

STATE OF THE SENATE ADDRESS HIGHLIGHTS APRIL MEETING

The April meeting was opened with a "State of the Senate" address by Chair Tom Jones. The address is included in its entirety elsewhere in this newsletter.

Ron Veenker was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Joan Kronz was elected to the positions of Vice-Chair and Parliamentarian. Both elections were by unanimous ballot.

Senator Linda Pulsinelli of the By-Laws, Amendments and Elections Committee introduced two new Senators: Robert Martin from Foreign Language and Larry Hauser from Psychology.

Jim Parks, Chair of the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee, reported that his committee is continuing to review promotion policies and alternative methods of lobbying for higher salaries. The committee is also beginning the study of health benefits and the amount of experience credit and academic credit gained elsewhere that faculty members are allotted when they begin work at W.K.U.

Senator Miller of the Institutional Goals and Planning Committee reported briefly on the open hearing held recently to allow discussion of the Lucas resolution concerning the department chair concept.

Chairman Jones announced the appointment of two ad hoc committees. They were the Committee on University Emeritus Faculty Relations, headed by Herb Shadowen, and the Committee on Social Functions, headed by Pat Bowen.

Finally, Senator Buckman reported on several items, including the Council on Higher Education's proposal to the legislature regarding parity funding for KTRS contributions. Senator Buckman urged members to make rather specific written responses to him regarding the presidential candidates so that he might have some information to give the board on faculty opinion. He also mentioned that he and Senate Chair Tom Jones had met with the L.R.C. to discuss faculty concerns, such as salaries and regional university autonomy.

STATE OF THE SENATE SPEECH

by Tom Jones, Chair

I do not wish to seem pretentious in delivering a state of the Senate speech, but it is becoming a fine old tradition that a newly elected Senate chair make some remarks at the first meeting following election. Last year, I made a brief talk in which I quoted from psychiatrist Thomas Szasz concerning the power of definition in human affairs. I suggested that our--the Senate's--early years would be years during which we could allow others to define us, or we could define ourselves, and that the best self-definition comes from action. Well, my esteemed colleagues, it seems to me that the state of this Senate is, it's just fine--we



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STATE OF THE SENATE SPEECH

have defined ourselves. Let me elaborate. We were a newborn baby two-and-one-half years ago: conceived as an embryo by a faculty ad hoc committee, nourished perhaps reluctantly by a presidentially appointed committee, and delivered hollering and screaming by a ratifying Board of Regents.

None of us is handed a packet of rules and instructions at birth, titled "How to Get Through Life;" neither was the Faculty Senate handed more than rudimentary--and vague--rules in the form of our Senate constitution. That is, this baby's packet of instructions was an all-encompassing preamble which said that, to get through our life, we could advise folk on any matter of university policy. Faculty Senate I took that preamble to imply that we could advise leadership at the top--through evaluation of administrators--that here and there there was an administrator who lacked--and in many cases enjoyed--the full confidence of the faculty--the people that administrators are employed to lead.

Faculty Senate I--the baby--crawled vigorously and, as I said a year ago, the administrator evaluation was certainly not the only thing achieved by that baby. By no means: there were several reports and resolutions of significance. Then Faculty Senate II--it seems to me--got richly fed from several committee nipples, and the baby became rapidly an adolescent--or at least pubescent--and that adolescent still maintains that it is a proper function of itself to advise about good and bad administrators. But we have done other things. I would not want to single out individual committee chairs--or the work of committees--for praise. But while the full Faculty Senate has begun to find a definition for this body of--now--63 members, it has been able to do so primarily because the activities of our several standing and appointed committees have been everywhere visible to the faculty at large, to the administration and Board of Regents, to the community, and, through the Congress of Senate Faculty Leaders, to the commonwealth itself. We have, in short, been everywhere in action.

