

Faculty Forum

Liz Sturgeon Facilitator

Opening Remarks

Aaron Hughey

- Full time faculty member since 1991, administration 10 years before that
- Department of Educational Leadership and now Department of Counseling and Student Affairs
- Interested in the position because of concerns—shared with other faculty in the room
- We used to receive faculty raises, compared to the last few years were pretty substantial, now they've gone away
- Faculty compensation a problem
- See students struggle with rising costs, concerned about financial issues, and share concerns that faculty have about finances
- There was a time when the faculty spoke as a group and the administration paid attention
- 1970s—if faculty had voted no confidence in the president, we probably would have had a new search for a new president, not now
- Shared governance is not working well as it currently exists
- We need to make sure voices are heard--our predecessors who have been in this position have been very vocal
- Commend their efforts

Angie Jerome

- Full professor department of Communication, led the newly constituted department of Communication through curriculum revision, transitioned from undergraduate co-ordinator
- Shared governance matters— I have served on the SEC, Grad Council, University Athletics, Senate
- Board of Regents will have to work with faculty, staff, students and President Caboni to make hard decisions
- Budget may be the immediate concern, but, finance and budget are just one board committee-- we need to remember academics and student affairs
- Wants to maintain focus on academic quality, retention, recruitment and diversity, not just finances
- Will use training in organizational communication and rhetoric to build relationships across the BOR and with all faculty
- Decisions based on arguments and qualitative and quantitative data
- Leadership in curriculum revision at the department level required conversations with a variety of people across the university to ensure an efficient overhaul

Mac McKerral

- Good afternoon, small and mighty good description of the audience
- My candidacy is a natural extension of more than 10 years of WKU service, learned a lot
- University is at a critical juncture, budget deficit, lack of state government confidence, declines in enrollment

- We have new leadership, hardworking faculty— working to deliver quality education at an affordable price
 - My energy will revolve around the budget— as President Caboni said in his special meeting with the senate: “the budget should reflect the values of the university”—I agree wholeheartedly
 - Money needs to be looked at in context—but need to be willing to re-assess things used in the past such as: accepted accounting principles, acceptable levels of debt
 - Budget is a planning document, but we don’t know how the money is spent
 - President Caboni is learning that the budget is a work in progress
 - Constituency is the faculty, but each member of the Board of Regents has the same constituency—students, faculty, staff and Bowling Green community that we serve
 - Problem has been with key spending decisions—the majority of the BOR has viewed its constituency as one: the president—
 - President provides direction and leadership
- BOR has a duty to listen to the president, but if the president is flawed, they need to follow up and listen to the rest of the constituency
- We need sound decision-making

Claus Ernst

- Professor of Mathematics, distinguished professor
 - I have been able to teach almost all Gatton Students
 - My strengths: I know WKU very well, I have served on various committees, including: senate, grad council, chairing fiscal finance committee, chaired the status and welfare committee in the past
 - Main service for the university—benefits committee
 - Consider myself a pragmatist—achieves things by doing things that are doable
 - Argue based on evidence, data, not on emotions
 - Proud of my work on the Benefits committee— we have roughly achieved a stable ratio of what the university spends versus what faculty and staff spends
 - Medical inflation exceeds general inflation we’ve done the best we can do
- What attracts me to this position—difficult budgetary times, in my opinion the most important decision is what to do about retirement plans, the university has taken a stance and President Caboni has alluded to this
- Most important decision—what to do with retirement plan, university has taken a position—
 - Consider myself a representative of faculty and will fight for faculty interests on the Board of Regents

Questions

Aaron Wichman—Psychological Sciences

Share with us what you think, positive side, what the vision is for the next five years at the university. What positive changes should we work towards, or positive changes that are possible with the right leadership?

Jerome: The way to understand what faculty do is to watch what faculty do.

