

**Western Kentucky University
University Senate, Special Session
Meeting Minutes
4 April 2019, 3:45 p.m.
Grise Hall auditorium**

A) Call to order

- A special session 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 (Nicholas Fortune), Leslie Baylis (Matt Woodward), Jim Berger, Jason Bergner, Scott Bonham, Tim Brotherton, Dan Clark, Margaret Crowder, Aquesha Daniels (Shane Spiller), Susann Davis, Pitt Derryberry, Carl Dick, Michelle Dvoskin, Loretia Dye (Andrea Jenkins), Claus Ernst, Travis Esslinger, Colin Farrell, Stacey Forsythe, Jim Fulkerson, Jay Gabbard, Dawn Garrett-Wright, James Gary, Natasha Gerstenschlager, Elizabeth Gish, Lance Hahn, Lawrence Hill, Jean-Luc Houle, Tom Hunley (Jane Fife), Angie Jerome (Holly Payne), Guy Jordan, Pat Kambesis, Jim Lindsey, Kim Link (Liz Sturgeon), Stephen Locke, Donielle Lovell, Stephen Mayer, Lauren McClain (Shannon Vaughan), Mac McKerral, Patti Minter (Jennifer Hanley), Kurt Neelly, Morteza Nurcheshmeh, Heather Payne-Emerson, Leslie Plumlee, Matt Pruitt, Ron Rhoades, David Serafini, Jo Shackelford, Joe Shankweiler, Christy Spurlock, Ajay Srivastava, Tammie Stenger-Ramsey, Heather Strode, Dana Sullivan, Toni Szymanski, Carol Watwood, Aaron Wichman, Mary Wolinski, Alison Youngblood, Uta Ziegler, Conner Haunshell (student), Kara Lowry (student), Ashlyn Jones (student)
- Guests: Jay Wells, Elijah Starker, James Barker, Gayle Allison, Emily Dewetter, Jack Dobbs, Tom Stewart, Lloyd Davies, Ted Hovet, Olivia Marshall, Baylee Hayes, Addyson Bednar, Jeanna Kleine-Kraut, Donald Speer, Emily Geimon, Sean Ward, Dakota Caldwell, Timothy Rich, Conrad Murphy, Scott Stroot, Taylor Cuthbertson, Heidi Alvarez, Judy Russell, Mark Robinson, Caitlyn Couvillion, Lisa Patrick, Audra Jones, Paul Hondap, James Brown, Jenn Brinkley, Alex Poore, Susan Eagle, Steven Gibson, Sean Hall, Cynthia Houston

B) New Business

- Concerns about, implications of, and potential responses to recent administration decisions
 - 1) G. Jordan motioned for approval of resolution of no confidence in Provost Ballman. M. McKerral seconded and offered a friendly amendment to make the vote a secret ballot.
 - Text of resolution: Be it resolved that the University Senate has no confidence in the leadership of Provost Ballman.
 - G. Jordan then read a statement of the events of Dean [Larry] Snyder's firing.
 - K. Atkinson notes that he offered Dean Snyder a chance to have a statement read. He declined.
 - Alison Langdon speaking: What I have to say has been said earlier [by Guy]. Knowing Larry as I do, it would be out of character for him to abdicate his responsibility during these tough times.

