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Faculty Senate Minutes, Nov. 2, 1998

Eastern Kentucky University, Faculty Senate

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The Faculty Senate of Eastern Kentucky University met on Monday, November 2, 1998 in Hiram Brock Auditorium. Senate Chair Karen Janssen called the third meeting of the academic year to order at 3:30 p.m.

Motion to Recess the Faculty Senate

Senator Harley moved that the Faculty Senate take a brief recess so that the Faculty-at-Large can meet, with the Senate reconvening immediately after the Faculty-at-Large meeting. Senator Goodwin seconded the motion, which was approved.

Meeting of the Faculty-at-Large

President Kustra called the meeting of the Faculty-at-Large to order. The Faculty-at-Large approved the following amendments to the Organization of the Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Senate:

- I. Change Section VII B (Membership of the Senate) to read:
 1. The membership of the Senate shall consist of representatives of the administrative faculty members. The administrative members shall be:
 - a. President of the University
 - b. Vice President for Academic Affairs
 - c. One Academic Dean to be elected by the Deans of the Academic Colleges, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the Graduate School, and Director of Libraries
 - d. Faculty Regent
 2. Delete Section VII B.2.b from the Senate rules
 3. Delete Section VII B.2.j from the Senate rules
 4. Delete Section VII C.1 from the Senate rules
 5. Change Section VII C.2.b (Chair of the Senate) to read:
 - a. The Chair of the Senate shall preside at meetings of the Senate. In the absence of the Chair of the Senate a member of the Executive Committee appointed by the Chair of the Senate shall preside.
 6. Change Section VII IX (Amendments) to read:

Amendments to this organization may be proposed by the Faculty Senate by a two-thirds majority of the members present or by petition of 10 percent of the Faculty-at-Large. Proposed amendments shall be presented to the Chair of the Faculty-at-Large, who will cause copies of the proposed amendments to be distributed to the Faculty-at-Large. Proposed amendments approved by two-thirds majority of those present at a meeting of the Faculty-at-Large shall be submitted to the Board of Regents through the President of the University and shall become effective on ratification by the Board of Regents.

Reconvening of the Faculty Senate

The following members of the Senate were absent:

R. Baugh	J. Culross	M. Myers*
J. Beck*	K. Dilka*	T. Myers
E. Caldwell*	V. Falkenberg	L. Tyson
S. Butler	M. McAdam	D. Whitlock
C. Nelson*	J. Clark	D. Feltner
R. Rogow	G. Cordner*	K. Henson
D. Whitlock		

* Indicates prior notification to the Senate Secretary

Among the visitors to the Senate were: Alyssa Bramlage, Eastern Progress, and Dr. Kirk Jones, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Inflation along with members of the committee.

Approval of the Minutes

Senator Janssen called for additions or corrections to the minutes of October 5, 1998. There being none, the minutes were approved as distributed.

Report from the President: Senator Kustra

President Kustra commented that the vote of the Faculty-at-Large for reorganization of the Faculty Senate was not intended to draw a line between the faculty and administration, but to present a different way of defining and configuring the Faculty Senate which is similar to governance at many other universities. The administration will continue to play a role in the Faculty Senate as the University moves forward.

Dr. Kustra stated that he is engaged in continuing discussion in Frankfort and across the state with his fellow university presidents on a variety of issues, especially the issue of dormitory sprinklers. Eastern's Board of Regents has authorized the university to fund sprinklers by using a combination of revenue sources—reserve funds and eventually the issuing of agency bonds. Thus Eastern, unlike several Kentucky universities, has a viable sprinkler plan which complies with the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) concerns. There is a possibility that the state might fund the sprinklers, rather than each institution being completely responsible.

At a recent meeting of Kentucky public university presidents, the apparent inequity in the establishment of endowed professorships between the research institutions and the comprehensive universities such as Eastern was discussed. President Kustra and other presidents of comprehensive universities feel that they must be more forceful in presenting their needs to the CPE. Dr. Kustra mentioned that the CPE will soon grant authority to university Boards of Regents to set their own tuition which will help Eastern to meet its future budgetary needs better.

Currently there is a battle going on in Kentucky as to who will dictate policy for higher education. Will the tradition of governance through the state legislature in which each institution engages in political power plays continue or will there be a more rational approach to budgeting and other processes in which the higher educational community through the CPE not the legislature determines resource allocation? Dr. Kustra emphasized that Eastern must be prepared to follow either approach.