-I was talking to Bruce Crawley's office—take your regent to work day so that they can see what faculty actually do

-Focusing on the ways that we can promote what we do, and getting involved, background in organizational communication makes me good at this

-Reading in the *College Heights Herald*— is creating an intercultural student engagement academy— we need to get faculty involved, possibly create faculty mentorship, get our positives out there in ways that can benefit us and students in the future

-Faculty regent could be a leader in getting our positives out there

McKerral: In academe the wheels turn pretty slowly which is a valid criticism from the private sector-- we think too long, ponder, argue and then move towards consensus and put things off

-benefits in the conversations, but slow

-Short term: in three years three things I would encourage the BOR to ponder:

1) re-establish the focus of the university to our priorities have been ignored for about a decade—concrete and mortar over people is wrong, people (Faculty, staff, BSAs) are the heart of the university

-Farther behind benchmarks in compensation, these are our values

2) re-think going forward how we are going about doing what we do,

-Spending years covering public sector budgeting—rarely can we anticipate that we will get funding back

-no significant changes in higher education funding in Kentucky, party affiliation won't change that.

-We need to look for specific ways to move from 50% revenue tuition and fees, to other funding models

-Templates and good ideas that others are trying, we need to explore

3) It's difficult for one BOR member to move the entire board, people who have served as regent recognize this—we have new BOR members and a new president, the best thing I can do is try to find consensus so that BOR votes aren't always against faculty and students

Ernst: Concrete goal— the budget study we have done has pointed out that academic affairs the as the overall budget percentage has been declining

-Number of faculty positions overall have been declining

-Make the BOR aware of these trends

-Stop the bleeding—keep academic affairs constant, increase budget affairs

Hughey: Changes will take about 3-5 years

-Positive: We need to make sure we get our focus on people-- on the people we are here to serve and the people in this region

-We are here for all the students

-Lots of students have potential to be successful in higher education, not everyone needs to be in higher education

-But we've drifted over the past couple of decades and the students this institution was established to serve, need to be better served—re-focus on the people in south central Kentucky

- We need more resources, and we have a lot of dedicated people who want to make a difference
- There is something special about WKU—but our mission has gotten diluted as we've grown larger, we can recapture that feeling
- One of the things colleagues talk about the retirement system—I've been here 36 years and I am not going anywhere because I like what I'm doing—as long as that continues to be the case
- Reputation the faculty has with the students we serve is important
- I love working with students and helping them grow and develop
- The Significant challenges, students' problems dwarf ours
- We need to ensure we make budget decisions that benefit students

Shura Pollatesk

What you stand for is only worthwhile if you recognize that the majority of the BOR is not on the same page as faculty. How do you plan on advocating in a way that will bring changes?

McKerral—not much of a shmoozer—I can do it, but I don't like to

- Understanding how BOR views this institution and their views
- Talk to students in press law class about Justice Brennan—wasn't the greatest legal mind, legal writer,—but the one thing he was really good at: when he felt like he landed on the right position he figured out the other justices he could get on board with him—enough to make his point
- Remind the BOR who they serve, they serve the university community, not just the president—we can make progress
- They have families—kids in college, faced financial struggles, these are real world problems
- My position is different: not married, no kids, no homeowner—but understand that folks not in his position have real world problems
- Get BOR to look at budgeting beyond numbers and percentages and routinely accepted principles that every penny that gets spent affects someone
- My 2% pay increase has translated on pay cheque as \$35—lost that \$35 and \$15 more in parking ticket

Ernst

- Staff regent, student, faculty—allies.
- Only pick fights where you think you can make some dent in it. Fighting athletics is pointless because the president's mind was set
- Independent data collection—administration puts out their data set. Acquire data set, not optimistic about swaying BOR
- Do independent data collection to make little dents in their opinions
- Trying to get them more academically favorable

Hughey

- Faculty regent's role is to be a voice in the wilderness-- what people remember is the fight not the final decision
- I believe you've got to do what's practical
- Don't decide what's right based on cost—figure out what's right and then advocate from that

