



UNIVERSITY SENATE

Thursday, November 19, 2009
3:45 p.m. – Faculty House

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the WKU University Senate was called to order Thursday, November 19, 2009, at 3:50 pm in the Faculty House by Chair Paul Markham. A quorum was present.

The following members were present:

Darlene Applegate, Greg Arbuckle, Eileen Arnold, Kristina Arnold, Melanie Autin, Mark Berry, Scott Bonham, Dorothea Browder, Barbara Burch, Barbara Bush, Pitt Derryberry, Mark Doggett, Uma Doraiswamy, Melanie Duke, Molly Dunkum, Douglas Fugate, Dawn Garrett, Andrea Grapko, Anthony Harkins, Darbi Haynes-Lawrence, Kate Hudepohl, Stuart Kenderes, Molly Kerby, Randy Kinnersley, Joan Krenzin, Alex Lebedinsky, David Lee, Qi Li, Nathan Love, Kelly Madole, Paul Markham, Michael McIntyre, Mac McKerral, Vicki Metzgar, Steve Miller, Patricia Minter, Kumiko Nemoto, Ivan Novikov, Holly Payne, Keith Phillips, Lisa Proctor, Kelly Reames, Mark Schafer, Richard Schugart, Roger Scott, Nevil Speer, Christy Spurlock, Mark Staynings, Heather Strode, Liz Sturgeon, Francesca Sunkin, Tadayuki Suzuki, Adrian Switzer, Samanta Thapa, Megan Thompson, Justin Thurman, Dave Vickery, Richard Weigel, Kenneth Whitley

Alternates present were:

Debbie Kreitzer for Aaron Celestian, Tammy Shaffer for Jill Duba, Angela Jones for Nikolai Endres, Melissa Stewart for Yvonne Petkus, Mary Wolinski for Heidi Pintner, Julie Shadoan for Beth Plummer, Liza Kelly for Gary Schallert, Therese D. Baker for Carol Watwood

The following members were absent:

Janet Applin, Mike Binder, John Bonaguro, Kim Botner, Richard Bowker, Kelly Burch-Regan, Audrey Cornell, Scott Droege, Ahmed Emam, Sam Evans, Blaine Ferrell, Johnston Njoku, Jim Lindsey, Roger Murphy, Steve Nagy, Dennis George, Les Pesterfield, Mark Pickard, Sherry Powers, Sherry Reid, Angela Robertson, Donald Swoboda, William Tallon, David Zimmer

II. Minutes

The Minutes of the October 15, 2009 meeting were approved as posted. However, Chair Markham noted that Dr. Burch had not yet had a chance to approve them and any corrections she makes will be presented at the December 17, 2009 Senate meeting.

III. Reports

A. Chair, Paul Markham

Chair Markham directed senators to review the agenda attachment entitled Potential Business Items for Senate. The list was compiled based on suggestions obtained from various sources including the Faculty Welfare Survey, CAD, Administrators, and the New Senator Orientation. Highlighted items are currently under consideration by the SEC or Senate standing committees, but he added that senators should feel free to indicate any other items they would like to suggest as additional priorities.

Chair Markham provided an update about the motion made by Senator Applegate at the October 15, 2009 Senate meeting requesting the SEC to investigate WKU licensing logo issues. President Ransdell, Deborah Wilkins, and Dr. Larry Snyder attended the November 2, 2009 SEC meeting to discuss the issue. The matter is still under review by SEC due to its complex nature. Deborah Wilkins will be compiling additional data for the December SEC meeting.

B. Vice Chair, Holly Payne

No report this month.

C. Coalition of Senate Faculty Leadership for Higher Education (COSFL), Molly Kerby

Senator Kerby noted that COSFL has a representative to CPE and that the representative's minutes from the November CPE meeting are available on the WKU Senate website. She suggested that senators review the minutes and pay particular attention to the budget information related to capital projects and tuition caps.

Senator Kerby stated that she and Senator Hudepohl will be attending the next COSFL meeting scheduled for Saturday, November 21 at the CPE offices in Frankfort.

Senator Kerby stated that she is now webmaster for the COSFL website which she will link to the WKU Senate website.

