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WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY



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FACULTY SENATE
communications committee
NEWSLETTER

From the Chair

When the winds of change are blowing,
it's time to build a windmill,
not a shelter. (Anonymous)

The proposed budget for 1992-93 has been sent to the regents, leaked to the press, and presented to the faculty and staff. (The events occurred in this order--does Western need plumbers?) Now it awaits consideration by the Board at their April 30th meeting.

This budget is undoubtedly the most significant to be proposed at Western in years. Not only did the makers of this budget have to deal with the biggest cut in funding in Western's history, but it is also the first budget to be developed from start to finish following the guidelines of Western XXI. Either of these factors by itself would make it a significant budget, but dealing with both at the same time makes it a landmark budget.

With regard to Western XXI, this budget is the first real test of this policy statement. Often when a self-study is conducted, the document produced is filed and it's back to business as usual. President Meredith and the Budget Committee are clear: this will not be the fate of Western XXI. They have formulated this budget according to its guidelines.

Judged by these guidelines, this budget proposal is very successful. The priority given to instruction and the classroom is evident. With regard to specific initiatives, much will depend on how the changes required by the proposed budget are implemented in each area. As a policy-setting document, this budget goes as far as is possible in one year toward re-examining institutional priorities.

To those who ask why some priority in Western XXI was not funded more or why another budget was not cut at this time, I would counsel patience. Only so many things can be attended to at once. There will be opportunity for adjustments and fine tuning in future budgets. This budget sets a new direction for Western in following the priorities of Western XXI. This fact alone is enough to make it a most significant budget.

This accomplishment is even more remarkable when we take into account the second factor--the huge reduction in the budget for this coming year. Often our reaction to tough times is to seek shelter, to throw up a rampart, to try to maintain the status quo. Not so with the Budget Committee. The members have used the budget cut as an opportunity to move Western forward. They have made difficult and painful decisions. No one likes it when a program is dropped or a position eliminated, but sometimes, unfortunately, it is necessary.

There is a lot of pain in this budget. It is not likely to

make anyone happy. All will be sharing in one way or another in the cuts that must be made. It will be especially difficult for those whose position is being cut or program suspended. The budget committee did well to make provision for persons facing such changes, whenever feasible. For others, there are often increased duties for administrators or increased teaching for faculty. Everyone will be affected in one way or another. Still, when all is said and done, the commitment to the classroom stands as central.

The extent of the commitment to the classroom in this budget becomes clear when it is recognized that, despite the \$6 million cut, no instructional positions were lost. Indeed, when reassignments are taken into account, there may even be a net gain--a remarkable achievement. How remarkable can be seen when one compares this proposal with the news from sister institutions around the state.

I am impressed with the faculty response to this budget. If faculty members are not openly approving, they are at least accepting of the proposed budget. The awareness that there will likely be no salary increase for two years is enough to temper anyone's enthusiasm for a budget. Personal spending will need to be adjusted, for living costs will go up even while our salaries remain the same. For most, however, such a burden is willingly borne so long as everyone shares in the pain. (It is especially regrettable that support staff, who have low salaries and for whom medical insurance and other costs are already such a burden, will have no salary increases.) This budget is being accepted because it places Western's priorities where they should be--on the classroom and those things that most directly affect instruction.

If approved, this budget will mark the beginning of a new era at Western. In future years the state's appropriation to the university will be calculated on the smaller base used in this budget. Given the state of the national economy and Kentucky's needs in other areas, there is every reason to expect that for the next few years increases in the state's appropriation will be modest at best. When Yale makes the headlines because it is cutting entire departments and stories about similar draconian cost-cutting efforts at other schools appear almost weekly, we will do well to recognize that our fiscal crisis is neither unusual nor it is likely to be short-lived. It is likely that we have here the pattern for the foreseeable future. For this reason this year's budget will have long-term consequences.

Fortunately, this budget is not the work of one person but of a committee that represents a broad spectrum of opinion and experience across the campus. Sometimes we are suspicious of the work of committees and rightly so, for at its worst a committee may kowtow to the whim of its most powerful members and so become a tool of special interests. Fortunately, in this case it appears that the opposite happened. Special interests were subordinated to the needs of the university as a whole. The result is that this budget proposal has more

credibility than usual.

