

Minutes
Bloomington Faculty Council
September 15, 2020

1. Due the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting occurred remotely, via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM. In the absence of Provost Lauren Robel, Council President John Walbridge presided. The minutes from September 1, 2020, were approved by acclamation, and without objection.
2. Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Eliza Pavalko offered a memorial resolution in honor of Robert Ferrell.
3. Former Council President Moira Marsh offered the second reading of a proposed amendment to Section 4.E. of the Bylaws of the Bloomington Faculty Council. The first reading of the measure occurred during AY 2019-20. The measure is intended to harmonize various aspects of the BFC Bylaws with other campus and university governance documents, including the Constitution of the Indiana University Faculty, which was altered recently to afford greater representation to colleagues appointed in non-tenure-track positions. The measure passed unanimously by acclamation, and without audible objection.
4. President Walbridge apprised the Council that the membership of most standing and campus committees has been finalized and noted that specific charges to some committee will be forthcoming from the Executive Committee shortly. He also noted that the Executive Committee expects to meet with members of Benefits Committee soon. Finally, Professor Walbridge acknowledged members' continued interest in matters related to the pandemic but reported that he had no special insight to offer. He did, however, assure members that campus and university leaders continue to monitor the situation closely.
5. Discussion then turned to the subject of the status of online course questionnaires (OCQs) during the fall 2020 term. During spring 2020 the administration of OCQs was made optional due to the unprecedented challenges instructors faced having to move their courses online in the middle of term. The Executive Committee has been asked by a campus unit to consider extending this practice in some form through at least the end of the fall term. President Walbridge put the request to the Council for general discussion. He specifically asked the Council to consider whether the administration of OCQs should continue at all under current circumstances, whether perhaps the administration of OCQs could or should be made optional, and, if so, at whose discretion. He also asked members to consider whether and how OCQ data collected under current circumstances should be used in the context of tenure and promotion reviews. Some members observed that concern about OCQs is especially widespread among colleagues without the protections of tenure; they also questioned the reliability of data collected under current conditions, particularly given the fact that a recent UFC report urged caution generally where the use of OCQ data is concerned. Other members suggested that, in this area, even imperfect data is better than no data at all. They also worried that suspending the administration of

OCQs could unintentionally penalize instructors by depriving them of the opportunity to document their successes adapting to current circumstances. Acting Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Kurt Zorn noted that units continue to exercise considerable control over which questions are posed to students on OCQs. Vice Provost Pavalko observed that, in her experience, “more information is better than less” where matters related to tenure and promotion are concerned. For their part, the Council’s student representatives spoke strongly in favor OCQs being administered, arguing that OCQs allow students to provide important feedback to instructors and the institution regarding their classroom experience. Past-President Diane Henshel suggested that it might make sense to charge the Educational Policies Committee with developing a reliable mid-semester assessment instrument that instructors could use to improve courses as they are happening. She did not believe this sort of feedback would be useful for purposes of tenure and promotion review, however. No specific actions were taken, but the matter may be revisited by the Executive Committee in light of the discussion.

6. Discussion then turned to priority setting for the current academic year. President Walbridge invited members to suggest issues they would like to see taken up over the course of the year. Suggestions included: consideration of the status of free speech on campus; consideration of the challenges currently being faced by colleagues with caregiving responsibilities; a review of campus policies in light of concerns about systemic racism; a review of whether and how campus polices support or impede student learning; a review of policies related to the merit evaluation process; a review of appointment category naming conventions within the non-tenure-track ranks.
7. The Council received a general update regarding University Information Technology Services. Angie Raymond and Sameer Patil, co-chairs of the Technology Policy Committee, introduced Rob Lowden, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Stacy Morrone, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President for Learning Technologies, and Dan Calarco, Chief of Staff for the IUB Office of the Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer. Vice President Lowden commented on several issues including the origin of disruptive technology outages that occurred at the beginning of the fall semester. Discussion then turned to range of technology-related challenges faculty members continue to face under current circumstances.

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.
Colin R. Johnson, BFC Secretary