This is a period of transition for Western Kentucky University. The University will have a new president. And, if I may speak as an elected member of the Presidential Search Committee, believe me, the faculty has had advisory impact on the selection process. That new president will come to what the Executive Director of the Council on Higher Education has called the "soundest physical plant among regional universities in the Southeast," and he will come to lead a faculty of fine folk, people ready and willing--in my opinion--to be led, as the professionals we are: led to teach, to research, to write, to think, to make Western what it was and can be again: number two in the state.

In conclusion, I said a year ago that it is apparent to me that my fortunes will rise and fall with the fortunes of Western Kentucky University. That still seems true to me. With one difference: then I only hoped that the Faculty Senate could assist WKU in leading the university forward. Now I know it can.

REGENTS' ACADEMICS COMMITTEE LOOKS TO FUTURE by Michael Harreld

(This year, for the first time, the Board of Regents established a committee on Academics, which is chaired by Michael Harreld. In the following guest editorial, Regent Harreld discusses that committee.)

I am pleased to share with you some of my aspirations for the recently created Committee on Academics of the Board of Regents. We have not been as productive initially as I had hoped, but the concurrent search for a new president has been so time-consuming that the work of the committee has not actively begun.

I think it important to explain how I view the responsibilities of the Board. First and foremost, the Board's responsibility is to the citizens and taxpayers of Kentucky--to see that the monies entrusted to us are all well spent for attainable goals and that there is in place a system to measure accountability for results. The policy of Western Kentucky University on any issue--faculty salaries, academic achievement of the graduates, or the building program--is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Regents. The Board must decide priorities and, in conjunction with the administration, faculty, and student body, formulate a clear, coherent plan.

Western Kentucky University differs only in small respects from other institutions where the evolution of a teachers' college to university status occurred primarily because of the population explosion and attendant enrollment growth. During that period, the process of thoughtful planning for the day when enrollment would be static and the physical facilities complete was necessarily set aside. I think part of the uneasiness among the University constituencies as to our role within the state system is grounded in the lack of clearly defined goals for these times. The Academics Committee can lead in determining the path the University should take in the future. While the mission statements of the Council on Higher Education are still being defined, there is ample room for creativity to be brought to the programs and plans of our University to make it a vital, growing institution. Several things must be addressed to achieve that end. A system of accountability seems to be the one ingredient absent throughout the University. Everyone is responsible and yet no one is responsible. The committees, councils, senates, etc., that function each within its own scope seem only slowly to move into definite positions. I hope that the Academics Committee can serve to accelerate the decision-making process within the University to make it far more responsive to current demands. Decisions to add, to delete, and to develop programs are often far too time-consuming--a condition which seems to presume that responsive action is inconsistent with an academic institution.

I share the concern with declining enrollment but I also understand that this is a nationwide problem and reflects demographic changes as well as the institution's ability to market itself. In any event, it is imperative that, in dealing with a more discriminating student populace, we adjust our institution to meet their demands. This will

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require significant and often painful decisions; we may have to develop new programs or eliminate areas of limited interest or curtail special areas with poor potential to attract numbers of students. To have the fine facilities that we do and not attempt to use them fully by enrollment growth is simply unacceptable.

All of this will require a hard look at the staffing levels of both faculty and administration, and I must say that there will be an increasing scrutiny of productivity in all areas. I also believe the Board will oppose in all instances the lowering of academic standards simply to reach a formula for state funding based on enrollment. If we cannot attract a quality student I would not advocate the lowering of our standards to accomodate fiscal needs.

In addition, immediate attention must be given to the number and dollar value of our scholarships. They are at this point not nearly adequate to attract enough fine students.

Lastly, an area of immense opportunity is that of continuing education. Our faculty and our facilities offer an enormous resource for the business and industry of Kentucky and contiguous states. I hope to quickly address the opportunities to tap the corporate resources which are currently being used for extended education. We have immense potential to capitalize on the strengths of Western Kentucky but it will require some adjustments in our academic programs to more readily meet the demands of our area.

It is our full intent to involve the faculty actively in this decision-making process. I hope that within 1979 we will see tangible progress towards these goals.

