

Proposal for a WKU University Senate Budget

Rationale:

The current University Senate budget is \$5,885.17 in the WKU 2016/7 budget (account index: 200027). Most of this is spent on the recorder and food services for meetings, leaving very little for anything else.

It has been a long-standing complaint, since the founding of the University Senate, that its budget is inadequate. What other functions essential to the university are required to operate on such a shoestring budget?

The University Senate's functions and operations are complex and, for almost all of these functions, the WKU University Senate relies on volunteers. Operating the Senate effectively demands an extensive amount of uncompensated time and effort from its faculty leaders, time and effort that goes far beyond what can be reasonably expected of faculty members in fulfillment of their normal service obligations. Faculty members who serve in such demanding and time-consuming leadership positions are not properly compensated, nor are they supported adequately by staff. It is unreasonable to expect faculty to conduct business essential to the university on a strictly volunteer basis, without compensation. Unsurprisingly, few faculty members are willing to take on the heavy obligation of leadership roles in the University Senate. Consequently, it would be in WKU's best interest to address this problem and ensure that adequate incentives be provided so that the most qualified faculty would be willing to take on these crucial leadership roles in order that the University Senate might function as effectively as possible.

To address these shortcomings we request proper support at two levels: (1) Adequate staff support and (2) course releases or stipends for faculty who take on Senate leadership positions.

A fully funded WKU University Senate

The following items should be funded:

1. Adequate staff support: A full time staff position should be created to support senate activities such as:

- Keeping minutes of meetings of all senate committees (replacing the recorder)
- Maintaining the senate web pages
- Collecting/checking/distributing course/program/policy proposals submitted to the curricular committees.
- Creating and distributing a senate newsletter

Skills required for proposed staff person:

- Excellent writing skills
- Ability to create professional-quality webpages
- Ability to design and edit documents for university wide distribution
- Ability to properly utilize all aspects of the Microsoft Office™ suite software

The staff person should work for, and report directly to, the senate officers. A graduate or undergraduate student would not be an adequate candidate for these tasks since the turnover rate of graduate students is very high. (at best a graduate student would last 2 years, but often it would only be one year).

2. Funds for course releases or stipends

The following leadership positions require a very substantial commitment of faculty time, one that goes well beyond what can be reasonably expected as part of regular service. Faculty who serve in these positions should be compensated with release time as follows:

- Senate Chair: Two (2) courses per academic year
- Senate Vice Chair: One (1) course per academic year
- Senate Secretary: One (1) course per academic year
- Chair of Graduate Council: One (1) course per academic year
- Chair of the Graduate Curriculum Committee: Two (2) courses per academic year
- Chair of the University Curriculum Committee: Two (2) courses per academic year
- Chair of the Colonnade Committee: One (1) course per academic year

For each course release the equivalent of a summer course stipend (around \$4500) should be budgeted. The funds should be available either as a stipend to the officers to supplement their salary; alternatively, this stipend could be given to the department as a subvention for a course release. The choice of accepting a salary supplement or release time would be negotiated between the officers and their departments.

Rough Cost Estimates

1. \$30,000 plus fringe/benefits = \$45,000
Office supplies \$5,000
2. $10 * 4500 = \$45,000$

Total \$95,000