

Faculty Senate meeting

10 September 2021

Senators in Attendance: Rex Strange, Brandon Field, Matt Hanka, Curt Gilstrap, Sima Fortsch, Stephanie Young, Chuck Conaway, Michael Strezewski, Jessica Mason, Marilyn Ostendorf, Mary Doerner, Kimberly Delaney, Xavia Harrington-Chate, Laura Bernhardt.

Other Attendees: Shelly Blunt, Kyle Mara, Oana Popescu-Sandu, Guoyuan Huang.

- Held via Zoom meeting. Called to order 2:05 pm
- Approval of minutes from 30 April 2021 and 27 August 2021
 - Minutes from 30 April 2021 approved with three abstentions.
 - Minutes from 27 August 2021 approved unanimously.
- Chair's Report:
 - Senate subcommittee updates from Rex:
 - Curriculum Committee – Matt Hanka will be chair for the term
 - Faculty and Academic Affairs – Thomas Weber has volunteered to call the committee together
 - Assessment Committee – some question whether to include the Core 39 Assessment Director, Bartell Berg, in the discussions. Asking the committee to discuss that.
 - Economic Benefits Committee – I have not yet heard back from them
 - Faculty Awards Committee - I have not heard back from them.
 - Rex still needs to contact the Student Affairs Committee
 - Honorary Degree Committee Nominations: Daniel Bauer has been nominated and was approved by acclamation. (Rex will contact him to let him know.)
 - Core39 Committee vs Core Council (which is the appropriate name?)
 - Discussion with Kenny Purcell regarding the name, description, and membership of the committee.
 - Handbook states that the ninth voting member of the committee is the core director (but only votes to break a tie).
 - The membership of the UCC Council included a student member (chosen by SGA), but this seems to have been dropped without comment...
 - The Romain College of Business is still one senator short for Faculty Senate. Perhaps one of the senators will mention that another representative might be elected sooner rather than later.
- Provost's Report, from Shelly Blunt:
 - Dr. Khayum wanted to pass along the resolutions that were approved by Graduate Council on Wednesday. The first was the one about allowing online

- graduate courses to be held on the event of campus closed due to inclement weather, and the second was to allow graduate courses to be held during Assessment Day. He will be considering those resolutions in the near future.
- A search for a new Dean of LA is underway. Dean White will be retiring, so a search will be ongoing for her.
 - Will be offering Major as Home grants for the Departments to use as a retention tool to connect students to their programs.
 - The Dean of Students Office has been very busy with contact tracing. IT has been able to create a report that tells us how many students are in quarantine on any given day and what classes are affected. 88% of the courses that are impacted only had a single student, indicating that we are not seeing clusters in particular programs or classes. These data will be used to determine if classes may need to be moved on line, or other things that needs to happen. There has been a larger impact this fall than there was last fall. The community numbers are larger this fall as well.
- Charge 21_07: Senate promotion of vaccination efforts
 - People want Faculty Senate to make a statement of support for vaccination.
 - Charge was approved with one abstention. Kim will work up a statement for next meeting.
 - Charge 21_08: Faculty representation in budget committees
 - This charge asks that we close Charge 2020.34, which went sort of nowhere, and request that Faculty Senate is allowed to elect two representatives to the Steering Committee that is being created to examine the University budget operations in academic and non-academic units, and be allowed to elect representatives to all the appropriate subcommittees.
 - The Provost's discussion of the Steering Committee last meeting strongly implied that little-to-no faculty input would solicited in the budget discussions.
 - Whoever is elected should be able and willing to make suggestions to the greater committees.
 - Especially representation to the Steering Committee could be important.
 - From discussion, the actions that should be taken is that the Faculty Senate Chair should present our request to the Provost and ask him to articulate his response to the greater meeting. The Faculty Senate Chair should also inform the President's Council of our request.
 - The charge was approved unanimously.
 - Charge 21_09: Equity for adjunct instructors
 - Charge requests a variety of changes to policies around adjunct instructors.
 - The motion was proposed that a request be sent to the Faculty and Academic Affairs Committee to identify the academic courses that may be overusing

- adjunct instructors so that we will be able to request that money for full time faculty be appropriated to those areas.
- The motion was approved with one objection.
 - The request was made to distribute this charge to the Council of Chairs as well. Rex will suggest to the Faculty and Academic Affairs committee that the Council of Chairs be used as a resource.
 - The original charge was voted on and rejected with two abstentions.
- Charge 21_10: Per diem rates
 - The charge brings the perennial suggestion to increase the *per diem* rate to the GSA rate.
 - The charge was voted to be sent to the Economic Benefits Committee unanimously.
 - Next meeting: 24 September, 2pm.
 - Adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Minutes recorded by Brandon Field, secretary.

