

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

September 14, 2020

4:30 p.m.

The Faculty Senate of Eastern Kentucky University met on Monday, September 14, 2020, via Zoom. Chair Ciocca called the first meeting of the academic year to order at approximately 4:30 p.m.

The following members were absent: A. Gossage, E. Meiners

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Senator Woodruff moved approval of the May 4, 2020 minutes as written, seconded by Senator Walz. **Motion carried unanimously.**

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT: Senator McFaddin shared the following in his written report to Senate.

Congratulations are in order; we have made it to the fifth week of the fall semester. We are a quarter of the way through the full semester, and some courses have already reached the midterm point. Being fully open, over the summer as we witnessed the pandemic surge, some of us were not certain the day would come when we could see faculty and students back in classrooms, residence halls welcoming occupants again, and our athletic teams returning to competition, but here we are. We made it, and each day we are closer to achieving the goal of in-person instruction and limited on-campus services being offered up to the Thanksgiving break. I want to share my continued thanks for your diligence as faculty to make the necessary adjustments to your instruction methods and course delivery to assure our students can reach their educational goals.

In terms of our pandemic response, we are seeing manageable caseloads of infection so far and every area of the University has risen to the occasion to implement the required health and safety measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 at ECU. Please refer to the [EQU COVID-19 dashboard](#) to stay informed. This is a critical tool to see where our case count stands and if certain populations are at increased risk. So far, what is encouraging to note is that our residential students seem to not be at any greater risk of infection than those commuting to campus, and also note to date employees, specifically faculty, have the lowest overall case count of any internal group. What this illustrates is that our preparations are working to decrease risk in our classrooms, offices, housing, and other public spaces. Our community is being diligent in following masking, social distancing, and hygiene guidelines. While there have been some reports of non-compliance, by and large, those not honoring the rules are the exception, not the norm. Thank you for all the work that has gone into giving us the best shot at a successful fall semester.

We also anxiously awaited to see what would come of our enrollment predictions. Questions over how and where courses would be taught caused great concern, financial losses and economic uncertainty weighed heavily on families making decisions on college, and the level of acceptance of our “new normal” led to great speculation on how many students would enroll this semester. Once again, our faculty, staff, and students have demonstrated. Colonels do not back down from a challenge. At last week’s board meeting Vice President for Student Success Dr. Tanlee Wasson reported record performance in student retention, significant growth in student

outcomes among underrepresented student populations, and stable overall enrollment. Our preliminary enrollment of approximately 13,700 students includes:

- more than 3,200 new students
- 928 transfer students
- a nearly 10 percent increase in e-Campus enrollment
- more than three percent increase in graduate student enrollment
- and a 5.8 percent increase in freshman retention.

We set ambitious goals for recruitment and retention even before any of us had said the word coronavirus, and to see us gaining ground in some key areas only reaffirms that through great adversity our students still seek the opportunities ECU provides. It is also a testament to our caring, dedicated support system of faculty and staff who continue to comprehensively support our students who depend on us. We should take pride in these results and work to continue growth in these areas.

Finally, I want to recognize another significant accomplishment: a favorable budget position to close our 2020 fiscal year. Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration Barry Poynter reports a strong financial performance following the implementation of cost-saving strategies across the University. The year over year position for the institution improved around \$6 million and the University is ahead of budget on tuition revenue by more than \$4 million. This is certainly an area where we expect additional challenges and will need to work diligently in controlling costs and seeking to increase revenues through thoughtful budgeting, aligned with our strategic plan. To that point, some of you may have heard about a potential reduction in state appropriations based on revenue declines due to COVID-19 impacts the past six months. We are expecting to get official notification today that ECU and all other state agencies submit a plan that reflects an eight percent reduction to our general fund appropriation for this fiscal year. For context, ECU's general fund appropriation for the current fiscal year is \$65,337,000. An 8 percent reduction would result in cuts totaling \$5,226,960. A campus update will be sent out later this week.

I am honored and humbled to officially serve as the 14th president of my alma mater and work with all of you through the unique circumstances facing ECU. This University and its people have consistently exceeded my expectations to offer opportunity, and this chapter of our history will certainly be written to reflect the great resolve that will power us through to continued success.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Update on Open Source Textbook Resources. Ms. Kelly Smith, chair of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee, gave an update on the committee's progress since last year and shared a PowerPoint [presentation](#) on OERs (open educational resources).

