

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee

Western Kentucky University

Report to the University Senate

Date: May 1, 2015

From: Dr. Patricia Minter, Chair

The Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee met on April 30, 2015 and submits the following report and agenda items for consideration to the University Senate:

Action Items and Background Documents:

1. Field Trip Policy:

- a. Policy 1.4180: Course-Related Field Trip Policy (see attached file) was tabled definitely at the Senate Executive Committee in March and referred to this committee for further consideration. After further committee review, the Faculty Welfare Committee voted unanimously at its March 30 meeting not to put the Field Trip Policy on the Senate's agenda for approval until the following information is provided:
 - i. Study Abroad/Studying Away information: The Committee asks that Study Abroad/Studying Away post relevant documentation regarding faculty code of conduct, rights and responsibilities, and terms and conditions of liability as soon as possible. We request that this link then be included in the proposed Policy 1.4180 so faculty members would have access to this relevant information when studying liability issues related to their field trip and study abroad planning.
 - ii. Terms and Conditions: The Committee thanks the office of Risk Management and Academic Affairs for providing risk management documentation showing individual coverage for \$5 million dollars per faculty member. However, the Committee believes that we need to have the Terms and Conditions of coverage in order to provide faculty with the information they need to perform due diligence in evaluating risk and responsibilities when planning field trips and Study Abroad/Studying Away courses. We request that this be posted on the web and linked to the proposed policy. Meanwhile, on April 3, 2015 Academic Affairs forwarded an explanatory document prepared by University Counsel Deborah Wilkins dated 4/2/15 , "Off-Campus Academic Activities Information Summary" which can be accessed [here](#). Provost Emslie stated at the SEC's meeting on 4/6/2015 that he believed that Study Abroad/Studying Away documents were not necessary in order to approve this Field Trip Policy, and that Study Abroad/Studying Away were separate issues unrelated to this particular policy.
- b. At its April meeting, the Faculty Welfare Committee reviewed all the relevant documents, and we concur that the "Off-Campus Academic Activities Information Summary" is an excellent source of information and relevant links for faculty seeking to understand their rights and responsibilities as field trip leaders. It has strengthened the proposed policy for the better. However, we also believe that this remains a "patch," not a penultimate solution to the problem of providing faculty with complete

information about their rights and responsibilities when taking students off campus, and we do not see any meaningful distinction between domestic field trips and Study Abroad/Study Away courses which are, for all practical purposes, very long field trips for credit.

Therefore, we unanimously approved the following motion:

We approve Policy 1.4180 and move that it be sent forward for inclusion on the University Senate's May agenda with one contingency: that the policy must include links to current statements of faculty rights, responsibilities, and liability coverage on both the Study Abroad and the Study Away websites in order to create a full, transparent policy and resource guide for faculty considering or planning to offer courses in those programs. We unanimously suggest that the Off Campus Academic Activities information document prepared by University Counsel be the model used to create these documents. If these two contingencies are met by the Senate's May 14 meeting, this policy as amended will go forward for Senate approval.

2. SGA Prayer Policy:

This proposed policy was referred to the Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee by the Student Government Association which passed it at its meeting on April 19, 2015 and modifies last year's prayer policy which was not approved by President Ransdell. After a very lengthy and thoughtful discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to send the prayer policy forward.

Information Items:

- Faculty Work Life Survey: The survey is now complete and the results have been distributed and will be posted to the Senate website soon
- Title IX/Clergy Act Subcommittee: The subcommittee continues to meet and will have a report for May to present to the Faculty Welfare Committee and to the SEC
- Compensation Concerns: We have two requests to study several aspects of faculty compensation, ranging from salary compression, gender inequities, and institutional commitment to long-term compensation plans. We will discuss this further at our May committee meeting and will communicate with our colleagues on Budget/Finance Committee.