

Faculty Senate Meeting

27 January 2023

Senators present: Kim Delaney, Kyle Mara, Jason Hardgrave, Xavia Harrington Burton, Brandon Field, Erin Reynolds, Curt Gilstrap, Nicholas Rhew, Amy Wilson, Jessica Mason, Rob Dickes, Stephanie Young, Julie McCoulough, Shane White, Matt Hanka.



Additional attendees: Mohammed Khayum

Held in BEC Boardroom

- Called to order: 2:36 pm
- Minutes from 2 December: Unanimously approved.
- Senate Chair report from Kim:
 - Followup from previous Senate charges:
 - 2022- Charge about Sodexo and damaged Faculty IDs: Sodexo agreed to replace damaged IDs and is working to reimburse the faculty
 - Charge about per-diem rates: working through the administration and committees; Steve Bridges asks that we be patient with it as it moves along.
 - Charge about student worker hourly rate increase: Administrative Senate has also seen a similar charge, and SGA is also working on a similar piece. Data is being collected, and the goal is to develop a proposal to present to President's Council. Kim is a little busy this semester, and she will be sending out an email to senators and alternates to ask for someone (not her) to take part in the working group of the different groups on campus to get that proposal together.
 - Assessment Committee Expansion: more than enough people have volunteered to fill the needed slots. Deans and Assoc/Assist Deans will not be required to participate. All colleges and the Library will be represented on the expanded committee (6 teams of 3 people). An election will be held between the people who volunteer.
 - University Promotions Committee change to handbook: Kim is still working on having the changes made to the handbook. These change will take effect in Fall of 2023. However, for Spring 2023, someone is needed to replace an at-large member who is on sabbatical: Jason Hardgrave was elected unanimously.
- Report from the Provost:
 - Search updates: bringing candidates to campus soon for the Chief Data Officer search. Pott College Dean search is going to start up soon. The NHP dean was a failed search last year and again this year, so Dr. Khayum is working on

making a recommendation about what to do for next year. Still proceeding with the Enrollment Management search.

- Still working on the CRM software purchase and configurations. Working on the things that need to get into it.
- Our feedback from the external consultants included 8 or 9 initiatives that are related to enrollment, some small, some not-so-small. Some of them are being implemented currently. Looking at things regarding Marketing for Enrollment. We had never considered Spring enrollment, but this spring we started addressing it, and we did okay: our returning student percentage was 93%, we had 50 new freshmen. We can't quite say which of the things we have been doing was what made this improvement, and we're looking into that.
- Charge 2023_01: Asking for clarity in Archie's Book Bundle opt-out.
 - Kim has received a response from Jeff Sickman addressing some of the elements of the charge. B&N has been responsive to some things in the past year; SGA had an open Q&A to learn about the book bundle.
 - Several questions arose. Kim will reach out to Jeff Sickman with the questions and to invite him to discuss it with Senate.
 - Charge was tabled until a later meeting.
- Kim was asked by Austin Sider to have us think about things that can be done better with regard to improvements to processes that IT can make as we incorporate Slate throughout the campus.
- Next meeting: 10th Feb 2023
- Meeting adjourned: 4:05 pm.

Name: Rich Bennett (Optional)

Date of Submission: January 6, 2023

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Kim Delaney
2. Xavia Burton
3. Kyle Mara

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:**

Archie's Book Bundle Notification

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?

In the fall 2022 semester, B&N College, the purveyor of books, supplies, and other sundries to our students here at USI rolled out their "Archie's Book Bundle" program onto our students. My understanding is that students are charged \$24/credit hour for books and some supplies related to the classes they are taking. While I get that this program may benefit some/most students, that is not the case for all. A good example is senior art students whose schedule might consist of primarily studio classes (i.e. making art) which usually do not require a book or the supplies, regardless of quality, for those course are not available through the USI Campus Store. Another example might be students that can get their materials elsewhere for cheaper than the price of their books through the book bundle program. While there are many things that I detest about this program, my charge is regarding the opt-out procedure.

From my experience, for a student to opt-out of the program, they first need to realize/remember that the program is an opt-in program by default, meaning if they do nothing their USI account will be charged \$24/credit hour for each semester. Information about the bundle program was sent to students prior to the fall 2022 semester, but, to date, there has been no information sent to students for the

spring 2023 semester as of the writing of this charge that I have received. I am also a student here, and I haven't received anything like this from the USI Campus Store.

