

Minutes
University of Southern Indiana
Administrative Senate
Wednesday, May 5, 2021
3 p.m. Virtual Zoom Session

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Britney Orth, Chair; Jake Hansen, Vice Chair; Ingrid Lindy, Past Chair; Brandi Hess, Secretary/Treasurer; Jada Hogg; Elizabeth Schmitt; Nick Bebout; Steven Stump; Angel Nelson; Carissa Prince; Taylor Gogel, William Pool.
Liaison VP Steve Bridges.

ABSENT: Maggie Carnahan; Megan Doyle; Liaison Kat Draughon

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Nelson to approve April 7, 2021 minutes. Gogel 2nd. Motion passed.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

Chair: Britney Orth

Since the last Administrative Senate Meeting on April 7, 2021, Orth attended the following meetings as Chair:

President's Council Meeting – 4/13/21

During President's Council, there were conversations about how the first USI Vaccination Clinic went and preparation for the 2nd USI Vaccination Clinic. As a volunteer at both on the first days (the busiest day) she thought that they went really well. There was a mixture of students, employees, and family members get their vaccines. There is a push for all University Community members to get vaccinated so that we can return to normal or a more normal for the next academic year. We need to work together and to do so safely. We need to keep our campus open and thriving. We do need to be back on campus – students and parents – new and continuing are looking for us to be fully open.

Janet Johnson, Director of Alumni and Volunteers Office spoke about the Screegles Mentoring Program for Career Development. As of the 4/13/21 President's Council meeting, there were 161 mentors, 47 students and 33 Majors. The alumni are graduates from the 1970s all of the way to 2020 Alumni. This is a great way to connect with current students – for any USI alum in the room – here's an opportunity for you, if you are interested. Alumni have been very responsive. One student shared that she couldn't find anyone in her major. Janet reached out and several jumped on to help this student. Here is the link - <https://www.alumni.usi.edu/s/1195/index.aspx?sid=1195&gid=1&pgid=322>

The Board of Trustees meeting will be Friday, May 7, 2021, in-person. Attendance will be limited, and it will be in Carter Hall, masked, and physically distanced. There will be a live stream via YouTube and the link will be on the Board of Trustee's website.

At the meeting Orth shared some quotes from some of our current students and an alumni and President Rochon and several President's Council leadership were touched by the quotes. She was asked to share them with our new Internal Communications Specialist – Trista Lutgring, so featured stories can be written.

Unsung Eagles Meeting and Event – 4/13/21 and 4/21/21

Orth was asked by President Rochon along with other Governance Groups Chairs and other members of the University Community to design a way to thank our unsung heroes or Unsung Eagles by hosting an outdoor, physically distanced picnic. It was open to the entire University Community as a way to celebrate the hard work by many and especially those Unsung Eagles. It is the committee's hope that this will continue to occur every year. Jessica Adler from VP Bridges' area came up with the original idea as she wanted to say "thank you" to those who worked hard during the height of the pandemic to keep us all safe, healthy, and prepared to return to campus after working remote during late Spring through Summer 2020.

University Budget Town Hall – 4/27/21

On April 27, President Rochon and other key University leadership spoke about many different details related to how well USI performed in the Indiana legislature matrix – in fact we performed the best out of every Indiana institution. We earned the 7% that the State asked all Universities to give and then some. Keep up the hard work to recruit and retain our students. Keep up the hard work as fiscally responsible individuals. Be proud that we work at USI and that we are doing good and important work.

It was also mentioned that two committees – one being led by Provost Khayum and one being led by VP Bridges will look at the possibility of employee raises and other important factors. More information to come.

President Rochon also mentioned that he is open to looking at alternative work schedules and arrangements post-pandemic for offices or individuals where that might make sense. However, he would like for a process and procedure to be in place for that first. That's where Administrative Senate can be helpful, especially with the IFCs that we have received from our constituents so far on this type of topic. The Executive committee is meeting with VP Bridges and VP Bower to get guidance on how best we can help with this process and possibly help with policies. More information to come after that meeting has taken place.

