

Faculty Senate Meeting

13 October 2023

Senators present: Kyle Mara, Prasenjit Ghosh, Jiaying Liu, Todd Schroer, Guoyuan Huang, Shannon Pritchard, Ro Dickes, Ashley Carter, Erin Reynolds, Amy Wilson (for Jessica Mason), Peter Whiting, Susan Ely, Shane White, Nancy Kovanic



Additional attendees: Shelly Blunt, Jason Hardgrave, Amy Chan Hilton

Held in BEC Boardroom

- Called to order: 2:32pm
- Minutes from 15 September were previously circulated via email and, without corrections, approved.
- Senate Chair Report from Kyle:
 - Public Safety issued a reminder about Rave Guardian Ap and stated that the blue safety phones, including those on the trails, were being removed from campus due to a lack of use and lack of available parts for necessary repairs.
 - The regular retirement policy in the employee handbook is being updated to include a requirement for 2-weeks notice prior to retiring. Previously, no timeline had been indicated in the handbook. This does not impact other retirement policies, which already have timelines established.
 - USI is moving forward with issuing a new drug and alcohol policy in which USI may test any employee if there is reasonable suspicion (appearance, behavior, speech, smell). This is not a random drug testing policy. Testing will be conducted through Public Safety, the police and Human Resources. Use of alcohol and drugs while on official campus business is a fireable offense. Kyle is reaching out to V.P. Bridges and Sarah Will to invite them to speak further with the Senate.
- Provost Report from Shelly:
 - Shelly reiterated that the retirement policy refers to the Regular Retirement (Employee Handbook, section C.6.C.)
 - Amy Chan Hilton and Jason Hardgrave will be training and leading a pilot for the Faculty Success Module in Watermark for those who are interested in volunteering. It was also confirmed that Watermark can accept data from Sedona (currently used by the College of Business).
 - The University is submitting a grant proposal to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to fund an Academic Success Coach to address specific populations. USI has selected First-Generation students as the focus population if the grant is awarded. The award will be announced by November 1st and has a hire date of December 1st.
 - SLATE will go live in January. Training will be offered as part of the Spring kick-off meeting. It is anticipated that faculty will primarily use the advising aspects of the software.

- The Evansville Mayoral Debate is being hosted at the Performance Center on Wednesday, October 18th and will be aired on TV and radio. Faculty are to encourage all students to attend.
- A temporary secretary is required in the absence of Brandon Field. Susan Ely was nominated and unanimously approved for the remainder of the semester. It is possible this appointment may extend to the academic year.
- Charge 2023_13_ Changes to Student Affairs Committee:
 - The current charge was approved unanimously and the Provost's office will revise the handbook to reflect the proposed language.
- Charge 2023_14_ Employee Benefits Expansion:
 - It was noted that employees already receive a 20% discount on USI spirit wear at the Bookstore.
 - A motion was made and seconded to amend the charge to include the proposal of 3 personal days as part of the faculty contract. The amendment passed unanimously.
 - The amended charge was passed unanimously. The charge will be sent to the Benefits Committee for additional research and the preparation of a formal request to USI administration.
- Next Meeting: October 27th
- Meeting adjourned with no additional business to consider: 4:05pm

CHARGE TO THE USI FACULTY SENATE

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: Fernando Ferreira (Optional)

Date of Submission: 10/5/23

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Susan Ely
2. _____
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:

Revision to Article V Section 3 of the ByLaws of the Faculty Constitution

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?

Article V Section 3 addresses the Student Affairs Committee, including the faculty and student members, as well as instructions as to how the student members are selected. The current verbiage states "The committee is composed of one faculty member from each academic college, one at-large faculty member, and three student members appointed by the Student Government Association". This current system of appointment does not ensure equitable representation of students from multiple colleges within the University. Additionally, President Rochon has requested an accelerated timeline for receiving the nominations for the President's Medal, which is one of the functions of the Student Affairs Committee. To meet the requested timeline, membership of the committee needs to be established early in the Fall semester. Both of these concerns can be addressed if the student members were appointed by each academic college.

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.

The Student Affairs Committee has met and has proposed new verbiage to indicate that each Dean will appoint one student member to the committee. The new language proposed is: "The committee is composed of one faculty member from each academic college, one at-large faculty

member, and one student member from each academic college appointed by their respective deans.” The Student Affairs Committee is requesting that faculty senate approve the change to Article V Section 3 of the By Laws of the Faculty Consitution to reflect this change in committee membership and the process in which student members are appointed.

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:

CHARGE TO THE USI FACULTY SENATE

Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name: Leigh Anne Howard (Optional)

Date of Submission: Oct 3, 2023

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Todd Schroer
2. Shannon Pritchard
3. Rob Dickes

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 and Staff On-Campus Benefits Expansion

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?

Since 2010, faculty and staff have not received raises to compete with increasing costs of living. In fact, from 2009/10 through 2022/23, employees received no raise during 4 of those years, a flat \$500 for one year, a 2% raise in five years, a 2.5% raise in two years, and then a 3% percent raise in the last two years. For this period of time, this averages to a 1.67% raise per year. While we understand a fluctuating enrollment on top of financial challenges associated with Covid-19 and other factors impact compensation for employees, there are additional actions USI can take to offer benefits to employees without adding additional costs to the institution. Such measures would support the idea of USI as a campus of care and illustrate good faith on the part of the University that it wants to promote a more productive climate that values employees.

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.

The Benefits Committee should research on-campus benefits offered at other schools, and then prepare a request to USI administration so that USI can provide more on-campus benefits.

Examples include:

1. Free tickets to events, such as all athletic events, theatre performances, MLK celebrations, and Founders Day events, when seating allows. The Eagles arena continues to be fairly empty during basketball balls games. Likewise, performance are not often sold out. On the day prior to these events, free tickets could be offered to employees. The other two events are sparsely attended by faculty and staff because of the cost.
2. Waiving the athletic fee for employees taking classes. The amount currently is \$120 per semester with the amount doubling in the next year. A \$500 athletic fee is particularly unconscionable for employees making minimum salaries and who are seeking professional development. No online student pays the fee; therefore, there is a precedent for a complete waiver of athletic fees.
3. Reconsidering the discount at the Campus Store. In the past the discount was 10% (I could not find this recorded on the web page/handbook so it may still be that amount). Increasing the discount to 20% would be helpful, especially to new faculty seeking spirit wear to participate in University Communication and Marketing initiatives, which discourage them from wearing gear from other schools, and to those enrolled in classes and need supplies.
4. Waiving all fees for continuing education courses, when enrollment in those course are of a number that the University breaks even. Currently, employees are charged a percentage of the established tuition for these courses, even when no travel or supplies are needed. In addition, a recent course had high enrollment, more than enough to handle the costs, though employees were still charged.
5. Provide 9-10 month faculty with 3 personal days an academic year.

There may be other such benefits that could enhance the wellbeing of USI employees and improve campus climate.

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: