

Western Kentucky University
University Senate
Meeting Minutes
20 September 2018, 3:45 p.m.
Faculty House

A) Call to order

- A regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Chair Kirk Atkinson on Thursday, September 20, 2018, at 3:46 p.m.
- Members present (substitute): Janet Applin, Kirk Atkinson, Melanie Autin, Jim Berger, Jason Bergner, Kristi Branham, Tim Brotherton, Dan Clark, A. Daniels, Susann Davis, Michelle Dvoskin, Claus Ernst, Travis Esslinger (Keri Esslinger), Colin Farrell, Stacey Forsythe, Jim Fulkerson, Dawn Garrett-Wright (Liz Sturgeon), James Gray, Natasha Gerstenschlager (Robin Ayers), Dominique Gumirakiza, Lance Hahn, Tim Hawkins, Lawrence Hill, Jean-Luc Houle, Angie Jerome, Guy Jordan, Pat Kambesis, Soleiman Klasatpour, Jim Lindsey, Kim Link-Phillips, Donielle Lovell, Stephen Mayer, Lauren McClain, Mac McKerral, Patti Minter (Jennifer Hanley), Kurt Neelly, Morteza Nurcheshmeh, Heather Payne-Emerson, Leslie Plumlee, Matt Pruitt, Dianna Ransdell, Ron Rhoades, Mark Schafer, David Serafini, Jo Shackelford, Joe Shankweiler, Christy Spurlock, Ajay Srivastava, Tammie Stenger-Ramsey, Heather Strode, Toni Szymanski, Carol Watwood, Mary Wolinski, Alison Youngblood, Donita Kelley, Carl Dick, Terry Dean (guest), Jean Neal-Strunjes (guest), Margaret Crowder (guest), Amber Belt (guest), Dean May, Emily Dewetter (guest), Michelle Trawick (guest)

B) Approve August 2018 minutes

- J. Berger motioned to approved. C. Dick seconded. Passed unanimously.

C) Reports, Part I

- ***Chair – Kirk Atkinson***
 - 1) Changes to Senate Charter
 - Most of the changes involve removing references to University College and ensuring fair faculty representation across the campus
 - 2) Clarification of Provost Ballman’s restriction on new course proposals (curriculum freeze) during campus wide program review - exception for new courses in the Connections part of Colonnade due to need
 - 3) Had first meeting with tobacco task force information for investigating tobacco / vape-free campus
 - University wide and was created as part of a grant
 - Have broken into major subgroups (policy formation, implementation, and enforcement)
 - 4) Had good meetings with both President and Provost
 - In normal meetings we were not trying to problem solve but rather were raising awareness for existing issues
 - One special meeting for one purpose – merit pool
 - Nothing major has changed, but met to discuss the issue
 - 5) G. Hackbarth (Associate Director of IT) came to last SEC meeting
 - Interested in getting faculty more involved in issues related to governance of IT issues/projects across campus

- K. Atkinson said an *ad hoc* committee would need to be formed but the Senate is currently not ready to do this now...advised that more investigation is needed (is this advisory or governance, for instance)
- 6) HURON group will be here in the October meeting
 - Will do the regular Senate agenda first and have HURON at the end
 - They have been asked to not give a generic presentation but to give information specific to the current budget model
 - Hope that the meeting is informational rather than confrontational
- 7) Rhoades report
 - Sen. Rhoades sent email to Provost directly (K. Atkinson was copied) with an interest in looking into moving early morning class start times for freshman and sophomores into a later part of the day (sleep patterns, etc.)
 - SEC referred this to the Academic Quality and Faculty Welfare Committees
 - Want these committees to collect data and report back on this issue
- ***Vice Chair – Dan Clark***
 - 1) Committee membership status
 - One at-large spot on Academic Quality committee (taken at this point)
 - Need members for Faculty Handbook committee (from Education, Business, and Libraries)
- ***Secretary – Jason Bergner (no report)***
- ***Coalition of Senate/Faculty Leadership for Higher Education – Molly Kirby (no report)***
 - 1) Basic explanation of the organization and the larger umbrella organization
 - 2) Welcome faculty to bring issues to her that need to be addressed
- ***AAUP Representative – Margaret Crowder***
 - 1) President of AAUP chapter on campus
 - Not very many members...welcomes more
 - 2) AAUP has a One Faculty, One Resistance movement
 - Fighting for free speech issues, academic freedom, and handling harassment issues
 - Provide a lot of reports (faculty compensation, best practices, etc.)
 - Happy to talk about AAUP with anyone interested in learning more about the organization
 - 3) Merit pay is an issue circulating around campus
 - Email went out discussing merit pay, criteria for evaluation, etc.
 - Issue of merit is non-negotiable
 - Many faculty I've talked to have concerns
 - We are still well below benchmark (haven't seen significant raises in probably a decade)
 - Significant salary compression
 - We should begin to raise all boats before looking at merit (budget crisis, prior decisions, etc. in the past)
 - We have had a strong faculty voice in the past, but that voice has not consistently been heard
 - Is program review a way to facilitate more cuts across campus?

