

Faculty Senate meeting

28 January 2022

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



Other Attendees: Mohammed Khayum, Ronald Rochon, Shelly Blunt, Shannon Pritchard, Rich Bennett, Amy Chan Hilton, Amie McKibban, Shelby Clark.

- Held via Zoom meeting, called to order 2:31 pm.
- Updates from Dr. Rochon:
 - Working to be as responsive as possible with regard to student mental health. The new venue of tele-health seems to be working well; if we come across students who are looking for help, please direct them to the Dean of Students' office so they can get help.
 - Lots of stressors on faculty and staff as well; mask mandate will be maintained as long as possible on campus. The more he watches behavior in campus community and in the nation, it appears that people are fatigued or apathetic. Our students are coming from many different backgrounds. He is asking everyone to recognize the importance maintaining grace.
 - Board of Trustees will be meeting Feb 7th about the Division I athletics; we expect that they will have a final vote on that day. He would like to thank the people serving on the exploratory committee for their hard work and due diligence throughout the process.
 - The question was asked if the report from the consultant was going to be released to the faculty; all the data that has been generated for the process has been released, but the consultant's report hasn't been returned yet; it expected to be delivered to the Board on Monday.
 - Dr. Rochon met with the president of Northern Kentucky, since they were a reasonably peer institution who recently made this transition. He put different people on our campus in contact with their counterparts at NKU to have conversations about what happened throughout the process.
 - He is working with the Provost on building a faculty development opportunity. Wants to develop a campus-wide committee to develop new development initiatives: what areas would be places that faculty want development. Hope to get it announced this semester, and get some of the work started over the summer.
- Approval of old minutes, 14 January 2022:
 - Amendment made to distributed version with regard to details of Strategic Plan.
- Chair's Report: Rex
 - Legal update from Aaron Trump:

- State Bill 167 was allowed to die in committee.
 - HB 1134 passed on the second reading on Tuesday, and through the House. We were able to have the state institutions and the teacher prep language removed.
- When we receive things that should be acted upon, they should be in the form of charges. The charges are not always posted on the website. Laura said that we might revisit what is in storage either digitally or in the physical archives. It was suggested that Laura look into what Faculty Senate material could be found, and that Peter Whiting would be a resource to help with this, as it was during his time as chair that some of it was started.
- College elections are underway in HP and LA. Pott College elections are complete. RCoB is looking to “get on it” soon.
- Update about Banner 9 implementation from Shelly Blunt:
 - Implementation is occurring right now; the employee part is live now; the student part is in the works, and they are also working on the faculty part, which will give us some new functionality that we could have available to us. One of the optional functions would be the Drop Roster, which we could use to drop students who have not been attending. Another one is attendance tracking. Another is Holds and Alt Pins; the students could be given a pin number that would be needed that their adviser could give them the code to be able to register for classes. The alt pin option can be specific to the program; it doesn’t need to have to be uniform across all of campus. Another new option is that faculty feedback could be provided to the students. Department Chairs have this information and will be able to have a conversation.
- Provost’s Report: Dr.Khayum
 - One of the bills still active in the Indiana House would affect the University insurance plans, but all of the other bills regarding to First Amendment and Higher Education, the higher ed part have been stripped out.
 - ICHE met this week, and they are looking to revisit the mission statements regarding the roles of the educational institutions: Research Institutions, Regional Campus, Community Colleges, Comprehensive Universities. USI is not mentioned as any particular type at all in the documentation. It appears that there are still many policymakers outside of our section of the state who still consider us to be a regional campus. We have positioned ourselves in our own documents to be a state-wide institution, and in the conversations with people throughout the state we will be presenting ourselves in this manner. (This relates to what we can qualify for with regard to performance funding.)
 - Covid cases seem to be stabilizing, he is not sure why the dashboard is down.
 - Commencement ceremonies will be similar to ones in the past year: distancing, reduced numbers.
- New Business: Charge 2022_02 Open Communication between Faculty, Staff, and Upper Administration
 - Communication between administration and faculty seems to be failing.

- More town hall types of meetings would be helpful. That could be helpful with regard to opening up lines of communication.
 - We need to be more intentional with regard to producing communication. Town halls for some reason seem more open than a faculty senate meeting; we could schedule those and invite the various administrators.
 - It was suggested that the Faculty Senate should organize Town Hall meetings on a regular basis with the University President and Provost. Once a semester might be a little too frequent; once a year might be more reasonable. However it was suggested that an immediate solution would be to have a meeting this semester and try to figure out what sort of regularity might be appropriate in the future.
 - The amendment was proposed to this charge that the Faculty Senate chair make a Town Hall meeting and invite both Drs. Rochon and Khayum this semester. In addition, it should be added to the responsibility of the Faculty Senate chair to schedule at least one town hall annually with the University President and Provost. The amended charge was passed unanimously.
- Next meeting: 11 February 2022 at 2:30pm.
 - Adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Minutes recorded by Faculty Senate secretary Brandon Field.

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: Shannon N. Pritchard, Ph.D. (Optional)

Date of Submission: January 17, 2022

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Dr. Conaway
2. Dr. Strezewski
3. Dr. Young

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:

Open communication between faculty, staff, and upper administration

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?

Increasingly the faculty and staff are losing any ability to communicate directly with the President or upper administration during bi-annual meetings. While the virtual meetings are a result of Covid and the need to take necessary precautions, there is no discernable reason for the faculty and staff to not have an opportunity to participate in these meetings through a designated Question and Answer session. Time should be allotted for anyone to ask a question for clarification on the information delivered during these sessions. Increasingly it seems the faculty and staff are "talked at" without any option to respond. This is unacceptable not only during these unprecedented times of Covid and all of the challenges facing the University, faculty, staff, and students, it is unacceptable under any conditions. Additionally, we have not had an open town-hall type of event for several semesters. These can be done via Zoom as well, if the administration is uncomfortable being in a room with their constituents for Covid reasons. However, there should be no reason not to have F2F town halls since the University has returned to full capacity face to face learning.

This administration is currently considering a huge change with D1 athletics, and my sense is that the faculty and staff are going to continue to be left out of any substantive conversations (aside from the "survey") about this move. We must be allowed an opportunity to speak directly about this proposed change, and any other issues, to those in upper administration if we are to truly be a community and family at USI, and that those words are not just empty platitudes.

The upper administration's seeming reluctance to engage with, and indeed at times animosity toward, the faculty is not productive or positive for USI.

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.

My requested action is that there be a designated Question and Answer session at all University meetings beginning immediately. My second requested action is at least one town hall with the President and faculty only be scheduled once per semester, and at least one town hall with faculty and staff per semester, beginning immediately. The desired outcome would be a sharing of information between the President and faculty and staff, and allowing faculty and staff to ask questions directly to the upper administration. I can see no downside to this suggested plan of action.

4. Potential Resources:

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

There are no additional resources 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:

The charge was amended to state that Faculty Senate chair will invite the President and Provost to a town hall in the Spring 2022 semester. Further, it will be part of the duties of Faculty Senate chair to organize this town hall annually.