

FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

September 13, 2021

3:30 p.m.

The Faculty Senate of Eastern Kentucky University met on Monday, September 13, 2021 in the main ballroom in the Keen Johnson Building. Chair Crosby called the first meeting of the academic year to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.

The following members were absent: J. Arneson, L. Cormier[^], A. Lawson, G. Nachtwey*, C. Neumann, V. Thomas

** Indicates prior notification of absence*

[^]ALT Bradley Kraemer attended for L. Cormier

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Senator Crosby announced that the Senate secretary had a fall last week and would be unable to attend in-person meetings for a while. He encouraged everyone to sign the poster up front for her and asked if anyone wanted to contribution money for a gift card to let him know.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Senator Crosby announced that the approval of the May regular and organizational minutes will be postponed until the October meeting.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT: David McFaddin

This academic year is already off to an incredible start and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our faculty for your commitment to our students to provide the best academic experience possible. We implemented a strategic plan for a full return to on-campus classes, programming, and support services. Our students are already forming potentially lifelong connections, opening their minds to diverse thinking and experiences, and soaking in knowledge in the fields that will be critical for their future careers.

These transformative moments are the building blocks that will become the foundation of their adult lives. There has been no greater feeling than seeing the return of some of our traditions like the Big E Welcome Walk and class photo embraced by our newest class of Colonels. This incoming cohort of students has had so much taken from them by this global pandemic. They are already practiced at overcoming adversity and their determination should inspire us all to fulfill our mission to educate and inspire students to make the most of every opportunity before them.

After a period of uncertainty in an unusual recruiting environment, enrollment numbers are showing some very promising trends. Some of the highlights for this academic year include:

- 2,531 New First-Time Freshmen
- Nearly 10% increase in new class year over year (first time in six years)
- 12% increase of in-state enrollment
- Nearly 20% increase in-service region enrollment
- 68% of students living on campus
- Up undergraduate and graduate underrepresented minority enrollments
- Up in new-transfer students

We must remain focused on recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts. We still have some ground to gain in overall enrollment, but the current numbers reflect growth in some key areas of focus. The experience our students have at EKU can be the best endorsement we have in encouraging others to make EKU a college of choice.

The EKU BookSmart program has created a unique buzz about our commitment to college affordability and removing financial barriers. Investing in textbooks and required course materials positions our students for success, and supports our faculty by ensuring students are prepared and ready to learn from the first day of class. More than 10,000 Big E Boxes have been supplied to students this fall and students and parents have expressed their gratitude for removing that expense from the overall cost of attendance.

While our incoming class faced trepidation in how they would navigate a post-pandemic college experience, our graduates entered an evolving workforce and they too persevered to achieve their career goals. We take pride that EKU graduates have earned the #1 ranking in Kentucky employment rates among bachelor's degree holders. 76% of EKU graduates find full time jobs within six months of graduating, and that is a true testament to how well our faculty are equipping graduates for their future careers.

In classrooms, labs and real-world learning environments our students receive world-class instruction, and we thank you, our faculty, for fostering educational excellence at EKU. A special congratulations to Faculty Regent Dr. Jason Marion for earning the 2021 [Global Health and Innovation Conference \(GHIC\) Innovation Prize](#) for his water purification research.

This semester we remain vigilant of public health measures and are closely monitoring both our university and local rates for COVID-19 vaccinations and infections. Our COVID-19 campus dashboard is active at <https://staywell.eku.edu/dashboard>. EKU student and employee populations have seen only moderate case totals of illness in comparison with increased cases in our local area. Contact tracing remains a key component in recognizing and addressing any potential vulnerabilities among our campus community. Please continue encouraging students and colleagues to report cases of illness or exposure, be mindful of any potential symptoms, quarantine or isolate as needed and advised by health officials, and wear masks. Although higher education was not part of the call for last week's Special Session, the General Assembly did affirm that COVID decisions will be made at the local level. Here at EKU, as we have since the beginning of the pandemic, we will continue our protocol of monitoring local and state data and more specifically continue the mandatory indoor mask wearing until further notice. Vaccination remains the strongest tool to reduce transmission and lessen the risk of severe illness. If you are already fully-vaccinated, thank you. Be sure to log in to EKU Direct and report your vaccination status. If you are able but not currently vaccinated, you are strongly encouraged to receive a vaccination as soon as possible. Increasing the overall vaccination rate of our students, faculty and staff will position us to have the greatest chance of finishing this semester and year without any interruption to in-person learning, residential living and campus programming and events.