This past year, the committee instituted the incentive grant for faculty and received \$25,000 from the Board of Regents. For the first grant cycle, \$23,000 has been awarded to faculty who plan to develop OERs for their courses. The \$2,000 remaining can be rolled over to next year to add to whatever funds are raised for a second grant cycle.

If you have questions, contact any of the [committee members](#) to learn about how to implement OERs in your classroom.

Additional members are welcome. Anyone interested in serving on the committee may contact Kelly.Smith2@eku.edu.

GENERAL & STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

REPORT FROM SENATE CHAIR: Senator Ciocca shared the following in his written report to Senate:

For the foreseeable future, the fall Faculty Senate meetings will be in a remote format. This will be revisited later in the semester with the hope of returning to face-to-face meetings in the spring semester.

Ms. Haley Norberg will be the new contact person for all university policies. The current policy process will continue to be followed. Jennifer Wies, Associate Provost, will work closely with Ms. Norberg on the academic affairs policies.

Other items discussed were the introduction of the [2020-2021 charges](#) for the Senate Standing Committees and on the best way to administer and capture Senate voting.

The New Senators attended an Orientation session on Wednesday, September 9 at 3:30pm via Zoom.

REPORT FROM FACULTY REGENT: Senator Marion shared the following in his written report to Senate.

The major events since our last Senate meeting include the following:

Presidential Selection

- The Presidential Search Committee opted not to begin a search and voted to recommend to the Board of Regents that our Interim President, Dr. David McFaddin, be named President of Eastern Kentucky University and to engage various constituency groups for input.
- The video recording of that meeting remains visible on YouTube via the [EKU E-Presence video link](#), and the portion including the [approved motion can be viewed here](#).
- The agenda (and committee member list) from that meeting is [linked here](#).
- A general background leading up to the meeting was provided during the meeting. For additional information, review a [timeline of events and additional background](#).
- The Board of Regents Chair called a special meeting of the Board of Regents for Thursday, August 20, 2020, and from that meeting, the Board of Regents voted to name Dr. McFaddin to be President.

Board of Regents Meeting – September 10, 2020

- A new student regent joined the Board to replace Madison Lipscomb. The SGA general election resulted in the selection of Eyouel Mekonnen and Nick Koenig as President and Vice President, respectively.
- Regent Alan Long of Richmond was re-appointed to a second term by Governor Andy Beshear.
- Enrollment was anticipated to decline by as much as 5% or more based upon forecasting in late 2019, early 2020; however, overall, enrollment was down 1.8%, representing the lowest decline in recent years, and a favorable scenario compared to our peer group during COVID-19.
- Enrollment numbers indicate total enrollment of 13,707. New freshmen and transfer enrollment were 2,360 and 928, respectively, totaling to 3,200 new undergraduate students.

- Freshman retention is up 5.8%, with the first-time freshman cohort of 2019-20 having 80.2% retention, and the underrepresented minority cohort being up 15.6% for a retention rate of 80.7%. These are all-time highs for ECU.
- The residential campus population is 18% smaller this academic year.
- For 2019-20, actual revenue was \$229M and actual expenses were \$215M. Auxiliary revenue, which includes housing, was \$3.1M below expenses, due to housing refunds, etc.
- Instructional costs for 2019-20 were \$79.9M in 2019-20 versus \$85.8M in 2018-19, resulting in a difference of \$5.9M being spent on instruction.
- Academic support and libraries expended \$2.1M less in 2019-20 than 2018-19.
- A substantial amount of uncertainty still remains with respect to what level of a general fund appropriation we will see for the next fiscal year and whether or not any adverse mid-year budget actions will occur. The Governor has advised state agencies, including universities to prepare for an 8% reduction in the next fiscal year. The state's financial outlook is uncertain as federal interventions could influence potential impacts.
- Many other areas of the university decreased expenditures year over year.
- Dr. Dannie Moore, attended his first meeting as Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, and he will have support in the office through two other professionals, one of which will be Dr. Roger Cleveland as Director of Faculty Diversity & Development. The other position will be the Director of Strategic Initiatives for Inclusive Excellence, Training and Campus Engagement (posted).
- Strategic Planning: The process for the next strategic plan is starting and for fall 2020, a strengths assessment, stakeholder listening sessions, and forming a strategic planning action team (or advisory committee) are on the agenda.
- The Board approved six administrative policies and repealed three administrative policies. One of the repeals pertained to the Retirement Transition Program.
 - a. **RTP:** University Counsel indicated to me that the reasoning for the policy being repealed is due to a change in the Kentucky Administrative Regulations that now requires a "Bona fide retirement" that results in a complete cessation of all employment relationships, and that "no prearranged agreement prior to retirement" that leads to reemployment is possible. The regulation University Counsel referred me to is 102 KAR 1:032, which can be [viewed here](#). Upon inquiry about future policies that recognize the experience and expertise of persons who may have retired from the university, the Board Chair and others in attendance indicated that a future policy or process may be possible for those types of scenarios.

