WKU University Senate Executive Committee (SEC) Meeting
February 8, 2016 -- 3:15 p.m.
WAB 227 - AA Large Conference Room

A. Call To Order

1. A regular meeting of the WKU University Senate Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Kate Hudepohl on February 8, 2016 at 3:19 PM in the Weatherby Conference Room.

2. A quorum was present: Heidi Álvarez, Barbara Burch, Thad Crews, Susann Davis, Laura DeLancey, Marko Dumančić, Claus Ernst, David Lee, Jeremy Maddox, Patricia Minter, Kurt Neelly, Jay Todd Richey, and Liz Sturgeon.

B. Approve January 11, 2016 SEC Meeting Minutes

1. A motion to approve the January meeting minutes by Marko Dumančić was seconded by Jay Todd Richey.

2. Discussion of the January meeting minutes by Susann Davis yielded the following friendly amendments: Hudepohl said "should not wait until May" in response to Molly Kerby's suggestion that we wait to discuss compensation strategies until the budget is announced. Under old business section 5, 6th bullet point down, "destroy the response rate" replaces "incentive."

3. The January 11th minutes were approved unanimously with the edits from Susann Davis on page 2 & page 5.

C. Reports

1. Chair (Kate Hudepohl)

- Chair Hudepohl said that she would like to discuss action on the budget after the Faculty Regent and Provost reports.

- The section on information items includes President Ransdell's response on the India Pilot Project.

- Regarding the Salary Firewall Resolution, there is no formal response yet from President Ransdell.

- Information items two through four pertain to salary. Ann Mead's spreadsheet was an addendum that was added after posting the agenda. There is objective data about cuts, and includes the real numbers.

- Student Government Association's resolution on compensation was very much appreciated by the employees at WKU.

- Kurt Neelly commented that the Graduate Council feels there has been increased communication with enrollment management and the international recruiting office.

- Chair Hudepohl said she would like the Provost and the Faculty Regent to comment on President Ransdell's retirement announcement.

2. Vice Chair (Julie Shadoan)

- Vice Chair Shadoan is absent today because she is covering for a colleague who has the flu.

- Chair Hudepohl said that it is time to elect the At-Large senators, and it is important to get the faculty voice involved in the governance process. Vice-Chair Shadoan will be working on this in the coming month.

3. Secretary (Heidi Alvarez)

- No report.

4. Committee Chairs

a. Academic Quality Committee (Jeremy Maddox): No Report.

b. Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibility Committee (Patti Minter): Report attached

Trends in Faculty Attitudes

- The Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee met on January 29th. There is one action item, and a response to one task from the Senate Executive Committee.

- The Committee discovered that there are seven different evaluation forms for six colleges and the libraries. Rather than making a global evaluation due to the variation between colleges, the committee made the following recommendations: to return to a five-point scale for evaluation, and encouragement for department chairs to write a narrative, because this gives more feedback (beyond that, the committee did not dictate); and (2) if changes do take place, faculty involvement and faculty feedback will be important. Patricia Minter said that most of the forms do have the five

increments; this gives a band to improve and understand what to improve. She added that we can't tell the management how to do their job.

- The information item by Lauren McClain and Steven King includes the last three years of faculty worklife data on a spreadsheet. Some things were up and down, and some stayed stable. The 2012 and 2013 questions were very different; this made it difficult to map trends with such radically different questions. The new survey will be launched in March.

- Chair Hudepohl thanked the committee for their work.

- Bob Skipper is working on the Active Shooter Training Video. Nobody on the committee wanted to star in this video. The rough cut is done, and a better cut will be done on Friday. The committee will preview it and share feedback. There are building-specific videos and building-specific trainings. The timeline is that by the end of April, they hope to have the video ready to go so that people can be trained.

- Patricia Minter made a motion to put the Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee report on the Senate agenda (2nd Richey).

- Jeremy Maddox asked a question on the evaluations: Has anyone expressed that they liked the new evaluation? Patricia Minter responded that the committee was not tasked for this. There was a lot of variation. The five-point scale shows better where people are. People see it as affecting their performance rating if they are not involved.

