

FACULTY SENATE MEETING
November 27, 2023

Members and Officers present: Ryan Alverson, Michael Baranowski, Ginger Blackwell, Janel Bloch, William Boyce, Andrea Brooks, Ronnie Chamberlain, Josh Cooper, Chris Curran, Charlisa Daniels, Jacqueline Emerine, Irene Encarnacion, John Farrar, Richard Fox, Kathleen Fuegen, Steven Gores, William Herzog, Lisa Holden, Steven Johnson, Ken Katkin, Edward Kwon, Isabelle Lagadic, Chris Lawrence, Zeel Maheshwari, Nikk Pilato, Michael Providenti, Robert Salyer, Hans Schellhas, Brittany Sorrell, Laura Sullivan, Jessica Taylor, Brandelyn Tosolt, Monica Wakefield, Zach Wells, Kim Yates, Junxiu Zhou

Members and Officers absent: Terrance Anderson, Carole Cangioni, David Childs, Joe Cress, Olu Ekundayo, Boshra Karimi, Jitana Lee, Marcos Misis

Guests: Matt Cecil (Provost), Amanda Andrews (Staff Congress), Lucy Burns (SGA), Grace Hiles (Faculty Senate Office), Diane Williams, Kristin Hornsby, Brooke Buckley, Vicki Cooper, Emily Detmer-Goebel, Alar Lipping, Brianna Marshall, Danielle McDonald, Holly Riffe, Shauna Reilly, Erin Strome, Diana McGill, Hailley Fargo, Tammy Knochelmann, Jason Vest, Phil McCartney, Dolores White, Bethany Bowling, Abdou Ndoye, Mary Chesnut, Suk-hee Kim, Amal Said, Donna Smith, Denice Robertson, Hassan HassabElnaby, Casey Kuhajda, Nichole Marimon, Shanda, Karimib1, Jered

Call to Order, Adoption of Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Senate President John Farrar at 3:04 pm with a quorum present. There is one change to the agenda; the Provost will provide an update on the Academic Commons (AC), but there will not be a presentation. The agenda was adopted as amended.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 30 meeting were approved with one correction. Under the Academic Partnerships presentation, bullet three, "500" should be "5,000."

Guest Reports:

- **Provost (Matt Cecil):**
 - He welcomed everyone back from break with the hope that it had been a good one. His report will be updates on the budget and the AC.
 - In 2022, in conjunction with the Dean's Council, savings needed from Academic Affairs were separated into three "buckets." The first bucket is filled with one-time salary savings during the fiscal year, which occur from holding positions open and sweeping back the funds. This is an annual requirement of \$2.4 million, but the current shortage is approximately \$600,000. This will occur each year until there are enough funds in the budget to buy it out with recurring money. Buckets two and three are recurring savings from the budget improvement plan (\$2.6 million) passed by the Board of Regents (BOR) in September 2023 and from the original repositioning plan, (\$1.8 million), approved in November 2022. Of the \$4.4 million total, only about \$1 million remain through Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. He believes that the remainder will be gained

through vacancies and that NKU will be able to deliver a balanced budget to the Board in June.

- A presentation on the AC was on today's agenda; however, in light of having made better progress with the budget, there will not be the need for as many hiring cuts, one reason for considering a Commons. The decision was made to determine a more complete plan that aligns with the work group's recommendations. There will be more information on this in January.
- When concerns were raised about the possibility that RPT software would be changing, he acknowledged the need to look at other options than the software being considered.
- **Faculty Regent** (Michael Baranowski):
 - The Board met on November 8. They approved the new Academic Partnerships (AP) contract and the Athletics enrollment strategy proposal. The Athletics' proposal vote was not unanimous (8-3). He voted against the proposal due to lack of clarity on the figures provided.
- **Staff Congress Representative** (Amanda Andrews):
 - Staff Congress will host a university holiday party on Friday, December 15, 3:00 – 4:30 pm., in the University Ballroom. There will be door prizes and light snacks. More details will be shared this week.
- **SGA Representative** (Lucy Burns):
 - This week there is a Victor Talks event on affirmative action.
 - The Academic Excellence Committee welcomes ideas for resolutions for next semester.
 - SGA is working to get drop boxes for individuals to leave concerns, is seeking feedback on the Winter housing fee, and working on a Family Day for next fall.

