

WKU UNIVERSITY SENATE MINUTES

March 4, 2008

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the WKU University Senate was called to order Thursday, March 4, 2008, at 3:45 P.M. in the Garrett Ballroom by Chair Julie Shadoan. A quorum was present.

The following members were present: Kristina Arnold, Nedra Atwell, Johnathon Boles, Scott Bonham, Barbara Brindle, Barbara Burch, Jeff Butterfield, Jerry Daday, Uma Doraiswamy, Niko Endres, Michele Fiala, Douglas Fugate, Jim Fulkerson, Andrea Grapko, Denise Gravitt, Kim Green, Anthony Harkins, Kathleen Hennessey, Roy Howsen, Kate Hudepohl, Skylar Jordan, Kaveh Khatir, Joan Krenzin, Dominic Lanphier, Jim Lindsey, Sherry Lovan, Nathan Love, Karen Mason, Andrew McMichael, Patricia Minter, Roger Murphy, Dan Myers, Steve Nagy, Thanh Lan Nguyen, Jane Olmsted, Holly Payne, Heidi Pintner, Matt Pruitt, Gary Ransdell, Jeff Samuels, Julie Shadoan, Vernon Sheeley, Heather Strode, Louis Strolger, Samanta Thapa, Stacy Wade, Carol Watwood, Richard Weigel, Jacqueline Wofford, Christopher Wagner, Zhonghang Xia.

Alternates present were: Hasan Palandoken for Stuart Burris, Daniel Carter for Terry Dean, David Benko for Constance Edwards, Elizabeth Goddard for R. Reagan Gilley, Steve Kenworthy for Yanmei Li, Michelle Lane for Shane Spiller, Kay Gandy for Rico Tyler.

The following members were absent: Cathy Abell, Mostafa Atici, Mike Binder, John Bonaguro, Richard Bowker, Janice Chadha, Walter Collett, Eddy Cuisinier, Judy Davidson, Sam Evans, Tim Evans, Blaine Ferrell, James Gary, Jens Harlander, Michelle Hollis, Heather Johnson, Aaron Kindsvatter, Mary Kovar, Debbie Kreitzer, Scott Lasley, David Lee, Yanmei Li, Richard C. Miller, Timothy Mullin, Sharon Mutter, Ken Payne, Katharine Pettit, Keith Philips, Mark Pickard, Sherry Powers, Sherry Reid, Angela Robertson, Sandra Starks, Tammie Stenger-Ramsey, Carol Stowe-Byrd, Don Swoboda, William Tallon, Luella Teuton, Paul Woosley.

II. President Ransdell's Address to the Senate Regarding the State Mandated Budget Cuts

Ransdell stated that WKU has a lot at stake and the next two years will be affected by the State budget. He thanked the Senate for the Resolution that will go forth in the General Assembly. He shared WKU's legislative priorities with the Senate. These were prepared prior to the December 21st announcement that there is a 3% budget cut and the mid-January announcement that there might be another 12%. The 3% decisions have been made. We are trying to avoid the additional 12% cut. Ransdell is hoping to get as close to zero additional cuts as possible. The State Senate leadership has been working on their own version of the budget after the House budget was released. Negotiations between the chambers will result in the final

budget. The vetoed projects are still in the legislative process. Ransdell is communicating with Frankfort that we will not be using revenue from tuition increases to offset the budget cuts. He feels that whatever tuition increases we have should be used for (1) utilities and other fixed cost increases; (2) compensation for faculty and staff; (3) funding the strategic plan priorities, especially increasing merit-based academic scholarship capacity (37/54 Math and Science Academy seniors will be staying at WKU), the extended campuses (Elizabethtown and Owensboro), the library, the honors college, and study abroad. Things that we cut from forced budget reductions will not be revisited anytime soon. Ransdell emphasized that tuition will not be increased as much as it has been in recent years. The applicant pool has doubled over the last ten years. Ransdell wants to price tuition within the market; we are now in the median in Kentucky (behind UK and U of L) and Ransdell does not believe that we can raise tuition more than 8 or 9%. The April 24 Board meeting will address the budget. Budgets funded from restricted sources (grants, earmarks, private gifts, etc) cannot be affected by the budget cuts because they are directed by the funding sources. There are also numerous purchase contracts that were made last fall which still have to be delivered. The President stated that if more cuts are ordered, we will target specific things rather than weaken all units. A faculty/staff email will go out in a few weeks as soon as the state budget picture becomes clear.

The President stated that he is willing to answer any questions the Senate might have. Denise Gravitt asked about raises. Ransdell stated that salary increases will have to come out of a tuition increase. There will be a compensation/increase into the next fiscal year, but he does not know the dollar amount (this depends on what happens with the state budget in the next few weeks.) The compression issue will also be addressed. Michele Fiala stated that she appreciates that we are being compensated and hopes that he will keep in mind that we'll still be doing professional development and much of that will be out of our pocket and hopes that he'll keep this in mind when he considers raises. Ransdell agrees that academic quality still has to be a priority, and scholarships are a part of this. Jeff Samuels suggested the creation of an academic quality improvement fund. Ransdell said that most donors specify what they want to invest in, and the gifts that are specified by the donors (private money) can only be spent in ways specified by the donor.

Julie Shadoan asked Dr. Ransdell what can be done to activate the amendment for Regent eligibility (this would be a change in eligibility for all faculty to be able to vote in a Regent election). KCTCS does not want it changed. Dr. Ransdell stated that we need to pick and choose our battles and right now the budget cuts have to be the priority. Regent Minter feels that we have been very tenacious on this issue and Robbin Taylor has been an excellent advocate for ORP. Minter hopes it will remain on the radar screen and feels that we ask a lot of these faculty, particularly in these times.

