Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2000

The final meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order by Ed Wolfe at 3:35 pm.

The main issues discussed were:

1. Student Government Association (SGA) request for a mandatory SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation (in addition to the normal University required faculty evaluations)

2. A past attempt by Human Resources to change health care premiums, co-pay structure and other related items in midyear.

3. PTR (Post Tenure Review) polling results.

4. Recycling program at WKU and the need for active participation by many more faculty and staff.

5. Miscellaneous - unfinished business such as the salary survey and Administration survey

The details:
Item 1 -
Two SGA representatives, Amanda Coates and Adam Howard, presented SGA's resolution for mandatory Faculty evaluations as follows:

Be it hereby resolved that the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University requests that the Faculty Senate approve the implementation of a mandatory SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation, consisting of, but not limited to, the attached questions, to be published and distributed to the university community beginning with the fall semester of 2000.

WHEREAS: the students of Western Kentucky University need a tool to aid in selecting the professor with the teaching style that is most appropriate to their needs, and
WHEREAS: the current evaluation meets only the needs of the department administration rather than directly serving the students, and
WHEREAS: many other universities currently offer this service to the student body, and
WHEREAS: providing the students with more data about an instructor will further enhance the learning environment, and
WHEREAS: to be most effective, this evaluation must be mandatory for both the spring and fall semesters.

THEREFORE: We, the members of the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University, do hereby request that the Faculty Senate approve the implementation of a mandatory SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation consisting of,
but not limited to, the attached questions.
AUTHORS: Amanda J. Coates & Adam Howard
SPONSOR: Legislative Research Committee

Questions
1. Does the instructor take attendance?
2. Does the instructor provide opportunity for extra credit?
3. Is the class primarily based on lectures?
4. Are exams the only measure of performance for the class?
5. Is the final exam comprehensive?
6. Would you take this instructor for another class?
7. Does the instructor require students to work in groups?
8. Does the instructor review the class prior to exams?
9. Are exams objective, i.e., multiple choice, true/false etc.
10. Is there a major writing assignment (8+ pages) required for this class

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A lengthy discussion of the SGA resolution followed.
Richard Hackney offered an amendment by substitution and suggested that the Senate recommend SGA's resolution to the University. Another amendment was suggested by Robert Dietle with the motion being that the faculty evaluation should not be mandatory. Senator Dietle suggested that the questions on the SGA evaluation were "points of information" rather than ones that could be used to evaluate. Robert was also concerned about the possibility of recurring requests for faculty input on the evaluation and recognized this as yet another burden faculty would have to bear. He also suggested that SGA's request for the State Attorney General's opinion was essentially a "lever" to push faculty to approve the SGA resolution. Carl Kell (sub for Larry Caillouet) and others were concerned with the possible legalities of the SGA evaluations and suggested we might want to check with General Counsel regarding the matter. Ed Wolfe mentioned there were many "mixed bag" situations regarding the challenges of such student-run faculty evaluations at a number of universities. Additionally, according to Ed's conversation with General Counsel and the President, such an evaluation could be conducted here at Western. Claus Ernst suggested that if such an evaluation would not be mandatory that it would not be conducted by most faculty. Senator Ernst continued by stating that faculty were service providers and such an evaluation would benefit students. He further added that there were web sites with "foolish postings" and poor remarks about faculty out there and that an SGA sponsored evaluation might provide more of a constructive avenue for those students desiring to vent. Stan Cooke stated that many of the questions on the SGA resolution sheet were already on faculty syllabi on the web. Further discussion involved Senator Dietle suggesting that faculty would loose influence on any future reconstruction of the SGA evaluation. Amanda Coates countered by stating that faculty and students would get together to construct questions.

--- the end result of the discussion was that the Senate supported a mandatory SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation - (The Dietle motion failed: 15 for and 17 against).

Kathryn Abbott made a motion to modify the Hackney amendment (see below for Richard Hackney's document) to include an annual review by university faculty and SGE with a main task being to review and approve questions on the SGE faculty evaluation. Jim Martin suggested that it was perhaps not too good of an idea to force such as committee together with regard to questions on the faculty evaluation. More discussion-- Mary Cobb questioned the financial aspects of conducting the SGE survey. Bill Davis noted that a survey like this was attempted years ago and that there were piles of unused evaluation forms that were never sent out.

A vote was taken regarding the second proposed amendment to Hackney's document --- it too failed.

All amendments failed and the Hackney motion passed. This document is as follows:

A Motion
WHEREAS: The Student Government Association (SGA) has requested (see the

http://wku.edu/00/38F9144/M8G/2
above resolution) that the Faculty Senate approve the implementation of a mandatory SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation, to be conducted in both spring and fall semesters, and to be published and distributed to the University community beginning with the fall semester of 2000, and

WHEREAS: SGA asserts that the needs of students are not served by the University administered evaluation, and that different questions (see above) should be asked on the SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation, to aid students in selecting the professor with the teaching style that is most appropriate to their needs,

THEREFORE: The Faculty Senate recommends that Western Kentucky University adopt the following set of implementing policies and requirements:
1. That appropriate time will be provided in all courses each semester for SGA to conduct an SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation, and
2. That the SGA evaluation and the University evaluation, being of different content and purpose, will be conducted on different days, to avoid inadvertent influence of either upon the other, and
3. That SGA and the instructor of each course will determine and agree upon the day and time for SGA to conduct the SGA evaluation for the course, and
4. That the SGA sponsored Faculty Evaluation and its effects will be the responsibility of the sponsor, SGA and its officers. The sponsor’s responsibility includes, but is not limited to, legal responsibility for actions arising from publication of subjective inferences with potentially defamatory consequences, such as, but not limited to, solicited responses to SGA’s proposed item 6 (Note to readers - this is question 6 in the SGA document above).

Item 2
Claus Ernst presented the following (with a friendly amendment by John White):

The faculty senate recommends that no changes to our health care plans which effect the employees negatively be made in midyear. In particular, no increases in premiums or co-pay structure and no cutbacks on the provider network should be implemented in midyear. A good faith agreement between the university and its employees means that both sides commit to a given plan design for a whole year. The senate recognizes the need to contain costs, but any cost containment measures should be implemented in the design of the new health care plans for the following plan year.

The senate unanimously supported this statement as noted by a show-of-hands vote.

Item 3
Ed Wolfe summarized the approximate 80% and 20% breakdown for the PTR polling questions. He sent an e-mail to all on this earlier this week.

Item 4
The Senate was invited to sign a sheet that supported more participation in WKU’s recycling efforts.

Item 5
Questions were asked about the status of the salary survey -- it has not been conducted. Additionally, the evaluation of the President is in the works and should be presented to the faculty before the end of the spring semester.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael May (acting secretary for Linda Parry)