Officer Reports:

- **Senate President** (John Farrar):
 - The search is open for the Vice President for Administration and Finance/Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The committee had their first meeting to review the committee charge. Initial review of candidates is next week. So far the pool does not look promising.
 - Rich Boehne will step down from the BOR in June, and he thinks it would be a good idea to propose names to the governor that would be good regents for NKU, such as alumni or others in the region. Please pass on any names to him that he could forward.
 - There was an issue in the recent past about a degree awarded to a former student whose 140/150 credit hours did not meet individual requirements for any major. In order for the student to be awarded the degree, four courses were waived – one Gen Ed course, the other three major courses. The issue came to the attention of the Faculty Advocate and there was an investigation. Legal Counsel did not find evidence of wrong doing. He said that waivers do occur in rare occasions, however, there is not a policy/procedure for waivers, so as a result of the investigation a small work group will be formed. He and Abdou (Ndoye), Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic affairs, will co-chair that work group.
- **Vice President** (Jacqueline Emerine):
 - No report.

- **Faculty Advocate** (Brandelyn Tosolt):
 - No report.
- **Secretary** (Laura Sullivan):
 - No report.
- **Graduate Council Chair:** (Ginger Blackwell):
 - No report.

Committee Reports:

- **University Curriculum Committee** (Richard Fox):
 - There is one more meeting this semester, December 7. Next semester, there will be one January meeting, two February meetings, and one March meeting, leading up to the catalog deadline (March 21). In the last UCC meeting (two weeks ago), there were two items of note. First, the Statistics name change was approved, but not unanimously (17-3). Concern has been raised over “name ownership” versus “curriculum ownership” and, if time permits, the UCC will address these in April. Second, a new course, BUS 100, was approved. This is a 3-hour course created for dual credit high school students in place of an existing 1-hour course that NKU offers to NKU students. This course is unusual in that its course description explicitly states the course is not open to NKU students.
 - When asked whether this issue was a one-off or something that might become a pattern, he noted that this course was created because the high schools did not want their students to take the 1-hour version available at NKU and so the College of Business is creating this 3-hour course. It seems unlikely that this will arise frequently.
- **Budget** (Janel Bloch):
 - Their last committee meeting covered issues from the BOR meeting, mostly revolving around Athletics. Advice from the departing Vice President for Administration and Finance/CFO, Jeremy Alltop, included the awareness that Athletics does not drive enrollment and to continue to ask questions about the program.
 - She is serving on the search committee for the Budget Director. There are some good candidates in the pool.
- **Benefits** (Charlisa Daniels):
 - The committee met on November 1 to vote on the Faculty Development Award (FDA) submissions. Award letters will be sent soon. At their next meeting the committee will look at application materials and set priorities.
- **Professional Concerns** (Kathleen Fuegen):
 - The PCC has met twice since the previous Senate meeting.
 - They discussed the Board’s decision to add six new varsity athletics programs and expand four others. The annual budget for the additional sports will be \$966K. The annual budget for the program expansions will be \$433K. Together, this results in about \$1.4M increase to Athletics annual budget starting in FY27-28. The argument in favor of

these changes is that they will bring an additional 50 students to campus, and the resulting tuition will offset the budget expansion.