MEETING THE COMMITTEES: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONCERNS
by Albert Petersen

As charged in the Faculty Senate constitution, the Professional Responsibilities and Concerns Committee shall make recommendations to the Faculty Senate with respect to the following issues:
1) policies and procedures for consideration of faculty grievances,
2) policy, criteria, and procedures for faculty evaluation, 3) policies and procedures relating to scholarly and creative faculty activity, and 4) responsibilities and obligations of the faculty person in his/her role as a scholar and teacher.

During the first Faculty Senate the committee submitted a grievance procedure to the full Senate which, subsequently sent it back to committee. Upon my assuming the committee chair with the beginning of the second Faculty Senate, the first order of business was a revision of the earlier grievance procedure proposal. Excepting

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termination of contract, the only grievance procedure available to a faculty member is the "open door policy" of the WKU administration. The committee plunged ahead, therefore, to design a grievance procedure based on the procedure submitted to the first Faculty Senate with the suggested modifications. After much labor it was submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and after discussion the procedure was sent back to committee, where it was decided that the procedure as formulated was unworkable from a legal standpoint.

The committee examined other alternatives based upon sample procedures used at other universities and at present is considering the possibility of a university faculty ombudsman. It is felt by the committee that at least in the initial stage of a grievance a faculty member might well prefer to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation... this fear was expressed to the committee by faculty who did not want to teach three nights a week at Fort Knox. The ombudsman concept may well deal with that problem. Any suggestions from the general faculty (and administrators) would be appreciated.

During the past year the committee also examined the administrative policy of evaluation of faculty. Each member of the committee examined his or her faculty personnel file in the department office, the dean's office and in the vice-president's office. All files were available with immediate access...no elaborate forms to be signed, etc. While there was concern in some colleges that the faculty did not see the entire evaluation form filled out by the department head, we found this to be rare. The committee recommended to the Faculty Senate a procedure by which all faculty will sign each page of his or her evaluation, and any comment the Dean adds at variance with the department head's evaluation will be discussed personally with the faculty member. The procedure has been approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Council of Deans.

The committee examined the evaluation forms from each college and found them either to be reasonable (in the committee's opinion) or in an active state of change with faculty involvement.

A concern presented to the committee which we have not formally addressed deals with action that might be taken against faculty who do not meet their final examination responsibilities by scheduling such exams according to the academic calender--giving exams during the last regular class period and leaving for summer vacation early!! The committee chairperson has been informed informally that such a violation, if flagrant, is grounds for dismissal. Come on folks, let's give our exams when scheduled...we would prefer not to deal with this one!

An issue the committee will examine during the 1979-1980 academic year deals with the limits the university places on outside professional consultation functions (pp. 41-42 of the Faculty Handbook). These will be activities that relate directly to a

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faculty member's professional academic interests and not to tending bar, selling ice-cream, or fixing rental property--unless of course!

If you have any questions or suggestions that relate to these issues or if you have other concerns that may relate to the Professional Responsibilities and Concerns Committee, please feel free to contact me.

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY:

Resolution
Faculty Senate, Western Kentucky University
Introduced: 4/12/79
Sponsors: Richard Greer and Raul Padilla

Whereas, William (Bill) Walls was a charter member of the Faculty Senate of Western Kentucky University and

Whereas, he chaired the Communications Committee and was thus in large measure responsible for the Newsletter and

Whereas, his dedication, as exemplified by his personal vitality and professional commitment, contributed to the growth and development of the Faculty Senate,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of Western Kentucky University formally acknowledge Bill's contributions by making this resolution a permanent part of the Faculty Senate minutes and,

Be it also resolved that a copy of this resolution along with an expression of gratitude for his contributions and an expression of sympathy for their loss be sent to his widow, Judy Scarpella-Walls, and to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William R. Walls, Sr.

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FACULTY SENATE
communications committee
NEWSLETTER

MINTON JOHN DEAN

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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