



Summer 2014

Report on Activities of the IWU AAUP Chapter, 2013-14

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Report on Activities of the IWU AAUP Chapter, 2013-14

Chapter Budget

As of October 8, 2013, our Chapter's Credit Union account showed a balance of \$2445.68.

10 members of 39 we have listed on our local roster had paid chapter dues. However, the national office showed that we have 33 members. We encourage members to renew nationally and/or locally to help amplify the faculty voice on academic freedom and shared governance.

Meetings

January 2014 member Joerg Tiede led a parliamentary procedure workshop that was open to all faculty. Approximately six people attended.

We hosted two book discussions in February on *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010) by Martha Nussbaum. For the first time, faculty development funds were available to reimburse e-books members who wanted to purchase a copy for their Kindles.

We held two Chapter meetings (one fall, one spring) and sponsored two all-faculty discussion sessions surrounding the issues raised by the University's decision to continue the Strategic Planning process even at the time that President Wilson announced (in the December 2, 2013 meeting) we would need to lose 18 FTE.

Actions in response to Strategic Planning

The Executive Committee of the IWU Chapter announced that the Chapter would host open forums (Feb 19 and 25) in response to budget and staffing announcements by President Wilson. Our goal was to determine an appropriate faculty response and we welcomed all viewpoints. [Summaries of these meetings copied below.]

We believed that the impact of these budget and staffing decisions on our ability to deliver the faculty-approved curriculum in Fall 2014 had not received sufficient attention by the faculty. Faculty had little opportunity to voice concerns over budget reductions or the ways in which the reductions were being applied (*e.g.*, reducing visitors and adjuncts).

We were also interested in discussing the impact of recent budget announcements on the ongoing development of the IWU 2020 Strategic Plan. In particular, members voiced concerns over the feasibility of the Plan's "Teaching and Learning" goals.

After these open meetings, AAUP members met on Feb 26, 2014 at 3:00 PM to further discuss these issues and ways in which the Chapter might advance the interests of faculty at this time. The Chapter unanimously voted to propose the first motion below and, with one dissension noted, also voted to present the second resolution.

Motions to be presented by the Illinois Wesleyan Chapter of the AAUP at the March 3, 2014 General Faculty Meeting

Motion 1: The Faculty objects to the way staff were informed of the Voluntary Staff Exit Program.

Presenting the program under the threat of the possibility of involuntary layoffs creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and is unacceptably coercive. Treating our colleagues in this manner is inconsistent with the values of Illinois Wesleyan.

Motion 2: Recognizing both the importance of long-term planning for the future of the university and the work that faculty, staff, students, trustees and administration have put into developing the current draft of the Strategic Plan 2020, the faculty respectfully requests that President Wilson postpone seeking approval of the plan from the faculty and the Board of Trustees. We need a better understanding of the impact of the current budget reductions and changes in enrollment strategy in order to ensure that the Strategic Plan is appropriately aligned with resources.

Ultimately, the first motion passed but the second was defeated. A record of the discussion is available in the April 7, 2014 Faculty Meeting packet (pp.4-8 at http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu.proxy.iwu.edu/meet_1314/8).

Summary of Feb 19, 2014 Open Forum on faculty concerns 28 attended

President Becky Roesner framed the discussion with a desire to identify constructive things we can do. Mostly, we identified a series of questions that we people would like addressed.

Our curriculum should be the priority at this time.

- Feeling that we have a moral/ethical obligation to deliver the stated curriculum. What's the expected effect on retention?
- Fall offerings in jeopardy without the number of faculty needed.
- Strategic Curricular Planning: we know the overall number of course offerings need to be reduced but reducing faculty positions from a gross numerical point, not by areas aligned to curricular needs, is not strategic.

Questions over the budget announcements are numerous:

- The proportion being taken from Academic Affairs does not seem equitable compared to the rest of the budget.
- Proposed reductions do not map to reality -- ITS has no money, how can more be removed? Student wages may be in some department lines, but they are also separate in some other proposed reduction lines.
- Does not seem like we should talk about budget reductions without knowing our plan for the curriculum.
- We were told budget adjustments were being made to account for a decrease in enrollment, but the recent numbers indicate we are being asked for more.

- There was talk last year of investigating ways to raise revenue. What's happened to that idea?

On the Strategic Plan/planning process

- Faculty are having difficulty with the connection between the vision/goals expressed in the plan at a time when not many of the points seem likely.
- Measurable goals assigned to the areas under review are lacking.
- There is a sense that we need a vision but a reluctance to approve this Plan fully with so many uncertainties. At the same time, the work invested on these goals should not be lost/ignored.

Summary of Feb 25, 2014 Open Forum on faculty concerns approx. 34 attended

The overarching theme again was a sense of confusion over the size and placement of budget cut decisions. One department isn't even being made aware of what decisions the director/chair is making.

On budget and curriculum

- Emphasis on these cuts being regressive/reactive, not strategic. Long term plan is not clear.
- We are not emphasizing innovative change/looking at what will make us distinguishable from other institutions. SCP group looking at what can be done with x funds; up to departments to be innovative in meeting the needs ahead. Hard to be creative and forward thinking about these problems given the current workload.
- Is anyone looking at what other low-cost ways we can raise revenue? Don't want to fix a problem for the next two years and then hear more cuts needed after that.
- Who is using the program revision descriptions the provost requested? [no answer]
- Some discussion about proportion laid on Academic Affairs compared to other parts of the budget, including administrators' salaries.

On staff letter:

- Staff perspective is all over the place. Some welcome the opportunity, others are worried.
- Supervisors not looped in and no apparent plan for how the work of staff will be accomplished.
- Overly heavy handed in the letter. Sense of staff value to the institution not present.
- No sense of proportion/balance of staff remaining in certain areas; again, not seeming strategic in addressing the budget issue. Why not identify range of positions/areas being affected rather than individual titles?
- Contradicts needs expressed in last two self-study/accreditation processes. How will that affect upcoming reviews?
- Buy out option should be available to all; voluntary and later involuntary.

Recorded in real-time but later summarized by

Meg Miner, 2013-15 IWU AAUP Chapter Secretary-Treasurer