Name: Becky Sparks-Thissen, Kyle Mara (Optional)

Date of Submission: 09/02/2021

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Kim Delaney
2. Xavia Harrington-Chate
3. Rex Strange

Complete the following items and submit this form to either your Faculty Senate Representative or to the Faculty Senate Chair for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

1. **Charge Title:**

Faculty Senate Statement of Support for Vaccination

2. **Background:**

Provide an explanation of the background and context for the proposed charge. What problem, issue, or experience prompts the proposal of the charge?

The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for our community. Keeping our community safe requires a number of actions on the part of every community member. Currently, USI encourages and enforces masking and social distancing. However, vaccination is the final key component to safe passage through the pandemic.

Vaccinations are readily available both on and off campus for all USI community members. These vaccinations have been proven to be both safe and effective at reducing transmission of Covid-19 as well as lessening the symptoms of those that may contract it.

3. **Action Requested and Desired Result:**

Specifically state what action you would like the Senate to take and the desired outcome that you would like to see.

In order to encourage vaccination of our USI community, Faculty Senate should make a statement of support and endorsement for the vaccination of all faculty, staff, and students at the University of Southern Indiana and everyone in our region. Senate should emphasize the safety and efficacy of the available vaccines and the need for vaccination to protect others as well as ourselves.

4. **Potential Resources:**

Provide any information that can help Faculty Senate fully address the charge. Attach additional documents if necessary.

www.usi.edu/biology/covidfaq

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/vaccine/>

Items 5-7 are to be completed by Senate Chair or Secretary:

5. Senate Comments:

6. Action Taken by the Faculty Senate:

7. Action Taken by the Administration:

Action taken by Senate:

9/10/21 - Statement to be written by Kim Delaney and Mike Strezewski.

9/24/21 - Statement approved by senate and posted on Faculty Senate website:

In an effort to protect our campus and our USI family, the USI Faculty Senate encourages all eligible members of our community to be vaccinated against Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted every level of society and has fundamentally changed how we as educators interact with each other and our students. USI Faculty Senate commends the hard work of our health care professionals and scientists that have worked tirelessly to provide care, treatment, and vaccine development. Vaccination helps protect against severe disease and helps curb transmission to others in our community. Experts have shown that the available Covid-19 vaccines are both safe and effective, as is evidenced by FDA approval, as well as recommendations by the major medical associations and the CDC. USI is helping to protect our community by offering vaccination to eligible individuals in the general public through our Health Clinic. USI Faculty Senate strongly encourages all members of the USI Campus Community to get vaccinated as part of the continuing effort to defeat the pandemic.

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: _____ (Optional)

Date of Submission: 08/31/21

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Chuck Conaway
2. Kim Delaney
3. _____

Complete the following items and submit this form to either your Faculty Senate Representative or to the Faculty Senate Chair for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

1. Charge Title:

Faculty Representation on Committees Examining Budget Operations in Academic and Non-Academic Units.

2. Background:

Provide an explanation of the background and context for the proposed charge. What problem, issue, or experience prompts the proposal of the charge?

This charge is intended to close and supersede charge 2020.34 "Shared Governance in Retrenchment/Financial Exigency Priorities." That charge, originally submitted in October 2020, was written at a time when anxieties about the financial viability of the university were considerably high as a result of the still-ongoing coronavirus pandemic, as well as decreasing enrollments, concerns about reductions in state appropriations, and fears about radical austerity measures being discussed and taken at other universities close to home and around the country.

While each of these factors remains a cause of concern, the level of alarm about them is nowhere near the extreme high that it was in the Fall of last year. In the Fall of 2021, the university appears - at least for the moment - to have fairly successfully weathered through those challenges without needing to resort to any such drastic austerity measures.

The earlier charge's proposal that the Faculty Senate should create an ad hoc committee to develop a list of priorities relating to the preservation of faculty positions and academic programs was made, then, in a time of great apprehension about "what happens next in a time of financial crisis," and seems out of place in the Fall of 2021.

In fact, perhaps in hope or anticipation of such a likelihood, the Faculty Senate failed to take any significant action on the charge. In such a light, the best course of action would now seem to be to close the charge.

In the meantime, as announced by President Ronald S. Rochon in the university's Fall 2021 meeting, USI is initiating a process of forming a Budget Committee to examine university budget operations in academic and non-academic units. At the first meeting of the Faculty Senate in Fall 2021, Provost Mohammed Khayum indicated that the entire process might consist of many subcommittees overseen by a Steering Committee.

The purpose of this charge is to ask that the Faculty Senate, as the elected, representative body of the faculty at USI, be given the opportunity to send elected representatives to these committees - elected representatives who will then be given the opportunity to report back to the Senate as occasion demands. Faculty and Faculty Senate participation should not be limited to the subcommittees. That is, our participation should not be excluded from the Steering Committee. According to the university's Constitution, the faculty, acting through the Faculty Senate, have the legislative authority to develop and propose policies governing the curriculum. The Faculty and the Faculty Senate, then, should not be excluded from any decisions that might impact academic programs and the curriculum. Nor should the Faculty or the Faculty Senate be excluded from any conversations or policy decisions that affect faculty salaries, furloughs, employments, or benefits.

The commitment to the principles of transparency and shared governance demonstrated in an invitation to the Faculty Senate to participate in these conversations and decisions will greatly assist the university's effort to build consensus in this process.

3. Action Requested and Desired Result:

Specifically state what action you would like the Senate to take and the desired outcome that you would like to see.

1. Close Charge 2020.34 "Shared Governance in Retrenchment/Financial Exigency Priorities."

2. The Faculty Senate should request the right to elect two representatives of its choosing to the Steering Committee that will be created as part of the process to examine university budget operations in academic and non-academic units.

3. The Faculty Senate should request the right to elect representatives to all appropriate subcommittees created as part of the process to examine university budget operations in academic and non-academic units.

4. Potential Resources:

Provide any information that can help Faculty Senate fully address the charge. Attach additional documents if necessary.

Items 5-7 are to be completed by Senate Chair or Secretary:

5. Senate Comments:

6. Action Taken by the Faculty Senate:

7. Action Taken by the Administration:

Action taken by Senate:

Faculty Senate Chair will forward charge to the Provost's Office and the President's Council. Senate Chair will ask the Provost to articulate faculty participation in all relevant budgetary committees.

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: Tamara Hunt (Optional)

Date of Submission: 9/1/2021

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Bartell Berg
2. Chuck Conaway
3. Mike Strezewski

Complete the following items and submit this form to either your Faculty Senate Representative or to the Faculty Senate Chair for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

1. **Charge Title:**

Equity for Adjunct Faculty

2. **Background:**

Provide an explanation of the background and context for the proposed charge. What problem, issue, or experience prompts the proposal of the charge?

Reliance on adjunct instructors allows the university to be more flexible in terms of its course offerings and scheduling, but this is often done without consideration for the impact this might have on the individual adjunct faculty member. One particular issue is the relatively last-minute addition or deletion of a class within a week or two of the start of the semester. For instance, an adjunct faculty member may be asked to teach a course within weeks of the start of the semester; if they are being asked to replace another instructor, there may not be sufficient time for the new adjunct instructor to order books, forcing them to use the texts selected by the original instructor. But in any case, the adjunct faculty member is expected to prepare the course and its Blackboard website with very limited time, and given the fact that many of our adjunct instructors teach at multiple institutions, lack of sufficient preparation time may well have negative impacts on teaching and learning. On the other hand, consider the impact on an adjunct faculty member whose course is cancelled or reassigned to a full-time faculty member just prior to the start of the semester. Many adjuncts rely on these courses to pay the bills, and many devote unpaid hours of work preparing these courses. Taking away these courses at the last minute has very real financial impact for many adjuncts, and it can hardly be said to be treating them as the professionals that they are. USI increasingly relies on adjunct instructors who receive low pay and no benefits; we need to do what is in our power to treat them equitably as fellow professionals.

