Officers’ Musings

23 January 2018

Welcome Back! We hope you are all off to a good start.

The Faculty Senate held its first meeting of the semester on January 18, 2018. We had no action items so we used our time to talk with President Curtis about ISU. President Curtis introduced herself by sharing her experiences here as a student. She remembered her dissertation advisors fondly and talked about how she still makes use of all they taught her. She said she envies us (faculty), misses teaching, and that even now as an administrator she still approaches decisions first as a faculty member.

After introductions, President Curtis asked Senators what they hoped to see ISU accomplish under her leadership. We raised some important concerns. Keri Yousif spoke emphatically about the importance of administrators visiting our classrooms. Some have been away from teaching for a long while and neither understand the challenges we face nor see the good work we are doing, and, yet, make decisions that affect us. Several senators expressed their frustration with faculty searches. We asked President Curtis if she could authorize searches early enough for departments to advertise and conduct interviews at competitive times during the hiring cycle. Others wanted ISU to make retaining minoritized faculty a priority and encourage its non-black faculty to foster a welcoming environment. Still others asked President Curtis to promote ISU as a place where faculty do not have to choose between teaching and research but can do both and bring their expertise out into the community.

Senators shared with President Curtis what they valued about ISU including our great students, ISU’s support for research and grant writing, the ability to be active in the community and, overall, have an impact. Our hope, we said, is that prospective faculty seek ISU out as “a destination rather than a stop-over” because of the unique opportunities it offers. By the end of the meeting, it seemed as if we were all on a similar page.

President Curtis made a point to say that she will work tirelessly to promote ISU to Indiana’s state legislators and beyond. She talked about the importance of these kinds of stories, coming directly from faculty and students, and about how she hopes to bring people to Indianapolis to promote all of the good work going on here. With that in mind, President Curtis explained that she will be more externally focused and will leave much of the university’s day-to-day operations to Provost Licari. This will be somewhat of a shift she said, one that she thinks will be good for ISU.

At future Senate meetings, we will be reviewing the changes in the Handbook related to data security (the sections of the “900s” that were not approved in December) and the Biennial Review process.

Do not forget that all departments’ P&T revisions are due by February 28. Make sure they reflect the changes made to the University Handbook, section 305.

The next Senate meeting will be held on February 15 in Dede III.

You can find information about the Faculty Senate, including standing committees, Executive Committee and Senate minutes, meeting schedules, etc. at the Faculty Senate website:  <https://www.indstate.edu/services/facsenate>.   There is also a Faculty Senate Blackboard Site that all faculty may access.  You will find it in your course list as COM-ISUFACULTY: University Faculty.  Your Senate officers for 2017-2018 and their contact information are:

Chair: Liz Brown, Professor and Chairperson of Mathematics and Computer Science, Liz.Brown@indstate.edu

Vice Chair:  Timothy Hawkins, Professor of History, Timothy.Hawkins@indstate.edu

Secretary: Lisa Phillips, Associate Professor of History, Lisa.Phillips@indstate.edu

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