Minutes for the Faculty Senate meeting of 16 November 2012

The meeting began at 10:30 am.

In Attendance: Raman Adaikkalavan, Mahesh Ananth, Oscar Barrau, Elizabeth Bennion, Vishal Bindroo, Vicki Bloom, David Blouin, Peter Bushnell, Linda Chen, Yi Cheng, Karen Clark, Louise Collins, Susan Cress, Hang Dinh, Diane Economakis, Elizabeth Dunn, William Feighery, Steven Gerencser, Christina Gerken, Alfred Guillaume, Hossein Hakinzadeh Chu He, Catherine Herbert, Julio Hernando, Jerry Hinnefeld, Lee Kahan, Larry Lambert, Monle Lee, Ilan Levine, Elisabeth Lucal, Anne Magnan-Park, Jake Mattox, Johnny McIntosh, Doug McMillen, Alex Meisami, Susan Moore, A. Ramis, Una Mae Reck, Carolyn Schult, Henry Scott, Scott Sernau, Caroline Shapcott, Dmitry Shlapentokh, Kenneth Smith, James Smith, Cynthia Sofhauser, Alison Stankrauff, Kyoko Takanashi, Monica Tetzlaff, Susan Thomas, Ganesan Vaidyanathan, Lesley Walker, Joshua Wells, Timothy Willig, Liqiang Zhang, Hong Zhuang, Lyle Zynda

I. Approval of minutes

The minutes were approved.

II. Chancellor Reck

Energy savings: The energy savings project started two years ago, in a partnership with Chevron, with the goals of upgrading or replacing central energy systems, conserving water, and reducing utility, operating, and maintenance costs. The goal was to recoup the investment in no more than six years. To date, the campus has reduced CO2 emissions by 5.3 metric tons and water use by the equivalent of 7.6 Olympic swimming pools. We have saved 29% in natural gas, 44% in electrical, 10% in water and sewer, and 38% in total energy costs. Chevron used many local contractors, with half of the dollars being spent locally.

Arts and Education Building: The building is on schedule to be completed in March, and the dedication will take place on April 17.

Pay increases: Chancellor Reck feels positive about promotion increases and somewhat positive about summer salary increases. She does not expect to announce a final decision until the March meeting because they will be doing budget construction in the coming months.

Upcoming Events: The Christmas Party will take place on December 7 at 5pm in the Grille. The welcome breakfast will take place in the Grille on January 4.

III. Vice Chancellor Bill O'Donnell
Budget Report: Vice Chancellor O'Donnell discussed the state of the budget, which is expected to reach a shortfall of $2.1 million by the end of the year due to decreased enrollment, an unbalanced budget, increased costs, and decreased state funding (see the Attachment to the minutes for specific details). O'Donnell noted that enrollment seems to be following economic trends and going back to the level from prior to the boom of 2010-11. We were able to make cuts last year that went largely unnoticed, other than the cut to the travel budget, so there are ways to manage the budget without impacting our mission. However, while there are still some reasonable cuts we can make, others will require some dialogue. O'Donnell emphasized that the time is now to say “when.” We cannot keep investing in more projects without cutting something. Even if there are good ideas for spending money, such as funding raises, there is no way to get them in the budget without taking something out.

Q: Does the campus debt include students who have not paid bills?
A. No—uncollectible accounts are written off as an expenditure. This is just the revenue side.

Q: How is the budget determined?
A: The tuition budget is basically derived from projections of enrollment. That projection is not only annual enrollment but also broken down into individual terms and the mix of students—part-time, full-time, in-state, out-of-state, undergraduate, graduate. Those projections are then applied to the new tuition rate.

Q: What are these projections based on?
A: The institution research office and administration has a model that they use, but we often revise their projections. They tend to use a three-year rolling average, but if we think there is more current data, we adjust their estimates up or down based on that data.

Q: What were the enrollment numbers like before the bubble of 2010 and 2011?
A: I don't have those figures with me, but it was below the numbers in 2010. I can certainly get you that data. I've been here since 2004, and it seems we've been growing in all of those years. 2010 and 11 were a spike; they were shocking numbers even though we've been experiencing growth. Now the numbers are starting to come back. During the spike, we had excess revenue and were able to do one-time money, faculty awards and that sort of thing, but now that the numbers are coming back down, we are going to have to make some adjustments to the budget. Those adjustments will be difficult but I think there are very doable.

Q: Is someone analyzing the metrics that ICHE is using? It's hard to imagine that we are doing so much worse that we lose half a million dollars.
A: I have a sheet with some sample calculations so that we can see how they are doing the calculations, so the amounts aren't in dispute based on the formula.

