

**Minutes**  
**University of Southern Indiana**  
**Administrative Senate**  
**Wednesday, April 7, 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; Maggie Carnahan; Elizabeth Schmitt; Steven Stump; Megan Doyle; Angel Nelson; Carissa Prince; Taylor Gogel; William Pool.

**ABSENT:** Nick Bebout; Elizabeth Schmitt; Angel Nelson. Liaisons Kat Draughon; VP Steve Bridges

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion made by Prince to approve March 3, 2021, minutes. Carnahan 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

**REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

**Chair:** Britney Orth

Since the last Administrative Senate Meeting on March 3, 2021, Orth attended the following meetings as Chair:

Two President's Council Meetings on March 9, 2021, and March 23, 2021

Dr. Ann White, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions announced recently that USI received funding from the Lily/Talent 2025 grant for adult learners. This Lily grant will pay for 7 full-time positions' salaries and benefits. There's a Center Director, Marketing specialist, another administrator, and some other support staff positions. It is grant funded and this will pay for the recruitment of adult learners as well. The positions and search committees will start soon (if positions haven't already been posted). There's also a long-term health care facility and some manufacturing targets that are interested in working with USI to help their employees/adult learners to earn certificates and degrees from USI. What a great recruitment and retention opportunity for the University!

There's been a reorganization in Student Affairs. There is now a New Student Transitions Office that will oversee Orientation and other new student and families type programming and services. Carmen Stoen is the director and John Race is the assistant director and that office reports to the VP for Student Affairs, Dr. Doss. This is a common reporting line and structure for this type of office, and it will hopefully be helpful for potential students and their families to find out more information about orientation and other new student programs as a separate office.

There will be some changes in policies and practices for spectators at USI Men's and Women's athletic events and games. For a period of time, each student-athlete could have 2 guests attend. There will be an increase of fans allowed while still following CDC guidelines and those guidelines established by the NCAA and the GLVC conference teams. More information has been shared in the USI Today communication recently.

Orth has been communicating with President Rochon, VP Steve Bridges, and those on President's Council about some of the questions and concerns that we have been receiving from our constituents, including some of the Items for Consideration related to employees' schedules, working from home, flexibility, etc. Orth reported that they have been open to the communication and there's been conversations that have occurred. More information to be discussed either during New Business or beyond this meeting.

As of March 23, 2021, we were down by 400 new students for Fall 2021. There have been some new marketing, recruitment, and retention initiatives that should help us. It is possible that she and others are overly positive – we do think that as the University becomes more and more open – students, employees, community members become vaccinated, and we follow the advice of the CDC and infectious disease specialists that our recruitment and retention numbers will go up. At the same time, it is important that we all recognize that we are down 400 new students and we do not know where we are with continuing students yet. Our academic advisors are busily registering new and continuing students.

Orth has been having multiple conversations with several employees who work in areas such as Public Safety. This is the time of the year where folks, especially those who are young adults struggle. If you see something, please say something. Please report it. You may have a small piece of the puzzle that will help those of us who do follow-up with students or employees need in order to get the full picture. We prefer to follow-up at the lowest level possible. If we wait to report things, a situation could go from being small to huge when it could be stopped at the lowest level possible. Please share if you have a concern about a

student, an employee, or a guest. Report it to your chain of command, share it with Public Safety, so that those of us who do follow-up have the information and can reach out.

President Rochon, VP Bridges, and Aaron Trump recently met with the Indiana Speaker of the House and other legislators and those meetings have gone well. There is a plan to have a "Town Hall" for the USI community sometime in late April to discuss budget updates. This is our University leadership's goal to have this opportunity, however, it will depend on when the information comes from the State.

International Programs along with President Rochon, Provost Khayum, and several administrators and staff attended a session with students to speak about the attacks against Asian-American and Asian individuals in Atlanta, Georgia. It was a positive session, and some students did become emotional, because they appreciated the check-in. This session was via Zoom and there was a diverse group of students and employees who attended, which was good to see.

As we begin this month of April, we are seeing people, especially students, but also employees who are feeling depleted. As was discussed during our Professional Development Committee's Mental Health Panel Discussion - please take care of yourselves – take vacation days, go for a walk, drink a Starbucks. It has been a challenging year for all of us. Students are stressed and we need to take care of ourselves, so we can help others. Through Deaconess Concern, as employees along with our family members, get up to 8 counseling sessions for free.

The Administrative Senate Executive Committee met on March 4, 2021, March 10, 2021, March 12, 2021, March 29, 2021, March 30, 2021, and April 1, 2021. We have met a lot since our last Administrative Senate meeting – we brainstorm what to discuss during our business and supplemental meetings, our plans for the Nurturing Our Nest Initiative, which we will discuss more in Unfinished Business, and we problem solve.

Orth met with an SGA member regarding Employee Customer Service Concerns and Ideas Meeting on March 30, 2021 - she will be discussing more about this in New Business.

**Vice Chair:** Jake Hansen

No report. Items will be discussed in the committee reports.

**Past Chair:** Ingrid Lindy

No report. There will be more information in the Nominations and Elections committee report.

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Brandi Hess

Hess reported no changes to the budget, and we have a balance of \$1,297.06. We did approve the captioning expense for the professional development speaker which will hit next month's budget report.

## **REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Employee Benefits** – Jake Hansen / Elizabeth Schmitt / Nick Bebout

Hansen reported the committee chairs met to discuss the IFC for floating holidays. They decided to create a subcommittee to investigate the issue further.

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

Stump reported the committee is looking at ideas from their Spring Break activities to move to summer programming. The committee is also working on the Employee Recognition event which is the bulk of their committee activity and planning at the moment.

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

The Employee Outreach Committee met on Friday, March 19. The primary focus at this meeting was discussing the obituary policy item for consideration. During the meeting, we shared the background information on why this was presented to the committee. The committee additionally began to brainstorm ideas on how to address the issue and create a plan for recommendation, particularly as it pertains to updating/informing employees on how they should submit a death notice and link to the obituary and informing the appropriate parties.

The committee plans to address this in a two-fold manner. Next meeting time will focus on stream-lining the communication process such as the creation of Qualtrics form for employees to submit obituaries, determining to whom the obituary will be distributed, and how to educate employees on the proper protocols of the policy. The secondary meeting will focus on

enhancing a community of care among employees, such as adding an “In Memoriam” section to USI Today and/or the creation of a new webpage to be updated with recent USI-employee related death notices. This way, it limits emails and creates a central location for employees to periodically check.

#### **Nominations and Elections** – Ingrid Lindy, Chair

Lindy reported Senators Carnahan and Gogel joined the Nominations and Elections committee. The committee proofed the email sent to all constituents and it was sent today. The email included information about the position, nominations, and timeline for elections. We have received two nominations already. Nominations are open through April 23. The committee will review the candidates and then work with Kat Draughon on creating the election ballot.

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

The Professional Development Committee hosted an event on Wednesday, March 31 – Mental Stability in Unstable Times: A Panel Discussion. Panelists were Janie Chappell of Deaconess Concern, certified life coach Ami Lloyd, and Dr. Robin Sanabria of the USI Counseling Center. The virtual event was attended by 27 individuals and we received great feedback. The Professional Development Committee plans to meet again in the next month.

#### **Liaisons** – Kat Draughon / Steve Bridges

Absent - no report.

#### **Unfinished Business**

Nurturing Our Nest – Weekly tips have been appearing in USI Today. If you have any more ideas, please send them to the Executive Committee. We met with USI Foundation to seek funding for our other ideas and were awarded funding. More details coming this summer.

Obituary and Sympathy Policy – Information was reported in the Committee report. Work is continuing for this policy.

Floating Holidays – No update.

Tuition Benefit – Orth contacted Faculty Senate past chair Kenny Purcell, and he thought everything was approved and in order, but didn’t realize it was not in the handbook. The proposal is currently with Provost Khayum and he will follow-up with Orth.

Sick Bank Policy – Tabled until Pandemic is resolved.

Parental Leave – Tabled until Pandemic is resolved.

Volunteer Pilot Project – Tabled until July 2021.

#### **New Business**

Mask Policy – The Senate discussed its ongoing support for the mask mandate despite the Indiana Governor lifting restrictions. Administrative Senate will again, like in the fall, express a joint commitment with the other governance groups, to support masking on campus.

A motion was made to support continued masking on the USI campus by Doyle, seconded by Carnahan. Motion passed.

IFC(s): Remote Work and Flexibility – Requests received have varied for remote work for roles that *can* work remotely in a permanent, (post-pandemic) employee benefit format. Suggestions range from one or more days at home, summer flex, and alternate work schedules. Constituents have been asking for clarification on summer expectations, so employees can plan (especially in terms of their childcare). Orth reported that the Executive Committee is collecting these IFCs and waiting on the University to release their return-to-work plans, so we can be better prepared for the Senate’s path forward.

Customer Service – Orth reported this could be a topic in the next Supplemental Meeting. How can we engage employees to improve customer service? Training on how to handle questions or USI specific like where things are on campus, or where/how to find answers if a student is asking for help and they don’t know the answer. A student is interested in helping with this project and he has Disney training. He is passionate about helping USI. The discussion will continue at the Supplemental Meeting on April 21.

Civility and Professionalism – The Shield wrote an article about a Faculty Senate meeting with guests from Carnegie Dartlett. The article discussed some of the confrontation involved in the meeting. The senate led discussion included how it’s important to be civil with one another, and how we can disagree, but in a professional way. Communication is important and could be improved. There are pockets of negative people “sinking the ship.” This broader negative/unprofessional discourse at USI has

an overall recruitment and retention impact. Is professional development the answer? Is there faculty to present on civility? Discussion on this topic will continue at the Supplemental Meeting on April 21.

**Announcements**

Supplemental Meeting – April 21, 3 p.m. on Zoom

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

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

*Next meeting on May 5, 2021, on Zoom.*