President Kustra stated that he enjoyed the lively debate on the subject of grade inflation in which the Senate participated in last month. He appreciated the diversity of ideas and opinions and the genuine sincerity and concern about improving the quality of academics on campus. The President was particularly interested in the problem of late withdrawals and would be willing to discuss a reasonable approach to it.

Dr. Kustra had his first meeting in Frankfort on the budget. This is the second year of the biennium and thus there is a limited opportunity to make any major changes. However, Eastern will have a chance to set some new priorities with existing funds. The President expressed his desire to work with various campus constituencies in establishing priorities. In Eastern's efforts to play ball with Frankfort and to be good citizens within the higher education community, Dr. Kustra concluded that we to some extent have underpriced ourselves, our product, and what we stand for at this university. During his brief tenure at Eastern he has observed there are some very real needs that have gone unmet which has hampered the institution's ability to provide a quality education to students.

Report of the Executive Committee and Senate Chair: Senator Janssen

Senator Janssen reported that the Executive Committee met on October 19 and discussed arrangements for the Faculty-at-Large meeting and the Faculty Regent election. The committee also discussed the Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Inflation report and the university withdrawal policy. The Executive Committee suggested a variety of possible changes to the withdrawal policy and potential benefits for students that the whole Senate might wish to explore. Dr. Gordon Davies, President of the Council on Postsecondary Education, will be a guest speaker at the Senate's December 7th meeting.

Report from the COSFL Representative: Senator Sowders

Senator Sowders reported that COSFL met at the University of Kentucky on October 24, with Dr. Gordon Davies, president of the Council on Postsecondary Education, as guest. Before the meeting all COSFL members had been alerted to examine three documents from CPE (Dr.

Davies' "Remarks to the Governor's Conference on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship," "Strategic Implementation Planning," and "Streamlining Academic Program Policies").

Dr. Davies responded to several questions concerning such issues as the level of faculty involvement in CPE planning, turf battles, the problem of matching funds, and problems related to keeping the cost of tuition down as well as a question about what proportion of the cost should be paid by students and what proportion by the state. Another issue was the need for a study of low salaries at some state institutions, the need to raise money in the base, the relationship between CPE and the legislature, problems with the Commonwealth Scholarship program, and, in general, the relationship of K-12 to higher education. Other questions dealt with the degree of CPE control of academic processes and the desire for CPE to provide incentives for cooperation among universities. Final questions were asked concerning the Virtual University and support of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action.

Anyone desiring more details about the meeting can contact Senator Sowders, or Senators Janssen or Sherry Jones. All the senators have copies of the three documents mentioned above plus a copy of "2020 Vision: An Agenda for Kentucky's Systems of Postsecondary Education." All of these documents are on the CPE website (www.cpe.state.ky.us).

Reports from Standing Committees

Committee on Elections: Senator McAdam

Senator McAdam reported that the committee has been very busy arranging the election of a new Faculty Regent by the January Board of Regents meeting. The committee has been communicating to the faculty through a variety of vehicles a call for nominations. In addition the committee made contact the Chairs to review who on their faculty is eligible to vote.

Below is a timetable for the Regent election:

November 11 - Nomination petitions due

November 17 & 18 Have forums Tuesday and Wednesday (Contingent on the candidate's schedules)

November 19 - Ballots get mailed

December 1 - Ballots returned

December 4 - Second ballot goes out if necessary

December 10 - Second ballot due back

December 14 - Second ballot checked and counted

Reports from Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Inflation: Dr. Kirk Jones

Dr. Jones distributed copies of the committee's summary report with recommendations and motions. He explained the methodology and survey procedures. Grade related data from 7,000 ECU students covering the years 1983 to 1996 were analyzed with a demonstrated 2/10th rise in

GPA over the period. Dr. Jones stated, like many other institutions across the country, grade inflation exists at Eastern. He discussed four significant areas of statistical analysis extracted from the committee's larger report: GPA Rise per Year, Statistically Significant Rise Relative to the Base Year of 1983, Faculty Grade Inflation Survey–Selected Results, and Aggregate Undergraduate EKU Grade Information.