D. Advisory

1. Faculty Regent, Patricia Minter

Regent Minter announced that, as was done last month, a verbatim transcript of her report will be available on the Senate website (see posted document). Regent Minter's comments focused on the October 30, 2009 WKU Board of Regents meeting. She thanked faculty and staff who participated in the protest the day of the meeting and/or signed the protest petition. She noted that the petition received 260 signatures including approximately 50 from staff. She hopes that the concerns expressed by WKU employees, WKU students, and the general public will be taken into account at the January 2010 Board of Regents Meeting at which the pay raises for Dr. Selig and Dr. Kahler will be reconsidered.

2. Provost, Barbara Burch

Provost Burch stated that there are numerous, often overlapping, committees and task forces operating at the state level. She thinks that the topics of particular emphasis include the following:

- transferability (a perceived problem whether or not it is a real one)
- general education (related to transferability of credit)
- actions to improve "efficiency" and "cost savings" (includes shorter time to degree – e.g. 3-year degree)
- accountability for student success (placement, documenting interventions, retention, graduation rates)

Provost Burch stated that though she agrees there is room for improvement in all of the noted areas, she is distressed because if a student doesn't have a focused goal on day one then the institution is penalized. She added that most educators have never believed that a student should have to know by day one. She suggested that Senate may want to issue a statement about the value of a university education and its place in the world.

Provost Burch also expressed concern about proprietary institutions and their ability to cherry pick students which in turn threatens our overall base. She also asked that faculty think about the word "efficiency" because WKU has to issue regular efficiency reports (about curriculum and other things). She noted, for instance, that we add more courses than we subtract and that some of those courses are offered infrequently. She suggested that faculty make hard choices about curriculum and still retain a comprehensive university experience.

Provost Burch next reported that she has been traveling for the last two weeks, partly as a way to secure more scholarship study abroad opportunities for students.

Finally, Provost Burch announced that "carry forward" money has been distributed but that the administration is holding some of it back until the next legislative session in case it turns out that we have to give some of it back to the state.

3. SGA President, Kevin Smiley

SGA President Smiley briefly described some current SGA activities:

- "dine with decision makers" - local state legislators to campus for dinner and free basketball
- sustainability efforts, "green teams" – doing green things on campus; e.g. greening offices; can notify Kevin if want office "greened" or Christian Ryan Downing
- scholarship programs (applications on website)
 - study abroad scholarships
 - scholar development grants – fund academic projects

SGA President Smiley also mentioned that he signed the "get real" petition to encourage legislators to reconsider the minimum drinking age because he believes that the current alcohol policy doesn't work.

IV. Standing Committee Reports

A. **Graduate Council**, Nevil Speer (Chair)

Chair Speer presented the Graduate Council report which was unanimously approved.

B. **UCC**, Julie Shadoan (Acting Chair)

Acting Chair Shadoan presented the UCC agenda which was unanimously approved.

C. **General Education**, Rich Weigel (Chair)

No report this month.

D. **Faculty Welfare&Professional Responsibility**, Jim Fulkerson & Vicki Metzgar (co-Chairs)

No report this month.

E. **Academic Quality**, Tony Harkins (Chair)

Chair Harkins stated that, contrary to a story printed in the College Heights Herald, his committee is not presenting information about the SITE evaluations today.

V. Old Business

A. Update on Provost Search (Sharon Mutter, Chair of Provost Search Committee)

Chair Mutter encouraged senators to visit the search committee website, ask questions, and provide insight to committee members. She shared the following details about the search process:

- committee received 70 applications by the October 15 deadline.
- committee has finished the initial review of applications and has whittled the pool down to 38-39 applications that meet the minimum qualifications of the job description.
- committee is currently working to generate a list of their top 15 candidates by December.
- committee will then initiate telephone interviews with those 15.
- committee plans to conduct on-campus interviews between the end of January and the end of February.
- committee will then forward their top three names to Dr. Ransdell who will make the final decision; ideally the process will be concluded by May 1.

In response to a question from the floor, Dr. Mutter indicated that the committee has permission to schedule on-campus interviews with five candidates.