Ransdell feels that the Regent election eligibility matter will not get much legislative attention this session.

III. Minutes

The Minutes of the December 13, 2007 meeting were endorsed by Dr. Burch and approved as read with no additions or corrections.

IV. Reports

a. Chair

Julie Shadoan, Chair of the Senate, reported that the faculty handbook is in its near final form and it will go to the Faculty Welfare Committee the week after spring break, then to the Senate. The target date is the June board meeting. The same will go for the Senate Charter Committee.

The ad-hoc committee on workload issues needs one volunteer per college. This will be a labor-intensive job. Volunteers are needed now so the committee can convene in the spring.

The Chief of Staff workload description was distributed to the Senate. Questions are being raised about where it falls in the chain of command and what the exact workload and responsibilities are. The job was given to Deborah Wilkins.

b. Vice Chair

The Vice-Chair, Denise Gravitt, discussed the upcoming senator-at-large election. No more than three people per department can serve. Names should be forwarded to the appropriate representative to each college: Ogden (Constance Edwards); CHHS (Saundra Starks); Library (Uma Doraiswamy); Community College (Michelle Hollis); Gordon Ford (Dan Myers); (CEBS) Rico Tyler; Potter (Jeff Samuels). The 10% per college rule will be verified. Each college can have a different date. Paper ballots will be used. Instructor/Assistant/Associate/Full rank are eligible. Procedures and dates need to be arranged and reported back to Denise Gravitt.

c. Faculty Regent

The Faculty Regent, Patricia Minter, stated that the Board of Regents met in late January. The issue besides the budget cuts that came out was the elimination of the men's soccer program. She has not received any correspondence from faculty members and hopes that if and when academic cuts come that there will be a ferocious outcry from the committee. She has had 12+ calls/emails about the illegal closed meeting, but she did not feel that any statutes were violated. She stated that the public statement released by Selig was not correct -- He and the President made the decision, not the Board. The Board took no action on the men's soccer program. The closed session took place because it was a personnel matter.

Regarding salary compression, Minter hopes it will move forward even in the difficult budget times. The Faculty Welfare Committee is working on this issue.

In Spring and Fall 2005, there was a Senate debate over the funding of the Director of the new Wellness Program. The salary was to come from the Self-Insurance Reserve Fund. Although the Senate liked the idea of the new position, the Senate strongly felt

it should be funded out of the E&G budget. Minter stated that the Wellness Program has again brought forward a proposal to fund two new positions out of the Insurance Reserve Fund. The Benefits Committee told them that this was inappropriate. They continued with their proposal anyhow. There was no consensus on the Benefits Committee. Minter feels it is appropriate to make a Senate statement on this. If the Resolution comes forward today, Minter indicated that she and the Staff Regent would take a resolution forward to the Board of Regents during their April 24th meeting with the intent that the Health Insurance Reserve Fund will never be touched except for what it was intended for.

d. Provost

The Provost, Barbara Burch, stated that we are waiting to find out what the amount will be for the budget cuts. The cuts will not be across the board, so she encouraged the faculty to give suggestions on the website on what to cut.

The new carry forward (CF) policy which allows the division to retain its CF going into the next year is a helpful one. Some of the revenue generating accounts will be exempted from the CF policy. This provides an opportunity for more judicious planning for use of these funds and for maximizing efficiencies.

The first doctorate in Ed. Leadership was approved, which is a cause to celebrate and a strong accomplishment for our campus.

Standing Committee Reports

a. University Curriculum Committee

Andrew McMichael, Chair of the University Curriculum Committee, moved for approval of the December and January agenda. The course proposals passed unanimously as presented without discussion.

b. General Education

Richard Weigel, Chair of the General Education Committee, had no report.

c. Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities

Nedra Atwell, Chair of the Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee, moved for approval of the committee's budget resolution for Senate consideration. The resolution passed unanimously as presented without discussion.

d. Committee on Academic Quality

No report was presented.

e. Graduate Council

Nedra Atwell, the Chair of the Graduate Council, made a motion for support and approval of the three Graduate Council agenda items for University Senate consideration. The consent agenda with amendment passed unanimously with no discussion on the items.

V. Old Business

Julie Shadoan's discussion with Robbin Taylor on the amendment issue has fallen on the priority list. Shadoan feels there is a misconception and does not understand KCTCS's opposition. Shadoan asked Robbin to initiate the conversation again. Shadoan also added that she does not like the fact that other universities violate the statute.

VI. New Business

Jeff Samuels made a Resolution based on the November 17, 2005 Senate Resolution to not use health insurance funds for anything other than what they were intended for. The new resolution proposed by Jeff Samuels, which was approved and passed unanimously by the Senate, is as follows:

"Be it resolved that the University Senate states its unequivocal opposition to the use of the University's health insurance contributions and employee premiums for anything other than their intended purpose of funding WKU's health care plans and reimbursing claims against them, and The University Senate requests that the Board of Regents create a regulation stating that insurance benefits monies may not be used for anything other than their intended purpose of funding the University's health care plans and reimbursing claims against them."

The second order of new business was brought by Andrew McMichael, who stated that the Benefits Committee reports directly to Dr. Tice. McMichael suggested that the composition of the committee should be revised. Minter said she would send the current composition of the committee and suggested that the Executive Committee come up with suggestions.

VII. Announcements

Julie Shadoan encouraged the faculty to visit the budget issues website and speak out on constructive issues, stating that it is our responsibility to participate.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion "that the meeting adjourn" was carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Pintner, Secretary