- Kurt Neelly asked if there was conversation about why there are seven different versions. Patricia Minter responded that the universal reaction was that they were surprised that they were so different but did feel that variation was necessary. The new way created less feedback.

- Jay Todd Richey asked if the discrepancy between different colleges is broken down. Patricia Minter responded that she can show him what they look like.

- There was no more discussion. The Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities report passed unanimously.

c. Budget and Finance Committee (Claus Ernst): No Report.

d. Colonnade General Education Committee (Marko Dumančić): No Report.

e. Graduate Council (Kurt Neelly): Report attached

f. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (Liz Sturgeon): Report attached

- Last month's question about the Military Policy Proposal has not yet gone back to the committee; it will be on the February agenda.

- Liz Sturgeon made a motion for approval of the UCC January Report to send to Senate. (2nd Marko Dumančić).

- The UCC Report passed unanimously as posted.

g. Faculty Handbook Committee (Margaret Crowder): No Report

5. Advisory Reports

a. Faculty Regent (Regent Burch)

- The Board of Regents meeting began in closed session because President Ransdell announced his retirement to the Board. He then gave a brief on the state of the budget. Then Gil Johnson gave a report from the Finance Committee, which accurately reflected salary, compensation, and health care. He noted that compensation should be a prioritized part of the budget, and added that he thought it was the administration's job to come up with a plan. Regent Burch asked if the recommendations were supported by the Board, and it was reaffirmed that compensation should become a budget priority. Merit, compression, salary, health care should be a priority over five years. This is of value because it is in writing. Regent Burch added that this depends on state funding and enrollment, and we must consider other sources of revenue. She read the quote from the report. The 2016-2017 budget includes a compensation increase or reallocation. She talked about professional development and strengthening the role of the Budget Council as advisory on the front end, and suggested that the President and the Budget Council and the Senate should work together. President Ransdell has been quoted since the state-mandated budget cuts saying that any improvements in state funding will be dedicated to faculty/staff and that it is a budget priority going forward.

- The SEC asked about "…even if cuts in departments." 4.5% means $3.4 million in cuts, 9% beginning July 1. $10 million in 5 months. This does not take this year's budget in account (there is

some shortfall). It shows in 2017 and 2018 $2.6 million each year ($5.2 million total). As compared to other students, WKU students are getting $4615 of state funding, compared to the $5,200 or 5,300 that others get at other state universities (except NKU). The 9% cut on July 1 is 4.5% now, then in 2017, then in 2018. When it comes to performance, we should fare well on it. Regent Burch said that it won't be pretty, and she is not sure where that leaves us. She said that the senate (faculty and SGA) positions and actions on salary mean a lot, and said that people should have some voice in it. It won't be an easy thing. Even with the direness of the state budget, the Board Chair is committed to helping with compensation. As bad as it is, it could be worse.

- The Board of Regents approved: new majors and programs; two new emeritus faculty, and two honorary doctorates.

- The NAVITAS program contract is being terminated.

- Regent Burch said the India Pilot Project Resolution went forward and we got a response; as we look at recruiting international students, the cost of recruiting needs to be considered. Yes, we need to recruit international students, but the Graduate Council might need to think about this. Equalizing tuition might not be a good thing to do. Subsidizing international students is a choice that schools make.

- There will be a Board of Regents meeting this Friday to discuss the Presidential search. The committee has not yet been announced. All Regents will be on this committee. They will give an opportunity for input, but they will use a national search firm. This will start as early as this spring. This is an opportunity for faculty input about criteria, characteristics, and various aspects of the job description of the new president. This input needs to happen very soon. Regent Burch asked if the Senate Executive Committee was the best place to initiate this input, because the faculty voice is important input.

- Chair Hudepohl said that the SEC has representatives from every college plus chairs of all of the standing committees. In the past, the SEC representatives in each college had people in the college collect data. Patricia Minter said yes, the SEC is an appropriate body to poll constituents for feedback. The last President search was quite lengthy; this kind of input makes people feel empowered.

- Patricia Minter asked if someone with a subscription to the Chronicle of Higher Education could pull some announcements so we can have guidance about what other colleges are looking for.

