

Faculty Senate meeting

14 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.

Other Attendees: Mohammed Khayum, Shelby Clark, Shelly Blunt.

- Held via Zoom meeting, called to order 2:01 pm.
- Approval of old minutes:
 - 3 December 2021: Approved unanimously with two abstentions.
- Chair's Report: Rex
 - As of Wednesday, 17% of the courses were affected by infected students, mostly one or two per course. We should expect it to get worse, distancing should be required, and masks should be encouraged.
 - Board of Trustees meeting was this week, they were given a presentation regarding the D-1 transition that ran long. The Board voted to release the report, and that was done yesterday. There will be a meeting in February for them to vote on the decision.
 - All of the concerns that Rex received from faculty members since this was made public was something that was discussed in the meetings that he was part of.
 - The committee was given the task to describe what would need to be done in order to go that route. No one on the committee wanted to increase student fees, and no one wanted to have a negative impact on academics.
 - Something about bills that are being discussed in the Indiana legislature that are aimed at Critical Race Theory. The other state universities and USI are all in cahoots to lobby against these pieces of legislation.
 - Several senators have classes that end at 1:50pm on Fridays; so we are moving the meeting start time to 2:30pm instead of 2pm. Expect a plethora of email notifications from Kim.
 - Covid Taskforce is still meeting, last Wednesday the meeting was dominated by the discussion of the Omicron variant.
 - Per Shelly, the University has ordered KN95 masks to have a supply available for students and faculty.
 - The question was discussed about the various policies for faculty presence on campus for days that we are not teaching. The policies vary by college, and sometimes by department.
- Provost's Report: Dr. Khayum
 - Numbers are going up, and we are trying to do the best that we can about the decisions that are being made. We are trying to always be flexible, and that flexibility is not limited to students. Given the different situations, arrangements should be

allowable, and latitude should be granted. The conversations surrounding these issues should be easy to bring up.

- Balance is important, and lots of things are being taken into consideration.
- Masking has not been consistent for people attending basketball games, and that might lead to the arena being closed of fans.
- Indiana Senate Bill 167 has language that will affect the Teacher Education program with regard to what is allowable in classroom instruction.
- D-1 discussion is still ongoing.
- Strategic plan through 2021 is being evaluated by the deans on a five-point Likert scale. A colorful spreadsheet was distributed with information related to 32 indicators. After the first year of implementation, results show that the 2021 targets for 17 of the indicators were not met. Next steps will involve an analysis of the factors related to these indicators and an examination of how the insights can influence the implementation efforts in Year 2.
- We should express appreciation to all of our colleagues for the efforts we're putting forth.
- New Business: Charge 2022_01: Communication regarding the administration of leave.
 - It was suggested that the charge be forwarded to HR asking them to build, and maintain, an FAQ page with these questions. A representative of HR sits on the Economic Benefits committee (currently Sarah Will), and perhaps the Economic Benefit committee should be tasked with providing the assistance to developing the policies that are meaningful to academia.
 - It was pointed out that the purpose of HR is primarily compliance, not interpretation of policy.
 - It was also mentioned that it is helpful to maintain a single point of contact with regard to the individual cases so the cases.
 - It was unanimously approved that the charge be sent to Economic Benefits committee to develop the streamlined process and documentation requested.
- Next meeting: 28 Jan 2022 at 2:30pm.
- Adjourned at 3:13 pm.

Minutes recorded by Faculty Senate secretary Brandon Field.

CHARGE TO THE USI FACULTY SENATE
Formal Request for USI Faculty Senate Action

Name:

Date of Submission: November 17, 2021

Name of Faculty Senate Representatives

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:

Improve service and communication about leave administration between USI Benefits Staff and employees.

2. Background

A number of faculty colleagues have had to take medical or family leave over the last few years and have experienced a lack of clear and consistent answers from Human Resources/Benefits.

When an employee seeks leave, the circumstances are often stressful or even life-threatening. While we recognize that the University requires certain paperwork to validate leaves, we ask that the administration of that process be improved and standardized. Clear, consistent leave administration would benefit the employee and allow the Benefits staff to get the paperwork they need quickly and efficiently.

3. Action Requested and Desired Result

We request that USI Human Resources create a streamlined process for requesting leave that is transparent and informative. For example:

- Create a leave FAQ page for the website and keep it updated
- Have one point of contact for leaves (with an internal backup) and route all inquiries about leaves or potential leaves to that person
- HR communicates with the faculty chair/dean to coordinate payment for class coverage and assists the faculty chair/dean with that process

We understand that the Benefits Staff may be able to offer additional/alternative solutions based on their expertise and we would welcome those solutions in response to this request.

4. Potential Resources:

None

Actions taken by Senate:

Charge will be sent to the Economics Benefits Committee. The committee is asked to work with Human Resources to address the concerns addressed in this charge and create an FAQ that will help communication between HR and Faculty.