

Academic Quality Committee
Western Kentucky University

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Report to the University Senate

Date: March 1, 2015

From: Laura DeLancey, Chair

The Academic Quality committee met on February 27th, 2015, and submits the following informational report to the SEC.

1. At the January SEC meeting our committee was asked to look into an email sent to all advisors regarding courses in which students funded by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) may not enroll with the use of SACM funding.
 - a. There was concern that advisors were being told to steer these students away from the list of subject areas.
 - i. Russell Curley clarified that the email was intended only to provide information about the SACM's restrictions so that advisors could help students make informed decisions about their course selections with regard to their financial aid. As some individuals felt the intent was ambiguous, he will send an email clarification.
 - b. The committee recognizes that there are related issues of student preparedness and academic freedom which merit further discussion. However, in the absence of a specific charge to discuss these issues, WKU's arrangement with the SACM falls outside the purview of this committee.
2. Regarding WKU's relationship with the Confucius Institute and the construction of a new CI building, the committee would like more information before proceeding with any action or recommendation:
 - a. The committee would like transparency about the funding: we would like to see the contract, and to be given more details about what foundation money was repurposed to support this endeavor.
 - i. We will contact President Ransdell's office to request this information in advance of our next meeting.
 - b. The committee would like feedback from relevant parties about the relationship of the CI to WKU's academic mission.
 - i. We will contact President Ransdell, Terrill Martin, and WKU faculty and students (especially those in the Chinese Flagship, Chinese major, and Asian Studies) for statements answering the central question: *How does the Confucius Institute benefit WKU's faculty and students, and how does its presence on campus support WKU's academic mission?*
- ~~3. The Faculty Regent's Feb. 26th Senate report also noted that WKU has discontinued its membership with the American Association of Schools Colleges, and Universities. The committee is curious about the benefits of membership, our other affiliations, and the decision process behind discontinuing this membership in particular. The committee leaves it to the SEC to determine if there should be further investigation by this or another committee into these issues.~~