- Regent Burch clarified that the firm will not need this right away, but will need it before March.

- Kurt Neelly asked how many people on campus will be on this committee? Regent Burch responded that typically the Senate Chair and the Regents are representatives. It won't be a huge committee but it will be inclusive. Jay Todd Richey, SGA President, added that the President indicated that he is comfortable with seven or nine. Regent Burch said we will know on Friday.

- Patricia Minter asked if current searches will be used as a model. Regent Burch responded that the guidance will come from the search firm. Regarding criteria in the Chronicle, 80% will be common, and some are specific to the priorities of the campus.

- Regent Burch urged the SEC to talk with colleagues and gather what it is that we are most proud of and like the best about working at WKU to keep on the agenda, and what would we like to change or redirect?

- Chair Hudepohl asked if this has to be done ASAP? Regent Burch said we will give a timeline back after Friday, and we can talk about it in late March or early April.

- Regent Burch said that though she is the one who made the request for feedback, she feels that Chair Higdon will definitely welcome more input than Regent Burch's.

- Chair Hudepohl charged the SEC with putting feelers out to the colleges. She said she will put the Chronicle searches on the agenda as an information item.

- Regarding the Board of Regents meeting, Chair Hudepohl asked Regent Burch why the state of the budget was discussed behind closed doors. Hudepohl also said that she was alarmed by the highlighted portion that employee compensation could include cutting programs. Patricia Minter said she was also troubled by this, and thinks other things can be done. Regent Burch then re-read the budget priorities.

- Various members of the SEC discussed the numbers. Claus Ernst said that in $10 million, 50% is athletics and 50% is major

programs. The Honors building was supposed to be paid by ____ or NAVITAS. Patricia Minter said that the original Board motion from July 2013 said it would be paid for $1.6 million in debt service or NAVITAS pathway students or the general international student fund. In the fall, it became a bond payment. According to former Provost Emslie, it was being paid through general international student revenue. This contradicted the previous minutes. Emslie said that it will never come out of Pathways. Regent Burch added that the President said it came out of international student enrollment. NAVITAS required faculty approval. Her personal concern is that it is 70% of tuition, and NAVITAS was bearing all of the cost. With this model, we have to bear all cost and have to be really good at recruiting. A dependence on international recruiting until 2020 (four years) means that 500 Saudi students times tuition yields a lot of money.

- It was pointed out that Ann Mead said if we retained 367 more students, this is $1.6 million in tuition. This could be a 1% increase for faculty and staff. Retention from fall is roughly 72-74%. If we went up 1% in enrollment (retaining 31 students in 40), this is $1.175 million. In looking at the reality that we can only get so much from the state, WKU needs to decide if we will be smaller or we need to find a way to make more students successful in retention and graduation. It was asked what can the faculty do? Every department is doing something for retention. This could be an opportunity for faculty leadership to help with compensation.

- Provost Lee said the 72-74% retention has been stable; if it goes up, it is only gradual. This is in line with peer institutions.

- Chair Hudepohl asked if the administration is contemplating how to stop tuition for rising (capping or bringing down tuition). She stated that if tuition were more affordable, people would flock to WKU. A few years ago, there was pressure for retention; in many cases, there is nothing that can be done.

- Provost Lee said there are two schools of thought in Frankfort: (1) a dramatic increase in tuition; and (2) freezing or reducing tuition is a bold move.

- Patricia Minter said that with an internal cut, an increase in tuition is based on keeping the doors open. Fixed cost increases escalate 2% per year. A 3-4% tuition raise is just to keep the base line. With agency bonds for the Honors College, DSU, and other building projects, it would make it very difficult to freeze tuition.

Have there been any significant changes? Academics are a tiny slice of the pie; what is the data?

- Provost Lee said the AASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) meeting in Austin focused on student success and retention. One example presented was structuring advising to help with student success. He said he does not know what is in place now, but indicated that he likes the 5th-week assessment and how it impacts students. Provost Lee said he came home with a sense that he wants to rethink how we can improve enrollment. He also felt that changing the tone of the academic probation letter to indicate that "this happens, and this is how we can work on it going forward" could be helpful with retention.

