Illinois State University

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Senate Meeting, April 8, 2009

Academic Senate
Illinois State University

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Academic Senate Minutes
Wednesday, April 8, 2009
(Approved)

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Call to Order
Senate Chairperson Dan Holland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call
Senator Kalter called the roll and declared a quorum.

Approval of Minutes of March 25, 2009
Motion XXXX-: By Senator Colaric, seconded by Senator Bagnuolo, to approve the Academic Senate Minutes of March 25, 2009. The minutes were unanimously approved.

YearOne Committee Presentation (Danielle Lindsey and Danielle Miller-Schuster, YearOne Committee Co-Directors)
Danielle Miller-Schuster, YearOne Committee Co-Director: I am the Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs in charge of planning and development. The YearOne initiative has been gaining great momentum this year. Danielle and I are very happy to serve as co-directors for this initiative. The first-year experience is not new to higher education; however, the trends are changing. ISU has excellent services for our first-year students. On the final page of the handout provided to you, you will see a 'year-one framework'. This framework provides us with a visual representation of the kinds of programs and services that ISU provides to its students in their first year. It also represents the departments that play a vital role in the acclamation, integration and engagement of our students.

It is overwhelming for our first-year students. Oftentimes, we perceive our first-year students as trying to navigate their way in the first few months. But the reality is that they are trying to navigate their way throughout the entire first year. We have the tools and resources available for our students, but it does not appear coordinated and seamless for them. In fact, it is so widespread that there is a strong need for students to be able to identify what is even out there and available to them throughout the first year. Therefore, Danielle and I were asked to come together from an institutional perspective to provide an integrated approach for the framework for our first-year students.

Danielle Lindsey, YearOne Committee Co-Director: I am Director of Academic Services and Associate Director of Summer Session in the Provost's Office. On page two of the handout, you will see the guiding principles laid out for you. You will see that we take a very holistic approach to the first year and realize that student success involves many factors. Obviously, that spans from faculty interaction both inside and outside of the classroom to ensuring that our students have the tools and information available to them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The YearOne initiative is an integrated approach between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The membership of the YearOne Committee is representative of the departments and units that are directly responsible for administering those tools to our first-year students. The committee's charge is to examine, inform, facilitate and enhance the first-year experience at Illinois State University.

Ms. Miller-Schuster: Goal 1 is creating a systematic, integrated approach to the first year. How do students identify help, resources, whatever is out there, to guide and help them throughout the entire first year? On the second page of the handout, you will see that identifier. Our transfer students were directly opposed to "first year" as an identifier because it sounded like it was their first year in college. Our students are the ones that

felt that "YearOne" identified with them the most. We then began to talk about a visual indicator on the resources, on websites, on print material. We came up with the YearOne logo with the help of a designer from Marketing and Communications (which can be seen on the YearOne website at http://www.ilstu.edu /home/yearOne). The exciting part is that we are gaining momentum and people are starting to call it YearOne instead of that 'first-year experience program'.

Beyond the print material, we wanted to provide a web presence. This is only the first level of that web presence, but the next page of the handout gives you an indication of what that website looks like for students entering in the fall semester. This website allows them to navigate to other sites to find information they are looking for.

The website, again, is just the first level of the web presence for Illinois State. We are exploring additional technology options. We obviously want to enhance student engagement, connect students to the greater community, provide peer-to-peer interaction online and be able to target key groups on campus. More importantly, we want to be able to run analytical reports in a timely manner.

Ms. Lindsey: With any initiative that is started on this campus, I think that we all realize how important it is to assess impact. We are very fortunate to have the support of the University Assessment Office. John Laird is a coordinator in that office and he sits on our committee. He will assist in assessing the impact of this initiative. He will also work with us to disseminate the information and encourage our committee's use of university-wide assessments, such as the engagement surveys. We can look at this data in unique ways to assess not only first-year students, but also specific groups of first-year students. The Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement will be administered to our incoming freshmen during Preview this summer and then the National Survey of Student Engagement will be administered to freshmen and seniors in the spring of 2010. In addition to the university-wide assessments, we will be submitting an annual report to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs that will include a summary of our work as a committee and our upcoming goals for the next year. It will also report the programmatic-level assessments so that we can really get a university-wide perspective of our strengths, areas in need of improvement and our overall trends.