Q: Is there also a standardization across other public universities in terms of the way they are calculating retention, graduation rates, enrollment, etc.?
A: It would all be the same data for all the universities. I haven’t seen the data for the other universities, but I think Purdue actually got more money back than they put into the pool. IU, overall, lost money on the deal.
Q: Where are we relative to other IU campuses?
A: I want to say that Southeast did better than us last time, but we are doing better in the coming biennium. There are six metrics overall—I think three in play for us. We do better on some metrics, they do better on others.
Q: Clearly someone is benefitting from these performance metrics, so they are clearly crucial. Somebody has to go in and look at these metrics. It’s hard to believe that we are doing so bad that we are losing half a million.
A: If part of it is the number of students you graduate or graduate on time, we don’t get to count students who start here and graduate at Bloomington. Bloomington is inherently going to do better on the metrics because of the kind of students they get. Their students are full time and graduate in four years. Our students work and often go part time. If they are here for their entire degree, they’re not going to get done in four years. That’s always going to be an inherent challenge for us and a tough metric.
Q: The metrics are based on who starts here and who finishes here. But with us a third of the students transfer out; a third are transfer students who come here. The metrics always discriminate against campuses like our own and favor the big state campuses. Nationally, studies are examining what happens to students overall, but that is going to take time to filter down to policy making. Right now, the state of Indiana is using a metric that discriminates against campuses like our own.
Q: What is the Noel Levitz contract?
A: The consulting contract we have related to undergraduate and graduate enrollment.
Q: How much did it cost?
A: The first contract is a 5 year contract; I don’t remember the second. We have funded most of it, but I believe we have somewhere around $200,000 left to fund. I think the rest of the funding is in place.
Q: Is that the whole amount? What is the total contract?
A: The total was somewhere around $800K or more.
Q: How long has the NL contract been there? Has it come to any kind of fruition?
A: I don’t actually work with them, so I can’t answer that question.
A: [Chen] There are several different contracts—for admissions and for graduate programs. The undergraduate consulting is ongoing; the graduate recently concluded. In graduate education, I think one metric they will claim is that they have stopped the hemorrhaging in our two largest programs: MBA and Education. Enrollments have gone up in slightly in the MBA Program, though I don’t necessarily attribute this to NL. With Education, the major problem was with changes to state licensing, where teachers are no longer compensated for a Master’s Degree, so we had a huge dive in the number of teachers who decided to go back to school. I know that has started to even out and Education has rethought its approach to the graduate program. Our other programs have always been healthy, so I don’t give much credit to Levitz on that head. Once the contract ends and we take a look at the last few years, I will have a better sense of how effective NL has been for graduate programs.
Q: How much do we subsidize child care?
A: It varies from year to year, but in recent years it has gone up. Student Government subsidizes it between $30-50K, and we have subsidized it up to those amounts ourselves.

Q: Does NL provide a report where they lay out their claims and evidence for their productivity?
A: [Chen] The consultants come on a regular basis; for the graduate programs, after every visit, they issue a report.
A: [Lesley]. I will find out who can speak to these NL questions and invite them to come address us in January.

Q: We need to consider both revenue generation and funding cuts. The task force could consider reaching out to South Bend students who live here but attend other campuses and encourage them to take summer classes. We could also encourage freshmen to start off with a bang by taking one summer class. Maybe our chairs or Deans could get us a list of course offerings for the summer so that we can announce to our classes that there are a variety of classes being offered at a 25% discount. Many students often don't get the information any other way. In terms of 4 year degree completion, while it would be small and symbolic, we could put an expiration date of four years on their IDs to get across the idea.
A: You make a great point about summer school. President McRobbie announced that there will be a junior/senior scholarship that covers the increase in tuition if they are on track to graduate. Where does summer play into this? Summer school can be a way to get students back on track to get that junior scholarship. Because it’s IU-wide, students from another campus could take classes here to get themselves back on track for the scholarships.
Q: I get concerned when I see things like child-care up there. A lot of our students are single parents with low income. One of the concerns I hear most is that I can't get my school-work done because I don't have child-care. Perhaps instead of thinking about axing childcare or anything else on that list, maybe we should think about improving them. Might this actually harm our income if we don't provide students with that service?
A: We have to be very careful with something like that, which does enable some of our students to come here.
Q: A question for Lesley: has there been any discussion about the unwillingness of Indiana University to supplement campuses for their summer losses? No one was excited about this, and the only thing that made them ok with it was a supplement. Is there any pushback to say that they are forcing us to have a lower income?
A: [Walker] What did come up is that McRobbie is disappointed with the results of this move. He said that if it doesn't work this year, he will end it.
Q: I was very happy last year when you got money to catch up with salaries. I was then disheartened when I saw that the additional money that was set aside didn’t really help us catch up with other campuses because they took advantage of the opportunity to go up to 2.2%, and we stayed at 1.5%. How do you explain that situation?
A: I think your point is really making my point. As long as we are overcommitted in our budget, this keeps us from doing things that we want to do. Our central asset is faculty in the classroom and we need to decide how to support that. We need to look at some of the peripheral things that we are doing and see if we don’t need to do them anymore. There are some things that got started 20 years ago and were very successful, but the people driving them left, and we continued doing them just because we’ve always had them. I know, for example, that we have one project where the space is basically unused and they didn’t use their budget. Maybe that project has run its course.

