

Faculty ask Brown for adequate raises

from the Courier-Journal, p. B-4, 2/14/80

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FRANKFORT, Ky. — A group of state-university faculty members has urged Gov. John Y. Brown Jr. to provide adequate salary increases for professors for the next two years.

Several leaders of the Congress of Faculty Senate Leaders delivered petitions signed by about 3,500 faculty members to Brown aide Don Mills yesterday.

The petitions call for Brown's proposed budget to reflect the salary increases recommended by the state's Council on Higher Education.

The council voted several weeks ago to ask Brown and the General Assembly to provide money for 9.5 percent annual increases in 1980-82. The proposal also requested additional funding, where necessary, to raise Kentucky's salaries to the average of similar schools in surrounding states.

Mills said later yesterday that he told the faculty leaders that Brown considers faculty salary increases a top budget priority. "He wants to try to reach the 9.5 percent, but we can't guarantee that," Mills said.

He said that increases for University of Kentucky community-college faculty will receive primary attention as the budget is drafted.

Mills said that Brown is also considering funding of a "catch-up" salary pool. He said that would help faculty members make up their loss in earning

power caused by 5.5 percent average annual increases since 1972.

"I also told them that we plan to put language in the appropriations bill that will assure that the money (for salary increases) will actually go to current teaching faculty," Mills added.

The petition drive is the first massive, public undertaking by faculty members to influence the governor and the legislature on salaries. In previous years the council's proposals have gone to the governor while faculty members have waited silently and hopefully for the results, which have usually been disappointing.

The petitions were circulated on most of the eight state-university campuses in the past two weeks by the Congress of Faculty Senate Leaders, a new statewide faculty group organized to influence higher-education policy.

Tom Jones, chairman of the group, said in an interview before yesterday's meeting that the petitions were not an effort to undercut university presidents or the higher education council.

"On the contrary. We approve what they're trying to do for us and we've worked very hard to help them," said Jones, an assistant professor of English at Western Kentucky University.

Jones said the group considers the effort a symbolic one to show the need for increased faculty salaries.

"Nationally published articles have indicated that university professors' purchasing power has slipped at least 24

percent since 1972, according to the consumer price index," Jones said.

"Some ranks for Kentucky's professors were near the median of surrounding states a few years ago, but we have again slipped behind," he said.

If the state does not fund salaries at the level recommended by the council, Jones added, Kentucky may lose its best professors to other states or other professions.

Jones said that 670 of 710 faculty members at WKU signed the petition. He said WKU President Donald Zacharias, a tenured professor of speech and communications, was one of the signers.

"I'm sure that the percentage of those on other campuses signing the petitions will be similar to Western's, since it is a positive step," Jones said.

The estimated 3,500 faculty members signing the petitions do not include faculty at the University of Kentucky, the state's largest campus. Jones said UK has not yet affiliated with the statewide faculty group.

Jones said that the faculty group's officers will meet with individual legislators during their review of the state's 1980-82 budget.

He said that he has already discussed the salary issue with several legislators. "They have said, 'We would love to fund the council proposal if the money is available,'" Jones said.

"But there has always been the ominous hint that it (the money) wouldn't be there."