- Patricia Minter suggested bringing Enrollment Management back under Academic Affairs.

- Regent Burch said that students ask these questions: "Can I really do this?" and "Do I really belong here?"

- Provost Lee said that of 10 students who come, 5 graduate, and 5 don't graduate. If we get one more, then the graduation rate is 60%.

- Claus Ernst asked what the correlation is between incoming ACT scores and graduation rates.

- Provost Lee said that the studies indicate that non-credit can be restructured to take co-requisite courses because it has higher success rates.

- Claus Ernst said that we tried that. He asked if there was data that correlates with the 72% rate? With a 30% success reate, what is the correlation to fixing the students at the South campus? What is the overall retention rate in those programs? With students with skills below average, taking one class to fix it does not work.

- Marko Dumančić said the entire faculty is dedicated to retention. The implication that there are retention problems does not acknowledge mismatched financial priorities. There are serious issues in how we handle money.

- Regent Burch said the prioritization of how financial resources are used is clear in the resolution. She said that we can argue about how money was spent, but it is done. There is a definite change from going over the scholarship level.

- Marko Dumančić said that unless there are guarantees on how the allocation will change, there will not be any energy invested in this.

- Provost Lee asked if there are some things that we can fix that will pay off in student success?

- Marko Dumančić responded that with tying faith to tuition, if the system does not change while we are keeping students here, there is no guarantee the money will be managed well.

- Laura DeLancey said that we need a guarantee on how the money will be managed for us.

- Kate Hudepohl said that it still goes back to needing a plan B.

- Patricia Minter said that former Provost Emslie was telling us what he was told to say. She agrees that no matter how well intentioned it is, the faculty has been told "if, if, if" so many times, that they don't believe anything.

- Chair Hudepohl said that she does not see any changes forthcoming from the administration.

- Regent Burch said that the Governor did not approve any funding for agency bonds and building. The President's request did not get funded. The likelihood of new building funds in the next few years is not likely. Alternatives that the faculty can do to strengthen the fiscal position of the university are important; the faculty cannot wait for a miracle.

- Jay Todd Richey said that there is great difference between the perceptions of the Student Government Association and the University Senate Executive Committee. In general, the SGA thinks that everything is OK. On the student level, criticizing the administration is not OK. The perception of the students is that the decisions that are made are what is best for the university. He asked if there is a consensus on where faculty/staff compensation will come from? Will it be cutting programs or increasing tuition?

- Patricia Minter said that a 1% raise costs $1.6 million; this is the equivalent of an agency bond. With student fees, there is a cap. Very little of this is actually going back to their education. The faculty does not have the basic resources we need to do our job and our professional development.

- Kate Hudepohl said that our salary is noticeably decreased through our new health insurance plan. With the cuts in academics in the spring semester, she wants the money restored in these programs.

- Claus Ernst said that the perception is incorrect; the health insurance changes were made under the assumption that the percent of cost sharing remains constant. The university chipped in additional funding. The perception is that there was a cut. The average aggregate does not indicate a cut. He added that Senate needs to know where the big items are. Ransdell's history of building – these are big-ticket items.

- Patricia Minter said that bad decisions and bad priorities are definitely felt.

- Jay Todd Richey said that SGA's perception is beginning to change.

- Regent Burch responded that we cannot undo an agency bond. The question is if faculty want a voice in influencing how the cut will be made, calculations will be the worse-case scenario. Where do we want the cuts to be made? If no suggestions are offerend, then it leaves the decision to someone else.

- Jay Todd Richey asked if SGA voted for the athletic fees increase. Patricia Minter clarified that the motion to roll back HEPI (Higher Education Price Index) passed and was respected for eighteen months, and the reversal came after eighteen months. She added a personal view that she does not believe that athletic money is private money. The Chief of Staff said that when the Student Government Association wanted money for the law program, that it would only be possible with the money for the garage. Nikki Seay was told it was not a good idea to do just the law, so it was combined with the garage.

