

**MINUTES
UNIVERSITY SENATE
DECEMBER 15, 2005
GARRETT BALLROOM**

Chair Andrew McMichael called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. **The following members were present: Alternates present were: Members absent were:**

Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of September 15, 2005, were approved as written.

Report from the President

Chair McMichael reported the following:

- 1) Note from the President on KTRS/ORP (handout). He did meet with the benefits committee and outlined what the options are. He says that we have short and long term plans to address the matter first here on campus and then in Frankfort.
- 1) Regarding the bomb threat policy. The Chair talked to Gene Tice about the bomb threat policy here on campus. The bomb threat policy is not to evacuate buildings if there is a bomb threat, but to first assess the situation. Gene Tice or someone from his office will assess the threat and decide whether it is real. Then they will ask for volunteers among the faculty and staff to search the affected building for suspicious packages while notifying the police. If they think that the threat is serious they will then move the threat level up and work toward an evacuation. Nevertheless, the default policy is not to evacuate if there is a threat.

The chair talked with Tice at length about that. His personal view is that this is an insane policy. There has been a bomb placed here on campus before. Back in the mid-70s someone planted a fertilizer bomb in a parking structure. What I was told by Dr. Tice was that 999 times out of a thousand that these things were pranks.

- 2) Health fund. The University Benefits committee passed the policy that is close to what we requested. It is on the President's desk for approval. It will come up before the Board of Regents at their next meeting. When that policy has been approved, I will bring it here for the consideration of the body. It is not exactly what the University Senate had asked for, but the Chair's understanding is that it is quite close. The Chair has not yet seen the policy.
- 3) Tice response to Harryman report. The email that Dr. Tice sent to Chair McMichael came as part of the agenda. Tice referred us to a report of the president. The president's report is a letter to Harryman. The letter explains the President's side of things. Tice did not personally respond. Dr. Tice said that Harryman threatened a lawsuit and that he did not want to put anything in writing that could then later be used in a court case.
- 4) Health fund. Health benefits committee has discovered that the health fund has been raided on many other occasions to the tune of about a million dollars. Many of these previous occasions were unknown to the health benefits committee.

Report from the Vice Chair

Vice Chair, John All was not present.

Report from the Faculty Regent

The Faculty Regent, Robert Dietle, reported that money appears to have been regularly removed from the health insurance reserve fund very regularly over the last five years without the benefits committee's knowledge. The administration response has been: 1) that the removals are a repayment for a loan from the university that bailed the fund out when it was threatened with insolvency. Regent Dietle rejects this claim as he was serving on the budget council at the time the alleged loan was to have taken place. It was a clear tradeoff; the faculty and staff paid for that bailout with a lower salary pool for that year. At the time of the bailout the language the president was using, but not what he is saying now; and 2) The Board of Regents voted on and approved all these withdrawals. This reveals a real problem on our campus. Our financial records are so opaque that there is no way for the Board of Regents have no way to know how and where money is being transferred. Example, the faculty regent knew that the health and wellness position out of the insurance reserve fund. However, when the budget came before the Board of Regents there was no mention of the health and wellness position in the documents. Thus, just by looking at the budget, there was no way to know that the Board of Regents knows what is being passed. So Regent Dietle also rejects the claim that the Board of Regents approved the transfers because the Board of Regents really has no idea what it is agreeing to but this information is not provided to them. We, as a faculty, must continue to press for information, because the administration does not provide such information willingly. The Faculty Regent is deeply disturbed by the fact that he is being told that he has set on a board that approved a policy to which he was absolutely oppose and yet having no way of knowing that I was approving that policy is a confirmation that the Board of Regents is really a rubber stamp.

Report from the Provost

- 1) We did successfully get reaffirmed by SACS.
- 2) Winter term. If the number of students was less than the course would normally make, the department head and the faculty member had discretion on whether a course would make. 1881 students enrolled in 136 courses. It looks like we have many students that want Winter term. We are going to evaluate Winter Term during the Spring term to make improvements. There is a strong possibility of moving the budget balancing portion to the colleges next time. Since this was the first Winter term, the administration wanted to make sure that the university would break even on it.
- 3) Many departments have received notices on equipment and renovations dollars. There was approximately \$1.4 million available. While we need many things that we do not have, the fact that we could build in recurring dollars into the budget a few years back means that we can count on being able to do some equipment purchasing and some classroom renovation each year.
- 4) What impact does winter term have on faculty work load? There is no difference. WKU still has a nine-month contract. We know that break is a time in which the

- faculty does much of their reading, research and class preparation. Our assumption is that faculty will continue to do that even if they are not teaching during Winter term.
- 5) We are doing reviews on Tenure and Promotion criteria. This is not being done with an eye toward changing present criteria in any way, but has arisen through a concern that the roles that faculty play is fully acknowledged. There have been so many changes to the faculty work in the past few years and this is an attempt to ensure that all aspects of faculty work are acknowledged.
 - 6) Insurance. The Provost suggests that we have the president come and bring whoever he wishes to discuss insurance in January. The Provost feels sure that any time she is off campus on university business that she is covered by university insurance. However, if she were being reckless, breaking the law, or ignoring responsible behavior then she believes that she would not be covered. That is the way that it has always been.

Questions:

Chair McMichael: Regarding the Tenure and Promotion criteria, are we to have a senate appointee to that committee?

Provost Burch: (answer outside the range of the microphone)

Chair McMichael states that the President and the administration's position is that the faculty is adequately insured when we travel. However, Vice-Chair All and others have been researching the issue and talking with the insurance company and the commonwealth attorney. Both of those groups say that we are not covered.

University Senate Action Endorsement

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

University Curriculum Committee (Report attached to Agenda)

Move approval of the UCC agenda. No items were moved from consent to action. Consent agenda was approved.

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee

Informational report from Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee is a copy of the Senate Faculty Survey for University Senate information. Any comments are appreciated.

Old Business

Reports from Harryman and Tice and the Letter from the President were brought up by Chair McMichael. The Chair noted that Mr. Harryman was not at the meeting. The floor was opened but no questions or comments were raised.

New Business

No new business was brought forward.

Announcements

Chair McMichael spoke to the resolution the University Senate took in November regarding the Benefits Committee and health insurance fund. He stated that the resolution passed by the senate was a good thing that that action has been taken based on that resolution. He went on to state that in a meeting with the earlier Provost, Dr. Burch expressed appreciation of an activist senate.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Smith, Secretary

NOTE: The agenda with its attachments for this meeting can be found on the University Senate website: <http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Org/FS/meetings.htm>