If you were not able to attend the University Budget virtual Town Hall, please review the recording at: <https://www.usi.edu/president/videos/> Faculty New Appointment Letter – 4/26/21

Orth attended a Faculty New Appointment Letter meeting. All of the Governance Groups Chairs along with the Academic Deans, Chair of Chairs, and a few faculty members discussed the letter along with Aaron Trump, VP Bridges, Provost Khayum and President Rochon. Feedback was given and there's a follow-up meeting scheduled for next week. This meeting was an opportunity for these individuals to review and give feedback of the letter before it is sent to faculty. Orth reminded the Senate that a clause from the Employee Handbook was added to the letter to prepare faculty in case fiscal related concerns occur. Everyone in the meeting was in agreement that this language should have always been in the letter and hopefully that it will not be a shocking when it appears in the letter from here on out.

Presidential COVID-19 Task Force

All of the Governance Groups Chairs including Administrative Senate, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, Chairs Council, and Student Government Association were asked to send a representative to the Presidential Covid-19 Task Force starting at today's meeting. Orth will serve as the Administrative Senate representative until at least July and then Jake Hansen and Orth will decide which one will continue to serve the Task Force. We will have a few voices on the Task Force as this group determines recommendations on how we safely come back to campus. Brandi Hess, our Administrative Senate Secretary/Treasurer also serves on the Task Force through her Web Services role and our liaisons VP Bridges and Kat Draughon also serve through their roles with the University.

Administrative Senate Executive Committee Meetings – 4/8/21, 4/16/21 (with a faculty member), 4/24/21, 4/27/21, and 4/28/21

The Executive Committee discussed what items to discuss in our monthly business meetings as well as our supplemental meetings. We also determine responses and next steps for proposals that come to us from our Administrative Senate committees as well as from other Governance Groups. We meet with offices and individuals related to Administrative Senate ideas, initiatives, and proposals – such as we had a meeting with Becky Diamond, Chris Tate, and Calista Tyler from Sodexo to determine how we would like to roll out some of our Nurturing Our Next ideas on the voucher. We have been asked by the USI Foundation and VP David Bower to develop and submit a proposal on how this program will work and we felt that it was important to reach out to Sodexo to ensure our proposal lines up with their internal processes. We also tend to work on Nurturing Our Nest items. We also discussed any business that is occurring in our committees.

Administrative Senate Supplemental Meeting on Customer Service and Civility – 4/21/21

Making an impact on customer service and civility across campus could be handled in a few different ways:

- Each Committee Chair/Vice Chair person can take back the information to their committees to determine their thoughts and how they might help with the concerns. All of the committees could play some sort of role.
- Through Administrative Senate's Nurturing Our Nest, we can reward positive behavior and reshape how to behavior civilly and compassionately.
- David Bradley, SGA's new Executive Vice President and former Disney Cast member has been invited to attend one of our summer meetings, so we can hear about his experience at Disney and some ideas.
- Look at New Student Transitions Office's FAQ and see if Administrative Senate can tailor it towards employees and share it from Admin Senate or Human Resources, etc – determine some partnerships.
- We set an example and show how to recruit and retain students and how to discuss concerns in a positive and purposeful way.

Lastly, the Registrar's Office could use some volunteers to help with the Sunday/Mother's Day Commencement Ceremonies. The Ceremonies that day begin at 9am, 1pm, and 5pm. Angel Nelson, Associate Registrar, may be able to share more information about the shift schedules and volunteer responsibilities.

Vice Chair: Jake Hansen

Hansen reported Administrative Senate Executive Committee members were selected along with other administrators across campus to provide feedback for the Board of Trustees on the performance review of President Rochon. It was a very engaging session that provoked thoughtful conversation.

Past Chair: Ingrid Lindy

Lindy reported the Executive Committee has been very busy in the last month. There have been a lot of conversations around positivity and professionalism. It's important to be positive in our work because it is contagious and impacts the interactions and service provided to students. Lindy also reported there's been a lot going on with Nominations and Elections and the report for that committee will be given later in the agenda.

Secretary/Treasurer: Brandi Hess

Hess reported the latest financial reports have not posted, therefore there are no changes to the budget. The balance remains at \$1,297.06. Hess will also be submitting requisitions to Printing Services for the Nurturing Our Nest initiative. Those expenses will be covered by USI Foundation.

Hess also reminded the Senate that June is the last meeting of the session and committee chairs will need to prepare an annual report summarizing the work and accomplishments of the committee and any ongoing projects that will be continued into the next session.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Employee Benefits – Jake Hansen / Elizabeth Schmitt / Nick Bebout

Hansen reported the committee met recently and reviewed the IFC for the floating holiday. There are other institutions with a floating holiday policy, but they are in the very beginning stages. USI's time off is already generous, so the committee will determine feasibility and need.