Motion 1

On behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Inflation Dr. Jones recommended that the following three recommendations be sent to the administration:

Recommendation 1:

Implement the Motion passed by the Faculty Senate (February 1, 1993) for the plus and minus grading with the following numerical equivalents:

A 4.00 B- 2.67 D+ 1.33
A- 3.67 C+ 2.33 D 1.00
B+ 3.33 C 2.00 D- .67
B 3.00 C- 1.67 F 0.00

Recommendation 2:

Re-evaluate the meaning of grades in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Recommendation 3:

Increase tangible resources (tutoring labs, tutors, peer counselors, scholarships, graders) to retain students.

Senator Rink moved approval of the recommendations. Senator Taylor seconded the motion.

Considerable debate ensued. A statement was made that the University of Kentucky adopted and subsequently dropped a plus and minus system because of faculty and student concerns. Dr. Jones was asked if the committee contacted University of Kentucky officials? He replied that it had not. Senator Anderson wondered if the plus and minus system was for both undergraduate and graduate classes. According to the 1993 proposal both would come under the system.

Senator Flanagan asked if the committee considered the effect the new policy would have on the university's repeat policy for students who receive a C- in a major that requires a C grade? Senator Gale responded that the College of Allied Health and Nursing does not accept a C-. When asked about the probability of administrative action, Senator Kustra stated that he liked the proposal because it provides a more exact way for a professor to evaluate the work of a student. Senator Kustra also mentioned that he very much sees the need for recommendation 3 in order to improve student retention and pledges adequate institutional resources for its implementation.

Other issues such as the adequacy of the computing system to handle this proposal, the need for all colleges to maintain the same grading system in order to avoid potential student dissension, an understanding that if the policy is adopted all faculty must use it without permitting any options, and the need to place all students at the same time under the same system were discussed. The motion was approved.

Motion 2

Senator Rink moved to "require the University definitions for the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F to be an element on every course syllabus." Senator Harley seconded that motion. Senator Yoder offered an amendment to the motion to "require the University definitions for the letter grades to be an element on every course syllabus." Senator Rink seconded the amendment. The amendment was approved. In discussion Senator Bright stated he favored the plus and minus system but was not in favor of putting it on the syllabus. He felt there were other means of publicizing the system to students. Senator Quillen expressed concern over a troublesome tendency to keep adding more and more information to syllabi which students could obtain from other sources. The amended motion was rejected.

Motion 3

Senator Rink moved to "place a moratorium on the use of student evaluation of instruction for at least three years for the purposes of merit pay, and tenure and promotion." Senator McCord seconded the motion. Senator Sowders of the English Department, stated that her department had a problem with the last part of the motion (the tenure and promotions decisions). The basis of concern was that it would be unfair to the faculty member seeking tenure and the promotion and tenure committee to suspend student evaluations and thus change the process in the middle of the stream. Senator Sowders moved to amend the motion and eliminate "and tenure and promotion." Senator Anderson seconded the motion. Dr. Jones stated that nearly 40 percent of the tenure track faculty who responded to the Faculty Grade Inflation Survey indicated they were concerned on how they assigned course grades would effect tenure decisions. And according to the survey, about 30 percent of the assistant and associate professor ranks who responded expressed concern about the implications of assigned grades and future promotions. Dr. Jones commented that the committee felt the inclusion of tenure and promotion was necessary in order to alleviate some faculty concerns over how course grades are assigned which might influence student evaluations and monetary reward. Further discussion ensued over what instruments will be used to evaluate faculty if student evaluation of instruction is suspended for promotion and tenure decisions. Senator Miller moved to table the motions for discussion at the December 7th meeting. Senator Taylor seconded the motion, which was approved.

Report from the Council on Academic Affairs: Senator Enzie

Senator Enzie moved approval of a proposal from the Council on Academic Affairs to change the name of the Department of Human Environmental Sciences to Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Senator Gale seconded the motion, which was approved.

Senator Enzie moved approval of a proposal from the Council on Academic Affairs to suspend three minors in the Department of Foreign Languages and Humanities (Minor in French Teaching, Minor in German Teaching, and Minor in Spanish Teaching). Senator Quillen seconded the motion, which was approved.

Adjournment

Senator Enzie moved that the Senate adjourn. It adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Charles C. Hay III Faculty Senate Secretary