- The PCC believes the Board needs to be held accountable for this decision. Instructional costs are not included in the budget. These costs are estimated to be about \$1.5 million.
 - The university's spending on athletics will be tracked and an increase is expected. Knight-Newhouse NCAA data (<https://knightnewhousedata.org/nfs/northern-kentucky-university>) show that NKU provides \$13.53 million to intercollegiate athletics. This is 82% of the revenue for athletics. This money could be used for instruction instead.
 - A member of the committee noted that the feasibility data for Division 1 in 2010 was based on having 22,520 students by 2020. Going to Division 1 costs much more than was anticipated a decade ago.
 - The PCC also discussed proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook policies 1.3 (Full-time non-tenure-track renewable faculty) and 1.4 (Full-time non-tenure-track temporary faculty). The impetus for these changes is the loss of several non-tenure track renewable faculty last spring. Renewable faculty are currently appointed annually. The goal with these proposed changes is to provide more job security to renewable faculty by providing two- and three-year contracts. The proposed changes would also provide faculty with renewable appointments more opportunities for promotion; would recommend that faculty in temporary appointments for at least three years should be considered for a renewable appointment; and would replace the titles currently used for non-tenure-track faculty.
 - There is a concern that extending contracts for NTTRs is a threat to tenure (it could make NKU more like institutions that have multi-year contracts and no tenure). There is a concern that extending contracts would make it more difficult to cut expenses in a budget shortfall. There is concern that NTT faculty do not feel valued at NKU. The PCC has been discussing changes to titles, the hiring process of faculty for renewable positions, and the performance evaluation for renewable faculty ought to be evaluated. Currently, a department chair or school director makes a recommendation for promotion. A question is whether there should be additional faculty involvement in the promotion process. This is an ongoing discussion.
- **TEEC (Chris Lawrence):**
 - TEEC is currently developing additional guidelines for chairs, directors, and administrators aimed at enhancing their use of the Explorance Blue software.
 - The committee is also drafting a proposal intended to foster faculty wellness by addressing teaching responsibilities.
 - **General Education Committee (Andrea Brooks):**
 - The committee is potentially considering three new course proposals for inclusion in the Education program. They are not aware of any others at this point coming through Curriculog, but that doesn't mean there will not be more. The committee plans to vote on all proposals, ideally, at the same time – so that will happen at a January meeting or early February at the latest. The courses are at different stages in Curriculog, but even if the vote is not until early February, there is still enough time to make it to UCC for fall courses.

- **School Representative Work Group** (Chris Curran and Jacqueline Emerine):
 - The work group met on November 7. They looked at updated data and the current Constitution regarding representation.
 - The group seeks feedback on whether advisors need representation.
 - The provost clarified that any new advisor hire would be staff; there are currently six or seven advisors who are NTTR.

New Business:

- Election of Faculty Senate Secretary (term from January 1 to June 30, 2024). Nominations to farrarj1@nku.edu or hilesg1@nku.edu or from the floor.
 - Michael Providenti has been nominated for the position. As there were not other nominations from the floor, he was elected by acclamation.

Old Business:

- There was no old business.

Announcements (John Farrar):

- Representatives are needed for the Parking Appeals Committee (30 minutes per month). Please email him if interested, farrarj1@nku.edu
- Voting is open for Faculty Senate and Faculty Regent elections. Eligible faculty should have received a ballot by email from Grace Hiles. Voting is from November 20 to December 1.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura A. Sullivan
Secretary

ACADEMIC COMMONS RECOMMENDATIONS

Draft 9/25/2023

CHARGE & BOARD APPROVAL

The Academic Commons workgroup began meeting in January 2023 to discuss the future of academic student support at NKU. This effort overlaps with Success by Design and the budget Repositioning plan. The charge presented to the workgroup by the Provost was to:

1. Catalog current academic support services at NKU.
2. Evaluate current and future student demographics and the different types of learners at NKU.
3. Make recommendations to align academic support services with our current, future, and emerging student populations.
4. Make recommendations about placing academic support services within the Academic Commons.
5. Make recommendations for appropriate administrative and organizational structures within the Academic Commons.

While budget savings are an anticipated outcome, the primary goals of the workgroup were to design a collegial system of exceptional academic support services for all students that is custom to the needs of NKU. Early on, the workgroup recognized that NKU already does excellent work in student academic support. The task then was one of scaling up, coordination, and an intentional symbiosis of current offerings followed by an extension to meet the needs of all students. Co-locating services has a definite benefit, which we see in the university center and library, but this project is not limited to location. A key question has been to consider what services would benefit from co-location, coordination, integration, and/or co-administration to create a meaningful and seamless student experience.

Following a brief presentation of the workgroup's vision statement by Provost Matt Cecil, the Board of Regents approved the following resolution on March 15, 2023, formally establishing an Academic Commons:

WHEREAS, the University currently operates many academic support services units across campus;

WHEREAS, consolidation of these units into a single, centralized location and resource will enhance student success, improve communication between support units, and foster a sense of community on campus;

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents has the authority to establish centers, institutes, and similar University academic units; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Academic Commons will significantly enhance the academic support resources that the University offers to its students.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Regents approves the creation and establishment of the Academic Commons at Northern Kentucky University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Academic Commons (AC) is a coordinated group of student-focused learning resources and services designed to give students convenient access to academic support services in a student-friendly environment designed to enhance access and collaboration as well as student success. The Academic Commons brings together units that complement the classroom learning experience and empower students to achieve their academic goals.