Employee Events –Steven Stump and Angel Nelson, Chair / Megan Doyle, Vice Chair

No report.

Employee Outreach –Taylor Gogel, Chair / Carissa Prince, Vice Chair

Gogel reported the committee has been busy working on the Obituary policy, which will be discussed in Unfinished Business.

Nominations and Elections – Ingrid Lindy, Chair

Lindy reported the Senate has a full slate of candidates for elections. She is working on the ballot information and bios for each candidate to appear on the website. The ballots will be emailed the middle of next week.

Professional Development – Maggie Carnahan and Will Pool, Chairs / Jada Hogg Vice Chair

No Report.

Liaisons – Kat Draughon / Steve Bridges

VP Bridges reported USI will get the 7% back that was pulled from the budget – it's not new money, but it's what we had to find in our budget. This is good news for the university. The Commission has provided guidance on tuition increase information. The University is reviewing the information and determining our position.

Unsung Eagles event was a wonderful event and was a great way to talk to people you don't normally run into.

Unfinished Business

Obituary and Sympathy Policy – The proposed policy was sent to all senators (attached to these minutes). The policy is very thorough and is clear that lot of consideration was given to each aspect. The Senate had no changes or modifications to the proposed policy.

Lindy made a motion to advance the proposed policy to the liaisons. Bebout 2nd. Motion passed. The Executive Committee will submit to our liaisons and schedule a meeting with VP Strupp and VP Bower since they are stakeholders in the current policy.

Statement of Continued Masking Support – Orth sent an email to VP Bower and VP Bridges and copied the chairs of the governance groups to express our support in continued masking through the Fall Semester. The mask mandate stands. VP Bridges expressed appreciation for our support as this will become harder and harder to enforce.

Remote Work and Flexibility – Orth reminded the Senate that during the Budget Zoom with President Rochon, he expressed his support of looking at a policy for remote work and flexibility beyond the pandemic. The Executive Committee has a meeting

scheduled with VP Bridges and VP Bower to discuss how the Senate can assist in the research and committee work around this topic.

Customer service, civility and professionalism – This topic was covered in the supplemental meeting. Nothing new to report.

Nurturing Our Nest – Weekly tips have been appearing in USI Today. If you have any more ideas, please send them to the Executive Committee.

Floating Holidays – The committee is researching floating holiday IFC, nothing to report at this time.

Tuition Benefit – Orth contacted Provost Khayum and he is still investigating the recommendation. He will follow-up with more information later.

Tabled Projects

- **Sick Bank Policy** – Tabled until Pandemic is resolved.
- **Parental Leave** – Tabled until Pandemic is resolved.
- **Volunteer Pilot Project** – Tabled until July 2021.

New Business

No new business to discuss.

Announcements

Supplemental Meeting – May 19, 3 p.m. on Zoom

Don't forget – Spirit Fridays and Tip of the Week! Share with your constituents!

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Next meeting on June 2, 2021, on Zoom.

Item Submitted for Consideration to Administrative Senate

Review and revise/educate employees on current policy F.24. Obituary and Sympathy Policy

In February 2021, Administrative Senate received an Item for Consideration (IFC) to review the current F.24 Obituary and Sympathy Policy. The constituent voiced concern there was limited knowledge about how the policy should work, who was responsible for reporting obituaries and death notices, and ultimately who “owned” the communication process. In turn, since the last revision to the policy in August 2019, and coupled with the limited communication about the changes at the time, the University community has suffered a loss of care in the support of its faculty and staff.

When the IFC was presented to the Employee Outreach Committee (EOC) of Administrative Senate, team members quickly learned through informal surveying and discussions that department leaders themselves were unaware of their responsibilities as it related to the current policy. In addition, through an informal surveying process, the EOC team learned employees who had experienced recent deaths in their family felt the limited communication by the University represented a lack of understanding/compassion of their loss. For example, one employee noted upon return from bereavement they were confronted by a colleague who asked how they enjoyed their vacation. Because no notice about the death was shared with the campus community, it was a painful experience for the affected employee and an awkward, embarrassing experience for the other.