- Jay Todd Richey asked what would be considered a substantive percentage salary increase? Regent Burch said that 15% over five years would bring us into a decent posture. Provost Lee clarified it would be per year over five years. Patricia Minter said that COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) increase is 8%.

b. Academic Affairs (Provost Lee)

- Provost Lee said the enrollment for the spring semester budget is based on 90% of the fall semester. It was 93% a week ago. We

have a revenue shortfall for the spring and for the year as a whole. It is a little better than anticipated.

- With the 9% solution, we need to find $6.7 million. Some can be one-time money ($3.3, $3.4 million year, next year $6.7 million) It is just the beginning to think how this can be done, and Provost Lee said he is open to suggestions. He will meet with the President and the Department Heads about thinking about how to structure going forward. Right now, a strategy is not set in stone. He will generate some scenarios and will ask for thoughts.

- Laura DeLancey asked of the $6.7 million shortfall, what percentage will come from Academic Affairs? Provost Lee responded that 70% is the number that has been passed. He thinks $3.3-3.4 million for this year can be dealt with, but the permanent cut down the road is more concerning. They are revisiting the budget allocation for 2018.

- Kate Hudepohl asked if there is a formal opportunity for senate to have input in how to handle the 70% cut? Provost Lee said that he prefers a response from the Senate Executive Committee or the Committee Chairs rather than Senate as a whole. The negotiation that as tuition increased, Academic Affairs would get 70% of that; he is not sure that he can change that.

- Jay Todd Richey said that some members of the Student Government Association are interested in creating a student resolution regarding the budget cuts. Chair Hudepohl said that she supports this, and that a public statement of a position from SGA has authority.

- Kurt Neelly said that this is not a situation that is unique to WKU. A question to the Provost and Regent is what are some of the other universities doing? Provost Lee said that the chief academic officers meet monthly and will make this part of their conversation.

- Chair Hudepohl said that she is a member of COSFL (Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leaders) and she learned that the Murray State University students will have a massive rally in Frankfurt and that this is in its initial planning.

- Jay Todd Richey responded that the Student Government Association is looking at March 2nd as a date to go to Frankfort for coordination of individual universities and university presidents.

The original date was canceled due to snow. Jay Todd Richey said he will keep the faculty informed.

- Kate Hudepohl said that at least two departments on campus are encouraging faculty to write letters to legislators. Susann Davis asked if it is better to call than to write letters because it requires them sitting down to take a message? Patricia Minter said that phone calls will be returned in a month. Fax is also effective. Email is the least effective. Minter added that she can give the contact information to those who want it, and stated that 100 phone calls in two hours can move a bill.

- Jay Todd Richey said that SGA is still working on how to make it work for money diverted from need-based financial aid. $3 million from the lottery funding was moved in literacy funding. The Board of Student Body Presidents said the work-force development scholarship does not replenish need-based financial aid. This puts students at a disadvantage. All student regents agree that a restoration of higher education funding is needed. There is disagreement on how the model looks, but need-based financial aid puts them all on the same board. How to restore the 9% is not what they agree on.

- Regent Burch said the 27% drop is what we are now having to fund with tuition that we used to use state funds for. If the SGA found out that information, then SGA would know what to ask for.

- Patricia Minter said that Representative Richards asked that the 9% be reinstated.

- Jay Todd Richey asked for an official explanation about why a tuition freeze would be hazardous to the university. Patricia Minter suggested that Jay Todd Richey ask Ann Mead. Essentially, fixed cost increases continue to increase each year; this is like continuing to use a credit card without ever paying for it. She added that presidential candidate Sanders suggests paying for higher education through tax revenue.

- Jay Todd Richey also asked about how a tuition freeze works; would it stay the same for all students, or does it stay the same from freshman year until graduation?

D. Old Business:

- There was no old business.

E. New Business:

- There was no new business.

F. Information Items:

1. President Ransdell response to India Pilot Project Resolution
    a. India Pilot Project Resolution
2. Mr. Gil Johnson Report to Board of Regents
3. Governor Bevin Proposed Budget
3. SGA Resolution of Employee Compensation

G. Motion to Adjourn

1. A motion to adjourn by Kurt Neelly was seconded by Jay Todd Richey. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Álvarez, Secretary