3. **Action Requested and Desired Result:**

Specifically state what action you would like the Senate to take and the desired outcome that you would like to see.

I would like to see the Senate propose policies to protect adjunct instructors, especially in the circumstances described. It should only be in exceptional circumstances that less than a month before the start of an academic semester, an adjunct instructor is asked to teach a course or lose a course that they are scheduled to teach. Ideally, I would like to see USI move towards annual contracts for adjunct faculty, guaranteeing them a minimum number of courses per semester. Even if that contract is only for a single course each semester, this would provide greater security and treat them like the professionals they are. I would also like to see a regular schedule of performance review and merit-based pay increases for adjunct instructors; many departments have adjunct instructors who have taught at USI for years without a pay increase. Finally, I would like to see faculty development opportunities for adjunct instructors, giving them opportunities to improve in professional skills and pedagogy; such development opportunities should come with a stipend, since it is inequitable to expect them to participate in activities on their own time which are actually beneficial to USI and its students.

4. Potential Resources:

Provide any information that can help Faculty Senate fully address the charge. Attach additional documents if necessary.

American Federation of Teachers, "Fairness and Equity: Standards of Practice in the Employment of Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty." <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/standardsptadjunct02.pdf>

Items 5-7 are to be completed by Senate Chair or Secretary:

5. Senate Comments:

6. Action Taken by the Faculty Senate:

7. Action Taken by the Administration:

Action taken by Senate:

Charge was rejected by Senate. A motion was approved for Faculty Senate Chair will forward the charge to Council of Chairs informationally, and FAAC was directed to identify academic courses that may be overusing adjuncts so that the departments involved would be able to request full time faculty rather than rely on adjunct faculty.

CHARGE TO THE USI FACULTY SENATE

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: Stephen Zehr (Optional)

Date of Submission: 8/26/2021

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Bartell Berg
2. Charles Conaway
3. Michael Strzewski

Complete the following items and submit this form to either your Faculty Senate Representative or to the Faculty Senate Chair for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

1. Charge Title:

Change travel per diem rate to federal GSA rates

2. Background:

Provide an explanation of the background and context for the proposed charge. What problem, issue, or experience prompts the proposal of the charge?

USI has not changed its travel per diem rate since at least the 1990s. We know, of course, that USI is either not cognizant of or does not respect annual inflation rates. That said, it is embarrassing and demoralizing to engage in necessary professional travel, but be reimbursed for \$32 a day for three meals. That may meet costs if one packs food (difficult to get away with in air travel) or eats all three meals at Subway (not where professional colleagues are eating). This rate also makes it challenging in the grant writing process where one is limited to \$32 a day for professional colleagues and visitors. For example, while writing a NSF grant for a workshop this summer, I was informed to only ask for \$32 a day reimbursement for attendees' meals, despite needing to spend about \$16 for lunch ordered from Sodexo. The problem is clear.

3. Action Requested and Desired Result:

Specifically state what action you would like the Senate to take and the desired outcome that you would like to see.

Pass a Senate resolution that demands the university rate for professional travel be set at the federal GSA per diem rate. These rates vary by location and year. They are fair and reasonable. This action should not need further study.

4. Potential Resources:

Provide any information that can help Faculty Senate fully address the charge. Attach additional documents if necessary.

GSA per diem rates can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. One might also contact Indiana University or Purdue University to determine how they avoid the archaic state rule of \$32 per day (\$26 in state). This rule would have been changed long ago if the powers that be were constrained by it.

Items 5-7 are to be completed by Senate Chair or Secretary:

5. Senate Comments:

6. Action Taken by the Faculty Senate:

7. Action Taken by the Administration:

Action taken by Senate:

Charge will be sent to Economic Benefits Committee for further investigation and recommendations.