

Faculty at regional universities upset by budget news

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Teachers learn they won't get catch-up funds

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whether it comes as a fringe benefit or salary?" he asked.

"What's significant," he said, "is that of the nearly \$2.7 million for faculty in the first year (of the biennium), \$1.4 million goes to the five regional universities."

Owsley told the committee members that council data show that the regional schools are already closer to the median of their "benchmark" schools on total compensation than UK or its community colleges.

Preliminary figures for the present year, he added, show that faculty at UK's community colleges receive only 91 percent of median total compensation at their benchmarks. Faculty at UK's Lexington campus only get 94 percent of their median, while those at other schools receive percentages closer to their medians, he said.

The budget allocates \$1.2 million in salary catch-up money for UK and its community colleges next year and \$71,252 for U of L faculty. None was allocated for NKU.

The budget calls for cost-of-living salary increases to average 7.5 percent in 1980-81 for faculty and staff and 9 percent in 1981-82.

The legislature appropriated the catch-up and retirement-equity money to the council. That agency will allocate the 1980-81 portions of the funds to the campuses when it meets next week in Frankfort.

By RICHARD WILSON
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FRANKFORT, Ky. — Faculty members at five of Kentucky's regional universities won't directly share in "catch-up" salary money appropriated by the General Assembly.

Catch-up funds allocated for the next two years for faculty at Eastern Kentucky, Western Kentucky, Morehead State, Murray State and Kentucky State universities are earmarked to reduce their retirement contributions to a level comparable with those at the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville and Northern Kentucky University.

That revelation surprised some members of the state Council on Higher Edu-

cation's faculty advisory committee in a meeting in Frankfort yesterday.

The committee meets periodically with Harry Snyder, executive director of the council, and his staff.

Some committee members said they were under the impression that the legislature had been asked for — and had allocated funds for — three specific faculty benefits at all of the state universities.

Those were cost-of-living salary increases, the "catch-up funds" to bring their average salaries closer to those of professors at comparable schools in surrounding states, and retirement equity for the regional schools.

But Snyder and Larry Owsley, the council's deputy executive director for finance, said the proposed catch-up allo-

what we said," Snyder shot back during a heated exchange with Matarazzo.

"Don't say that I misunderstood anything you said. That's a bunch of crap," Matarazzo answered.

Snyder said he resented the implication that he, or his staff, had misled the faculty committee.

"Higher education did better this time than we've ever done in my memory.... It's because we all worked together," he said.

A statewide faculty group had worked hard for the council's funding proposal — and later Gov. John Y. Brown Jr.'s proposed higher education budget — primarily because it believed funds were contained for the three specific benefits, said Steve West of Murray and

Tom Jones of Western Kentucky University.

Jones, head of a state group of faculty-senate leaders, spearheaded a letter-writing campaign by faculty members and a lobbying effort with the legislature and the administration for passage of the budget.

"How do you think we feel when we see most of the money in the catch-up pool going to UK?" Jones asked.

Snyder and Owsley contended that the retirement-equalization program would increase gross earnings for faculty at the five affected regional schools.

Faculty members at those schools are members of the Kentucky Teachers Retirement System. Historically, they have paid more of their salaries for retirement than their counterparts at UK, U

of L and NKU, which are under a different retirement program.

Under the 1980-82 budget, the state will pick up an additional 2.215 percent of the regional faculty members' retirement contributions, which will reduce their individual contributions from 7.84 percent of their salaries to 5.625 percent.

The state's cost for this equalization is \$1.4 million in 1980-81 and \$1.5 million in 1981-82.

Snyder later acknowledged the confusion surrounding the issue.

"I guess the question is: Does the individual faculty member get the increase

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Plans were intended from the start to be based on total faculty compensation, which included fringe benefits, not just salaries.

Owsley said that approach was taken because of a wide disparity in fringe-benefit programs among the universities.

"I've never heard the explanation that I've heard today. Maybe you people drifted in the middle of the stream when you went to lobby (with the legislature)," said S. M. Matarazzo of Murray State University.

Matarazzo accused Snyder of not providing the faculty group with accurate information on the budget proposal.

Maybe this has something to do with what you thought you heard, not with