4 May 2020

Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of the semester. The semester certainly has not transpired in a way that we could have imagined in early January. This semester was difficult and chaotic. We want to thank you for your hard work and sacrifice to create a positive learning environment for your students. We know this was not easy. We know that you, like the officers, sacrificed your spring break to work tirelessly to transform your courses to the new online format required due to circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The exact path forward remains unclear, however the current and incoming officers are confident that the faculty will continue to adapt, improvise, and innovate through this uncertain time. The current and incoming officers are dedicated to advocating for the needs of faculty and staff as the University works to develop a return to on campus work plan. The health and safety of the faculty and your families are our top priority.

The Faculty Senate held its last regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year on Thursday, April 30 via Collaborate. During the meeting we heard from the President and Provost with campus updates regarding the University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts the administration is taking develop a return to on campus work plan. We addressed and approved couple of program elimination proposals, a new minor proposal, a new graduate certificate, and the School of Nursing restructuring proposal. We also addressed changes to the Assessment Council membership, adopted new operating procedures for the Senate to regularize the opportunity for electronic participation, and approved the Faculty Senate Standing Committees membership. Finally we had a two information/discussion items including the part-time and temporary faculty resource website, as well as the results of the budget contingency faculty survey.

In the Provost’s report, we learned that our registration efforts for Fall 2020 are tracking well and are tracking ahead of historical data, particularly with regards to freshman to sophomore registration. This is some news to be cautiously optimistic about. We would like to thank Linda Maule and the University College for their aggressive and direct efforts to encourage students to register. They have done terrific work in reaching out personally and individually to these students. There is much work to be done to retain those registered students over the summer to avoid “summer melt,” but as we reflect on the current registration period, there is certainly opportunity to analyze successful tactics and strategies used by the UC and to see if they could be scaled and used across colleges in the future.

With regards to the curricular items on the agenda, the Senate approved the elimination of both the Economics for Social Studies Licensure program and the History for Social Studies Licensure program. Additionally, the Senate approved a Minor in Information Technology and a Graduate Certificate in Psychoeducational Assessment. Finally, the Senate approved a restructuring of the School of Nursing within the College of Health and Human Services. This restructuring collapses three departmental units into one school unit.

The Senate also approved operating procedures for electronic participation in Faculty Senate. These changes will not only codify our current practices during the pandemic, but also allows for regular electronic participation in situations where a Senator cannot be physically present at the scheduled meeting time. The intention is to draft a Constitutional change next academic year to establish language within the Constitution for electronic participation. Similarly, the “Break the Glass” plan is a contingency plan for the Senate, the Executive Committee, and the officers of the Senate to engage in shared governance in the event the University does not resume face-to-face classes and meetings by the beginning of the Fall semester.

We closed out the meeting with a brief discussion regarding the budget contingency faculty survey which many of you participated in. Thank you. We had a total of 428 responses and 151 responses to the open-ended invitation for suggestions. A report of these responses with context to the purpose and creation of the survey will be shared at a later time. An overview of the results demonstrate that teaching is a core function of what we believe we do here at Indiana State. Additionally, the results demonstrate that we, the faculty of Indiana State, understand the potential necessity to make cuts to areas which matter to us within and outside of Academic Affairs. The results of the survey are by no means mechanism by which cuts will be made, if required, rather as an advocacy tool for the officers as a pulse of the faculty at this snapshot in time. Thank you for you thoughtful and deliberate engagement in this process.

Earlier this month the 2020-2021 Faculty Senate had their virtual meet and greet. At this meeting they also elected officers and accepted nominations for members of the 2020-2021 Senate Executive Committee with subsequent electronic voting. Below are the 2020-2021 Faculty Senate Officers and at-large members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:

**Officers:**

Liz Brown – Chair

Keri Yousif – Vice-Chair

Bob Guell – Secretary

**At-Large Members:**

Mike Chambers

Lindsey Eberman

James Gustafson

Tim Hawkins

Chris MacDonald

Virgil Sheets

Your Senate Officers for 2019-2020 and their contact information are:

Chair: Chris MacDonald, Professor and Chairperson, Department of Applied Clinical and Educational Sciences, Chris.MacDonald@indstate.edu

 Vice Chair: Robert Guell, Professor of Economics, Robert.Guell@indstate.edu

Secretary: Kent Games, Associate Professor of Applied Medicine and Rehabilitation, Kenneth.Games@indstate.edu

Please contact one of the Officers or your Senate representative(s) with any questions or concerns.