- Times we need to draw a line in the sand—what’s right regardless of the foregone conclusion
- People have a sense that you can’t do anything any way—what’s the point?
- Power in raising awareness about issues
- First and foremost stuck to our principles, make sure we are doing the right thing
- right thing then figure out how to pay

Jerome

- Professional communicator
- In my Issues Management class
- We talk about stakeholders and activism, incremental erosion—not going to change everyone in 5 minutes on the first day
- Over time people will change
- Crisis response and image management—speak “lawyerese” and “accountantese”
- Curriculum revisions—we merged 4 majors into one department
- We worked on these revisions from January-April—revision completed with strangers in all departments
- Get it done, get it done well and efficiency
- Performance funding models—show the state people BOR how we can meet performance measures to get more money
- My background will help me build relationships with the BOR

Kelly Madole

You have alluded to the role of the BOR vis a vis the president— but what about with the new president? What challenges and opportunities can you between Caboni and Ransdell in terms of leadership?

Ernst

- I am impressed by President Caboni, meeting with every WKU distinguished professor in their office, conversation about an hour, touching on a variety of issues
- Lots of ideas and he recognizes the difficulties we’re facing quite well
- He’s a person you can work with, someone who listens
- Remember when President Ransdell came?
- President Caboni reminds me of the early days of Ransdell’s presidency
- The right moral perspective, conversation about South Campus students—students with low success rate—lots of debt and no degrees, these are all areas where changes need to happen
- We compare ourselves with benchmarks—we want salaries at the benchmark level
- Income stream is below benchmark, we cannot be at benchmark everywhere in our expenditures

Hughey

- Not being a university distinguished prof, set up my own appointment
- I have mixed feelings—optimistic with new president, hope and vision
- I remember when Ransdell came to WKU—got a phone call from him because he had read my op-ed piece in the newspaper

- Ransdell had noticed it and wanted to include pieces in email
- I have mixed feelings—it's all water over the bridge, search process not transparent, the ends justifies the means, future—we go about the search a different way to get more input from everyone involved
- Cautious—make sure that we move forward with our vision

Jerome

- Major challenges—we don't know, we've heard things, made predictions
- Takes budget crisis seriously, re-constituted the charge of the budget council—look at all the money and how it's spent
- At the Faculty Convocation—it was clear he understood audience and that our morale is at an all-time low
- He re-instated the Spousal tuition benefit which shows he is paying attention
- Never mentioned athletics, forensic team, talked to faculty and staff about the things we care about
- Not out at the football game doing rah rah rah stuff

McKerral

- I have not met President Caboni, but I have attended meetings with Caboni
- Not jumping out of his chair—during meeting
- Responsibility of retaining, graduating, getting students' jobs is on the shoulders of faculty
- No compensation for added burdens
- Compensation is not something we can be cavalier about
- More vocal about presidential search, went to the BOR and asked them to abide by their own by-laws in relation to transparency
- Caboni could very well be a good president
- Not opening the process-not who you get, not who you don't get
- Diversity—emphasized at the department level, administration is not the most diverse
- More effort to bringing different viewpoints
- Diversity—defined broadly, if we find ourselves reducing it to ethnicity/race we open ourselves to give space to those who oppose it
- Diversity is a broad rich term

Janet Applin

There is a long drawn out process of curriculum how arduous the process is to get curriculum approved in a timely manner. What is your view on the curriculum process?

Hughey

- Curriculum is a process that gets repeated three times
- That's just how we do things and it takes six months to get anything finished
- There is no follow-up to see implementation and verify everything is what it is supposed to be
- Gets to senate and then beyond and then you've got to re-start the entire process
- Self-governance, self-policing, defense is that this is the way we do things.