From the faculty's perspective, the Board of Regent's consideration of this budget will not be so much a test of the merit of this budget as a test of the wisdom and courage of the regents themselves. Will the regents take Western XXI and its priorities as seriously as President Meredith and the Budget Committee did? For the good of Western, let's hope they do.

* * * *

This issue is the last Newsletter of the 1991-92 academic year. It has been a remarkable year. The first budget cut is now a distant memory. The final outcome of the audit and related issues is still unknown. More recently, the proposed budget, especially the proposal to suspend football, has kept Western in the headlines. Meanwhile, a solid achievement goes unnoticed--I have in mind the new General Education proposal which will go before the Board at the upcoming meeting. (I have a theory that the amount of attention that the press gives to an issue is inversely proportional to its educational significance!) Because of this year's events, there have been many changes at Western, with more to come. In so far as we have met these challenges creatively--built windmills and not shelters--Western has the prospect of emerging a stronger and more focused educational institution in the coming years.

Finally, a personal note. I want to thank the members of the Executive Committee and the Chairs of the various standing committees for their support and hard work. Your contribution was invaluable. Thanks also to all the senators who worked on these committees and faithfully attended the meetings. Whatever was accomplished this year in presenting faculty concerns can be attributed to your contribution. If I had known last April, when I was approached about being chair of the Senate, what an 'interesting' year this would be, I would have refused the nomination. In this instance ignorance was bliss. At our next meeting it will be a pleasure for me to hand over the duties of the office to our next chair who will, I hope, enjoy serving during less turbulent times.

Arvin Vos

DRAFT
FACULTY SENATE MINUTES
April 9, 1992

The Senate was called to order at 3:30 P.M. Senator Charles Bussey was represented by Senator Pro Tem Rich Weigel, Senator Mary Cobb by Jimmy Feix, Senator Rita Hessley by Chuck Hendricks, Senator Stephen Jacobs by Glenn Powers, Senator Barbara Kacer by Judy Pierce, Senator Janice Massanat by Shiu-Yue Mak and, Senator Gary McKercher by Colleen Reardon. The following miscreants were absent without representation: James Bingham, Linda Brown, Larry Caillouet, Marlyn Casto, John Crenshaw and Cheryl Keyes. President Thomas Meredith was also absent.

The March 12, 1992 minutes were read and accepted with corrections.

Report from the Chair. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with the president for a confidential briefing on the budget. The Executive Committee was generally pleased with the proposal, and made a few minor suggestions. The Executive Committee has decided to postpone the annual survey of faculty opinion until later in the semester when faculty members will know more about the proposed budget. Finally, while some senators could be dropped due to repeated absences without representation none have been dropped to date.

By-laws, Amendments and Elections. Senator Otto announced that at-large elections were still underway. Other elections had been completed.

Professional Responsibilities and Concerns. No report. A resolution on faculty travel would be presented later for second reading.

Faculty Status and Welfare. Senator Kuhlenschmidt announced a second reading of a resolution on faculty liability under old business and read a statement on evaluation of junior faculty by senior faculty which will be printed in its entirety in the next Faculty Senate Newsletter.

Fiscal Affairs. Senator Glasser reported that a reanalysis of expenditures revealed a significant increase in instructional spending per student at the end of 1991, the first such increase in five years.

Budget Committee. Senator Hansen reported that the President had not met with the committee since leaving for the Women's final four basketball tournament, the budget is expected to go to the Board of Regents on or about April 13, and that the board is expected to act on the budget on April 30.

Senator Hunter presented data indicating discrepancies in the level of institutional contributions to WKU employees' retirement accounts compared to the contributions for public school teachers and faculty at other universities. Certain changes in the formula used to compute contributions would create a more equitable situation and could amount to about \$2000 per year in additional retirement pay for WKU faculty. Alternate explanations for the discrepancy were reported in discussions: because University employees contribute to Social Security while public school teachers do not, and because teachers are paid less they need a higher multiplier to compute institutional contributions.