After a year of limited interactions, we are offering structured student life activities to promote the overall well-being of students as part of our Exceptional Eastern Experience (E3) programming. You will find a number of these events and experiences open to our campus and local communities including live music, pep rallies, festivals and much more. I hope you will take advantage of these events and are invited to enjoy the E3 schedule of activities along with your friends and family.

REPORT FROM THE PROVOST: Sara Zeigler

Below is an update on the four dean searches that are underway:

- The CLASS dean search and the Justice, Safety and Military Science dean search, will have finalists on campus in late October or early November. There will be virtual and in-person opportunities for everybody to meet those candidates, interact with them, and provide feedback to me and President McFadden on their merits.
- The College of Business dean search will have finalists on campus probably in late January after classes begin.
- The College of Health Sciences dean search has not yet established a timeline. The co-chairs of the search committee will be Shirley O'Brien and Abbey Poffenberger. The committee members will be appointed and the timeline established in the coming weeks.

I will be seeing all of you in departmental meetings in the coming months to learn more about the particular concerns that you're facing at the departmental level. Similarly, watch for an announcement from my office about open office hours that I will be establishing as Provost probably starting in October, where you can drop in on, zoom, or schedule short appointments on short notice to talk about any issues you wish to discuss individually.

I have begun meeting monthly with the Senate Chair and Vice Chair as well as the Faculty Regent to make sure I'm hearing all of your concerns. I'm hoping this will ensure really strong communication between me and the faculty.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Student Government Association. Jenna Smith reported the following:

- SGA has been collaborating a lot with E3 events, especially focused on Homecoming activities. This is the first time SGA will have a float. In addition, we're also working hard to provide a good tailgate experience and funneling students into the football games so that we have a large student population at the games.
- Our Student Senate met last week for the first time and approved our operating budget. We had 8 new senators elected on the 7th.
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- SGA would like to have a mental health week in the spring. This will be a collaborative effort across different departments across campus. A work group will be established soon to work on that initiative.

If you ever need any student representatives or have any questions regarding student opinion, please email jenna.smith@eku.edu.

Faculty Advocate. Chair Crosby reminded everyone that Dr. Beth Polin is our new Faculty Advocate. For those that don't know, we no longer have an ombud. We have now a faculty advocate, and the role is slightly different. So, she will be a guest at our meetings from time to time to talk about her role and things that affect us.

NEW BUSINESS:

Standing Committee Charges. Chair Crosby announced that everyone should have received the email with the charges that were approved by the Executive Committee for all of our standing committees.

Chair Crosby reminded the standing committees to share their meetings schedules with the secretary so the information can be posted on the website in order to stay in compliance with state statute about open meetings.

Standing Committee Elections. The following vacancies were filled.

- *Elections & University Nominations Committee (1 vacancy)*
Senator Couvillon self-nominated. Senator Streetman moved to close nominations and accept by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.
- *Faculty Welfare Committee (1 vacancy)*
Senator Streetman self-nominated. Senator Winslow moved to close nominations and accept by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.
- *Budget Committee (1 vacancy)*
Senator Smit self-nominated. Senator Winslow moved to close nominations and accept by acclamation. Motion carried unanimously.

GENERAL & STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**REPORT FROM SENATE CHAIR: Senator Crosby**

Much of the summer was spent working on the following:

- Revising the standing committee charges for this year.
- Soliciting XC volunteers to serve as liaisons to our standing committees.
- Coordinating the efforts to move Senate meetings from the South Ballroom to the Main Ballroom to more easily meet spacing requirements due to COVID.
- Securing the return of refreshments for the Senate meetings. (Thanks to President McFaddin for funding refreshments for us again this year.)

In addition, I worked with Vice Chair Lisa Kay and Faculty Regent Jason Marion to establish a regular meeting once a month with Provost Zeigler. There have been three very productive meetings already. We have found the Provost to be very open to talking about our concerns and is intent on addressing them.

With the changing of the state statute, university presidents are now evaluated on an annual basis. By now all faculty should have received the link to a survey to evaluate President McFaddin with the same process that was used previously with President Benson. The surveys will remain open until October 9. The Senate Executive Committee will have until November 5th to compile the faculty survey data and submit their written report to the Board of Regents.

REPORT FROM FACULTY REGENT: Senator Marion

Since our last meeting of the Faculty Senate, the Board of Regents has had two meetings. Furthermore, the Council on Faculty Statewide Leadership (COFSL) has met in conjunction with the faculty regents of the various public institutions in Kentucky to nominate three faculty members to the Governor for consideration as the appointee to fill the faculty seat on the Board of the Council on Post-Secondary Education. With respect to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents, the meeting is scheduled for September 23.

Details on the upcoming meeting and the two previous meetings are provided below. Furthermore, since our last meeting Regent Nancy Collins, Student Regent Eyouel Mekonnen, and Staff Regent Philip Gump all completed their terms of service.

