

**Faculty Satisfaction Regarding Heating and Cooling of Facilities at WKU**  
**Results of a survey during the 2015/2016 academic year**

History:

During the 2015/6 academic year the Budget and Finance Committee of the WKU University Senate raised the issue the WKU policy and procedure on heating and cooling of campus buildings based on a feeling that many faculty and students experience times where their workspaces and classrooms are set at a temperature that is uncomfortable and detrimental to a productive working and learning environment. A subcommittee of the Budget and Finance Committee met with staff from facilities management (DFM Director Trent Blair, Fiscal Manager Angie Jackson, and sustainability Coordinator Christian Ryan) to start an investigation. Facilities management told us that they would like to see data to see where the current policies need improvements. Thus, the committee decided that as a next step we needed to collect information. After a lengthy discussion we decided to proceed with an online survey conducted as part of a student project (by Quintin Wright, Austin Young, Zach Scannell, and Michael Noble) under the direction of Dr. Lauren McClain (Department of Sociology). This report presents the results of this study to the WKU University Senate for further action.

Summary of Results:

The survey went out to faculty via the faculty-all listserv. Faculty who work primarily on Main Campus were eligible to participate. Two hundred faculty members participated in our survey, 196 of these work on Main Campus, 170 are full-time faculty (22% of all full-time faculty). There was participation across all colleges of the university. The results of this survey are not necessarily representative of all faculty on Main Campus, however, they can give us a sense of satisfaction/dissatisfaction among those who responded.

About 1/3 stated they spend between 30-39 hours in their professional work space and about 1/3 stated they spend more than 40 hours in their professional work space. About 100 faculty members stated they routinely spend time on the weekend in their professional workspace. About 120 stated they leave their professional workspace routinely after 4pm, with 80 leaving their professional workspace routinely after 5pm. About 150 claimed that they perform over 60% of their work on campus. About 50% or more of all respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statements:

- My classrooms are typically a comfortable temperature.

- My office is a comfortable temperature in the fall (47.09%), spring (59.16%), summer (62.94%), winter (56.32%).

Almost 50% agreed with the following statement:

-I find it hard to work in my office on weekends because of the temperature.

-My students complain about the temperature in the classroom (55.63%)

The details of the questionnaire and the actual answers totals are given in an attachment to this report. In addition, comments faculty gave that address particular complaints about actual buildings are included.

#### Recommendation:

The outcome of this survey shows that there is discontent with the current policies on heating and cooling on campus and that, particularly for older buildings, these concerns need to be addressed. While it sounds impressive when WKU states how much energy was saved, there is a price that is paid for this – lost productivity and reduced faculty morale. Clearly there must be a balance between energy savings and creating comfortable working conditions.

Does student learning decline if the classroom is too hot or cold? How much does research output decline if a professor will stop working after hours because there is no comfortable place to conduct work? It is not possible to attach a dollar amount to these issues. We need a system that recognizes that – unlike most staff members - faculty members do not always work between 8:00am and 5:00pm. We need a system that is more flexible to accommodate academic work.

We strongly recommend that the administration revise their heating and cooling policies to accommodate faculty and students better and to take heed of building-by-building comments to address the physical needs of each to facilitate more comfortable working conditions.

We have several particular areas where the current policy must be improved based on our investigation:

1. We were told that ASTRA is updated only twice a week and that this is done by hand. Even after requesting this information, we were not given the information on which days of the week the ASTRA update occurs. That means if a faculty member requests a room via ASTRA for an after hours study session we do not know how many days in advance this request needs to be made. Clearly more transparency is needed.

2. The current policy that addresses temperature issues after hours are inadequate. Facilities management told the subcommittee that the current policy requires to call 911 (campus police) if we feel that we need temperature adjustment after hours. Campus police may then call somebody who may or may not be able to adjust the temperature in a particular room via an online system. Clearly there is a better way of doing this.

3. Sometimes when a faculty member calls Facilities Management about a temperature issue, the issue remains unresolved. On occasion disagreements occur as Facilities Management staff seem unwilling to recognize that there may be a problem with the heating/cooling systems. We believe that there should be a better way to resolve such issues collaboratively.

4. It is clear from the comments that certain buildings are particularly uncomfortable. We recommend that each building be assessed for unique heating/cooling issues. For example, some people say that their buildings are extremely cold while others report their buildings are extremely hot. Others report mold/mildew conditions while others report disruptions to class and concentration due to how loud the heating/cooling system is. Given the number of buildings on campus and the varying ages of each, we recommend that buildings be given priority for updates in this area.

Respectfully submitted:

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