

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY
Faculty Senate
March 1, 2011

Present: Senators Bartnik, Begley, Blaylock, Bloomdahl, Bodevin, Busija, Coffelt, Farrell, Fawzy, Goggins, Guyer, Herr, Hoover, Jung, Kleinhans, Koren, Norris, Ortega, Ortmann, Papajeski, Pittman-Munke, Porter, Rogers, Schell, Lt. Col. Simon, Swisher, Washington, S. White, Yarali, and Regent Rose. Dr. Floyd Carpenter was proxy for Senator Stambaugh, accounting. Dr. Neal Messer was introduced as the new senator from the Department of Modern Languages. Absent: Senators Binfield, Byers, Locke, McCreary, Robertson, Smith, and A. White.

Guests: Provost Higginson and Josh Jacobs, President's Office. The minutes of February 1, 2011, were unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Academic Policies—Chair Papajeski reported that the committee met in February and discussed polling students and faculty regarding a plus/minus grading system. Information systems has been consulted in order to offer an anonymous survey through VoteNet.

Finance—Chair Blaylock reported that the committee is preparing a report on the university's financial information and hopes to present it to the senate in April. The committee also discussed another salary equity study.

Governmental Affairs—No report.

COSFL—President Pittman-Munke reported that faculty involvement on the state's general education/transferability committees has ensured faculty input into transfer credits.

Handbook and Personnel—Chair White reported that the committee is reviewing a series of changes to the definitions of graduate faculty and terminal degree categories in Chapter Two. The question of who may serve as the primary research mentor for master's candidates has posed a problem, especially for the MFA program. The program utilizes special appointment faculty for that mentoring. He noted that any input from faculty would be appreciated by the committee.

Senator Porter inquired of the status of the survey of lecturers regarding a change in title to allow voting for faculty regent. President Pittman-Munke reported that the survey has been written and is aimed to gauge the interest of faculty in voting for faculty regent. The provost noted that she is currently reviewing the status of faculty with the lecturer title who will complete doctoral studies. Those ABD with one year to completion will be reclassified as instructors for next year's budget to comply with current handbook language. The Handbook Committee will look at a differentiation of duties to allow for a title change if there is sufficient interest of lecturers in being able to vote for faculty regent. The Provost would be willing to look at a change to allow for voting but that would adhere to compliance with SACS criteria.

Rules, Elections, and Bylaws—Vice President Koren announced that the senate is resuming its annual administrative assessment. The assessment of the provost and university president will be available beginning on March 2. Chairs and deans will be added to next year's assessment. The committee is currently accepting nominations to university governance positions. Departments will be asked to hold elections for departmental representatives to the senate.

Executive—President Pittman-Munke reported that the committee and senate leadership have actively participated in salary discussions for next year with the president. Dr. Beck, chair of the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee (FSIB), was invited to the committee's last meeting to give an update on the sick leave at retirement proposal.

Insurance and Benefits—A recommendation to implement a policy to compensate faculty at retirement for unused sick leave has been presented to the Board of Regents. The administration is looking at ways to implement such a policy to include both KTRS and optional retirement plan participants. FSIB will meet on March 11 to deliberate any recommendation coming from the administration. The committee also is waiting on cost calculations from the administration on extending the family leave benefit.

The executive committee has received related documentation on the university's censure by the AAUP from the president's office. The most recent response to an inquiry from Dr. Dunn outlined pertinent changes that would have to be made to the university's *Faculty Handbook*. This information will be forwarded to the senate's Handbook and Personnel Committee for review. Remedy also includes monetary restitution by the university to faculty members (or family) affected by decisions leading to the censure. Faculty senators generally support an attempt to remove the censure not only to remedy affected faculty but also as a means to ensure good employment practices.

As an informational item, the senate was informed that copies of the petitions used to nominate candidates during the most recent election of faculty regent had been provided upon request of the university's attorney.

Board of Regents—Regent Rose briefly reviewed highlights from last week's Board meeting and retreat that he had previously distributed to all faculty. The board approved the buy-back of sick leave upon retirement of KTRS faculty up to 92 ½ days effective July 1, 2011. This equates to one-half year of credit in KTRS. The president is ready to support an equitable amount for faculty enrolled in optional retirement plans.

A new degree program was approved in Library Media Education. The board heard a report from Facilities Management on the condition of Ordway Hall. Regent Rose asked for public comment as the board considers renovation or demolition. The board also received information on graduation rates and passed budget guidelines pending CPE's setting of tuition limits. Preliminary figures allow a three to three and one-half percent (3-3 1/2%) raise for faculty and staff with additional monies for promotion and equity increases identified in last year's staff study. Regent Rose will continue to work for larger increases. Colleges were asked to identify one percent of budget for raises and vacant faculty lines of three years or more were taken back.

The growth of the extended campuses will be presented by Dean Van Horn at the next board meeting on May 20.

Academic Council—No report.

Residential Colleges—Dr. Bodevin reported that the council is looking for two new residential college heads for Regents and Hart Halls and encouraged faculty to apply for these positions. Interested faculty should contact either Dr. Renae Duncan, associate provost, or Dr. Richard Scott, chair of the Council Heads.

New Business

Vice President Koren reported that the new library task force met last week. Chief of Staff Jacobs reported that the group discussed three sites for a new building and financial proposals. In other new business, the senate discussed the limits of authority in faculty suspensions, the role of the Office of Equal Opportunity, and the right to supersede the *Faculty Handbook*.

Provost Higginson announced the establishment of a new winter term beginning with the 2011-2012 academic calendar. It gives students a chance to pick up three hours of credit before the spring semester to help them graduate on time and includes both undergraduate and graduate online offerings.

On behalf of the executive committee, President Pittman-Munke asked the senate to endorse a review of the power and authority of other senates across the state in terms of curriculum issues. The University Academic Council currently holds that authority with the senate acting as advisory only. The committee will investigate other structures. The impact of having junior faculty on the senate was also noted.

Senator Schell, on behalf of former Regent Strieter, asked to read an excerpt from an AAUP statement on “Ensuring Academic Freedom In Politically Controversial Academic Personnel Decisions.” The excerpt is included as part of these minutes (*a copy can be requested from the senate office; the full report can be found at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/ensuring.htm>*). After ensuing discussion, the senate president agreed to review the Office of Equal Opportunity’s role in grievance procedures with the university president and the perception that the *Handbook* was recently superseded in a personnel matter.

Regent Rose asked to add an item to his report. The Board authorized a stipulation to the leave reporting policy to ensure institutional accountability. A number of exempt reporting is not being made in a timely fashion or not at all. Faculty will be asked to comply with the policy. Senators noted that there is a helpful tutorial online to assist in reporting that can be easily downloaded for ready access.

The senate adjourned at 5:20 p.m.