- C. Ernst read a prepared statement about the Dean Snyder situation. He notes that he is not a voting member of the Senate and is only speaking as an advisor to the Senate.
- L. McClain prepared a statement. This statement was read by D. Clark.
- M. McKerral read a prepared statement
 - Text: I arrived at WKU in 2005, and since that time I have immersed myself in university governance, serving multiple terms as a senator, and as chair of all senate standing committees except one, and serving two terms as chair of the Faculty Handbook. But in all that time, I have never encountered an environment such as the one we face now. I am not going to take time to repeat specifics about that environment, they have been clearly stated. But I think it is worth noting that some senators faced a tough decision as to whether they would attend this meeting for fear that it might cost them in some way. And I know there are senators among us who are here with fair amounts of trepidation for that same reason. I understand that. I have been an outspoken on a number of issues since I came here and many of those issues arose at times when I was not tenured. But I can empathize with junior faculty, and I do not expect them to abide by my standards. That would be going down a dangerous road. I mention this because that climate of fear is attached to the many other issues we face. I do not think anyone could argue that there have been a series of administrative missteps that have occurred over the past year that have eroded the faith of the faculty and staff who come to work each day to serve the primary mission of this university — academics. These missteps threaten the core of WKU, the philosophy behind its creation and the culture upon which it was built. A budget crisis, even one as severe as the one we face, does not give license to gut the rich fabric of this university. That is a threat that must be addressed. And as I have said many times recently and through the years, addressing it requires a strong and unified voice from this body and the faculty it represents that threats to the academic mission of WKU needs fixing and they need fixing now. This is where my viewpoint differs greatly from that of our faculty regent. I am all for giving people second chances, even third chances. Lord knows, I have been extended more than of those than I deserve. If I chose to pursue a doctorate, I could write a thesis on personal redemption. And it would be a pretty good read. Redemption is a good thing. So, I offer this idea: A vote of no confidence does not mean that faith and confidence cannot be restored. Faith and confidence can always be restored. But that will never happen unless this body states in a clear and unified voice that change for the better must start now and that the demand for change is an expectation — not an option.
- A. Youngblood – Much of what I've prepared has already been stated by others. I think that fact that many of the junior Senators (over 60% make up the Senate) have had to be encouraged to come to this meeting. That speaks volume.
- A. Jerome prepared a statement that was read by J. Fife
- S. Vaughan – I want to emphasize the recognition of the student voice and their impact on this process. We owe it to the students to take action because they have been out there taking action.

- P. Derryberry – I need clarification on the resolution. Would censure be a separate motion?
 - K. Atkinson – Censure would need to be a separate motion. We have pre-made ballot books for this possibility.
- Bruce Schulte (guest) – I want to thank the Senate for being willing to call this meeting. What the Regent [C. Ernst] said is important. The question is that whether Provost Ballman is the right person for the time. I've been here for 10 years, and I'm especially impressed by the unity that this campus community has shown during this process. We have the leadership from within to carry us through this no matter what happens.
- L. Hill – I like this motion and everything in it. My department asked me for time to ask for time (until the next Senate meeting) to consider no confidence v. censure.
- J. Henley – I appreciate the students' support and the support from the SGA. The power washing of the students' comments off the sidewalk showed the current atmosphere on campus [in a negative light].
- J. McAndrews (student) – Students have been out every day (or at night) chalking the sidewalks in protest. While these chalkings were initially washed off, the University did back off and allowed these chalkings to occur.
- U. Ziegler – Does the vote of no confidence mean the Provost is gone, or does it mean something different?
 - K. Atkinson – The vote of no confidence (in my understanding) is that it does not mean automatic firing.
 - M. McKerral – It means we have no confidence. We have no control over what happens after that.
- Jay Wells (student): Student protestors were stopped by police and told that it was University policy that students had to have the permission of a building's administrator before we could chalk in front of it. Administration is attempting to silence us, and we need to stand up to it.
- A. Conrad (student): It was said that it was a small group of protestors. At first that was true, but it is now well over 200. I just wanted to give you an idea of the number of students.
- C. Werner (student): I want to make it clear that there are students from all five colleges here. This is not just a PCAL issue. Are any others motions being considered for other members of the administration?
 - K. Atkinson – There are currently no other motions on the floor.
- A. Jones (student) – I am proud of our student body has banded together to make our voices heard about this issue. I have found a home here on the Hill. I have felt so welcome, and I didn't feel that way at any other college I visited.
- Lisa Patrick (student): Every day we go to classes. As a student, I find that it's the staff members that keep me going to classes. They educate us, push us forward, and want the best for us. When I see how Dean Snyder was treated, you lose a sense of respect, a loss of morale of the faculty, and it doesn't make me feel good, safe, and secure about going to WKU.

- J. Lindsey called the question. J. Hanley seconded. The vote to call the question passed 54-1.
- Resolution passed, 50-10 with three abstentions.

C) Adjournment

- M. McKerral motioned. Unanimous approval.