The workgroup has distinguished between co-location and co-ordination of services. The workgroup clearly recognizes the benefits of co-location of services. Concurrently, we also realize the physical space limitations at NKU. The workgroup recommends that the implementation of the Academic Commons be approached in phases.

The primary focus of the short-term recommendations is for co-ordination of “core” services under a single leader while considering extended services and co-location (and the location of adjacent services) in the longer term.

Additionally, an Advisory board is highly recommended to be formed by leadership to help guide the implementation and future direction of the Academic Commons.

Phase I: The first phase of implementation should focus on the below identified “core” services.

Categories/ Functions	Content Comprehension	Learning Skills/ Navigating College	Research Assistance	Learning Resources/ Learning Tech Support
Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tutoring Supplemental Instruction Writing Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-Year Experience Programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning tool support (Canvas, Microsoft)
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardized Test Prep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-Year Experience Programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment-based Research Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textbook Lending Learning tool support (Canvas, Microsoft)
Extended	<i>Further exploration in Phase 2</i>			

The AC workgroup has attempted to focus on the service functions required by students, but some of these functions are synonymous with NKU units. In addition, the workgroup identified some service gaps, such as standardized test preparation, learning strategies and metacognition, and comprehensive learning tool support. Some of these functions are currently offered in a distributed way by many units.

Overarching the categories of support for students is a need for triage service. Triage currently exists, but in a scattered, uncoordinated way across many units. Members of the triage team will have a comprehensive knowledge of the learning assistance services available to students in the AC and across the university. Accordingly, these individuals will be responsible for identifying the needs of the student and connecting them to resources.

Currently, much of these functions and services are already occurring in the library, which has long served as an academic hub on campus. As such, the library is a natural fit for the phase 1 “core” inclusion in the Commons.

Phase 2: Beyond the initial implementation of “core” services, the Academic Commons workgroup identified several phase 2 services that would potentially benefit from or bring benefit to the coordination and co-location of the Academic Commons. However, their breadth and/or complexity require more discussion for longer term inclusion or exclusion from the Commons. In short, these services make some sense to include in the Commons, but there is good rationale for leaving them in independent, but adjacent, units.

As a result, we recommend that the Honors College, Study Abroad, undergraduate research support, Testing Services, Student Accessibility, and Peer Mentoring be included in further discussion by the leadership of the Academic Commons with the NKU community.

Phase 3 (long term): The AC workgroup clearly identified the benefits of an intentionally designed, purpose-built physical and virtual space for the Academic Commons. This space is envisioned to be multipurpose, collaborative, comfortable, welcoming, and functional. The Commons will nurture an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and creativity, encouraging cross-disciplinary dialogue and innovative scholarship. In addition to the core service delivery of the AC, the student-friendly physical space would accommodate lounging, studying, and recharging.

An ongoing challenge of the implementation of the Academic Commons will be how to deliver these services to online, evening and working students, and commuters. Additionally, the design and implementation of an online space to facilitate intellectual curiosity, creativity, dialogue, and scholarship must be a priority.

PROPOSED CONTRACT CHANGES

1. Reduce Revenue Share to AP

- *New Programs* (less than three years from its start date): 50 percent revenue share unless
 - AP compensation > \$23.75 million; then 49.5 percent share
 - AP compensation > \$25 million; then 49 percent share
- *Existing Programs* (three or more years from start date): 47 percent revenue share unless
 - AP compensation is \$22.5 million to \$23.75 million; then 46 percent share
 - AP compensation is \$23.75 million to \$25 million; then 45 percent share
 - AP compensation is >\$25 million; then 44 percent share

2. New Programs

- NKU agrees to offer new AOL programs in the next 24 months
- Have identified 12 new programs in education, health care, business, and computer science to offer beginning Fall 2024

3. Processing Initiative

- AP provides NKU \$100,000 annually to be used to improve processing of applications

4. Reconciliation Initiative

- NKU and AP will share the burden of uncollected debt
- Previously, NKU was obligated to pay revenue share on uncollected debt

5. Terms

- New revenue shares and other initiatives effective January 1, 2024
- New agreement extends contract terms five years beyond original end date, now runs to 2031

IMPACT OF AP PARTNERSHIP

Current Agreement

- 4,800 to 5,000 enrolled students in more than 30 accelerated online programs in FY24
- Revenue in excess of \$40 million and expenses of \$20 million in FY24, net approximately \$20 million to NKU

New Contract

- Net new revenue to NKU, 2024 to 2028 of **\$38 million to \$40 million** plus expense reductions
- Estimated additional enrollments of 1,000 to 1,500 annually by 2028

Why are NKU and WKU Students Worth Less to Kentucky than their Peers?

