

Western Kentucky University
University Senate
Meeting Minutes
13 December 2018, 3:45 p.m.
Faculty House

A) Call to order

- A regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Chair Kirk Atkinson at 3:45 p.m.
- Members present (substitute): Lawrence Alice, Janet Applin, Kirk Atkinson, Melanie Autin, Terry Ballman, Jim Berger, Jason Bergner, Kristi Branham, Tim Brotherton, Dan Clark, Aquesha Daniels (LeeAnn Coder), Susann Davis, Pitt Derryberry (Sally Kuhlenschmidt), Carl Dick, Michelle Dvoskin, Claus Ernst, Travis Esslinger (Kim Esslinger), Colin Farrell, Stacey Forsythe, Dawn Garrett-Wright, James Gary, Natasha Gerstenschlager, Steven Gibson, Dominique Gumirakiza, Lance Hahn, Tim Hawkins, Lawrence Hill (Matthew Nee), Jean-Luc Houle, Angie Jerome, Guy Jordan, Pat Kambesis (Margaret Crowder), Kim Link, Donielle Lovell, Stephen Mayer, Lauren McClain, Mac McKerral, Patti Minter, Kurt Neelly, Morteza Nurcheshmeh (Farhed Ashrafzadeh), Heather Payne-Emerson, Leslie Plumlee (Robin Ayers), Matt Pruitt, Dianna Ransdell, Mark Schafer, David Serafini, Jo Shackelford, Joe Shankweiler, Christy Spurlock, Ajay Srivastava, Tammie Stenger-Ramsey, Heather Strode, Carol Watwood, Mary Wolinski, Alison Youngblood, Donna Schiess (guest), Jennnifer Mills (guest), Amber Belt (guest), Ladonna Hunton (guest)

B) Approve November 2018 minutes

- D. Clark motioned to approved. J. Applin seconded. Passed unanimously.

C) Reports, Part I

• ***Chair – Kirk Atkinson***

1) T. Ballman to speak –

- Has had the opportunity to meet with talented faculty, staff, and students; attend events; visit multiple departments, etc. since arriving on campus
- Still learning about WKU and the community and the policies that are in place that give us structure, including Academic Affairs policy 1.2000
 - Current policy requires non-tenure eligible to be notified by December 15 of non-renewal for the following academic year
 - The timing required by this policy creates difficulties for us given our current budget situation and that we don't know our staffing needs for the coming academic year
 - I did not mean to cause the alarm, hurt, and frustration across campus with these potentially-affected faculty by my proposed policy change and the plan to notify all non-tenure track faculty of non-renewal for the coming year (though most would almost certainly be rehired).
 - I understand now that to implement the new policy *en masse* was not the appropriate thing to do. Anytime we have a policy that affects people [directly], we need to take the time to do proper analysis and have discussion. I talk full responsibility for my actions. All of the faculty under this policy will be retained for the 2019-20 school year.

- M. Crowder – Question about RAMP and putting everything on the table when evaluating the budget... A number of us would like to see everything on the table. Athletics should be brought to the table and included in the RAMP model. My understanding that is has been taken off. If so, why has it been taken off? Our mission is academics.
 - T. Ballman – We’re devoted to academics, which is the main mission of the university. We should discuss inviting others to talk about athletics.
 - M Crowder – I didn’t hear the answer as to whether athletics is off the table.
 - T. Ballman – I believe everything is on the table, including athletics. I agree it should be part of the conversation.
- M. Pruitt – How much daylight is there between the President and Provost’s offices with regard to this proposed policy change? Did he have knowledge about it? Is he going to be hands off, and this was your call?
 - T. Ballman – I don’t blame anyone but myself. Something like this will not happen again. I try to inform the President in general terms, but he entrusts people to do the right thing.
- J. Shackelford – In CHHS, we have a lot of clinical faculty. Does this policy (non-tenure track) include clinical faculty?
 - T. Ballman – I don’t know. I was responding to a policy, not the people who are part of the policy.
- ***Vice Chair – Dan Clark (no report)***
- ***Secretary – Jason Bergner (no report)***
- ***Coalition of Senate/Faculty Leadership for Higher Education – Molly Kirby (no report)***
- ***AAUP Representative – Margaret Crowder (no report)***
 - 1) Please encourage people to go to the AAUP website so we can make sure we have an official charter here at WKU. It’s an opportunity for us to have conversations about academic freedom, shared governance, etc.

