

## Faculty Senate meeting

11 February 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, Jason Fertig.



Other Attendees: Mohammed Khayum, Ronald Rochon, Shelly Blunt, Shelby Clark, David Hitchcock, Nita Musich.

- Held via Zoom meeting, called to order 2:31 pm.
- Update from Dr. Rochon:
  - This week, with the opportunity to go to Division I, and the reveal on Wednesday has been an exciting week.
  - At the town hall, he hears that some people are still concerned about the Trustees' decision. He is asking everyone to work together. The goal is to enhance our reputation and to get ourselves more recognition.
  - It is important to come together as a community, so the students can see this as their campus of choice.
  - He spoke with a woman this morning who remembers the rhetoric about this university, when we were just starting, that a university in this region of the state would never work. That same rhetoric was repeated in 1985, when we sought independence from ISU.
  - Next Wednesday: there is a documentary about USI that will be premiered on campus.
- Approval of old minutes, 28 January 2022:
  - Approved unanimously, with one abstention.
- Chair's Report: Rex
  - There is a meeting of the Covid task force next week, the requests are to relax the mask mandates, remove some of the Plexiglas from areas on campus, and reduce efforts in contact tracing. Rex thinks this is premature.
  - Rex is suggesting that the Faculty Senate should consider producing an annual report of what has been accomplished.
  - In an effort to make sure that our records are publicly available, the minutes have always been shared on the website but the charges have not. (The minutes do not always have full descriptions of the content of the charge in them.) For the future, the charge documents will be attached as appendices to the minutes and put on the website.
- Provost's Report: Dr. Khayum
  - Dean searches for two colleges are ongoing. The next few weeks will see activity with regard to bringing candidates to campus and interviews, so watch for that.

- There is still an open question about snow days: what happens when we close campus. This is a discussion that's going on. The current policy is that all classes, except the online Master's classes that have been given an exception, are cancelled. Even if the undergraduate class is an online or hybrid modality.
- Shelly Blunt is looking into the limit about the maximum number of hours that students can take in a bi-term. The current policy is 18 hours during fall or summer session, and 7 in the summer session, and that does not account for bi-term classes. There is a proposal being drafted to modify that policy, and when Shelly received it she will bring it to Senate for discussion.
- The number of students in quarantine this week is just under 60. This is a decline from last week, and has been a continual decline for the past few weeks.
- With regard to D-I transition, USI is in a much stronger position as a campus than we were two years ago. The survey of campus was conducted to get the pulse of the campus: they got the pulse – a lot of people were against it. The report from the contract group will be released on Monday. We are able to quantify the direct costs of making the transition, but we are unable to quantify future benefits as easily. The question of trust in this context was not considered in the short-term, but in the long term; the ultimate test of the decision will be the outcomes relative to projections and targets, such as fundraising, support of academic programs, and student fees over the transition period and beyond. We should report the results to the campus consistently, and we should hold people to the fire for the decisions that have been made. Concerns that people have need to be continued to be shared, because he can say that they are not being ignored.
- **New Business: Charge 2022\_03 Foreign Language Credit for International Students**
  - International students whose native language is not English are required to take an (additional) foreign language for the BA degree. The charge proposes these students might be given a chance to get credit towards their degree for their native language, and therefore presumably be waived from the foreign language requirement.
  - This issue has already been addressed by the WLC department, and a statement of policy has already been drafted:
    - **Current Policy:** Students whose native or first language is not English may request a waiver from the world language proficiency requirement for a BA or AA degree. A student who requests a waiver must (1) certify English competency by achievement of a minimum of 500 on the written Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or 173 on the computer-based version, and (2) demonstrate proficiency in the student's native language. Students who receive an exemption from the world language proficiency requirement are still responsible for completing the C4 Western Culture requirements (if under the University Core Curriculum) or the BS Skills requirements (if under Core 39), as well as all other credit hour requirements for the degree.
    - **Proposed modification:** Students whose native or first language is not English may request a waiver from the world language proficiency requirement for a BA or AA degree. A student who requests a waiver must (1) **certify English**

proficiency (<https://www.usi.edu/international/admissions/apply/>), and (2) demonstrate proficiency in the student's native language. Proficiency in a native language can be assessed by submission any one of the following: a) Officially Accredited Evaluation of High School or University Transcripts (Students can submit an official transcript showing dates of attendance and degrees received from a foreign high school (or equivalent) in which the language of instruction is not English.) OR b) An approved proficiency exam in the native language (see World Languages and Cultures Department Chair for approval) OR c) Passing an upper-division class at USI in the native language (in fulfillment of the Departmental Challenge policy).

Students who receive an exemption from the world language proficiency requirement are still responsible for completing the C4 Western Culture requirements (if under the University Core Curriculum) or the BS Skills requirements (if under Core 39), as well as all other credit hour requirements for the degree.

- The motion was made to endorse the new policy, and that was approved unanimously.
- Next meeting: 25 February 2022 at 2:30pm.
- Adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Minutes recorded by Faculty Senate secretary Brandon Field.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Optional)

Date of Submission: 1/26/2022

Name of Faculty Senate Representative:

1. Dr. Chuck Conaway
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:**

Foreign Language Credit for International Students

**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?

International students at USI who are native speakers of languages other than English are asked to take a foreign language offered by USI if they want a Bachelor of Arts degree. These students do not have the option to take a placement test and show their proficiency in their native language. Yet these students are reading and writing and attending college using the English Language, thereby demonstrating knowledge of a second language.

What are best practices in such situations? Not all universities have the same policy, but at least some institutions offer international students the opportunity to test out of their native language:

The policy at Boston University, for example, reads:

"Students who have acquired substantial knowledge of, or are native speakers of, a language other than English may meet the requirement by demonstrating appropriate proficiency, as determined by the college, in all skills relevant to the comprehension and production of that particular language. Except in the special cases of ancient languages no longer spoken and of American Sign Language, proficiency testing includes reading, writing, and speaking."

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/programs/second-language-requirement/>

**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.

Faculty Senate should find out what best practices are for offering international students foreign language credit for their non-English native language. If best practices indicate that such students should be given an opportunity to earn credit for their native language, Senate should draft a policy to be adopted by the university.

**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:**

**Action Taken by Senate:**

This policy is already in the process of being modified by the World Languages and Cultures Department. A draft of the new policy was presented (text in minutes). Senate unanimously endorsed the new policy.