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Faculty Senate Minutes, Oct. 15, 1998

Eastern Kentucky University, Faculty Senate

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The Faculty Senate of Eastern Kentucky University met on Monday, October 15, 1998 in the South Room of the Keen Johnson Building. Senate Chair Karen Janssen called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

The following members of the Senate were absent:

E. Baldwin*	S. Gakpo	R. Rogow
D. Batch*	M. LeVan	S. Strong
R. Baugh*	S. Long*	L. Tyson
S. Butler	M. McAdam	D. Whitlock
J. Clark	T. Myers	C. Yang*
J. Culross	M. Patrick	W. Farrar
D. Robinette*		

* denotes prior notification of absence to the Faculty Senate Secretary

Visitors to the Senate were:

Stephanie McSpirit, Anthropology, Sociology and Social Work; Alyssa Bramlage, Eastern Progress; Richard Chen, Accounting; Ann Chapman, Administration, Counseling, and Educational Studies; Paula Kopacz, English; Kirk Jones, Mathematics/Statistics/Computer Science.

Approval of the Minutes

Senator Janssen called for additions or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes from the September 14th meeting were approved.

Report from the President: Senator Kustra

President Kustra reported on a recent meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) he attended in Frankfort. After some debate, which centered on questions of accountability, the CPE approved guidelines for the distribution of money for university endowed professorships and research chairs. Of the allotted \$110 million for the program, regional universities will receive \$10 million to share and match. Dr. Kustra also mentioned that Eastern was approved by the CHE to establish one program of distinction—the College of Law Enforcement's Justice and Safety program.

Senator Kustra thanked everyone for participating in his Installation ceremonies. It was a celebration of EKV. Senator Kustra's family and friends really enjoyed the opportunity to meet the EKV community.

Due to the tragic fire at Murray State University, Dr. Kustra has been looking at campus sprinkler systems. Currently there are no sprinklers in fourteen of EKV's residence halls. These buildings were built when the fire code didn't require them, but EKV must bear some financial responsibility for upgrading. Senator Kustra has presented a plan to Council on Postsecondary

Education President Davies to pool together the costs of all the Universities, go to the legislature next spring, and have them make a separate appropriation that brings everybody up to safety standards of today. However, the Council on Postsecondary Education has asked Eastern to gather data with the idea that the institution may have to bear the cost, which is approximately \$5 million. It would be spread over three to five years, because work can only be done when students are not in the dormitories.

Senator Kustra said other alternatives for funding have been explored. For example, a combination of funding that wouldn't come down too hard on any one constituency. One idea being considered is the use of agency bonds. Any use of agency bonds would necessitate an increase in dorm fees. However, Eastern has some of the lowest dorm fees in Kentucky. Vice President Jim Clark will be meeting in Frankfort to make our case.

Another issue that Senator Kustra is looking at is retention. Work has been done on this issue in the past. He is in the process of reviewing committee reports, talking to people who studied the issue, and looking over previous recommendations. Senator Kustra would like to convene a group of interested parties. Sooner or later EKV will be evaluated on this issue, and it is important that Senator Kustra get as many ideas as possible so that he can understand all the nuances of the issue. He would like a collective effort by the faculty to come up with a plan. There may be a need to set admission standards at some point. First, the institution must address retention and then admission requirements.

Report of the Executive Committee and Senate Chair: Senator Janssen

On Monday, September 14, 1998 the Executive Committee met with all members present. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing how to get all of the faculty together, at one time and place, to vote on the motions passed by Faculty Senate to amend the rules of our organization. The decision was to recommend to the President of the Faculty-at-Large that we meet on November 2 at 3:30 in Brock Auditorium in the Coates Building. Members of the Senate need to bring all of the faculty members that they represent. There will be refreshments in the lobby. Following the vote on the motions, Faculty Senate members will stay in Brock for our regular meeting.

The December 7th meeting will have a special guest speaker. The President of the Council of Postsecondary Education, Dr. Gordon Davis. Extra chairs will be available for faculty guests who would like to hear President Davis.

Because of Senate's rather large printing expenditures, the minutes will be mailed to Senators just once. If you do not receive the minutes or misplace them please go to the Faculty Senate Web site to obtain them. You can find the Faculty Senate Web site after clicking on Academics on the EKV home page.

The Academic Affairs Vice President Search Committee is meeting to screen the more than 90 applicants to a much smaller number, so that committee members can call references. The Committee is pleased with the excellent response to the position announcement. The applicants are from around the world and from a variety of academic backgrounds. There are many

interesting and well-qualified applicants. The goal is to have from three to five candidates on campus for faculty to meet.

All Senators were encouraged to inform Executive Committee members of concerns and issues. Senator Janssen requested that she be contacted by e-mail, phone, or campus mail if she can be of assistance. The next Executive Committee meeting was scheduled for October 19th.

Report of the Faculty Regent: Senator Miller for Senator Fleming

Faculty Regent Fleming is on sabbatical this semester. She will attend the Board of Regents meeting on October 30th. She is in communication with the faculty via email. Her email address is: mary@amstat.org.

