

SENATE SURVEY OF FACULTY OPINIONS

April 23, 1996

VG=VERY GOOD, G=GOOD, U=UNDECIDED, P=POOR, VP=VERY POOR

<i>MY PERSONAL IMPRESSION OF:</i>	Percent of Responses					Mean	N
	VG	G	U	P	VP		
1. faculty morale is that it is	3	30	23	34	9	3.16	237
2. the Senate's focus (e.g. choice of issues) is	4	35	36	16	8	2.88	234
3. the Senate's performance in communicating faculty concerns to university administration is	10	44	24	15	7	2.65	234
<i>IN MY VIEW:</i>							
4. a system that would distribute salary increases based primarily on merit would be	21	34	19	15	11	2.62	242
5. the expectation that a faculty member must be proficient in all professional areas (teaching, research and service) is that this expectation is	10	26	9	33	21	3.28	236
6. the latitude for the faculty to influence decision-making is	1	16	20	39	24	3.67	236
<i>IN MY OPINION:</i>							
7. the university's governance system is	2	26	32	28	13	3.24	234
8. the university's spending priorities are	2	20	30	31	17	3.41	235
9. the university's administrative responsiveness to faculty concerns	3	17	28	30	22	3.53	236
<i>MY PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF:</i>							
10. the university's president's job is that it is	11	30	21	21	16	3.01	238
11. my department head's job performance is that	33	29	13	15	10	2.39	233
<i>I RATE MY:</i>							
12. working conditions	9	57	12	18	4	2.51	240
13. job satisfaction	16	52	16	10	6	2.37	241
14. working relations with other faculty as	34	56	6	2	2	1.83	241

Comments on *Senate Survey of Faculty Opinions*

April 1996

Something needs to be done concerning the physical condition of this institution. I teach in classrooms with no heat/air conditioning, no overhead projectors (none available) and no projection screens. Students are beginning to complain about the state of the facilities and also the lack of technology on this campus. It is time to re-evaluate our priorities--#1 students, #2 faculty, #3 administrators.

This university spends a higher percentage of its budget on non-academic areas than most comparable universities. It is possible to play games with the figures, selecting out of a few specific areas or years where this is not so, or redefining some non-academic expenditures as academic. But we should shift the emphasis more to *teaching* students.

There seems to be an over abundance of funding for library resources and a bare-bones impoverished one for professional development (i.e. attending conferences). Couldn't some of the library money be directed in the other direction?

The university is a rudderless vessel. There is an absence of any leadership of real substance.

Faculty can influence decision at the department and college level but I really don't think they can at the VP and Pres. level.

Was very disturbed to learn that in *Faculty Handbook* faculty member denied tenure has **no** right to attorney in evidentiary hearing. How did that get passed? Where were Faculty Senate and Faculty Regent?

In COBA, recruiting for new faculty in Dept was done by **College-wide** committee. Dept faculty had no say in who from their Dept represented them, no control on who invited for interview, or who offered job. Self-governance?

The questionnaire related to the president's performance asks faculty to comment on issues which may not be relevant to their work assignment or which may be difficulty, if not impossible, to have objective information as a basis for a decision.

My observation of the Senate at Western Kentucky University is that the choice of concerns frequently serves to encourage a climate of combativeness and unease. This is unfortunate, for it serves no one. It is no wonder the taxpayers who provide funding for institutions of higher education perceive us, as a group, to be nonproductive.

My opinion of the faculty senate is that it has outlived its usefulness. Whether it is a function of the leadership (or, more accurately, a lack thereof) or some other factor, I do not know. My impression is that members perceive their role to find fault with the administration, focus on individual welfare concerns, and other self-serving issues. Not once do I recall emphasis on such things as the quality of instruction (meaning trying to improve what WE do rather than pointing accusing fingers at THEM for what they don't do), serving students, or faculty responsibility.