September 23 Meeting: The meeting is currently planned to begin at 10 a.m. in Powell 219. The meeting is a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting and will likely include university reports of interest. Typical reports of interest for this quarter's meeting include an enrollment and retention update and a financial update relative to the previously approved university budget. There is a possibility that the meeting will be held remotely, and if so, it will be livestreamed. If the meeting occurs in person, social distancing and mask wearing will be compulsory for all attendees. Seating will be arranged for attendees to maintain distancing. All Board meetings are open to the public.

July 26 Meeting: The Board of Regents met briefly (~20 minutes) on July 26 for the primary purpose of administering the oath of office to a newly appointed regent (Ashley Ward) and to recently reappointed regent (Laura Babbage). Pursuant to KRS 164.330, the Board had to meet within thirty days of an appointment of any new members. The meeting occurred via Zoom. The agenda is viewable here and the archived livestream [viewing link is available here](#).

June 17 Meeting: The Board of Regents met on June 17 at 9 a.m. on the stage of the ECU Center for the Arts. The meeting was in-person so there was no livestream or livestream archive. The agenda from the meeting is linked [here](#). The agenda book includes the 2021-22 University Budget document beginning on page 192. A thorough summary of the items presented to the Board by university leadership was detailed in a June 11th email to the university community by President McFaddin. A thorough summary of the items and the Board actions is viewable in a June 17th *Eastern Progress* story by Zachery Combest ([linked here](#)). Meeting highlights included:

- Staff Regent, Jeremiah Duerson, being administered the oath of office for when he started service July 1.
- An investment in our faculty and staff, with the \$1,000 re-occurring increase in base salary for full-time faculty and staff. (\$1.7M budget investment)
- Providing more on-campus engagement via the Eastern Experience Fee (\$75 per student) through modification of the formerly known Campus Recreation Fee.
- Implementing a \$125 fee for Student Health for providing greater preventive and treatment care of our student's health and well-being in a holistic manner inclusive of mental and physical health.
- Implementing a 2% increase in undergraduate tuition.
- Awarding new funds to continue to support the Board's Innovation Fund support of open educational resources (OERs). The Board Chair presented very positive words for the work of Kelly Smith and those involved in OERs as OERs represent a significant savings in ECU's aid funds by providing a direct savings to the institutionally supported BookSmart program.

- Awarding funds to create a new “One Stop Shop” using the Board’s Innovation Fund to setup locations in Powell and Whitlock to support students with everything from registration questions to financial aid, billing, holds, etc.

COFSL & CPE: The nominations process for the Commonwealth’s Faculty Representative to the CPE Board was very positive for ECU. We had three nominees (tied for the most of any university) and Dr. Kellie Ellis of Communication Sciences & Disorders, was selected by COFSL members and affirmed by the faculty regents to be on the short-list of three nominees for the Governor’s consideration to be appointed to the CPE Board.

For Tuesday, September 14th, in lieu of meeting in person for the CPE’s Trusteeship Symposium, regents and trustees from Kentucky’s higher education boards will attend the CPE’s Governing Boards in Equity Student Success Academy virtually on Zoom from 1-5 p.m. The agenda is linked [here](#).

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Academic Quality Committee. Senator Sands announced that the committee will meet on the September 27th.

Elections & University Nominations Committee. Senator Schilling announced that she was elected chair at the first committee meeting last week. We plan to continue to meet the week prior to Senate meetings. However, we haven’t set our schedule yet because we were waiting until our fifth member was on board.

Information Technology Committee. Senator Hight reported that the committee met on Friday, September 10. This year we’re tasked with looking at copyright issues for streaming videos that are being used by faculty and staff and reviewing the fair licensing use of those.

Rules Committee Report. Senator Kay announced that the next meeting will be on the Monday, September 20.

Faculty Welfare Committee. Senator Blair was elected to serve as chair. The committee plans to meet soon with Beth Polin, our new Faculty Advocate, to discuss her role and to find out if faculty are using her services since the loss of the Ombud position.

Ad Hoc Committee on OERs. Senator Marion reported that at this past Board meeting, OER Chair Smith presented another Board Innovation Fund which was successfully received by the Board.

The OER Committee met recently to award some of those funds, and the applicants of those received the notifications that all of their projects were fully funded. There are still remaining funds available which will be awarded in the spring.

The work of the OER Committee continues as they look at potentially working more with the Bookstore Advisory Committee or working with the Associate Provost office on possibly creating a university standing committee

ADJOURNMENT:

Senator Marion moved to adjourn at approximately 5:15pm.