Q: I think everyone would feel more comfortable is they knew the range of options for salary increase.
Q: What's going on with Greenlawn?
A: Ultimately, the goal is to tear it down. What’s been discussed as a possible plan would be to keep Greenlawn around to house people while we renovate first floor administration. So we may have Greenlawn around for a couple more years.

IV. Executive Vice Chancellor Alfred Guillaume

Distinguished Teaching Award: Executive Vice Chancellor Guillaume presented the award to Yi Cheng.

Indiana State University Visit: A group went to examine their four-year pledge and discuss with them what process they used, what insurance they have built in institutionally, and how they are going to accommodate it financially if it fails. They have committed resources to providing certain services and classes to ensure that students can accomplish this goal. If students have done all the correct things, the institution will allow the student to finish at no additional cost. Guillaume asked faculty to advise students to take more than twelve hours in order to increase our revenues. Jeff Jones is working on trying to get better students in the pipeline, and we are working with Bill O’Donnell to see how we can provide more financial assistance.

Q: Will the four-year guarantee have an impact on the budget?
A: It won’t cost anything unless the university does not meet its obligation to the student by making sure the classes are available within that time frame. If somehow the university cannot provide the appropriate classes, the university has the obligation to allow the student to finish his or her education cost free. We have not yet formulated our own plan, but we are going to look at that and come back to the chancellor’s cabinet and this body with one before the end of this next semester.

Q: We may have to let low-enrollment classes run for students to graduate on time.
A: That is true.
Q: I want to go on record to say, as an advisor, it is often the best advice to encourage a student to drop a class and even to take less hours if it means they will achieve a degree. I hope the administration will take this into account. When advising a student, it is not necessarily in that student’s best interest to encourage him or her to take 15 or 18 hours.
A: One size does not fit all, but when you have a graduation rate over six years of 23%, that's also not a good use of our resources. We have to be more accountable with the public dollars that we are entrusted with.

Q: One thing that would be helpful is knowledge of when classes will be offered in the future. It is much more difficult to help students plan their future when we don't know what will be offered.

A: That is where the faculty and the Deans have to work together to make sure that there is a forward-looking plan, not just from semester to semester, but two or three years ahead.

Q: We will need to have structural and infrastructural ways (childcare, parking, etc.) to enables a non-residential population to continue working on their degree. It has to be a multi-prong approach.

A: it is important to emphasize that only a small percentage of ISU's students opt for this plan. It is not something that we will have for every student. But right now, a lot of our students come here and don't complete their degree. The budget is based not just on the new students we get but on the number of students who persist.

Q: It is a bit of a mistake to try to satisfy this push for students to complete the degrees in the same way they do at Bloomington. We don't serve the same population. The point has to be turned around.

A: I understand that. But I also understand the problem in a very pragmatic way: if we don't change, our revenue stream is going to become smaller and smaller.

Q: But the metrics that we are forced to work with may be changed if the administration went back and discussed how these metrics don't account for our kind of students.

A: I take that to heart.

V. Elizabeth Bennion (Faculty Welfare)

Summer Salary: Faculty should have received an invitation to complete a survey where they choose one of the summer salary proposals and explain why they favor it. The Faculty Welfare committee will continue to keep an eye on the faculty salary issue that Chancellor Reck discussed. The committee would like to emphasize that other campuses have decided to award raises in the higher salary range when given the opportunity.

Open Enrollment: Today is the open enrollment deadline. The tobacco statement will lower your cost by $25. You have fill out the statement each year. Most employees are now on the high-deductible savings account. While the deductible went up, the university is covering the difference.

Winter Walker Promotion: The SAC will offer a Winter Walker special from November to March ($40); for $50, you can even bring partner with you that is not a member of IU.

VI. President Walker

President Walker waived her remarks due to time constraints and opened the floor to questions.
Q: I was delighted that there will be one-time funding. However, as we've seen, the budget is tight, and we should spend that money very carefully. The turnaround time for the proposals is very quick. Could that deadline be pushed back to give time to craft thoughtful proposals? Is there any good reason not to push the deadline back?
A: Pushing the deadline back would also push back the decision to fund until after the semester break, which means people wouldn't have funding at the beginning of next year.
Q: Is that a problem? What would the consequences be of a later announcement?
A: What we usually do in January is have the Vice Chancellor in to discuss the budget. The guidelines are no different than they were in the past. We [the Budget Committee] are available to help with the proposals.
A: [President Walker] I will work with the budget committee and determine what would be reasonable to do about this, if anything.

VII. Announcements

The Undergraduate Research Conference will take place April 19. Abstracts are due by April 1. Please encourage your students to submit to the conference.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:32am.