

REPORT for the Budget & Finance Committee Meeting of April 11, 2024

The Budget & Finance Committee last met on March 7, 2024.

1). Meeting called to order: E. Kondratieff (3:45 pm).

Attendees:

Eric Kondratieff, Chair (PCAL)
Kurt Neelly (At-Large)
Jeremy Maddox (OCSE)
Julie Shadoan (PCAL)
John Erickson (GFCB)
Martha Day (CEBS)
Daniel Boamah (CHHS)
Tanner Blood (SGA)
Faculty Regent Shane Spiller (non-voting)
Provost Bud Fischer (non-voting)

Absent:

Sean Kinder (Libraries)
Ben Dinan (At-Large)

Positions currently unfilled:

Alternates for CEBS, GFCB, PCAL, SGA

2). Chair Report – E. Kondratieff:

A. Minutes from 03/07/2024 meeting – approved.

3. New Business: (NB: this is BFC’s last meeting of Academic Year 2023-2024)

a) **New Directions and Topics for Next AY?** WKU, R2 designation, and funding to support the research necessary to sustain such a designation.

i) Maddox:

(1) recommends Senate discuss **R2 designation**, especially re: funding to non-research and PhD applied research funding.

ii) Spiller:

(1) This topic discussed at recent Regents’ meeting – **R2** is not an application process, rather a designation based on how WKU faculty operate and what its programs produce.
(2) Research production / effort may require an increase in faculty support funding (which has progressively diminished in the past several years with funds redirected to student support services).

iii) Provost Fischer:

(1) WKU may already be designated an R2 institution in the next 3-yr designation period.
(a) He expects WKU will be designated R2 next February but is uncertain about what the State would do were this to occur; the KY legislature has yet to finalize its current funding bill to determine if WKU funding could change with this R2 designation.
(2) RAMP model funding would NOT likely change based on Research- or R2-designation status. Much remains to be seen and discussed in terms of legislation and with CPE.
(3) RE: State Appropriations and Funding (per President Caboni’s recent message), Fischer reiterated that the 4% appropriation budget increase is only for the first year; effectively, it works out as an approximately 2.25% increase for each of the 2 years of the upcoming State Budget.

iv) Neelly:

(1) Confirmed comments by Provost Fischer that BEC has discussed salary recommendations and forwarded their recommendations to Administration.
(2) Asked whether faculty and staff salaries should be a topic for next year’s committee,

v) Committee:

(1) Unanimously agreed this topic must be a discussion point for next year.

b) Who plans to remain on Budget & Finance Committee next AY?

Kondratieff-Yes	Boamah-Yes
Maddox-Yes	Day-Unlikely
Neelly-Yes	Shadoan-No (resigning from Senate)
Erickson-Yes	Blood (SGA)-No (will not be on SGA next yr)

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4) Old Business

a) Some follow-ups on the Ron Rhoades Memo

i) Kondratieff

- (1) Shared with committee members his email response (based on committee discussion) to Rhoades, Rhoades' reply, and Renaldo Domoney's brief summary and breakdown of the issues noted by RR.
- (2) Posed the question as to which issues the committee thinks it can or would like to tackle?

ii) Maddox:

- (1) Believes that the undergraduate enrollment cliff is a worthwhile topic to consider.

iii) Provost Fischer:

- (1) An alternative perspective to the "Enrolment Cliff": There is still room to increase the number of KY high school grads who attend college, as KY percentages (48%) are significantly lower than surrounding states whose attendance rates are 15-20% higher than KY's.

iv) Spiller and Provost Fischer:

- (1) both offered opinions that enrollment capture and first-time student enrollment prediction models have improved a lot in the past 2-3 years. The goal (and hope) is to have a higher level of confidence and accuracy when budgets are set in the summer and revenue distributed to Deans and Units at the start of the AY so that significant adjustments will not have to be made *during* the AY.

v) Boamah:

- (1) Asked whether WKU is tracking / following fee waivers and scholarships UK and UofL are offering that would potentially attract students away from WKU to their institutions?

b) Follow up with SGA progress on Big Red Backpack "Pushback"

i) Provost Fischer:

- (1) sked SGA to provide more feedback regarding Big Red Backpack program.

ii) Blood:

- (1) SGA is deferring this topic to next AY to discuss and provide formal feedback to Jennifer Tougas and WKU Administration.

5. Faculty Regent – Shane Spiller

- a) Discussed efforts to clear up the impact of the recent state appropriation increases in the biennial budget.
- b) Explained changes in how faculty/staff salary are reported and placed online (the reporting has been scaled back to only that which is required by law; WKU had been "over-reporting")
- c) Provided overview of upcoming BoR meetings and topics.
- d) Reiterated that committee members can and should contact him through remainder of semester or this summer with questions.
- e) Expressed gratitude to administration for prior efforts to minimize premium increases for health insurance as health insurance is very expensive and complicated.
- f) **Provost Fischer:**
 - i) Shared that institutions have asked KY CPE to run cost analysis to see if all KY institutions would see cost savings if they all operated under same health insurance plan as a single unit.
 - ii) CPE will continue to look into this.

6. Faculty Regent – Bud Fischer

- a) Admin. continuing to monitor ongoing 2024 budget *and* watching the Legislative session re: the upcoming 2-year state budget.

7. BEC Rep – Neelly (No Report)

8. Shadoan: Motion to adjourn @ 4:51. Approved.