- This is causing anxiety across campus
- We've all been working harder and asked to do more with less
 - Staff are doing jobs of multiple staff members as they absorbed the cuts from last year
 - Faculty are often asked to do things outside of our "hive" (for the good of the students)
 - However, time is limited at some point
 - We've all been working hard in the past despite these limitations for the "family" of WKU
 - We all deserved to be rewarded equally
- The criteria for merit are being given at the end of the period for which we are being evaluated is unheard of
 - Only a few are going to be able to take advantage of this
 - None of us should be fighting each other for these benefits
- If we truly want to change the culture on this campus, we need to start with incorporating the faculty's voice into decisions
 - We hear a lot of wanting to change the culture from the new leadership
 - This would have been a good time to take a small step by consulting the faculty on this issue

D) Committee Reports and Recommendations

- ***Academic Quality – Heather Strobe (no report)***
- ***Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities – Patti Minter (no report)***
 - 1) Patti (absent) wanted to pass on she (and others) had a very productive meeting with Provost Ballman and shared the results of the faculty work-life survey
 - 2) Time to post the overall results of the faculty work-life survey (she will send out an email very shortly – be looking for that email)
- ***Budget and Finance Committee – Jim Berger (no report)***
 - 1) Looking at how budget has changed over the last few years
 - Working with HURON to get crosswalk between old budget and new proposed budget modeled
 - We will share this as soon as we can
- ***Colonnade General Education Committee – Mary Wolinski (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) M. Wolinski motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - Two new Connections courses have been approved.
- ***Graduate Council – Carl Dick (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) C. Dick motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - K. Atkinson – GC has moved to an electronic workflow system. This will start to "shake the tree" with the UCC. It will be a good thing. I will say more about this at a later time.
- ***Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Janet Applin (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) J. Applin motioned. Unanimous approval.
- ***Faculty Handbook Committee – Kate Hudepohl (no report)***

E) Old Business

F) New Business

- 1) Policy 1.3150 UG Admission Holds
 - J. Berger motioned. J. Hanley seconded. Unanimous approval.
- 2) Course Type Cleanup
 - D. McElroy contacted K. Atkinson and seeks Senate approval.
 - K. Atkinson – Technically, I don't think they had to come and get Senate approval.
 - Registrar is going through and trying to clean up the coding for certain courses.
 - Coding may have been inaccurate or didn't correctly describe the course (lecture v. experiential).
 - M. McKerral – So if we vote this down would they have to stop in their tracks?
 - K. Atkinson – Yes. They said they would stop.
 - J. Bergner - D. McElroy stated the Registrar could go back and undo any changes that had been made before the Senate formal approval (5-6 courses had been changed at the point of the SEC meeting and could easily be changed back).
 - J. Berger motioned. H. Strode seconded. Unanimous approval.
- 3) TCFS – Austin, TX Oct 26-27, 2018 – Invitation
 - K. Atkinson – received SEC approval to attend this conference
 - Provost has agreed to fund K. Atkinson's trip to regional Senate meeting.
 - A. Jerome motioned. D. Clark seconded. Unanimous approval.
- 4) Merit Pay (J. Berger)
 - J. Berger motioned to approve a resolution. Seconded by M. McKerral.
 - Senate Resolution [proposed at this point, not approved by the Senate – proposal placed here for reference to the discussion below]:

“The university, in its efforts to address merit pay, has asked that specific criteria be identified for each department/unit. These criteria will be used by administrators to make decisions about how much merit pay individual faculty members will receive. The importance of these criteria and their role in the decision-making process leads the University Senate to make the following requests:

1. Each unit, including the faculty of that unit, conduct a discussion of the criteria for merit pay and weighting of those criteria.

2. The resulting decisions about which criteria to use and how much to weight each criterion be communicated to the faculty of the respective units in advance of asking for documentation in support of merit pay increases.

