

University Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 7, 2013 -- 3:15 p.m.
Weatherby Conference Room

Call to Order:

- Chair Margaret Crowder called the Executive Committee meeting of the WKU Senate to order on Monday, Oct. 7, 2013 at 3:15 pm in the Weatherby Conference Room. A quorum was present.
- **Members Present:**
Heidi Álvarez, Jill Brown, Ashley Chance Fox, Margaret Crowder, Tucker Davis, Gordon Emslie, Loren Foster, John Gottfried, Jennifer Hanley, Ric Keaster, Mark Reeves, Angela Jerome, Alison Langdon, Patricia Minter, Beverly Siegrist
- **Guests Present:**
Jim Berger, Jerry Daday, Claus Ernst, Richard Gelderman, Kelly Madole, Sharon Mutter, Beth Plummer, Kelly Reames
- **Absent:**

A. Approve September Minutes

- A motion to approve the May minutes by Patti Minter was seconded by Kelly Reames. The minutes were approved as posted.

B. Reports:

1. Chair – Margaret Crowder

- The total operating budget for the University Senate is \$6000. \$1750 goes toward coffee/tea/water for the University Senate meetings. Other expenditures so far this year total \$170.22

2. Vice Chair – Jennifer Hanley

- Members of standing committees are still being recruited in order to have full representation.

3. Secretary - Heidi Alvarez (no report)

4. Faculty Regent – Patricia Minter

- Regent Minter went to the CPE Trustees Conference. Preparing people for the work force was the theme. Minter had a positive impression. She also had the chance to speak with Philip Bale, Gil Johnson, and new faculty regents from other universities.
- The BOR met at the end of September.
- The full board meeting is Oct. 25.
- The Provost's Enrollment report and census report: International student and out of state tuition makes the market more complicated.
- Minter brought up the agency bond issue; we need 60 more Navitas students to pay the debt on the agency bond in fiscal year 2014; the overage will be picked up by the

faculty raise pool.

5. Provost – Gordon Emslie

- Enrollment is tied to health. The MAPWorks survey shows that the number is down from 660 to 120. The drop for non-payment deadline is Oct. 8. Total head count compared to Sept. 23 of last year shows that we are still 500 short; but we still have students who need to enroll for bi-term. We are expecting a higher retention rate, 80% of fully enrolled. NAVITAS 170-180 predicted students. Everything is tracking the way it is expected and should be fine.
- Staffing plan: critical slots have been filled; numbers are down. We reached our 2018 goal for faculty/student ratio.
- 1.5 million – benefits reserve; in principal there is money to address salary
- The money for faculty searches will either be used for raises, health insurance; the 3% tuition increase – flat; college readiness dollars/performance index: if funded we would get 3.5 million – translates to a 3% raise over 2 years. Money is being held in academic affairs as a buffer; Money could go into faculty searches to address faculty compensation.
- A separate email address is being proposed for official university correspondence (administrative council & senate chair). Dr. Minter asked if the faculty regent would be on this list. Minter feels this new email address would significantly be a limitation of speech. In an informal vote to provide feedback to the Provost, the consensus was that the executive committee agreed with Minter. The executive committee voted “no” on the creation of a new email account.

C. Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations

1. Graduate Council (Beth Plummer):

- Beth Plummer made a motion to endorse the September Graduate Council agenda items as posted. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Hanley. The Graduate Council items were approved unanimously by the Graduate Faculty.

2. University Curriculum Committee (Ashley Chance Fox):

- Ashley Chance Fox made a motion to endorse the September UCC items as posted. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Hanley. The UCC items were approved unanimously.

3. Academic Quality: No report

4. Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibility: No report

5. General Education (Loren Foster):

- Loren Foster made a motion to approve the September UCC items as posted. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Hanley. The UCC items were approved unanimously.

6. University Benefits Committee (Claus Ernst):

- Claus Ernst stated that the Benefits Committee needs input from the University Senate on Health Insurance.
- On “additional” copays, deductibles, & out of pocket, we are still waiting for a report from Anthem.

