

MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Present: David Agard, Ryan Alverson, Janel Bloch, Nicholas Brummer, Kinsey Bryant-Lees, Alina Campan, Nathan De Lee, Irene Encarnacion, Amy Gillingham Culligan, Jack Harrison, Lynnis Hillman, Carrie Hipple, Ken Jones, Jennifer Kaiser, Edward Kwon, Kevin Muenta, Shawn Nordheim, Reiko Ozaki, Patrick Schultheis

Absent: Lou Manchise, Hardik Patel, Catie Shelton

Guests: Diana McGill (Provost), Karen Mefford (Interim CFO), Chad Ogle (Provost's Office), Ryan Padgett (Chief Enrollment Strategist), John Farrar, Grace Hiles

Chair Janel Bloch called the meeting to order at 3:17 p.m. via Zoom. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes, with some corrections identified, from 1/24/2024. Motion carried.

Chair's Report: The president recently issued a legislative update. There are still a lot of unknowns in the state budget, and therefore in the NKU budget. As of now, it is not looking like there will be money for raises in the NKU budget. The new CFO/VP-Administration & Finance has been selected and will start in March.

Enrollment Report

Ryan Padgett gave an enrollment update. The ongoing issues with the FAFSA will have a significant impact, e.g., about half as many forms as is typical have been received. Students are being told to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible.

Several strategies are being used to stop the decline in undergraduate enrollment, including changes in how student events on campus are being done and new strategies on recruitment and admissions. The redesign in the State platform will automate a lot of processes, allowing staff to be involved with student enrollment.

Enrollment seems to be on target for this semester. We are down 52 students, spring over spring, and the projection was to be down 180. The growth has been in transfer students and graduate students in the accelerated online programs. The persistence rate is up 1.6%. But fall over fall enrollment is down 842, including 334 new students lost.

VP-Admin. & Finance/CFO Report

Karen Mefford reported the budget process is ongoing. We anticipate a 2% increase in tuition rates. We are anticipating flat tuition revenue. With the previous changes made in financial aid strategy, as students graduate, the financial aid numbers will start to go down. Units have been asked for a plan for a 2% cut. They are hoping they will not have to use it, but it identifies where cuts can be made if need be. A balanced budget needs to be presented in June. Many things are still up in the air. Everyone understand how important it is to give raises, and we cannot continue to not give them. A question was asked about whether there is a formula for the number of faculty vs. administrators. Provost Diana McGill pointed out that this is a decades-old question. We need a certain number of faculty to be successful.

While Provost McGill is trying confirm the exact number of faculty we are down, we do indeed have fewer lost faculty. Having fewer faculty affects the percentage of courses taught by part-time vs. full-time. There is a high level of variability among depts. In terms of faculty. It is difficult know what the benchmark is. For example, there are some units on campus where although numbers of faculty have decreased, the units have not necessarily become understaffed, but closer to being right-sized.

Provost McGill reported that a lot of time is being spent on legislation and budget; the unusually high number of bills is taking a lot of time. The requested funding for Young Scholars Academy is not in the budget that passed the Kentucky House. The Kentucky House took the CPE recommendation and put it in their budget. The Kentucky Senate will also build a budget. They have the ability to add lines. The YSA funding still could be added as a line of support or it could become a redirection from the school districts' budget. There is still hope that we could get support.

The building of the science center is over budget by \$3 million. The building will be planned and in budget with the amount of money that the state provided. For some time now, Kentucky stopped adding Operations & Maintenance cost to budget when buildings are built. The science center will likely still be built although its features may need to be reduced.

A question was asked about reserves. Karen Mefford pointed out that it is important to realize that over the past several years, NKU's cash position has gone down by double digits. The point was that we cannot continue at that pace. We cannot continue to be spending more than we're bringing in. It's about managing the budget we have. We keep talking about getting to a balanced budget, but we want to get to a surplus. Next year's budget will be balanced. Last year we came in at a better position than anticipated, and that could happen again.

There was some discussion of the pending DEI legislation and the impacts that could have on enrollments.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.