

## Individuals Present

Senate Representatives: Rex Strange, Brandon Field, Chuck Armstrong, Matt Hanka, Laura Bernhardt, Brandon Field, Charles Conaway, Guoyuan Huang, Jessica Mason, Marilyn Ostendorf, Mary Doerner, Kim Delaney, Sima Fortsch, Shannon Pritchard, Jennifer Greene,

Others In Attendance: Ron Rochon, Jon Mark Hall, Nick LaRowe, Amie McKibban, Amy Chan Hilton, Crystal Steltenpohl, Jenna Kloosterman, Ken Walsh, Kyle Mara, Mohammed Khayum, Shelby Clark, Chuck Armstrong, Brett Anderson, Todd Schroer, Dave Huebner.

Called to order at 2 pm

Rex had invited Dr. Rochon to attend Faculty Senate to address the study that has been commissioned to investigate transitioning USI to Division 1 athletics. Since his time with Senate was limited, he was invited to address those questions first:

RR:

- Over the summer, he was approached by someone in charge of a Division 1 conference who had been investigating USI as a potential conference member and invited us to join the conference.
- This had not been on his radar at all, but when it was discussed with people here (include members of the Board of Trustees), it was clear that we should investigate the opportunity.
- Jon Mark Hall was asked to begin looking into what this would take, and a consultant was hired to do a study of the impact and potential of transitioning to NC2A Division 1 athletics.
- An exploratory committee was formed and met for the first time this morning. The members of the committee are publicly known, but they have all been asked to keep the details of the internal deliberations confidential, to protect the individual committee members.
- No decisions have been made at this time; the results of the study and the committee's work will inform the final decision that the Board of Trustees will make.
- The co-chairs of the committee are Jon Mark Hall and Nick LaRowe.
- This is an important way for us to enhance our visibility as an institution. If we choose not to go this route, we need to consider other innovative routes.

Jon Mark Hall:

- The committee has 25 members, from all across campus. The committee met today for more than four hours, first as a large group, and then in the two subcommittees.
- We had never been approached by a conference, and talking with other Universities, it seems to be uncommon for NCAA conferences to invite new membership; we need to at least do a study to see what it would take.
- The \$18,000 consultant fees are being paid with money from the Athletics budget.

- The NCAA has a checklist for self-review that we will consider, and provide the result of those considerations to Dr. Rochon.

Nick LaRowe:

- The committee has been tasked with due diligence, to help the University to make the right decision.
- The committee is not asked to make a recommendation; just a statement of readiness on a list of different facets.
- The committee represents a wide range of the University, including six faculty members.

Kim Delaney was given the opportunity to ask questions that she had collected from Senators and other faculty members, which were answered mostly by Dr. Rochon. In summary:

- There is a \$1.6-1.7 million application fee for the NCAA, however this fee is refundable if we do not go D-I, and if we pull out in one or two years we will get a prorated refund.
- There is no decision yet on the source of the budget for the continuing costs involved with D-I athletics, but David Bower has indicated that there would be a need to increase community involvement (donor base). This includes no decisions on whether student fees would be increased (which was cited as a revenue source for other similarly-sized D-I non-football institutions in Indiana), nor how faculty and staff raises might be included in future University budgets.
- Dr. Rochon is meeting or has met with people from NKU (who transitioned several years ago from GLVC to a D-I conference), including the President during their transition.
- The revenue share for D-I far outreaches what we have in the D-II, however there is a lag in time between negative to net-positive.
- Steve Bridges is looking into the budget scenarios involving how many enrollment hours would be needed to cover the additional budgets.
- With regard to the question on the impacts on students (both athletes and non-athletes), one of the impacts is that there is a four-year waiting period before we would be able to compete at the national level in NCAA championships (this might be cut to two years), and this would be a large impact on student athletes. The NCAA checklist that the committee is working from includes questions on aspects of student welfare (including gender equity, graduation rates, and others), so that will be considered as part of the committee work. One of the items of concern is the treatment (even neglect) of student athletes, particularly African American men. This is under consideration.
- The timeline of the study is driven by deadlines given by the NCAA, and the committee and consultants will have their work done by December.
- With regard to the questions regarding the tone-deafness of the timing of the announcement, especially given the pandemic austerity measures, and the lack of hiring in student services, the response given was the timing was driven by the invitation to join the conference.

President Rochon, Jon Mark Hall, and Nick LaRowe left the meeting at 2:40

Approval of minutes from previous meeting was postponed until our next meeting.

Rex is on the Division 1 Exploratory Committee as the Faculty Senate rep. It met for first time today (10/8/2021). Most questions have yet to be answered, but many of the ones that were asked will be answered by the study.

The Reclassification Checklist provided by the NCAA is the structure for the committee's work, and Rex emphasized that Senate's focus should be on how this will impact the academics of the university. Nick LaRowe is a faculty member and a co-chair of this committee and faculty should utilize him as a faculty contact as they see fit. Committee is charged to finish their work by December 3.

Faculty Senate expressed the desire to have more specific answers on the timeline as well as Dr. Rochon's indication of "coming back to the campus community". Does that mean that he's coming back for feedback or to present the conclusion? Rex's impression is that if the Board of Trustees decides to make a bid, that decision will be made at their January meeting.

Rex said the Checklist has a list of bullet points each to be ranked:

- 1 – Ready to make the transition now
- 2 – Ready to make the transition with minor adjustments
- 3 – More than minor adjustments are needed to make the transition

We do not know if the consultants' report will be made public. Rex was told that an executive summary will be made available to the committee. The Senate would like to see both the Report and the Executive Summary, and Senators discussed writing a charge to that effect.

There was extensive discussion of Senators' opinions of the move and the process. The suggestion was made that Senate might want to survey the faculty, but that was not formalized as a motion or what that survey might look like. It is also clear that any survey at this point would not be meaningful, as it would simply be a reflection of the faculty's initial reaction to the information (and misinformation) that has circulated at this point. For any survey to be meaningful, it would need to occur after the study results were in.

Rex decided to call for a special meeting on October 15 to address any charges or issues that arise regarding this issue in the next week.

Meeting adjourned 3:39pm.