

Minutes
Bloomington Faculty Council
December 1, 2020

1. Due the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting occurred remotely, via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM by Provost Lauren Robel. The minutes from November 17, 2020 were approved with 100% of voting members in favor.
2. Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Eliza Pavalko offered a memorial resolution in honor of Michael Chiapetta.
3. President John Walbridge used his time to thank members of the Council for their continued engagement. He noted that the work involved in participating actively in the enterprise of shared governance is largely elective, and often unacknowledged. “For the most part,” he observed, “there’s not a lot of glory to be gained from it.” Nevertheless, faculty members do serve because they “care about the wellbeing of their university, their colleagues, and their students.”
4. Provost Robel struck a similar note in her comments. She began by noting that this has been one of the most extraordinary semesters in Indiana University’s 200-year history. She also said that the level of appreciation the Trustees, President McRobbie, and she feel for everyone’s efforts is as “deep and strong as I can express.” The Provost observed that we are likely to face many of the same challenges in the spring that we faced in the fall, but also noted that there does seem to be some light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, given recent news regarding the development of effective vaccines. Indeed, she reported that, based on these developments, she hopes and fully expects that we will all be back in classrooms, offices, and labs next fall. Provost Robel also said that the university is hopes to do as good a job protecting members of the IU community through vaccination as it has protecting them through regular testing. On the topic of vaccination, the Provost noted that the campus has already reached an 80% compliance rate where the recently instituted flu vaccine mandate is concerned. Echoing President Walbridge, Provost Robel also took a moment to underscore the importance of shared governance. She noted that it is only through the long relationship that faculty have with one another that we have been able to accomplish much of what we have accomplished. She also praised faculty for the role they play in protecting the academic mission of the institution, academic freedom, and the interests of students, both graduate and undergraduate. Finally, she took the opportunity to bestow bicentennial medals upon all living faculty who have served as Presidents of the Bloomington Faculty Council in recognition of their distinctive and distinguished service to the campus. During the question and answer period, the Provost was asked if she had any insight into when members of the IUB community might expect to receive vaccinations. She said that she did not have any concrete information to share yet and noted that university is just beginning to receive information regarding how the first phase of vaccine distribution will be implemented.
5. The Council then turned its attention to proposed amendments to Proposed to BL-ACA-H28, the policy governing faculty instructional responsibilities. J Duncan presented the

measure on behalf of the Educational Policies Committee. The proposed amendments expand the definition of “early evaluation” from letters grades, which is currently the form most early evaluations take, to other evaluative mechanisms including narrative observations and other qualitative forms of feedback. As noted previously, the proposed changes were prompted in part by a desire to encourage instructors to make better use of the new Student Engagement Roster’s full range of capabilities. Additionally, some faculty have reported that they find it difficult to assign a meaningful letter grade so early in the term. After noting a few friendly amendments made in response to feedback received following the measure’s first reading on November 17, 2020, the proposed amendments were put to vote, this being the measure’s second presentation before the Council. It carried with 96% support. Following the vote, Duncan encouraged Council members to begin making inquiries with their constituents regarding which student populations they believe should receive this sort of early feedback as a matter of policy, since that is an issue the Council will likely also be reconsidering in the relatively near future.

6. The final item on the agenda was a general report from members of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The report was presented by committee Co-Chairs, Frank Diaz and Sylvia Martinez. Professors Diaz and Martinez described several of the committee’s recent undertakings including: the authoring of a letter by members of the DEI Committee to the Presidential Search Committee stressing the importance of the consideration considering diversity, equity and inclusion within the context of the process; the curation of a set of anti-racist resources, which can be found online at <https://diversity.iu.edu/anti-racist/resources.html>; the initiation of discussions with campus administrators regarding how best to document, incentivize and reward work related to diversity, equity and inclusion, possibly by way of leveraging “diversity indicator” data collected through the DMAI; and the development of a set of proposals for possible co-curricular programs meant to ground and support the recently augmented Diversity in the United States (DUS) general education “shared goal” requirement. Diaz and Martinez also announced that initial funding has been secured for a new BFC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Teaching Award. The award competition will be administered by the BFC DEI Committee. The goal is grant three such awards each year. An inquiry was made following the committee’s presentation regarding whether BFC committees are within their rights to communicate with other entities in the Council’s name. Provost Robel noted that there is nothing in the Council’s bylaws that explicitly prohibits committees from issuing communications with other entities, although the practice has always been for committees to keep the Executive Committee apprised of such actions, which the DEI Committee did in this case. In any event, Diaz and Martinez explained that the DEI Committee’s letter to the Presidential Search Committee was not issue in the name of the Council as whole, but rather in the name of the DEI Committee itself.

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.
Colin R. Johnson, BFC Secretary