Officers’ Musings

28 September 2017

The semester is now in full swing as is the Biennial Review process. Don’t forget that interim grades are due no later than 4:00 on Oct. 3 and wellness checks have to be completed by Oct. 6.

Faculty Senate’s second meeting, September 21, 2017, was much less brief than its first. We hope discussions continue to be as robust. The latest Senate information will always appear here in the Musings with the corresponding details in the Exec and Senate minutes. If you are wondering why there is often a lag between the three, we cannot post the Exec and Senate minutes until they are approved (approved minutes are always available at <https://www.indstate.edu/services/facsenate>,). The Musings contain the most up-to-date information about happenings in the Senate, the Exec minutes the weekly details leading up to those Senate meetings, and the full Senate minutes the recap with all the details.

In her formal remarks, Liz Brown, our Senate Chair, wanted to make it abundantly clear that her recent involvement in Vigo County’s proposed jail hearings should in no way reflect poorly on President Bradley. The president has never, she wanted to state for the record, prevented her from speaking on any issue. As citizens of Vigo County and beyond, our ISU-affiliation should have no bearing on our ability to speak publicly in whatever way we see fit. There is really no need, Liz said, to identify us as any other than citizens when we participate in local politics.

During the open discussion period, senators discussed career readiness and what’s currently being called the “Pearson Issue.” First, career readiness. There was some confusion about how we are to demonstrate that our students are, indeed, career ready. It came out through discussion that some of us were conflating the Career Readiness Certificate offered through the Career Center with the Provost’s more general directive that we all begin incorporating discipline-specific career ready objectives into our department curricula. The bottom line is that all programs should be moving to demonstrate that they have clearly identified the ways in which they are preparing their students for careers related to their majors. Most of us are already doing this implicitly, we simply need to make our efforts in this direction explicit. The Provost suggested we incorporate career-readiness objectives into the assessment criteria we already use. We all need to develop career-ready objectives by the fall of 2018 so we can begin assessing our students for their career ready skills AY 2018-2019. This is a different process than requiring students to obtain a Career Ready Certificate.

With regard to the Pearson Issue, please read the upcoming Executive Committee and Senate minutes for the details. In a nutshell, the Provost made it clear that the proposal is in the very beginning stages and that the idea is that Pearson help only with marketing and retention in the following programs: BS and MS in Criminology and BS and MS in Public Health. Several senators expressed concern about potential disruption to the curriculum as a result of working with Pearson and reiterated that the Senate has primary authority under the Handbook over many changes that are envisioned.

Candy Barton went through the list of changes to the University’s Health insurance plan. We will see a 2.8% increase in premiums this year and have a new “High Deductible” option. The High Deductible option will require enrollees to open a Health Savings Account. Prescription coverage will switch from Express Scripts to CVSHealth, though we do not have to have our prescriptions filled at CVS. Dental coverage will remain the same. Again, for details, see the upcoming Senate and Exec minutes and/or contact Candy Barton’s office.

The Senate heard a reading of proposed revisions to sections 245.3.3.5 and 245.3.3.6 of the University Handbook. The changes have to do with how representatives to the Senate are chosen when a vacancy occurs. Senators now have a little over a month to review in preparation for an Oct 26 vote. Because these are constitutional-level changes, the entire faculty will vote on them as well. Keep an eye out for a Qualtrics survey to this effect in early November (should the Senate approve new language). Also Handbook-related but not a constitutional change, the Senate approved new language involving how grievance pools are constituted. Sections 246.14.5.1 and 246.14.5.2 were amended to reflect the fact that ISU now trains people who are involved in grievances annually and to ensure that the pools are populated with as diverse a set of people as possible (by rank and representing all protected categories, per the language set forth in the Handbook). The Senate also approved the list of nominees to serve on Awards Committees (the list is generated by the preferences people mark on their Senate ballots in the spring) and a new representative to PTOC who will be filling in as a result of a resignation.

Avoid the $50 surcharge to your health insurance and get your wellness check done, by Oct 6!  Time is running out. You should have received a letter at your home address about how to sign up for the wellness checks. For more information, please go to <https://www.indstate.edu/human-resources/wellness/wellness-discounts>.

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.