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May 4, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Margaret Crowder, Chair, University Senate

FROM: Gary A. Ransdell 

SUBJECT: Senate Resolutions

Thank you forwarding to me several resolutions originating in the University Senate. I will respond to each one in this reply.

- 1) Language recommendations related to the equal treatment of students policy.

I fully agree with the resolution to include "disability" and "gender identity/expression" to the list of characteristics listed in the policy and will ask that policy 1.3001 be amended accordingly.

- 2) Support of the SGA resolution in opposition to the proposed increase in the students' athletic fee.

While I am happy to receive this resolution, the final action on the tuition and fees budget for fall 2015 was approved at the Board of Regents' meeting on Friday, April 24. Faculty Regent Barbara Burch described the Senate's position in this regard and Student Regent Nicki Taylor described the position of SGA in this matter as well. As is their individual and collective prerogative, however, the 11 members of the Board often have differing views. The final vote to approve the tuition and fee schedule was 8 to 3 in favor of submitting the tuition and fee schedule as recommended by the Finance and Budget Committee of the Board following its discussion of these matters at the Finance and Budget Committee meeting on March 27. There are a couple of points that deserve clarification in this regard. This action, which includes the two fee adjustments for Athletics and Student Activities, relates only to the FY 2015-16 budget. This action does not constitute an automatic increase in future years. Any future increases would need to be reviewed and acted upon in any future annual budget. Secondly, this action in no way limits academic departments or even entire colleges from implementing academic course fees or other fees relative to meeting cost demands in given disciplines, departments, or colleges. Those actions are typically handled through appropriate academic circles and approved by the Provost.

- 3) The next series of recommendations were related to the Confucius Institute.

I have complied with every request which has come to my attention from anyone who wished to make a recommendation regarding the Confucius Institute. Two deans (Sam Evans and David Lee) serve on the Confucius Institute Board of Directors. Two members of the faculty (Janet Applin and John Gottfried) are serving as a committee to help determine how the new Confucius Institute building will be conceived, built, and utilized going forward. Three faculty (Martha Day, Laura McGee, and Qin Zhao) will serve as an advisory committee for the Confucius Institute and its programming, funding, and general operations going forward. The other recommendation dealt with adding a position to the Steering Committee and fill it with a member of the Asian Studies faculty. It is my belief that three members of the committee is sufficient, and I valued the input of both Deans in determining who is best to serve in an advisory capacity to the Confucius Institute. I have also shared with the Academic Quality Committee of the Senate the contract which I signed in December related to funding for the new building. I have, therefore, completed two of these three recommendations (created an advisory steering committee and expanded faculty input into the plans for the new building). The building, by the way, like any other building on our campus is, of course, open to use by any group on campus. The Confucius Institute staff will set up a means through which anyone on campus can reserve the building for appropriate programmatic use.

The other recommendation that I am not prepared to do is alter the campus reporting structure. Dr. Wei-Ping Pan serves as the Assistant to the President for Chinese Relations. This is a part-time position which also includes Dr. Pan's role as Director of the Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institute reports directly to me. I enjoy my work with the Confucius Institute and with Hanban and choose not to relinquish that direct engagement. I have personally worked diligently over the last several years to build a strong relationship with Madame Xu Lin, the Director General of Hanban, and will continue to do so.

As I have indicated in previous communiqués, the Confucius Institute is a programmatic element and should not be directly engaged in matters related to curriculum and academic course content. Yes, Hanban has funded a couple of positions in the Department of Modern Languages, but was not involved in the selection, appointment, or academic orientation with either of those faculty positions. Those positions, much like dozens of privately funded faculty positions across campus, are beneficiaries of the financial support from a private benefactor. The benefactor, however, (in this case Hanban) does not affect, to my knowledge, the content of their teaching or their courses.

The Teacher Certification program is entirely under the guidance of the Dean and faculty in the College of Education. I have confidence in Dean Evans and his faculty and staff to properly administer the Kentucky Teacher Certification dynamics through the Department of Education and the Education Practice Standards Board for Kentucky.

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Our U.S. relationship with China, in my opinion, is our most important international dynamic. Most of our global challenges will be easier to address if we can work with China in positive ways. It is incumbent on us to work with China to find solutions—from the economy to the environment. I intend to help guide the Confucius Institute in constructive ways which help our students engage China in thoughtful ways.

Please communicate this response as you deem appropriate. Thank you for the Senate's continuing engagement in these and so many other important matters. Your recommendations are appreciated.

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xc: Dr. Gordon Emslie, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs