

Senate Resolution in Support of AAUP Guidelines and Best Practices for Program Elimination and Faculty Termination:

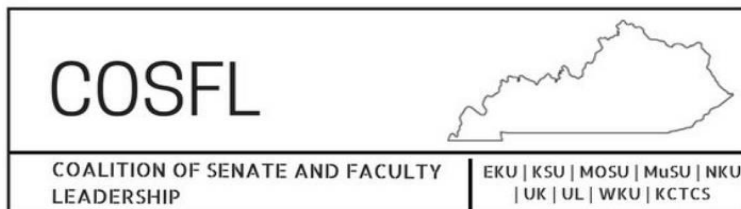
In his email to Faculty and Staff dated Tuesday, 3 April 2018, President Caboni made the following statement regarding HB200 and its House and Senate iterations (entire email attached):

“...the adopted budget includes language that would allow universities to eliminate tenured faculty positions associated with the closure of academic programs. It is my view, and I have shared this during my conversations in Frankfort, that current guidelines set forth by the American Association of University Professors provide a fair, reasonable and effective pathway to manage downsizing or elimination of academic programs. I am strongly committed to following those guidelines and to protecting the integrity of tenure and academic freedom as we work together to address the current financial challenges facing WKU.”

This is in line with the COSFL statement issued just a few days earlier (also attached).

The WKU University Senate strongly concurs with both of these statements. It reiterates that the guidelines should be followed at all times to protect tenured faculty and the principles underlying tenure, as well as our students.

Resolved: As it is in keeping with the AAUP guidelines, the WKU faculty affirms the procedures outlined in the WKU Faculty Handbook, 23rd Edition, Section VII, “Termination of Faculty”; furthermore, the faculty strongly supports President Caboni in his commitment to uphold and follow AAUP guidelines for academic program closures and downsizing faculty.



COSFL Statement on Kentucky Budget Bill

**Submitted by Enid Trucios-Haynes, President of COSFL
on behalf of COSFL Membership**

March 29, 2018

FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

The Kentucky Coalition of Senate & Faculty Leaders [COSFL] strongly opposes any budget bill provision that would permit the summary dismissal of tenured faculty. The Senate budget bill permits Boards of Regents and Trustees to eliminate or modify majors or degree programs due to “low utilization, financial feasibility, budgetary constraints, or declaration of financial exigency” and to terminate tenured faculty after a ten-day notice.

Salaries are the largest and most controllable expense for universities. Shortsighted strategies designed to achieve immediate financial savings, such as eliminating programs, their supporting staff, and faculty, including those with tenure, will cripple universities as engines for growth and development in our communities. The devastating impact on our students and state will reverberate for decades to come. The Senate bill will do more harm, and devalues universities, their faculty, and public education. It will not yield savings because of our ethical responsibility to “teachout” students to degree attainment. This obligation takes years to accomplish and is an accreditation requirement for many institutions and programs.

Faculty believe that public universities have a collective mission to provide access to education to *all* Kentuckians. Decisions to close or modify academic programs require careful consideration relying on faculty expertise to evaluate current trends, long term projections, and historical data in their academic fields. While “low utilization” or low enrollment may seem like an obvious reason, there are cycles in the popularity of some programs and other programs must be continued to provide the well-rounded education students need and expect in order to compete in a global economy.

Universities have an ethical obligation to our students to avoid what seems like an “easy fix” to eliminate majors and degree programs based on financial feasibility and budgetary constraints. Rather, faculty and university administrators must evaluate these challenges with integrity and transparency, and work collaboratively to avoid the extreme measures proposed.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects freedom of speech and this is the bedrock of American universities. Tenure is the method by which U.S. universities establish teaching and learning environments free from ideological constraints, and advance new ideas regardless of controversy in research, scholarship and creative activity. Faculty, protected by this academic freedom, are the heart of U.S. universities which make us attractive to students from across the globe. Tenure protects the academic freedom to teach unpopular topics and to explore the full range of thought on a topic, ensuring students develop the critical thinking skills most valued by U.S. employers.

COSFL is a statewide forum of senate and faculty leadership representing the eight public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). It was formed July 13, 1979 as a collective advocacy body of public higher education faculties.
<https://www.wku.edu/cosfl/>



Timothy C. Caboni

Tue 03-Apr-18 4:10 PM

To: Faculty-All; Staff-All

Reply



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Faculty and Staff:

Last night the Kentucky General Assembly passed the biennial budget that will fund the state's operations for the next two years. We've been closely engaged in this process throughout the legislative session, and while there are some improvements in the final version from where we started, this budget presents us with significant challenges.

First, state appropriations for universities are reduced by 6.25% as was originally proposed by the Governor. However, a portion of that is returned to the performance funding pool, which was adopted by the legislature last year following months of work by the university presidents to come to agreement on an outcomes-based funding model. So while we will lose \$4,619,000 in the budget reduction, we will likely gain most of that back in the performance model, bringing our state appropriation reduction to a little less than 1%.

Additionally, legislators applied an approximate 2% reduction in funding to support the Gatton Academy, so we will have \$75,000 less to support operations of the Academy in the next two years. The Kentucky Mesonet, a statewide weather monitoring network operated by WKU, was fully funded at \$750,000 per year. That was zeroed out in the Governor's original plan.

Legislators did not include direct relief for our employer contribution payments to KERS, the primary driver of fixed increases to our operating budget, so we anticipate those costs to increase significantly. Legislators also did not include the asset preservation matching funds proposed by the Governor to help campuses address a backlog of maintenance on university buildings and infrastructure.

Finally, the adopted budget includes language that would allow universities to eliminate tenured faculty positions associated with the closure of academic programs. It is my view, and I have shared this during my conversations in Frankfort, that current guidelines set forth by the American Association of University Professors provide a fair, reasonable and effective pathway to manage downsizing or elimination of academic programs. I am strongly committed to following those guidelines and to protecting the integrity of tenure and academic freedom as we work together to address the current financial challenges facing WKU.

We are continuing to study the pension reform bill that was passed and other measures that relate to KTRS and KERS employers contained in other bills. As we know more, I will communicate further on those matters. Information on other legislative actions can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/govrelations/index.php>.

This has been a long and arduous process, which began in January with the Governor's budget proposal, and it isn't yet final. Governor Bevin now has ten days to veto all or parts of the budget bill, and the General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene April 13 and 14 for final actions on legislation that is not yet finished and for action on any vetoed items. During the session, we presented at hearings in the House and met with legislative leadership and members in both the House and Senate to ask for stable, predictable and adequate funding for WKU. While the national trend has begun to shift back to state governments increasing support for higher education, sadly Kentucky is not yet there. That is all the more reason to redouble our efforts to make significant gains on enrollment, retention and graduation numbers. We are seeing positive trends in that regard, and I am grateful for your work and continued commitment to our students and our University.

Best,

Timothy C. Caboni