3. Criteria and weighting of those criteria be made publicly available, by December 2018, to members of the unit.

- Discussion follows:

- J. Berger - We are being asked to consider merit pay and how it should be distributed. We (Budget and Finance Committee) met as a committee.
 - Budget committee found that departments are doing it differently
 - The committee wants there to be transparency in this process
 - This resolution seeks to increase this transparency so that faculty knew what merit pay would be given and how it would be evaluated (what criteria would be used)
- A. Jerome – I’m all for this, but our merit narratives were due this week
- J. Berger - We want to make the information publicly available – giving the deadline of December 2018 because some departments aren’t ready now
 - We also want this information out there as a resource if we do have merit pay in the future
- S. Davis – You seem to be asking about how this is going to take place, yet the word “discussion” seems as though you want the faculty to have a voice in the decision (the decision has already been made for many at this point) – Can you clarify this?
- J. Berger – My understanding is that the committee wanted faculty to be involved in understanding what criteria were used in the merit pay process
 - I don’t think the faculty are going to decide
- S. Davis – Are you open to a friendly amendment to clarify this wording?
- J. Berger - Yes.
- S. Davis – When we say “discussion,” it makes it seem like it’s open for debate as to what the criteria will be. #1 should be an “explanation” versus a “discussion.”
 - J. Berger – Does #2 not address this?
 - S. Davis - #2 says “resulting decisions” and I don’t think we’re asking for a decision to be made in #1 if it’s just an explanation
- D. Clark – I wanted the “discussion” to be in there for the future and not just an explanation...the idea behind #1 was that the faculty would have input on the criteria for merit pay should it come up again
- M. Pruitt - If are serious about faculty governance, it seems odd to say we want to be informed versus having a say
- M. Dvoskin – It reads as though we are rubber stamping what’s already been done, and I’m not comfortable with that. If we want to put forward a resolution for the future, it should read that “this has not been happening, and in the future, we want...”
- C. Dick – This is a resolution asking for transparency in the process.
 - #3 – Is this to be made available to the general public, or available to members of the unit?
- J. Berger – The way that we were discussing this, it could be available on a shared drive that would be available to the members of the unit but not necessarily to the university at large.
- C. Dick - #3 – Would striking the word “publicly” get you to the same place?
- J. Berger – I want it to be publicly available to members within the unit.

- C. Dick – Publicly available means anyone with an internet connection could find it.
 - Offered friendly amendment to strike the word “publicly”
- A. Jerome – Since our salaries are public, is it ever going to be made public who got what percent of the increase? (rhetorical)
- T. Ballman – I don’t want to speak directly to the resolution, but I do want to speak about process.
 - President Caboni changed from 4% merit to 2/2 split (across-the-board v. merit)
 - This change was based on input. All boats are rising.
 - I have had two meetings with Deans where we have spoken of the process regarding merit, particularly the very short timeline we have.
 - In order for any increases to appear in January checks, all recommendations have to be finalized by Oct 31.
 - We talked at length, and it’s my understanding that Deans were talking with their department chairs, and that the chairs were convening with their faculty and discuss a baseline for establishing satisfactory work (which may not be considered meritorious). Those who go above and beyond should receive merit.
- M. McKerral – The impetus for this resolution is to let admin know that this process needs to be transparent. Decisions have already been made, even at the departmental level.
 - In the ongoing debate, the folks opposed to merit argue that there aren’t clear criteria to dispense merit.
 - Having transparency between departments would help people share knowledge and improve the system overall.
 - We aren’t looking at right now but down the road.
 - This 2% is not going to fix salary compression and other inequities across campus.
 - We want to create a shared wealth of knowledge and helping people understand that participation in the establishment of the criteria is the faculty’s best interest. Going forward we may actually find ways to justify merit.
 - This 4% cannot correct 10 years of neglect.
- J. Applin – clarification about the percentage
 - My department was told the opportunity was for an additional 4% merit (6% total raise).
 - T. Ballman – That’s correct. If someone gets 4% merit, someone else would have to get 0% (there’s not enough money).
- M. McKerral – Can we get back to the resolution?
 - Friendly amendments (summary of above discussion happened here – final amended resolution below)
- L. McClain – If we’re saying the intent is for the future, then do we need to take out December 2018 if this is for the future?

