

Faculty Senate meeting

25 February 2022

Senators in Attendance: Rex Strange, Kimberly Delaney, Brandon Field, Curt Gilstrap, Stephanie Young, Charles Conaway, Michael Strezewski, Jessica Mason, Marilyn Ostendorf, Sima Fortsch, Mary Doerner, Xavia Harrington, Laura Bernhardt, Matthew Hanka, Jason Fertig, Shannon Pritchard.



Other Attendees: Mohammed Khayum, Shelly Blunt, Shelby Clark, Kristalyn Shefvland, Edie Hardcastle, Amy Chan Hilton, Guoyuan Huang, Jul Davis, Cindy Deloney Marinio, Alisa Holen, Kyle Mara, Stella Ress, Aaron Trump, Cacee Hoyer.

- Held via Zoom meeting, called to order 2:32 pm.
- Approval of old minutes, 11 February 2022:
 - Version 2 of the minutes were distributed earlier. Minutes approved unanimously.
- Chair's Report: Rex
 - COVID-19 Presidential Task Force Meeting
 - Discussed whether to change current practices with regard to masks, plexi glass shielding, and contact tracing. The overwhelming advice was to NOT change practices and policies until the rates of positive tests diminishes.
 - The Steering Committee agreed with this advice and announced their decision earlier this week.
 - 2. Development Council
 - This council is responsible for determining the funding needs of the University to be underwritten by private gifts to the USI Foundation. This council also assists in planning solicitation of funds from private sources.
 - Members of the Development Council are asked to invite individuals to join as a team to consider how private gifts can help programs, departments, and/or colleges. Each team leader is then responsible for sending their team's report to Andrea Gentry and me no later than Friday, April 22, 2022.
- Provost's Report: Dr. Khayum
 - Some individuals will be on campus next Monday and Tuesday as part of one of the project working with a predictive retention model. The consultants will be meeting with different office on Monday to get a feel for what we do in terms of retention. Groups of faculty, advising center staff, enrollment management people, will also be meeting with them.
 - With regard to re-thinking the mask policy: there was something sent to the administrative staff in Liberal Arts, asking for feedback. The task force has consistently followed the CDC guidance, and it sounds like there will be new CDC guidelines that include more metrics, and the Task force will try to follow CDC guidance as closely as possible.

- With regard to the Development Council, there has been a push to maintain academic integrity, and they are looking for large things that could be helpful to academics.
- New Business: Charge 2022_04 Preferred Names and Pronouns on Banner
 - The class rosters do not have a place for students to declare their preferred name or pronouns. The charge proposes that Banner allow for preferred names and pronouns be included on rosters, Blackboard, and email addresses.
 - There has already been a preferred name policy that has been handed off to Data Governance and with Banner 9, it is possible to include preferred pronouns for students. It is being in the process of being implemented, but several things have caused delays. It is not as simple as just adding a new field to the database, as the charge implied.
 - Motion approved unanimously with two abstentions.
- New Business: Charge 2022_05 Reinstatement of Faculty Sabbaticals
 - Faculty Sabbaticals had all been cancelled for Covid Austerity measures, and in the past two year the USI Administration's decisions on budgets has brought us to comfortable financial position. The charge requests that sabbaticals be reinstated at pre-Covid levels to continue the levels of scholarship required from an academic institution and that the faculty who had been previously granted sabbaticals that were cancelled should be prioritized.
 - The Provost's Office is in the process of assessing the sabbaticals that have occurred in the past, and mention was made that the University seems to have a difficulty supporting faculty scholarship across the board. It was suggested that activities under different Vice Presidents throughout campus might be treated with the same scrutiny with regard to effectiveness that the Academic Affairs office is treating the topic of faculty sabbatical.
 - It was requested that this charge be reported by the Faculty Senate Chair at the Board of Trustees meeting.
 - The motion was approved unanimously with one abstention.
- New Business: Charge 2022_06 Resolution on HB 1134
 - The charge requests that the Faculty Senate compose a resolution against Indiana HB 1134, which places on topics that can be taught in K-12 public education.
 - The motion was made to make a statement about HB 1134. The motion passed with one opposed and one abstention.
 - The draft statement was amended to bring the statement in line with the contents of the bill. The final statement:
 - The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Indiana values freedom of inquiry, exploration, debate, and critical thinking in the classroom. These principles are the bedrocks of education, fostering effective learning environments that encourage open and honest dialogues about issues that affect us both in and outside the classroom. HB1134 encroaches on these principles and threatens the idea of free, equitable, safe, and well-rounded education in our state. Without significant or pedagogical evidence of need,

the bill attempts to impose restrictions upon the discussion of so-called divisive concepts such as sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin. This bill would also threaten educators who encourage their students to think critically. We stand in support of our K-12 colleagues in Indiana and around the country who face such limitations and interference with their roles as educators. We affirm the statement by the elected trustees of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation that acknowledges the strength of existing educational policies, standards, and practices. In addition, we recognize that HB1134's threat to academic freedom will further exacerbate the shortage of qualified educators in Indiana and across the country. The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Indiana stands in favor of strong, diverse, and well-rounded education and is opposed to HB1134.

- The statement was approved with one in opposition and one abstention.
- It was suggested that the statement should be sent to Senator Rogers. Aaron Trump will send Rex the contact information for the appropriate Indiana Senators.
- Next meeting: 18 March 2022 at 2:30pm. Subsequent meetings: April 1st (no kidding) and April 22nd.
- Adjourned at 4:26 pm.

Minutes recorded by Faculty Senate secretary Brandon Field.