President Bowman: I just want to compliment the committee on the work it has done. I had a chance to brag about our work in Springfield a couple of weeks ago at the House Appropriation Hearing. I was asked a question about our graduation and retention rates. The representatives wanted to know what we were doing and I talked about some of these initiatives. I suppose most universities do this kind of thing, but it is clearly being done more effectively here than at other places. In 1995, our six-year graduation rate was 55.9% and today it is 69.9% and will probably go up to 70% next year. I think initiatives like this will push it even higher, probably into the mid 70s in a few years. The retention rate from last fall to this spring was 89.9% for first-year students; that is the highest in our history. We are on the right track and I just want to compliment and encourage the committee to continue its work.

Senator Kalter: We were just comparing the back page of the handout with the page showing the website and noticed that not everything that is on the back page is on the website. I wonder if you could say if this is an accurate representation of what is on the website.

Ms. Lindsey: We tried not to just make it a web page with tons of links. We didn't want to duplicate the A-Z list. We tried to focus in on programs that were specifically designed to work with first-year students, but also there is another link a little bit further down, that did get cut off when that page was printed, which directs students to other university-level, or more widespread, units, such as the Dean of Students Office, Student

Health Services, etc., where they can get the information they need.

Ms. Miller-Schuster: As we begin to explore this and this becomes more of a discussion topic, I think that the evolution of unit websites will change to fit the needs of the different types of populations that we have on campus. Instead of the idea of a departmental website targeted for all students, we may see a shift in focus targeting specific groups.

Senator Mallory: Has there been a need for programs specific to graduate student?

Ms. Lindsey: That question did come up in the Academic Advisory Council meeting. We are looking to partner with them more and have one of their representatives on our YearOne Committee. So that is something that we plan to talk about as a committee.

Senator Gifford: Will the YearOne logo appear on other websites?

Ms. Lindsey: It already appears on several department sites. Web Support Services is working with the people who represent departments and units on the committee so that their specific unit website has the YearOne identifier on it. The YearOne website is a university-level website, so there is probably just going to be a spattering of integrating it into the links on other appropriate websites. That is our goal.

Ms. Miller-Schuster: We want to make sure that the logo appears only on resources and services for first-year students. We don't want it to lose its focus. We want first-year students to know that we have thought about their unique needs and that we want to make sure that they know about these resources and services in order to improve their success during the first year. We want to make sure that that is a clear message across campus.

Senator Wang: The mechanism that you present here is at the university level. How do we bring that interest and excitement to the departmental level?

Ms. Lindsey: We just had an e-mail from CAST asking 'how can I help? I want to be involved.' We have to strategically think about what we can handle each academic year, so we are going to be identifying the goals that we can accomplish next year. One of the things that we have on our list is to go out and meet individually with maybe just the colleges, just the department chairs, or however best we determine to do that. We want to work with them to determine their needs for first year-students and how we can support them. We really do see ourselves as supporting the mission and the work that the individual units do.

Senator Wang: My suggestion is that this kind of information needs to go to each department, especially the undergraduate advisors in each department, so that they can spread the news to the first-year students.

Ms. Lindsey: The University College is very much represented on our committee and they do the intrusive first-year advising. We are meeting with the Academic Advisory Council for the academic advisors at the department level. We know that we need to do even more outreach to the academic units.

Senator Holland: If I were a first-year or perspective student, how would I find out about YearOne?

Ms. Miller-Schuster: We really have to think about the timeline of when we go out and meet our perspective students. Admissions plays a huge role in that and they are very much a partner in what we are doing. Even at the freshmen information nights, the YearOne identifier is on the screen and they talk about what that means. Students and their families are going to hear about how the university treats first-year students. That is carried

through in our summer and fall orientations.

Action Items:
04.03.09.01   Athletic Council Bylaws-Revised-Draft 4 – Proposed Blue Book Revision (Rules Committee)
The Athletic Council Bylaws, as revised, were unanimously approved by the Academic Senate.

03.26.09.02   Library Committee Bylaws-Revised-Draft 2 – Proposed Blue Book Revision (Rules Committee)
The Library Committee Bylaws, as revised, were unanimously approved by the Academic Senate.

Information Item:
03.26.09.01   2009-10 Institutional Goals and Priorities Report (Planning and Finance Committee)
The Institutional Goals and Priorities Report was presented to the Senate as an Information Item. It will come before the Senate for action/approval on April 22, 2009.

NOTE: Further specifics of the meeting are not available due to failure of the recording equipment during the meeting.

Adjournment