If you would like people to actually read the *Faculty Senate Newsletter*, then I suggest you make changes to the current way it is being presented. I am someone who uses computers a great deal; yet, I generally do not have time to browse around the web on Western Online to look for something to read. The notion that I should take time to periodically check the FS web page on the *chance* that there *may* be a newsletter published this month (as was suggested by Bart White at the April FS meeting is ridiculous.

A suggestion for increasing the readership of the newsletter would be to send a campus wide email message letting faculty know that a new edition of the newsletter has been published on the web. This notice should probably have a table of contents for the newsletter and a URL for quickly locating the newsletter.

There are unequal assignments/expectations in Faculty workloads and in evaluations. My evaluations from the dept. head and the students have been very good. however the unequal workload assignment and the lack of consistency in evaluations is slowly eroding morale. Five/ten years from now this university will be in severe crisis as "loyal" employees retire.

The president's leadership is severely diminished by his seeking another job. The Faculty Senate should address summer salary.

A great many problems at this university would be solved if we got rid of football...

Evaluate secretaries performance!

OPPS! You didn't account for response bias on this one! (on a questionnaire with "Very Poor" checked for all items)

The salary situation, along with the high cost of medical insurance and lack of a dental insurance plan, continues to be frustrating.

WKU no longer knows what kind of institution it is or what its mission should be. The President has a public school mentality and the faculty is asked to do more and more with less and less. We are suppose to teach but merit is based on research. WKU is not a research institution nor should it be. Moreover, there is little or no leadership.

Regarding Q#5--\What is meant by proficient. Define the benchmarks for each area--teaching, research, and service.

Regarding Q#4 Merit raises are a good idea overall. However, during years that there is minimum funding for salary increases, raises should be across the board. Everyone is entitled to a minimal raise (across the board). After the minimal raise, then raises should be based on merit.

If this university is to improve in stated aspects of quality (research, student preparation, efficiency, open hiring/minority faculty recruitment), it will have to:

1) discard many "traditional" (read "outmoded") policies, explicit and implicit, including unwillingness to involve graduate students in teaching, small class sizes even for service courses, nepotism and fear of recruiting from outside the WK community

2) make difficult decisions regarding support/justification for continuation of graduate programs on a unit-by-unit basis. Currently assistantships are woeful and the graduate community is below critical mass in numbers of quality students, available courses, and expectations.

3) shed much of the cynicism and sense of being victims of the administration/legislature/public, etc. This university has few unique problems, and none which can't be improved by becoming less insular.

4) recognize that change (=improvement) in one area comes with accommodation in (not addition to) other areas. Time just be allocated, along with resources, in a more modern and realistic way.

Too much \$ on sports.

Response to #1 reflects faculty dissatisfaction with performance level of current **students**. They know less but are more arrogant and/or resistant and/or indifferent to learning than ever before. This is a phenomenon that seems to have been observed by *all* faculty through-out the institution.

#4 Merit would be an excellent method for distributing salaries if the criteria for merit within a department was consistent. To attain merit faculty should know what measures will be used and how various activities are viewed toward merit...standards are needed.

#5 Teaching effectiveness is more important than most activities deemed service; and students would be better served to have effective instruction.

#9 Responsiveness? Faculty Concerns? Ha! Get rid of the fat high paying unnecessary positions that make our administration look like an upside down weeble.

#10 Did you ever observe that Dr. Meredith is always searching for a job in the spring just before raises are to be determined. Let the King go to Alabama!

#13 From an ethical point of view it will be difficulty for me to last my entire tenure at Western given such poor standards as exist. Our students are underprepared and somehow earn degrees. How can this be why they never learn vital basic skills? I love my job but I see numerous students sliding through our university, many of whom will never have a job in their area of study.

Code of ethics absurd!

#12 working conditions--stressful!!

There is tremendous disparity between colleges. Some of this perhaps is for good reason. Faculty Rank appears to have little meaning on this campus. I would favor a pay system based on a combination of merit and rank, with some built-in standards for each academic rank.

We have sick buildings on this campus which increases medical costs.