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Reactions

are mixed

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There are mixed reactions to the 20-18 vote Monday by the state Senate defeating a bill which would have provided one student and one faculty member, with non-voting status, membership on the Council on Higher Education.

And the same legislative body essentially killed any chance of passing Senate Bill 194, proposed by Sen. Ed Ford (D-Cynthiana), when it refused Tuesday to reconsider the bill.

"I am disappointed because it is another example of the council's inability to communicate with faculty and students," said Steve West, a faculty member at Murray State University and legislative liaison with the Congress of Faculty Senate Leaders.

"I am encouraged by the closeness of the vote because this is the first time a bill including faculty has been considered," he said.

Although the CHE has established faculty and student advisory committees which meet on a regular basis with Dr. Harry Snyder, executive director of the council, SB 194 would have provided direct input from faculty and students.

The council coordinates budgets and programs at Kentucky's eight state universities. Presidents of each institution serve as ex-officio nonvoting non-voting members.

Dr. William Buckman, faculty representative on the board of regents at Western Kentucky University, said the bill's defeat can be contributed to a lack of lobbying by faculty and students and the CHE's opposition.

"This has not been a strong priority of faculty this year. We are more concerned about the state budget and faculty salary increases," said Buckman, a physics professor.

Tom Jones, a Western English professor who chairs COSFL, said he "personally did not push that hard (for SB 194) because I felt a faculty advisory committee could have as much impact, if not more, than a non-voting member."

Jones said he has a philosophical "problem" with one faculty member attempting to represent the views of faculty at all state universities.

However, Jamie Hargrove, president of Western's Associated Student Government, said student leaders at state schools favored both the advisory committee and a representative on the council.

"I am disappointed in the manner in which the Senate vote came about. We didn't have an opportunity to express our views on why it should pass," Hargrove said.

He explained one reason the bill failed to pass was concern that granting non-voting status to the two groups would eventually lead to requests for voting rights on the CHE.