

Washburn University General Faculty

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2024

I. Call to order

President Mazachek called the meeting to order at 3:33.

II. The minutes of the March 6, 2024, General Faculty Meeting were approved unanimously with minor adjustment.

III. Presentation of gift to President (Stephenson)

- This was a big year.
 - We have more freshmen, applications, and scholarships.
 - We have a new mission, values, and strategic frame.
 - We have a new provost and three new deans.
 - We received many donations.
- On October 22nd, we inaugurated Mazachek as the first woman President at Washburn. Presented the photo from inauguration day to Mazachek on behalf of the faculty.

IV. Remarks Mazachek

- There were town hall meetings to discuss budget, the campus, and enrollment.
- We are making changes to graduation; watch for this. It includes assigned seats and coldworks.
- Received a gift from Dick Davidson; a farmer who worked his way through school and became CEO of Union Pacific has provided our largest scholarship gift of about 250,000 a year.

V. New Business

- There was a challenge to the Bachelor of General Studies. As Faculty Senate President, Ricklefs announced a petition for the information item being moved to action item. There should be discussion and a vote to move it, to permit a vote on the new degree.
- There are two issues.

- According to the Constitution, we vote on substantial changes, including new departments and anything that affects graduation. The Constitution is not updated online.
- The language of the Faculty Handbook disagrees with that. The faculty constitution has not yet been updated online. Can use a petition to have it be a voting item.
- Ricklefs moved to approve this adjustment to the agenda, Cook seconded the motion.
- The move of the item from information to action item was approved.

Requiring General Faculty Approval

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) New Program – Bachelor of General Studies (BGS)

There was a move to approve

- Schmidt noted that this is a summary of what came through Senate, and we do not have all the details. This should be moved to another meeting.
- Per Burdick, there has already been plenty of discussion, full College meetings on it, should avoid extending.
- Morse agreed there was fair and shared governance through the College, but there may be issues for departments outside the college.
- There were no issues brought up and this has already been through the process (Ball). Lolley added that February was the first time this was discussed.
- The degree permits an alternative for those otherwise unsuccessful; however, Nizovtsev has concerns regarding this being a disservice to students when it comes to the job market.
- Per Kendall-Morwick (K) there are safeguards in place to ensure this is a rigorous, meaningful degree. Prasch does not see the safeguards.
- Erby asked to present as there is an open discussion
 - BIS is currently serving as a degree completion program. This provides those with significant credits with a more flexible roadmap to graduation. It is available to those who are unable to get through a degree program.
 - The BGS does not require a major, but all general education requirements and a 2.0 GPA. Does not require the 99 CAS credits. Students need to be accepted by a program coordinator for this degree.
 - The coordinator will meet with all other units each year to check in.
 - EN300 materials will be used to assess program learning objectives.

- Administration from across campus created this based on other programs in the region.
- In terms of governance, there was feedback from all College divisions. The item was brought to the curriculum committee of the College Faculty Council, the College Faculty Council, and then Full College faculty twice. Of the 70 participants in the vote, 90 percent were in favor. All proposed amendments to limit the flexibility of the program were voted down.
- There was unanimous support in Academic Affairs and at Faculty Senate.
- Smith suggested a friendly amendment to indicate that it's a program, not a degree. He also noted that other BGS in the state have a concentration requirement, why do we not? Per Erby, the administration at Pitt and Hayes found the concentration to be a stumbling block and to be arbitrary.
- Altus, as Academic Affairs committee chair, was concerned there were no issues earlier in the process.
- Ricklefs asked about students getting credits from work experience; Ball confirmed this has always been an option.
- Grant asked whether the BGS is a program or degree. Fritch suggested they are interchangeable.
- Ibanez requested a move to electronic vote due to the full proposal just now being presented. Prasch seconded.
- Concerns were voiced regarding a need for a friendly amendment, a loss of votes if moved online, and with the process dragging out.
- Morse call the question for a vote; failed.
- Smith proposed including a minor requirement or a certificate, as they are more flexible than a major and may make graduates more marketable. Prasch seconded.
 - Per Routsong, the program is to help people who have more than 200 hours with no degree. There are students who will not meet this additional requirement.
 - Kay suggested that if we are trying to help with success, adding the minor or certificate will negate this effort.
- Burdick called to question on the amendment – does not pass.
- Jones is in favor as it is outlined for accessibility reasons but has concerns that there may become a precedent that programs are not important; it will be just another path to completion. The BIS has not done that (Burdick).

- Are there safety measures in place that this is not going to be for just all students to use (Kohls)?
 - Schnoebelen suggested that there are no fail safes, and this is not a reasonable expectation. Paragraph four includes the safeguards, and at some point, we need to trust advisors.
 - Cook agreed there needs to be an element of trust, we already trust Chairs to make decisions regarding waiving courses.
 - Routsong will likely be the coordinator.
 - Jones indicate it is not a trust issue, but that starting a program where students can do whatever will undermine programs, there will be a need for less tenured faculty, and this may be a method of money saving for the university.
- Cook called the question, Kendall-Morwick (K) seconded.
- The item passes.
- Erby appreciated the discussion and vote. Fritch noted that he has opinions as a faculty member but cannot Provost; that disagreement is good among faculty members. Ricklefs appreciated the time to work through how to ensure the process happens.

V. Announcements

Tonight, Prasch will be showing the documentary *No Place Like Home* (Wilmott); during finals week they will show *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Faculty Colloquium is coming up.

Kendall-Morwick (K) announced the celebration of teaching to take place next Thursday.

Apeiron is next week (Sullivan).

Wi-Fi film festival is coming up this month (Wynn).

VI. Adjournment 4:51