

Faculty Regent Report

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Part II: July 28-29 Summer Retreat and Third Quarterly Meeting

On July 28, the Board of Regents held its annual retreat, with the third quarterly meeting following on July 29. You can find the agenda for the Board meeting on the 29th here:

http://www.wku.edu/regents/documents/july_29_2011_bor_meeting.pdf

At that meeting, the Board voted to approve the one percent raise for faculty and staff (with a \$500 floor and a \$1000 ceiling), approved one new athletic coach contract and two contract extensions, and acted on several curricular matters. Congratulations to Drs. Farley Norman and Robyn Swanson on their elevation to the ranks of our University Distinguished Professors.

Much of the Board's work took place at our annual retreat, held on Thursday, July 28. We heard presentations on the diversity plan, the campus master plan, and the ongoing website project, all of which were covered at yesterday's Convocation. Provost Gordon Emslie and Associate Vice-President Doug McElroy presented the "Rally for Retention"; their preliminary findings and strategy now have been communicated to the faculty through their departments and formed a part of the Convocation program. Regents had many questions for them, from skepticism or amazement about the GPA/ACT formula to the advising and registration strategies for math placement and developmental courses. One concern I raised was the need to avoid asking faculty to devote time to initiatives that either do not work or are perceived as time wasters, and their responses indicate that they understand. Many of you have contacted me with your thoughts and concerns already, so please continue to contact me.

As you are aware from President Ransdell's e-mail dated August 2, the Board is in the process of its first by-law revision in ten years. You can find the proposed revisions on his email attachment, which are mostly routine language changes. We also discussed the format for the minutes, which will not be as detailed going forward. Frankly, detailed minutes are preferable, because they are easily searchable as part of the public record and thus lead to greater transparency. Dr. Robert Owen has pledged to keep the podcasts up and available for the public and I appreciate his assistance, although it is still more challenging to listen and search than it is to search keywords.

President Ransdell's email also describes a conversation about possible term limits for faculty and staff regents. It was a lengthy discussion that did not yield a consensus on Thursday, and Board Chair Freddie Higdon declined to include it in the first reading of the revised bylaws. When the issue was raised again at the full Board meeting on Friday, Chair Higdon declined to move forward with such a proposal until faculty and staff were

consulted and had the opportunity for input. Although the podcast is not yet posted, you can listen when it is posted here: <http://www.wku.edu/regents/podcasts.php>

The following is a summary of the relevant information on the subject.

- Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) says that governor-appointed regents serve 6-yr. terms and cannot serve more than two consecutive six-year terms, and leaves open the possibility of more than two non-consecutive 6-year terms. For example, Regent Larry Zielke will have served 12 years on the board by the end of his current term. Link: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/krs/164-00/321.pdf>
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- This is the text relating to appointments for governor-appointed regents:

(2) The terms of appointed members shall be for six (6) years and until their successors are appointed and qualified, except the initial appointments to the board of regents for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System shall be as follows:

(3) New appointees of a board of regents shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. Board members serving as of May 30, 1997, may be reappointed at the end of their existing terms and may serve two (2) additional full consecutive terms.
- This is the language relating to faculty regents:

(6) (a) The faculty member of a comprehensive university shall be a teaching or research member of the faculty of his or her respective university of the rank of assistant professor or above. The faculty member shall be elected by secret ballot by all faculty members of his or her university of the rank of instructor, assistant professor, or above. The faculty member shall serve for a term of three (3) years and until his successor is elected and qualified. The faculty member shall be eligible for reelection, but he or she shall not be eligible to continue to serve as a member of the board if he or she ceases being a member of the teaching staff of the university. Elections to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term in the same manner as provided for the original election.
- Other Boards of Regents by-laws: A survey of the other Boards of Regents/Trustees by-laws at the other seven state four-year universities shows that no other state universities in Kentucky have term limits for elected faculty and staff regents. Some by-law statements refer to the relevant section of KRS 164; others quote directly from section (6) (a) above on the subject.

In summary, there are many major initiatives and proposals either under way or under consideration. As always, please contact me with any questions or comments you may have, and it remains a pleasure to represent the faculty and their concerns on the Board of Regents.