A significant amount of time was spent discussing the student campus experience, including dormitories and opportunities for improving campus life. The need for a wellness center for students, staff, and faculty was discussed with general assent that this was a needed improvement to the campus. President Kustra reviewed items arising from a meeting he had with student representatives, including Student Regent Adam Back and other campus leaders. Items that arose out of the Presidential Search Criteria were reviewed, as well as material from the annual meeting of the Association of Governing Boards. The meeting was constructive and informative with general assent that the format was a good one and should be continued at future retreats. It was agreed that the Board needed additional information during the decision-making process and that a time would be set aside during each regular meeting to take a longer look at one aspect of campus life.

Report from the COSFL Representative: Senator Sowders

COSFL has not yet met yet this fall. The first meeting is Saturday, October 24th.

Report from the Student Senate: Mr. Adam Back

No report given.

Reports from Standing Committees

Committee on Elections: Senator McAdam

No report given.

Committee on Committees: Senator Taylor

No report given.

Committee on the Rules: Senator McCord

No report given.

Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities: Senator Rink

The Committee on the Budget held its first meeting of 1998-99 on October 5, 1998, at 10:30 am in the Faculty Club of the Keen Johnson Building. Senator Richard Rink was asked to chair this committee with all the members in attendance agreeing to this request.

The Faculty Senate Chair addressed the members on the opportunities that the committee has with future input on the university budget as well as giving consideration to broadening the committee's mission within the Faculty Senate.

Reports from Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committee on Grade Inflation: Dr. Ann Chapman

The complete report was given to all senators, and the contents were reported by Dr. Chapman.

The committee analyzed a random sample of 7000 student records entering the University between the fall of 1983 and the fall of 1996. The students GPA's were analyzed during the following points: after their first semester, during the semester which they obtained 44 hours, and after graduation. At each point the data was analyzed according to the students incoming ability level as measured by the ACT. The groups were divided into ACT: less than 17, 17-22 and greater than 22. The committee also analyzed a Faculty survey.

From the beginning, the committee has had two main concerns: 1) is grade inflation real or only a false perception and 2) if grade inflation is real, what is the impact on students. The committee overwhelmingly believes grade inflation is real. Addressing the second question, the committee concluded the high achieving students who are most hurt; but, all students suffer. Students may never develop their potential if they are not challenged in college.

The committee has three recommendations to put before the Senate.

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

A 4.00 B- 2.68 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
2. Re-evaluate the meaning of grades in the Undergraduate Catalog.
3. Increase tangible resources (tutoring labs, tutors, peer counselors, scholarships, graders) to retain students.

The motions that will be made at the next meeting are as follows:

1. Require the University definitions for the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F to be an element of every course syllabus.
2. 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 decisions.
3. Change the criteria for graduation with honors, the Dean's List, and the President's Award.
4. Make course GPAs and grade distributions, together with students' current term GPAs and composite ACTs readily available to all faculty within a given department.
5. Institute grade indexing for classes enrolling 8 or more students.

In the discussion about the report, Senator Levine asked why the plus/minus system was not previously implemented. Dr. Enzie reported that the computer software was a problem in accepting the plus/minuses. Dr. Falkenburg also mentioned there was a problem with the graduate level. Another Senator pointed out that U.K. had tried the plus/minus system and didn't like it.

Senator Carter mentioned that the withdrawal policies contributed to grade inflation. Senator Beck concurred and pointed out that the lenient policies allowed students who were not doing well to withdraw from the class thus raising the overall GPA of the class.

Senator Falkenburg commented that the data could mean that our developmental program works. Grade inflation may be a natural outflow of improved teaching. In addition, most graduate schools look at GPA as one minor factor in admission decisions. More attention is given to GMAT or GRE because they are nationally standardized. Senator Denham pointed out that we need a measure of evaluation for students using the tutorial resources. We don't want to penalize students if they raise their grade. Senator Beck commented that we are a teaching college not a research college. We may have a far more dedicated teaching faculty since that is our primary purpose. He also asked what type of grade inflation goes on at other institutions.

Senator Cordner pointed out that the faculty survey said that faculty believe grade inflation exists. Senator Taylor commented that often we see grade inflation as a problem; but, think it's not me. He also stated that he opposed removing student evaluations. In response, Senator Chapman said we can continue student evaluations; but just don't use them for personnel decisions. Senator Biesinger offered that departments differ in their reasons for promotion. The student evaluations can be used to manipulate the system; however, it depends on the departments emphasis. Also, he wanted to agree with previous speakers about the withdrawal policy. He felt there would be many more D's and F's in his classes if the withdrawal policy was not so lenient. Senator McCord asked if any distinction had been made between part-time and full-time faculty. Kirk Jones said they didn't attempt to single out any one group of faculty. Senator Feltus pointed out the pressure to give higher grades because other faculty members are giving higher grades, especially in a situation where there are multiple sections of a course.

Senator Janssen asked for a round of applause for the work the committee has done.

Adjournment

Senator Enzie moved that the Senate adjourn. It adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Margaret M. Willingham for Charles C. Hay III Faculty Senate Secretary