- The numbers fluctuate because there are 2,000 on the plan and 3,000 dependents. The cost is within what it should be and the average on everything is fine.
- The percentage increase of premiums for employees has risen faster than the employer contribution. Employees contribute roughly 1/3.
- There is a \$149,000 deficit for 2012 in the plan summary.
- For 2013 there are huge fluctuations from month to month. We don't know until the year is over whether or not there is a deficit.
- The history of benchmark data suggests that at \$418, WKU is significantly below benchmarks.
- The standard model supports plans with different amounts. We have a flat rate contribution for employer and this is not standard.
- The variable contribution plan is 70% of whatever the employee picks.
- The Senate brought this forth in Jan. 2012. The general council said that we would not be grandfathered by the Affordable Care Act. In addition, President Ransdell argued that we do not have the money.
- The Benefits Committee deferred the decision until January 2015.
- Reserve amounts were diminishing and numbers are overdrawn.
- This issue needs to be put forth to the Senate because the number is going down quickly.
- The plans for 2014 are already set, so the Senate cannot influence this.
- The Senate CAN address what happens for 2015.
- Whatever resolution comes forth should be submitted by early spring of 2014.
- There is no easy answer. The current balance in the reserve as of August 2013 is \$4 and ¼ million. The runout claim has 3 months lag time; we need at least 3 million in the reserve to make a switchout.
- We will lose \$3.5-4 million in 2014.
- The budget committee has made resolutions but the recommendations were rejected.
- Tony Glisson is working on a compromise.
- We have to raise \$2.6 million for a 1.3 WKU increase in employer contributions. This is equivalent to a 1% salary raise. ½ is not budgeted.
- Employee contribution, premium increases, and employer contribution will hopefully keep in a positive balance by 2014.
- There will be a strong impetus for a 2015 plan design; either leave negotiations to the benefits committee or exert political pressure.
- The money has to come from somewhere.
- New faculty members should have the option of supporting their dependents.
- We save a little money by being self-insured but there is risk with this.
- The possible solution of a health savings account is not helpful to people with chronic illness.
- Whatever we do, there will be people who are unhappy. We need a clear vision for how it will affect staff and new junior faculty members.
- An excise tax should not be considered.
- Hanley: It was suggested that members of the benefits committee meet with the faculty welfare committee to discuss this situation, to come up with options, and present it to the SEC.
- The benefits committee will also present this to the Senate.
- Minter: stated that the Senate resolution must be coherent and workable, and it

- must have unanimous support from the Senate.
- Emslie: \$1 in salary is taxed; \$1 in health goes toward health.
- Emslie: some are on our plan who could be covered in other ways (opt out). 175-180 is the number of people who opt out; this number stays relatively constant overtime.
- A motion by Mark Reeves to have the Benefits issue further considered by the Faculty Welfare Committee and to take this report to the University Senate as an information item with the understanding that action will be taken later was seconded by Loren Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Old Business

- Several members of the recently reappointed ad-hoc Faculty Governance Committee came to answer questions and clarify the document that they passed on to the Executive Committee in September.
- Mutter: the committee does not want to go back and change anything in their document, but they can clarify things. The committee as a whole has completed what they were asked to do and they want to pass the report into the executive committee. She clarified that the proposed phase 1 was to make comments, let the faculty read it, take faculty comments, and amend as necessary.
- Keaster: motion to send the document to faculty welfare & edit as they feel necessary, then bring it back to SEC to send to the faculty as a whole, because if the SEC puts the document forth, then it becomes a mandate. The motion failed.
- Mutter: the ad hoc committee's concern is to say why they made the decisions they made; to give rationale for any concerns.
- Crowder: motion to table ad hoc governance report for dissemination; A. Langdon seconded motion; discussion centered around ownership of the document. Mutter said she is happy to address questions. Vote: motion failed unanimously.
- Minter presented ideas on behalf of Robert Dietle, a member of the ad hoc committee who was at another meeting. He stated that the document is "a result of long discussions and many compromises... I cannot say that I'm in total agreement with every aspect of the proposal... For me the fundamental question remains 'What problem are we trying to solve with the new system?' ...The hope is that the new system will deal with business much more expeditiously. I am not sure this is true... Simply changing the system will not address many of the larger issues we face: the administration's interaction with faculty governance; the lack of widespread faculty interest in participating in governance; the difficulty of gaining administrative support for any faculty initiative, etc. A new governance system will not transform the culture of WKU."
- Dietle also expressed concerns regarding the UC representation and the IEC: "Beyond this general concern, I have two specific issues with the proposed system. First, I think the proposal undercuts faculty representation. By limiting the number of representatives, larger colleges will be underrepresented while smaller units will be over represented. My colleagues on the task force did not agree with me on this point but I was very open in stating that I would raise this issue in the senate. Secondly, the Instructional Council concerns me. At present our governance system is faculty centered. The introduction of the Instructional Council has the potential to change that. For the first time, representatives from the deans' offices will have a formal role in the way academic business is conducted. Given the way the provost – and I assume he is present listening to this – used the Council of Deans to intervene

