



FACULTY SENATE
communications committee
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI, NUMBER 6. February 17, 1983



Faculty Senate ✓

Committee Reports

Executive Committee:

Senator Bowen reported that the figures for University enrollments for this semester have been released. Total enrollment was 303 full-time student equivalents above that for last spring. All levels experienced growth except the freshman class, which has decreased by 258 full-time equivalents.

The Committee on Professional Responsibilities and Concerns has been asked to look into the problem of finding appropriate means to recognize retiring faculty members. In addition, the Faculty Status and Welfare Committee is to examine ways in which faculty members approaching the ends of their careers might prepare for retirement, as well as how University policy might facilitate the process.

There was much discussion in the Committee concerning the manner in which a new Faculty Regent should be elected. An attorney-general's opinion was sought in order to clarify whether one or two elections would be necessary, given Regent Buckman's desire to resign prior to the official expiration of his term in October.

The formula funding hearings scheduled for this campus on February 17 have been canceled. It is probable that the hearings, now to be held in March, will not take place on each campus. Instead, there may be three regional meetings, thus enabling more Council members to be present at each meeting.

Academic Affairs Committee:

Senator Schneider presented the following report:

On January 12, 1983, Vice-President James Davis requested that the Academic Requirements and Regulations Committee of the Academic Council review the present change of grade and exceptions to class drop/add policy. In this request, he suggested that the committee examine the procedures used by "other highly-regarded academic institutions." The committee surveyed several institutions with the results of this survey being distributed at the last Senate meeting. On February 9, 1983, the Academic Requirements and Regulations Committee met, and, after considerable discussion, passed a resolution favoring the continuation of the present policy.

The former still have no inherent problem with regard to football; most of the latter do.

Why? Because football is unique among college sports in that it can be very expensive. At only a few large institutions can the football program fully support itself (usually by ticket sales and alumni contributions). The other colleges and universities are faced with the problem of how to justify paying for an increasingly expensive sport in times of economic difficulty.

So . . . the program doesn't pay for itself, and you must justify subsidizing it -- what options are open to you? Normally, one simply *invents* reasons for supporting the program. Rather than refute all of these diversions, let me just mention a prevalent one: enrollment. Some members of the academic community believe firmly that schools can attract sufficient numbers of students only if they provide sufficiently prestigious football teams. With no study to confirm it, and in the face of some that would appear to discredit it, this belief has become a part of folklore.

Does this belief hold up under scrutiny here at Western? Fortunately, we have a unique parallel to serve as a test: Eastern Kentucky University. Here we have, in the same state, two almost identical schools with almost identical enrollments. Six years ago, Western was at the top of the division and Eastern was down; for the past four years, Eastern has been at the top and Western has been down. However, enrollment trends at the two universities *show no differences over the entire six-year period*. The two enrollments fluctuate synchronously and independently of fluctuations in the success of the football programs.

Can a school retain its "stature" without football? Of course it can (e.g., the University of Chicago, the University of Vermont, and Fordham University). It was Fordham, by the way, which had a famous football program (remember Vince Lombardi?), but chose to close it down when the costs went up. Some universities, university presidents, former players, and even major sports magazines have spoken out against the hypocrisy of bringing academically unprepared students to the campus and allowing them, effectively, to major in sports. On the other hand, the lack of full scholarships (tuition, room, and board) for superior academic scholars makes one wonder if a university's major function is still academics.

I won't propose a solution. That would take several pages, require a great deal of time-consuming research, and begin a debate that I don't care to engage in. The comprehensive solution is obvious anyhow.

Furthermore, the entire issue may soon be irrelevant to me -- I'm mulling over an offer I've just received. It seems that the Dallas Cowboys are beginning an *academic* scholarship program next fall. Look for me: I'll be at the end of the bench, by the cheerleaders. A little shorter and a little lighter than the rest of the players, but no less game. Oh, I probably won't be in a single play, but playing won't be my function. *Et tu, Howard?*

Announcement

In order to comply with state-mandated procedures for the election of Faculty Regents, it will be necessary to conduct two separate elections. One election will be for the contemplated unexpired term and the other will be for the 1983 to 1986 term. The two elections will require the use of separate ballots on the same day. They will also necessitate separate nominations and separate letters of intent/willingness to run.

The cost of printing this publication by WKU was paid for from State Funds KRS 57.375.