Secondly, if they decide they do not want to be charged \$24/credit hour, they must find out how to opt-out of the program, which is not straightforward. Currently, to opt-out a student must first go to usi.edu/campus-store. You can't get to the Campus Store through usi.edu landing page by clicking on a link in any of the menus that I can find. You have to know the specific domain (?) of usi.edu to go to. So there's a roadblock right out of the gate. If there's another way to get to usi.edu/campus-store, it is not clear. I had to Google "USI Campus Store Opt-out" to find the page. Once you go to usi.edu/campus-store, you have to click on "Archie's Book Bundle" in the Campus Store menu. Then, you have to click on the "Archie the Eagle/Archie's Book Bundle" image on the right side of the page or the "More Details" link below the image. On the page that opens, you have to scroll down to the FAQ section and open up the question entitled "Can I opt out of the program?" You are then presented with a link to the "Archie's Book Bundle Opt-Out Form" with a warning that you must opt-out before the 100% refund period, which is not indicated until you click on the form. So, as you can see, this process is quite convoluted. I'm not aware of any other method of notifying students about opting out of the program. I would have gotten the message. I had to use Google and do some hunting to find the opt-out form.

Thirdly, they must do all of this on or before the close of business on the Friday of the first week of classes. For the spring 2023 semester, this is January 13, 2023. I think this was the case for the fall 2022 semester...the end of the first week...and suspect this will be the case going forward.

Lastly, as of the writing of this charge, there has been no attempt that I know of by the USI Campus Store to inform/remind students of the program, how to opt-out of the program, nor when the last date students can opt-out. Again, I am a student and would have gotten an email if they had.

I may not be giving our students enough credit. Maybe they are very keen and savvy and are already aware of the insidiousness of programs like this and are quick to avoid pitfalls. I hope that's the case. However, I can't imagine this is the case for all students. We advocate for students' mental health. We advocate for inclusion of students in their experiences at USI. I think we all advocate for their success in our classrooms. Why not advocate for their financial well-being as well?

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 have three mostly mutually exclusive solutions:

1. My big ask is that the bundle program be changed to one where the student must choose to opt-in rather than opt-out. Thus, opt-out would be the default option.
2. If #1 can't happen, I would like for the administration to compel B&N College to notify/remind students of the bundle program; the fact that it is an opt-in by default program and that their USI account will be charged if they do not opt-out; a clear link to, or clear directions on how to, opt-out of the program; and the deadline for opting out clearly indicated in a stand-alone email to students within a reasonable time frame before the start of each semester (i.e. not too late and not too soon). Additionally, signage should also be placed in common areas reminding students of the program and its details if feasible.
3. If #2 can't happen, I would like for CETL to publish a "required/recommended" syllabus statement outlining the facts and deadlines of the Archie's Bundle program. The verbiage should be approved by Faculty Senate regardless of who writes it. I'm happy to provide a sample statement to start the process if this option is chosen.

4. Potential Resources:

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

I doubt senators have access to the contract between B&N College and USI, but that may need to be referenced.

Maybe see what SGA has to say about the student experience thus far with the bundle program? It could be that they find most students are satisfied with the bundle program the way it is.

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:

I just met with Campus Store yesterday to discuss Archie's Book Bundle and related topic for the spring term. They held their internal debrief at a corporate level today and will share those results with me during future meetings. Neither the store nor the Bursar's Office has received a significant number of complaints this term about Archie's Book Bundle. The Student Government Association hosted a widely-publicized open forum on November 16 to solicit student feedback and address concerns. One of the specific concerns about the program was the opt-out versus opt-in feature, which we explained and which the students in attendance seemed to understand and accept.

In addition, we demonstrated the simplicity of the opt-out process during the SGA presentation. Also, we highlighted price comparison tool that allows students to make an informed decision about whether to participate in the program. The opt-out link appears immediately below that tool. One of the outcomes of our meeting yesterday was a suggestion by Barnes & Noble to make that comparison tool more prominent. They are not interested in students making poor decisions because the company realizes that the success of the program depends on students recognizing its value. We plan to implement that change for Fall 2023. During the SGA forum, we agreed to remain in communication with SGA leadership, and we asked for their help with student communication and outreach. If they become aware of a problem, we asked them to alert us.

To support the fact that the opt-out link is not difficult to find, the percentage for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 is nearly identical—33 percent opted out in fall and 34 percent opted out in spring. In rough numbers, those percentages equate to nearly 1,900 student in fall and over 1,700 so far in spring. The numbers are above the opt-out percentages at other schools to my knowledge, which tells me that access to the link is not a problem for most students at USI.

The communications for the Archie's Book Bundle program are a combined effort between the University and Barnes & Noble. The store, the Bursar's Office, and University Strategic Communications participate. The communications include emails, yard signs on campus, social media posts, information in TouchNet, and information on the student bills. We listened to feedback after the fall semester and made changes. For example, some students complained that they did not know if the opt-out worked. As a result, we worked with IT and instituted a confirmation email. We have added FAQs and redesigned that page more than once in an attempt to be responsive to constructive criticism.