- S. Davis – We need to be clear if we’re talking about something now or going forward.
- M. Pruitt – Seeing as how different departments are doing different things, I’d like to see what we have right now remain the same for this year. We can address the future at a later time and come up with a much better system. We can better address the future when we have more time.
- M. McKerral
 - That’s why we put that date was put there so this base of knowledge can be created.
 - We get paid for January on December 16. By the time this deadline comes along, all the criteria developed by the various departments will be done.
 - There’s a lot of value in that.
 - If you drop the date off, this may disappear into a black hole and you would never see the information. The date was put there so we can develop this base of knowledge and improve the system going forward. I think having the date in there is important.
- D. Clark
 - If there’s merit pool next year and we pushed the date back, the whole academic year will be gone and we’ll be right back in the same boat next fall.
- K. Atkinson reads edited resolution (text of amended resolution below)
- Hawkins – [playing Devil’s advocate]
 - Do we want to do this? For instance, we already have criteria for P&T. I’m not aware of any quantitative weighting of those criteria. I’m wondering why? Is there a reason we don’t have that? Is there value in the flexibility? Does this same flexibility apply to merit? Was a weighting of and listing of criteria publish the last time we had a merit increase? What do other universities do?
 - Is it useful to step back and think about flexibility and reflect to other evaluations? Do we even want to vote on this resolution?
- K. Esslinger – That’s why they want to leave it up to the various departments. The resolution works well by leaving it up to the departments.
- C. Ernst – This resolution was intended to be passed before this process was completed. This is the only chance we have today to do this.
- A. Jerome – Department chairs have until October 1 to put their stuff into the Dean. You can still participate.
- L. McClain – We’re confused in here about what this says. I don’t see how anyone outside this room is going to have clarity about what this resolution says. Can we make this clearer? I don’t want to put a stamp of approval on something that’s not clear.
- M. McKerral – Put “going forward” at the beginning of #1? That would take care of the clarity concern.
- A. Jerome – called the question

- M. Pruitt - Question raised about whether you need to vote on calling the question (to end debate)
 - M. McKerral - Answer was that you do not. Calling the question ends debate.
- Amended text of resolution:

“The university, in its efforts to address merit pay, has asked that specific criteria be identified for each department/unit. These criteria will be used by administrators to make decisions about how much merit pay individual faculty members will receive. The importance of these criteria and their role in the decision-making process leads the University Senate to make the following requests:

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2. The resulting decisions about which criteria to use and how much to weight each criterion be communicated to the faculty of the respective units in advance of asking for documentation in support of merit pay increases.

3. Criteria and weighting of those criteria be made available, by December 2018, to members of the unit.

- Motion to pass amended resolution passed, 39-9.
 - Later, rules stated that we should have had a 2/3 vote to end debate. The floor was opened for objections, but none was made. Thus, the motion stands.

G) Reports, Part II

- **Advisory Report, Faculty Regent – Claus Ernst**
 - 1) 4% increase was declared in the spring
 - Expressed to President Caboni the culture of non-transparency on campus
 - There are departments that have done a reasonable job, while others have done nothing
 - Should there be across-the-board raises until we meet the benchmark? The university has selected benchmarks that purposefully makes us look bad so we can't ever reach the benchmark. You cannot reach benchmark salaries without benchmark revenues, which we don't have.
 - Raises (salaries) have been disclosed in the past (Faculty Welfare committee did that). It can be done again.
- **Advisory Report, Provost – Terry Ballman**
 - 1) Still concerned about the number of Connections course offerings
 - Colonnade is looking into a long-term fix
 - 2) Recent article in newspaper reported “D” grade for WKU for general education program
 - T. Ballman supports the good work we're doing regardless of any external source
 - 3) Program review called for in the new strategic plan

- Allows us to make strategic decisions as a university
- All departments will look at all programs
- Templates will go to departments next month
 - Due date January 15
- Series of groups will look at this, but we are still determining the process
- M. McKerral – spring Colonnade issue
 - In my department, we have courses we'd like to propose
 - Is there a way to streamline the proposal for a new course?
 - A lot of the info in the application is in the syllabus
 - I think the form is a reason why people don't pitch more courses
 - M. Wolinski – It's still possible to get it in by the November deadline
 - We have to have assessment criteria in the proposal
 - Most people get their proposals approved even if they need some changes
 - T. Symanski – In our department, we have to get department approval, then college approval, then UCC approval – that's already three months
 - Is there a way to get a dispensation for Collonnade
 - M. McKerral – I don't want us to get into another trap where we have to waiver a bunch of students
 - T. Ballman – Anything you can do (it's a faculty-drive process) to expedite the process would be greatly appreciated.
 - K. Branham – There's not a lot of incentive to create these courses. Pushing the faculty to create more courses isn't the way to fix it. The Collonnade requirement needs to be revisited and solved.
 - M. Wolinski – We have a subcommittee that's looking at doing things to make this process faster / more flexible.
 - M. Crowder – What used to happen is that new courses used to go through in a parallel fashion to shorten the timeline.
- **Advisory Report, SGA President – Stephen Mayer (no report)**
 - 1) SGA elections happened this past Monday and Tuesday.
 - 2) F. Wilson gave a presentation on a Reg2Vote initiative (getting student registered to vote and make it easier for them to get to the polls)

H) Information Items

- 1) Math dept. issue with course prerequisites (C. Ernst)
 - Registrar changed “prerequisite” to “may be taken concurrently” via a computer program
 - Anyone who has courses with prerequisites should check it.
 - If TopNet is different than what is in the catalog, the student would likely win the appeal.

I) Adjournment

- S. Davis motioned, H. Strode seconded. Unanimous approval.