B. Update on General Education Task Force (Larry Snyder, Chair of General Education Task Force)

See handout entitled, LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.

Dr. Snyder indicated that the task force is one year into what is expected to be a three-year process. He shared the following details about the progress of the task force:

- he will present Provost Burch with a task force status report next week.
- the task force will hold a variety of forums in spring 2010 to gather feedback from the wider campus community.
- any changes to general education will not be driven by issues of assessment.
- the task force supports using the LEAP principles of learning as the foundation for our general education framework (see handout). He stated that the task force and provost generally support these principles which were developed from interviews with institutions of higher education from across the U.S. Further, using such a document may prevent the Kentucky legislature from imposing a standardized general education system.
- a website providing information about task force activities and general education resources will be available by December 1, 2009 and will include a place for faculty to make comments.
- he anticipates implementing a new general education system as early as fall 2011.

Provost Burch added that she thinks it is very important to continue working on revisions to our general education program because she has no doubt that the Kentucky Legislature will attempt to impose some type of general education system statewide. She feels that the more proactive we are now, the more likely we are to have a say in how it looks.

C. Update on March 2009 Senate resolution RE: insurance reserve (See posted attachment)

Chair Markham reads the March 2009 resolution (see attachment). He then states that the outstanding issue is the drain on the insurance reserve fund. He notes that the SEC has draft a resolution, to be brought up under New Business, but wanted to give senators a chance to ask questions first.

Senator Lebedinsky raises a question about the fact that the money in the reserve fund is being invested in the stock market. He states that private insurance companies do not do that, that stocks are risky, and that if we are going to invest the money it should be in something more secure like bonds. Senator Shadoan, member of the Benefits Committee, explained that because it is in a Foundation account, it is invested like all other money in foundation accounts. She's not sure what, if any, mechanism exists by which employees could control how money in a Foundation account is invested. Regent Minter stated that in her opinion as a rank-and-file member of the Benefits committee that the money should remain where it is until it breaks even; as long as it remains there the loss that has occurred in the last year will not be realized. Once it breaks even, we should consider if we want to make any changes.

Senator Browder expressed concern about the use of funds from Workman's Compensation to offset the rise in insurance premiums this year. Senator Shadoan and Regent Minter, members of the Benefits Committee, explained that the premiums had been set too high for that account and that there were reserves available for the one-time transfer (\$1.5 million) the Benefits Committee voted on to help offset the rise in insurance premiums this year.

Senator Shadoan pointed out that we do need a long-term strategy to address the problem of cost-shifting that is going on. Insurance premiums are not going down and if we continue to have claims like we did last year it's going to be even worse. The increased and increasing cost cannot continue to be shifted to the backs of employees. We need a long-term plan to come up with alternatives. Some discussion followed.

Senator Shadoan moved for the formation of an ad-hoc committee, membership to be determined by the Senate Chair, who have relevant expertise to investigate the insurance reserve fund and the issue of cost shifting. The motion, seconded by Senator Speer, passed unanimously. The ad-hoc committee needs have its findings ready by the February meeting of the Benefits Committee. Dr. Miller added that the committee needs to remember that its results affect all employees, including staff.

VI. New Business

A. November 2009 SEC Motion regarding Health Fund Reserve Accountability

Chair Markham reads the November 2009 SEC Resolution (see posted attachment). The motion passes unanimously with no discussion.

B. Senator Keith Phillips, Biology, brought forth one issue:

He stated that the Biology Department is currently reviewing its tenure and promotion guidelines and is considering some kind of instructor or lecturer ranks. He would like the Senate bring back this issue and see if we could get something approved; the last document he saw on it was something like Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, Senior Lecturer.

Chair Markham asks if it would be acceptable to refer the matter to the Executive Committee for consideration. Senator Phillips agreed with this suggestion.

Senator Reames pointed out that this topic was addressed last year by two standing committees of Senate who each generated a long list of questions that still remain to be answered before the matter should again be considered by Senate.

Chair Markham notes that these documents and other relevant ones are, or will be, posted on the Senate Website.

The motion to refer the question of instructor ranks to the SEC was seconded and it passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kate Hudepohl, Secretary