Why are Northern Kentucky University (NKU) and Western Kentucky University (WKU) students paying more in-state tuition than their peers? Answer: chronic underfunding of these institutions, compared to their peers, by the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) recently approved its operating funds request for the [2024 to 2026 biennial budget](#). Rather than providing a remedy, this request perpetuates the inequity in funding for Northern Kentucky University, where I am Faculty Senate President, and Western Kentucky University, of which I am a graduate. This continued underfunding comes at a time of historic annual budget surpluses of \$1 billion in Kentucky over the last three fiscal years. The “rainy day fund” is up to \$3.7 billion and [continues to grow](#). Shouldn't Kentucky invest some of that surplus in its university students to remedy the funding inequity?

Until recently, across all public universities in Kentucky, state funding per student has had a downward trend for the last 25 years. A simple way to calculate state support across institutions is to compare the Kentucky general fund appropriations from the state per [full-time equivalent \(FTE\) student](#). For example, NKU received \$4800 per student in 1999, but only \$4100 per student in 2016. More recently, NKU received about [\\$4590 per student](#) in 2022. Using [inflation adjusted dollars](#), that \$4800 in 1999 would be \$8850 in 2023.

How does that impact NKU's budget? In 1999, NKU received \$32.3 million from Kentucky, which would be \$59.6 million in 2023 when adjusted for inflation. Yet, NKU actually received \$50.9 million before performance funding in 2023. Additionally, NKU serves approximately 40% more students in 2023 over 1999. As a result, the state share of the NKU budget has dropped from 40% in 1999 to around 20% in 2023. That's a common and disappointing trend for the public universities in Kentucky.

For at least a decade, NKU and WKU have been underfunded when compared to other regional public universities in Kentucky. The data is clear. The average state base-funding appropriations per student for our peers in Kentucky (Eastern, Morehead, and Murray) is approximately \$5314, while comparatively, WKU receives \$5088 and NKU receives \$4590. That's a difference of \$226 for WKU and \$724 for NKU *per student* or considering the enrollment at our institutions, it's a [\\$3 million and \\$8 million gap](#), respectively.

How does that translate into student costs? The [average in-state tuition](#) at Eastern, Morehead, and Murray is \$9445, while WKU students pay \$10800 and NKU students pay \$10296. NKU and WKU students pay about \$1000 more in-state tuition compared to their peers. Yet, NKU was just designated as a “great value” by the *Wall Street Journal*, a recognition not shared by any of these other universities.

It would seem that the CPE would be working to address this inequity. They are certainly aware of the problem. The [CPE budget request](#) for 2024 and 2025 calls for a 9% and 12% funding increase over the budget biennium. The funding increase is both needed and welcome. However, the structure of the increase makes the situation worse for NKU and WKU students, not better. The gap between NKU and WKU with its peers actually increases by about \$400 per student because their peer institutions stand to receive bigger increases.

NKU has been meeting the performance metrics set by the CPE. The performance funding model has a set of 11 metrics by which universities can earn additional state funding. Over the last few

years, NKU has consistently met its goals on [7 to 8 of the 11 metrics](#), more than any other regional public university and second only to UK in the state. Surprisingly, that performance is not rewarded by additional funding in the CPE's budget request. Shouldn't performance be taken into account?

What am I proposing? NKU and WKU funding can't come at the expense of Eastern, Morehead, and Murray. However, Kentucky needs to get serious about its future and sustainably fund higher education by increasing funding for all public universities. This is the bare minimum. Kentucky must fix the base funding for NKU and WKU *before* applying any percentage increase in funding. Bring the per student funding for NKU and WKU up to the average of Eastern, Morehead, and Murray. That is the only thing that is fair for all Kentucky students, and the cost is only \$11 million, 0.3% of Kentucky's rainy day fund.

Why are NKU and WKU students worth less to Kentucky? Why are they forced to pay more tuition? Aren't they worth it?

John Farrar has taught in higher education since 1999 and is currently a faculty member at Northern Kentucky University, where he serves as the Faculty Senate President. He resides in Alexandria, KY. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University (1992) and Williamsburg (KY) High School (1988).