There needs to be a clearer balance between content and substance

- More than the procedural things
- POV—not telling people it's appropriate to do things
- Difficult to keep things aligned
- We make our own paper trail simply to have documentation, we need to move faster

Jerome

- So far the curriculum process has been smooth
- Grad school now has an electronic system
- Same pre-requisite off 10 different classes
- New system collates
- Supposedly coming to undergrad curriculum committee in 2 years and will make things easier
- Faculty are going to make mistakes
- Substantive change vs friendly amendment—we need to streamline this process so that friendly amendments can be handled quickly
- Electronic process hopefully will make things better
- There needs to be a committee of people recently gone through this, needs changing, work with UCC, registrar

McKerral

- Curriculum is the purview of the faculty
- Problems in the curriculum, regent needs to fix
- Degree programs—are more important and need the attention of the BOR
- Vibrant KY economy—reality lots of people who went to college because they want to do good and valuable work without caring about how much they get paid
- Degree programs we need to identify, which ones we need, which ones we need to get rid of
- Curriculum process needs faculty to fix it

Ernst

- Curricular issues are faculty issues
- Change: we need to devise new system and get it through and get it improved
- Faculty senate leaders have asked for financial support for the faculty senate
- Budget and finance committee—full time person at the disposal of the senate, help getting things streamlined
- Work is done by volunteers, not offsetting the costs (course release) we have not gotten what we wanted

Jim Berger

Faculty regent is the voice of the faculty on the most important body of the university—how do you work with faculty to get input, resources?

Jerome

- You have to ask, just like I did in the curriculum revision for my department

- I talked to everyone from faculty to Michelle Trawick
- Go to ask people—to listen to everyone, every department
- I am willing to go out and do the work and get to know people and their issues
- I have served on a variety of committees, regent needs to talk to everyone and know people
- We need to build those relationships
- Let regents hear the voices, put in the time to get people to know the issues
- Challenges in departments can vary widely

McKerral

- Good question
- Some folks view me as a bit cantankerous, testy
- When people see me in that mode—they understand it's a serious issue and I'm going to take it seriously
- When I was Senate Chair—bi-term plan came up in senate, it was wrong-- it was purely revenue based
- Another administrative policy also came forward—student production policy— in response to crosses and condoms
- The policy dictated that faculty report to administration that we might do something in our classes, it was a bad policy and we shot it down
- Presidential search should have been open— I was willing to take on the issue, speaking as an individual faculty member, but sentiment in senate was similar
- If you don't win—university senator, give up seat for board of trustees—enjoy working with faculty, to work out issues and problems
- Know there are folks who are listening,
- Faculty regent- but still more connected to students

Ernst

- I have helped faculty through my work on the Benefits committee—advocated always a fair cost-sharing—keeping costs constant
- I have Met with the president
- Using the position of tenured faculty member, not like the chair of the benefits committee
- Our insurance crisis—we negotiated in senate
- University new plans, committee, played a central part in the effort being made in the benefits committee

Hughey

- Look everywhere for information—senate and other representation
- Not a professional represent
- When I was in High school—Title IX became a wild fire issue
- I went before the Board of Education—because Title IX was not being enforced
- I have never served in governance, Never served in student government
- You have to be Have to be constantly aware

Closing Remarks

McKerral

- I have No agenda I just want to offer service
- I share similar beliefs to a lot of faculty
- I am running because I'm tired of the same old same old for decade
- We can do better, and I am willing to fight to make it better
- I Hope that others who are absent take this seriously
- We are at a critical juncture, representation on BOR is important
- As your representative, I will do all that I can to make sure we know what might happen before it does

Ernst

- Good candidate because my strengths include rational reasoning, independent thinker
- My past service speaks for itself—resolutions out of budget and finance---salary, buildings—ask they should only proceed with fully funded projects, heating cooling

Hughey

- Teaching for the last 30 years, since 1988
 - Resource management, budgeting
 - Budget reduction scenario, etc.
- Close connection between what we do and what we are prepping the next generation to do

Jerome

- Corporate and organizational communication, crisis communication
- Full professor at WKU--24 years after being here as a freshman
- Professional Communicator—willing to ask, building relationships