Faculty_Regent. The regent announced that he would be meeting with library representatives to discuss possible changes to work schedules in light of the proposed budget. Alternatives are still under discussion.

Old_business. The following items were considered for second reading:

1. The proposed amendment to the constitution, Section III.A.3, failed after discussion.
2. The proposed amendment to the constitution, Section III.C.2, passed after discussion (attached).
3. The resolution on faculty liability passed (attached).
4. The resolution on funding of faculty travel passed (attached).
5. The resolution to eliminate intercollegiate football at WKU was presented for second reading. A Spencer/Turley motion to substitute a resolution that "President Meredith direct the Athletics Department to put a ceiling on intercollegiate football expenditures," in place of the resolution to eliminate football, failed following discussion.

A Weigel/Garrett motion to substitute a resolution that "The Faculty Senate favors suspension of intercollegiate football at Western Kentucky University" failed after discussion.

A Garrett/Pulliam motion was made to substitute the following resolution for the original resolution:

Resolved that the Faculty Senate favors the elimination of intercollegiate football at Western Kentucky University.

A Spencer/Shannon motion to suspend definitely until the Fall semester a vote on the substitution failed on a voice vote. A division of the house was next requested whereupon a secret ballot was also called for. The Garrett/Pulliam motion to substitute the new language passed 32-9.

The substitute resolution then passed on voice vote (attached).

New business. A Goble/Spencer resolution commending the Lady Toppers basketball team was presented and passed following a request to consider it on one reading (attached).

A Hunter/Krenzin motion to direct COSFL representatives to present the pension contribution discrepancy to the COSFL was accepted for first reading (attached).

Announcements. The next COSFL meeting is set for April 25, 1992. Those wishing to have input are asked to forward their comments to Senator Pulliam.

The first meeting of Senate XVI is scheduled for April 30.

The senate adjourned at about 5:30 P.M.

Appendix

1. Amendment to Section III.C.2 of the Faculty Senate Constitution:

"voting members of the Faculty Senate are to be elected during February and March and shall be chosen as follows:"

2. Resolution on faculty liability

"Resolved that the Faculty Senate hereby adopts the AAUP Statement on Institutional Responsibility for Faculty Liability."

3. Resolution on faculty travel allowances:

"Be it therefore resolved that the university increase travel allowances for attendance at professional meetings to a realistic level, including annual adjustments, as soon as the current budget crisis is past."

4. Resolution on intercollegiate football:

"Resolved that the Faculty Senate favors the elimination of intercollegiate football at Western Kentucky University."

Appendix (Continued)

5. Resolution on the Lady Topper Basketball team:

"Whereas the Lady Toppers showed stamina and perseverance in its 1991-92 season in order to win the Sun Belt Conference title, and whereas the team brought honor and glory to themselves and Western Kentucky University by challenging formidable opponents and advancing to the final game of the National Collegiate Athletic Association women's basketball championship for the first time in history, the Western Kentucky University Faculty Senate does hereby resolve to congratulate and commend the members of the Lady toppers team, Coach Paul Sanderford and the staff for this meritorious achievement."

First reading

The Faculty Senate directs the Senate's COSFL representative to present the information concerning KTRS multipliers to COSFL, urging that body to pursue, by whatever means it deems best, a program to bring about a more equitable KTRS multiplier for university faculty.

A Reminder on Standards for Tenure and Promotions

Concern has been expressed that senior faculty follow personal criteria in evaluating colleagues' performance rather than standards set out in departmental procedures. The Faculty Status and Welfare Committee has been requested to remind tenure and promotion committees to follow the published procedures and criteria in voting on tenure and promotions. Junior faculty follow the published standards presented to them at the time of their employment as contractual obligations and believe meeting these standards will result in tenure and promotion. In order to achieve a just and fair system senior faculty need to follow published guidelines in tenure and promotion recommendations.

If they are not already doing so, department heads are encouraged to instruct tenure and promotion committees in the specific, published criteria to be followed in tenure and promotion decisions.

Junior faculty are reminded that procedures for review of non-reappointment recommendations are detailed in the Faculty Handbook.