employee COVID-positive case and it’s important for people to continue using that request access form so that we could easily locate where people were on campus and who might have been exposed.

**Unfinished Business**

Sick Leave Pool - Adams reported the Senators should have the proposal draft in their inbox. To summarize, for all benefits eligible employees they could donate between 7.5 and 22.5 hours of their sick leave per year to the Sick Leave Pool and become participants of the Sick Leave Pool. The Pool would be available to participants who have specific hardships or issues that exhausted their own sick leave. Since Senators just received the proposal, and more time is needed to review all the documents, the Senate decided to use time during the Supplemental Meeting (May 20) to further discuss and ask questions about the proposal. Bebout made a motion to table this discussion to the Supplemental Meeting on May 20. Ewearitt 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Milestones Reception - Howard discussed Milestones in her committee report, no further discussion is needed.

**New Business**

Extension to FMLA/Parent Leave – Right now the University gives you up to 10 additional parental days, the Item for Consideration asked to increase the parental leave days. This was submitted before the Pandemic hit, but with our current situation, how should we proceed? The Senate discussed how it is a challenge for newer employees, even those with 3 years of service, to have enough leave balance to take several weeks off for their child. There is a limit to the amount of sick time you can use, and if you’d like to be home beyond that, you would have to use vacation leave – this is where parental leave would help people not use all their vacation time in addition to sick. If the employee has to go on bedrest prior to delivery, but then has a complicated delivery or additional health issues post-delivery, they could easily go through all their time, and then have nothing left when they return back to work. Having time at home with the child should be different than the lead up to delivery and perhaps we should be promoting more time bonding with family time. More parental time could be a great employee recruitment tool as many people consider the leave policies in their decisions. We could run the data on how many people have used this and what the costs were based on support staff and administrators. Adams will take this Item back to the Benefits Committee for further research and consideration.

Article IV – Organization Bylaws change – Hansen is recommending a change to the Bylaws to require the Chair position to have at least 2 years of prior experience on Administrative Senate. This is a one-word change in Section 3, item E to read: Any administrator with voting rights who has served at least two years on the Administrative Senate shall be eligible for nomination as an officer.

Motion was made by Adams to send this change to our 2020 Administrative Senate Elections, Bebout 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Marketplace – Hess asked the Senate for feedback around USI Today’s Marketplace and when to reopen the buying/selling of items. University Communications recently received requests to post items and with the current Pandemic/work from home situation, what is appropriate? Senators recommending looking at another peer set to see how they reopen (Goodwill?), waiting until August 14, or just waiting until we return to on-campus work to see what guidelines we have as a campus.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 4:23 pm.

*Next meeting on June 3 on Zoom.*