REPORT FROM PROVOST: Senator Pogatshnik shared the following in his written report to Senate.

Launch of Fall 2020 Fall Semester

I'm very pleased to report that we have had a remarkably successful launch of the Fall 2020 term. This semester, approximately 70% of our courses that had been originally scheduled as face-to-face when the calendar was first approved last spring include some or all face-to-face components. Coordinating schedules, while taking into account the priority needs of 1st and 2nd year students and the social distancing requirements in our classrooms has been a monumental task. I'd like to formally recognize Dean Sara Zeigler and her Academic team, and the Office of the Registrar for their outstanding work.

I especially want to commend all the faculty for their flexibility and creativity in adapting their courses to provide the best possible learning experience for our students. They have truly gone above and beyond to serve our students. One indication of the commitment from our faculty is reflected in our record high retention rates that we achieved this year – to have done this in the midst of the covid pandemic has been nothing short of remarkable.

Assurance of Learning Day

This year's Assurance of Learning Day is scheduled for Friday, October 2. At this stage, it looks almost certain that our methods of course delivery for the spring term will look similar to what

we are doing this Fall. I would encourage departments and faculty to commit some time during the day to focus on using the Fall 2020 experience, including any preliminary data you might have that is indicative of student performance, to implement further design improvements into Spring 2021 courses.

General Education Revisions

Work on revisions to General Education Curriculum is moving forward. We have established three separate subgroups to consider different aspects of General Education.

1. Julie Duckart is serving as Coordinator of the Mission and Goals Recommitment and Outreach Task Force.
2. Rusty Carpenter is coordinating the Teaching Certification Task Force.
3. Matt Winslow is coordinating the Skills Alignment Task Force.

The Committees are meeting regularly with a goal of putting forward recommendations in early December. My thanks to these faculty and members of their respective teams, and to Jennifer Wies, in moving this initiative forward.

Strategic Planning Process

In the next few weeks, we will begin the formal process for drafting ECU's new strategic plan that will begin in Fall of 2022. Jennifer Wies and Bethany Miller will be serving as co-chairs of the Committee. Priorities for the new plan are expected to include Opportunities for achievement and growth, alignment of budget and resources to strategic priorities and collaboration among internal and external stakeholders. Phase I of the process will take place this Fall and will focus on Strength Assessment, the formation of the Advisory Committee and stakeholder listening sessions.

Digital P&T

Finally, this semester we are piloting an electronic process for submitting and reviewing documents for the P&T process. While not all departments and colleges will choose to participate in this for the coming year, we hope that this will lead to a simpler and more efficient process for the submission & review of P&T documents.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Information Technology Committee. Senator Nachtwey made the following announcement on behalf of Jeff Whitaker of IT and requested that faculty share the information with students.

IT is in the process of setting up internet access points in outdoor areas and parking lots for students who do not have stable internet service at home. As of two weeks ago the Ravine was the only access point that was up and running but they are working on getting the others up and running as soon as possible.

Locations with Access Point (AP) count:

Ravine (1 AP) – Area close to the library (DONE)
Powell Plaza (3 AP's)
AC (6 AP's)
Lancaster Lot (4 AP's)
Disney (1 AP)
BTC (5 AP's)
Manchester
Corbin
Perkins (2 AP's)

Faculty Welfare Committee. As last year's chair of the Welfare Committee, Senator Grempe met with the University Benefits Advisory Committee on August 27th. The biggest news is that there will not be a rate increase in any of our insurance benefits for the upcoming year. In addition, the deductibles on the high deductible plan have been lowered to \$4,000 for individuals and \$8,000 for family.

Flu shots will be provided again this year for all full time employees. Visit the [HR website](#) for available dates and times. Drive-by service is also provided at BluMine Health Clinic for free flu shots for employees.

Just as a reminder, BluMine Health Clinic also has a diabetes management program with zero dollar co-pays for prescriptions, if you schedule your visits and blood sugar checks through them.

ADJOURNMENT:

Senator Pogatshnik moved to adjourn at approximately 5:30 p.m.