The enclosed proposed revisions to the Obituary and Sympathy Policy are aimed to better address and correct the situations described. The EOC had a few goals in mind while conducting the revisions:

- Clearly articulate who is responsible for reporting death notices and obituaries;
- Refine language in the policy as to which department and/or University leadership owns and monitors the obituary policy and process;
- How the University will formally respond to various deaths among the USI family; and
- Create a better culture of care and sympathy among the USI family in the event of a death.

The revised policy includes:

- Identification that all obituaries will be monitored and originate with the USI Foundation;
- Department leaders or their designee to submit an Obituary Form, primarily found on the usi.edu/forms intranet log-in;
- The means and ways in which University Marketing & Communications will properly inform necessary University leadership and audiences, and clarifying the department will own the process; and,
- A new webpage as an extension of USI Today titled “In Memory” in which the various situational obituaries and death notices (as defined) will be published for the USI family and community to view.

Proposed Revised Policy

The USI Foundation monitors obituaries and will receive all University death notices (in the event a public, published obituary is not yet available). It is the responsibility of each department leader or their designee to additionally submit the Obituary Form (found on the USI Employee Forms webpage) when learning of a USI family-related death within their respective department. This should include spouse,

domestic partner, children, step-children, parents, step-parents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, or son-in-law. Other employees are welcome to submit an Obituary Form containing as much information as they have; in these situations, the USI Foundation will confirm with department leadership of the affected employee.

Once the obituary and/or death notice is verified, the USI Foundation will notify a designated member of University Marketing & Communications. University Marketing & Communications will determine course of action depending on the type of obituary/death:

- 1) Current Employee or Current Student: an email notification will be sent to the “Death of USI Family Member” Outlook group alerting all necessary University leadership. In addition, upon publication of a public obituary, University Marketing and Communications will send an email notification to the entire University. The obituary will be placed on the USI Today’s “In Memory” webpage for employee viewing. The obituary will not be listed should the family of the student or employee request it not to be. If a current student dies, at an appropriate time, the Registrar’s Office will send a letter to the family of the deceased student stating the University will close the student's file.
- 2) Employee’s Family Member (as defined above): an email notification will be sent to the “Death of USI Family Member” Outlook group alerting all necessary University leadership. No email will be sent to the entire University, however the obituary will be placed on the USI Today’s “In Memory” webpage for employee viewing. The obituary will not be listed should the employee request it not to be. Department leaders or their designee should additionally communicate with their respective department based on the employee’s wishes.
- 3) Retiree or Spouse/Child of a Retiree: upon publication of a public obituary, the USI Foundation will send an email to retirees, leadership within the retiree’s former department and Human Resources. Under certain circumstances (i.e. death of former USI President or First Lady or First Gentleman) University Marketing and Communications will send an email notification to the entire University. The obituary will be placed on the USI Today’s “In Memory” webpage for employee viewing. The obituary will not be listed should the retiree’s family request it not to be.

The Death of USI Family Member Outlook group will generally include the President’s Office, Vice Presidents, Human Resources, Office of the Dean of Students, USI Foundation, Office of the Registrar, Academic Deans and respective personnel, and identified members of the USI Retiree Coordinating Council. The Death of USI Family Member Outlook group will be owned by University Marketing & Communications and will be updated regularly.

University and department leadership will seek to express a timely form of sympathy from the University. The University will lower the official University flag at half-staff for deaths of current employees, current students, and official retirees of the University. The USI Foundation will order flowers or a plant as appropriate.

USI Today’s “In Memory” webpage will be updated in real time, soon after verification of the obituary/death. After an appropriate amount of time, the obituary will be removed from the webpage.

Obituary Form

- Available in usi.edu/forms - Foundation's Listing; link available with-in policy; link on the "In Memory" website; governance groups pages
- Housed behind USI login – automatically includes submitters information
- Questions
 - First Name (Preferred name)/Last Name of affected employee
 - USI Department (Dropdown) of affected employee
 - Date of Death of Deceased
 - Link to Obituary (Not required; If available)/funeral home website/Facebook post screenshot)
 - Name of Deceased
 - Relationship to Deceased
 - Does the employee want this to be shared? (Yes, No, Not Sure)
 - Comment Box for additional notes
 - If asked, may we share your name with affected employee? (Y/N – default to yes)