in the debate over the Colonnade Program, I have no reason to believe that the Instruction Council will play the sort of neutral, "information only" role that is ascribed to it. The provost is free to consult whomever he wants about academic matters. He is free to create an instructional council to advise him. I'm just not sure that such a body should be made a formal part of the faculty governance system."

- Langdon: would we be able to generate enough members of each committee, considering that we are struggling to find representatives now?
- Hanley: would like to see regional campuses included in discussions; she wants their voice to be heard, and wants instructors & other non-tenure-track members to be represented.
- Provost: if you are in the English department, you are in the English department. Stated that factoring in regional campuses can be easily done.
- Madole: what if SEC makes recommendations that the original committee made and this is not something the original committee agrees with? The committee does not want to become a secretary to edit changes.
- Berger: discussion of unit of power was the tenure granting unit.
- Mutter: this can be expanded to regional campuses to serve.
- Berger: question was how does this affect overall representation.
- Ernst: advises against sending it back; suggests that SEC make the document its own & push it through.
- Explanation of the rationale for a two-bodied system: because there are more members and more opportunities to fill the committees
- It is premature to make edits without discussing it with the committee that made the document.
- Top 5 issues based on SEC feedback that was emailed: 1. Term limits; 2. Membership of committees; 3. Instructional; 4. Timeline; 5. How is it intended to streamline curricular issues?
- Mutter: dual-body structure is to streamline proposals from both bodies all on faculty who are interested in various areas to focus their energy in those areas. This produces more faculty as a whole in the representation process.
- Madole: Fisher report recommended that a process of having two bodies was cumbersome; faculty were not in favor of a single body because it diminished faculty voice.
- Ernst: Senate had no power & most resolutions were ignored. Academic council, most people had not read it. UCC was made much smaller & those that really did the work were the ones charged with it. The biggest drawback of the one-bodied system is that they have regularly failed on non-curricular information. What is lacking is having the time to address these things. (i.e., a thorough review of budget issues)
- Reeves: a critical issue is the relationship with administration
- Ernst: splitting bodies apart would be a good thing because it will give the manpower to address critical issues.
- The Senate has no restrictions; the Senate can do anything it likes.
- Academic policies that also affected faculty welfare could be addressed by both bodies. Resolution process: 2 chairs would decide whether or not to send 2 resolutions forth.
- Ernst: twice the number to fill committees will enable more representation.
- After much discussion, Beverly Siegrist made a motion to post the report of the ad-hoc committee for information only on the University Senate website and hold a

forum (also at regional campuses). It was seconded by Alison Langdon. Ric Keaster called the question, Heidi Álvarez seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Dates for the forum will be discussed via email.

E. New Business:

- Date for special senate meeting with Dr. Ransdell: Motion to approve by A. Langdon, seconded by R. Keaster. Passed unanimously.
- Email from Eric Reed regarding a request of Senate sponsorship for an open forum: A motion from A. Langdon to cosponsor in name only (without budgetary support) was seconded by J. Hanley. Passed unanimously.

F. Information items:

A motion to adjourn by J. Hanley was seconded by A. Langdon. The meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Álvarez
Secretary