D) Committee Reports and Recommendations

- ***Academic Quality – Heather Strobe (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) H. Strobe motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - 2) B. Stobaugh (CITL) to speak
 - About a year ago we had some interest in developing a peer review instrument. Some departments already had such instruments and some didn’t, and those that were using instruments weren’t uniform.
 - A group of faculty utilized the instrument and reviewed each other, refining the instrument, improving the process. Kinesiology also used this instrument and gave us feedback.
 - This instrument is to be confidential. It’s about teacher growth. It’s not to be used for data collection or as a formal evaluation by admin.
 - K. Atkinson – If there’s any concern, it’s that it’s something that starts off as one thing and ends up as something else (from optional to being “expected” in a P&T packet).
- ***Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities – Lauren McClain (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***

- 1) L. McClain motioned. Unanimous approval.
- 2) 5-year trend study for faculty work life survey
 - D. Clark worked to put this together
 - We have made changes for clarity, transitions, etc.
 - Two of the questions that we added about being informed of campus decisions (looks pretty good) and another about university decision making being transparent (it doesn't look very good)
- ***Budget and Finance Committee – Jim Berger (no report)***
 - 1) We are working on a variety of projects
 - Putting out a clear description of how RAMP works
 - Merit pay models across the nation and finding ways to implement it more effectively here
 - Met with Staff Council chair
 - Working on budget comparison over the last five years
- ***Colonnade General Education Committee – Mary Wolinski (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) M. Wolinski motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - Approved four courses in gen education, three Connections and a Foundations
 - Approved removing deadline for students entering before 2014 to complete their general education requirements
 - International subcommittee is still meeting and is close to finalizing a proposal for a fourth category in Connections
- ***Graduate Council – Carl Dick (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) C. Dick motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - Carryforward in research funds. Started with 60K and increased us to 90K.
- ***Undergraduate Curriculum Committee – Janet Applin (report posted, endorsed by the SEC)***
 - 1) J. Applin motioned. Unanimous approval.
 - We are anticipating quite a bit of curricular activity after CAPE is completed.
- ***Faculty Handbook Committee – Kate Hudepohl (no report)***
 - 1) M. McKerral – Has this committee met?
 - P. Minter – Not yet.

E) Old Business

- 1) Senate Charter changes draft, 2nd reading
 - J. Berger moved to table definitely (until January). Seconded by L. Hahn. Passed unanimously.

F) New Business

- 1) Employee benefits advisory committee representative (Eric Kondratieff)
 - K. Atkinson will fill in until Eric gets back in August to serve another four-year term.
 - A. Jerome motioned. P. Minter seconded. Passed unanimously.
- 2) NCFS membership vote
 - J. Berger motioned. L. Hahn seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - The only unknown is the annual membership fee, but I expect the Senate budget will be able to accommodate that.

- 3) SEC meeting (emergency) produced a resolution in response to the Provost's proposed policy change to the date for notice of non-renewal for non-tenure track faculty.
- A. Jerome motioned. L. McClain seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - [NOTE: At the meeting, there was a fair amount of crosstalk throughout this discussion, making it sometimes difficult to track who was speaking or what was being said. I tried to capture the essence of the discussion.]
 - M. McKerral – I support the resolution. It addresses a serious issue, but it doesn't address the more serious issue. That more serious problem is the current administration does not solve the WKU budget crisis. The President stood before this community and stated that the budget reflects the mission of the university. It's becoming clear from this budget that whatever the mission of this university is, it's not an academic one. We are told we (as faculty) are responsible for recruiting, retention, for teaching more classes, more students, in the same amount of time, with fewer resources. The recent increase in compensation comes on the backs of our students. What about our students? Higher tuition, higher fees, meals plans they don't want to buy, and taught by faculty who are beleaguered and have less resources and diminishing morale. I have heard the current administration say that it did not cause the budget crisis. The faculty didn't cause the budget crisis, either. If the people who tasked with defending the academic mission of WKU are unwilling or unable to defend it, then the faculty needs to do it. This body [the Senate] should be leading that effort.
 - K. Neelly – I would like some clarification that at conclusion of CAPE, if/when programs are removed, will tenured faculty within that department be retained for one additional year, or is it possible that they would be terminated?
 - T. Ballman – Any program up for suspension will be taught out. All efforts will be made to protect tenured faculty. For instance, as a program is taught out, a tenured faculty member may be asked to teach something else.
 - D. Schiess – I teach in Communication and an instructor. I'm in my 16th year. [She offers her viewpoint on the proposed policy change, including personal experiences with cuts. The main point is that instructors are the heart of the academic mission. They teach more classes (often extra), more students, are loyal to the university, and have been WKU's biggest supporters. The instructors deserve a more humane approach]
 - L. Hahn – I wanted to hear about how the SEC became aware of this issue.
 - K. Atkinson – It was intended to be transparent and communicated, and it was let out at a particular level. I found out before an SEC meeting from an instructor.
 - L. Hahn – It appears to me that the Provost is taking the bullet on this one, and I don't know if that's appropriate or not.
 - T. Ballman – Again, I take full responsibility. I was responding from a fiscal concern. I thought re-assuring people would alleviate the stress. That didn't happen.
 - A. Jerome – Why did letters need to go to everyone? Why weren't the letters just sent to the departments that are at risk instead of everyone?

- T. Ballman – I viewed it as a policy issue. Therefore, everyone that fell under that policy needed to be notified.
- L. McClain – I understand the CAPE process is supposed to be driven by faculty, but I still have a hard time believing that there’s no such thing as a vulnerable department. There have to be programs that are more likely to be cut than others.
- M. Pruitt – Why do we need a resolution? We have a policy. Is this resolution a guideline or wish lists?
 - M. McKerral – Part of the context that’s missing is that between the time the announcement was made and when these letters were going to be sent out, there was a suggestion made that the Senate would pass a resolution to call for a suspension the policy for the notification date. This indicates some were willing to have us sign off on suspending policies if it suited someone’s needs. I think this resolution is extremely important. Dr. Ballman, I appreciate your remarks earlier. With regard to transparency and faculty involvement, at our last meeting, we had a long list of folks that wanted to serve on a number committees related to RAMP and CAPE. What struck me as odd is that we weren’t allowed to appoint, but rather nominate and let the admin pick. This doesn’t fit my concept of faculty governance.
 - S. Davis – Matt, I wanted to refer you to the agenda posted. There was an original proposal to delete all references to dates, and the last I heard it will be on the January agenda.
 - T. Ballman – That was supposed to an information item for consideration. It was supposed to go to the Faculty Wellness subcommittee for consideration.
 - M. Crowder – The handbook is not legally binding, nor are the policies in it.
 - G. Jordan – This is a symptom of longer series of developments. We keep hearing that academics is the core mission of the university. I think the time is coming soon for a resolution that ties athletics to that mission. For instance, if a certain percentage/number of academic faculty have to be let go, then those cuts should come out of athletics first. We can’t have a \$12-14M subsidy coming out of academics and going to athletics when we are shedding the core mission of the university.
 - K. Esslinger – We can’t put the athletics issue on the Provost. Athletics are not under her in the university’s organizational structure.
 - D. Clark – I’ve been appointed to one of the committees regarding the budget. Athletics is part of our focus, and we’ll make recommendations to the executive budget committee.
 - R. Ayres – This resolution only saves my job for one year. If this is the way I’m going to be treated, I should look somewhere else. I have too much to offer to be treated in this manner.

G) Reports, Part II

- ***Advisory Report, Faculty Regent – Claus Ernst***
 - 1) I have been a tireless advocate for transparency and have relayed the need for admin to listen to us.
 - 2) The SEC found out about the letters on Monday afternoon. K. Atkinson and I were in the Provost’s office, and she admitted the mistake and changed her mind.

- 3) How much distance is there between the President and the Provost?
 - The leadership culture of this university has changed. The President would like his subordinates to work much more independently than in the past.
- 4) The RAMP includes every unit of the university. What it's still lacking is transparency. There are very few who understand this model. While we have the numbers, we don't know how they are calculated. Not even the deans have full access to the RAMP model.
- 5) One item not on the next Board agenda is the contract of the new football coach. It will come to the Board, but not tomorrow.
- 6) The audit report will come to the Board tomorrow. It covers the fiscal years 2016-18.
 - The revenue is falling by \$10M over this time.
 - During this same time we have raised tuition by 10%.
 - Student head count changes not at all. We have a shift in the types of students we have (fewer international students, for instance).
 - Unless we can find a way to stop this decline, things will get worse. This drop is larger than the athletics' budget.
 - Pension liability is valued at \$445M...a stunning number.
 - I encourage all of you to look at the RAMP numbers. There are no easy fixes.
 - G. Jordan – No one disputes the grim numbers. Given those numbers, why is now the time to incur another \$50M in debt for a freshman village?
 - C. Ernst – This will be decided by the Student Resident Life Board. S. Mayer is on board with thinking that the dorms need to be updated/replaced for WKU to remain competitive with regards to housing/amenities. I was in no position to oppose it. The Residence Life Foundation owns these dormitories. Whether to build these dorms or not has no bearing on WKU's budget.
 - G. Jordan – If the cost of these dorms increase, the cost of attending WKU continues to rise, and we have fewer students attending. Thus, less revenue. We don't maintain the buildings we have.
 - C. Ernst – I don't disagree with any of that.
 - M. McKerral – The Senate throughout the years have had long-standing resistance (e.g., passing resolutions) to new buildings. Yet, the university does "sleight of hand" to get buildings built anyway. You are the faculty regent. Why didn't you ask us [the Senate] what we wanted? You are there to represent us and our interests.
 - C. Ernst – It's not as easy as you make it. Will this have a positive or negative impact on enrollment? No one knows. I tried to do what I thought was right. It's a complicated question.
 - M. McKerral – All I ask is that as Regent, when you are facing these decisions, seek input from us. Don't tell us after the fact.
- **Advisory Report, Provost – Terry Ballman**
 - 1) New HR policy that deals with faculty and leave
 - In the past, faculty needing leave weren't guaranteed to be paid
 - WKU has developed policies that guarantees paid leave to faculty during approved medical leave. [NOTE: See email from T. Glisson sent out following this meeting.]

- *Advisory Report, SGA President – Stephen Mayer*
 - 1) Sent out \$21K in scholarships
 - 2) We're having a rally cry for education in Frankfort (state student government meeting)

H) Information Items

I) Adjournment

- H. Strode motioned. Unanimous approval.