



FACULTY SENATE

Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2024

Senators Present: Ann Abraham, Omid Bagheri, Christopher Banks, Tina Bhargava, Lauren Copeland, Tamra Courey, Jennifer Cunningham, Mark Dalman, Ed Dauterich, Kimberly DePaul, Vanessa Earp, Julie Evey, Michele Ewing, Michelle Foster, Claudia Gomez, Tianyuan Guan, David Kaplan, Sean Kennedy, Edgar Kooijman, Janice Kroeger, Velvet Landingham, Tracy Laux, Richard Mangrum, Karen Mascolo, Mahli Mechenbier, Vic Perera, Amy Petrinec, Linda Piccirillo-Smith, Helen Piontkivska, Lydia Rose, Susan Roxburgh, Athena Salaba, James Seelye, Diane Stroup, Jennifer Taber, Eric Taylor, Robin Vande Zande, Laurie Wagner, Theresa Walton-Fisette, Sue Wamsley, Christopher Was, Kyle Winkler

Senators Not Present: Casey Boyd-Swan, Michael Fisch, Todd Hawley, Taraneh, Meshkani, Deborah Smith

Ex-Officio Members Present: President Todd Diacon, Provost Melody Tankersley; Senior Vice President Mark Polatajko; Senior Vice President Eboni Pringle*; Vice Presidents: Sean Broghammer, Doug Delahanty, Amoaba Gooden, John Rathje, Charlene Reed, Peggy Shadduck, Crystal Burnett for Willis Walker; Deans: Sonia Alemagno, Christina Bloebaum, Ken Burhanna, James Hannon, Versie Johnson-Mallard, Sharon Wohl for Mark Mistur, Mandy Munro-Stasiuk, Diane Petrella, Elizabeth Piatt*, Amy Reynolds, Alison Smith, Deborah Spake, Manfred van Dulmen
*Interim

Ex-Officio Members Not Present: Vice Presidents: Valoree Vargo, Stephen Ward; Dean Allan Boike

Observers Present: Emeritus Professor Janson, Kelly Cichy (University College), Brett Tippey (Honors College)

Observers Not Present: Ms. Olivia Eader (USS), Ms. Emily Erb (GSS)

Guests Present: Daniel Alenquer, Denise Bartell, Michael Beam, Bradley Bielski, Brenda Burke, Christina Burnworth, J.R. Campbell, Sue Clement, Chris Dorsten, Aimee Dudas, Christopher Fenk, Michelle Foster, Nick Gatozzi, Jennifer Hebebrand, Torsten Hegmann, Daniel Holm, Kristina Kamis, Michael Kavulic, Valerie Kelly, Sarah Labovitz, Cheryl Ann Lambert, Dana Lawless-Andric, Wei Li, Joanna Liedel, Jennifer Marcinkiewicz, Shelley Marshall, Babacar M'Baye, Emily Metzgar, Gerrey Noh, Christa Ord, Collin Palmer, Susan Perry, Helen Piontkivska, Christa Porter, Amy Quillen, James Raber, Kasey Ray, Matt Rollyson, Denise Seachrist, Angela Spalsbury, Therese Tillett, Deirdre Warren, Kevin West, Sonya Williams, Melissa Zullo

1. Call to Order

Chair Laux called the meeting to order at 3:21 p.m. in the Governance Chambers, Kent Student Center. Attendees were also present on Microsoft Teams.

2. Roll Call

Secretary Dauterich called the roll.

3. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda (Piccirillo-Smith/Walton-Fisette). The agenda passed.

4. Approval of the Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023

Chair Laux asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2023, Faculty Senate meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Salaba/Cunningham).

The minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.

5. Chair's Remarks

Chair Laux turned over his time to President Diacon.

6. President's Remarks

President Diacon spoke about gains in enrollment, retention, international students, and our continuing R1 status with around 10,000 students per year regularly graduating with all degrees considered. He added that our faculty are receiving many awards and appearing in media as national experts. He then moved to an update on the budget.

He said we are now building the budget for FY 2025. The intent is to create a balanced budget for the upcoming five-year period (through July 1, 2027). He made it clear that Kent State is committed to a balanced budget, but the challenge increases yearly. Every year, save one, since 2017, Kent State has made cuts to deliver a balanced budget. The university will need to reduce spending from 10-25 million each of the next four years in order to keep the budget balanced. By FY 2028, the hope is that Kent State will be free of additional reductions for a while.

President Diacon said that we can no longer continue to operate as we have in the past; notable changes to operations will have to be made. There will need to be a reduction in the number of employees. Our expense increases are outpacing our revenue in these areas: cohort tuition (no raise in tuition or room and board for four years for students); shrinking of state support (1.9% increases for the next two years); competition for enrollment; tuition discounting; and scholarships.

He added that \$500 million is the approximate total of general funds for the Kent campus. The regional campuses face similar challenges and are not in that budget. Auxiliaries (housing and dining) are also not in the budget. He reported that the DeWeese Health Center's annual budget

is about \$2.3 million dollars per year less than its expenses and that athletics will have to take a \$1.3 million budget reduction for the upcoming year.

President Diacon mentioned deficits at other universities and the cuts they are facing both nationally and in Ohio. He said that deficit budgets for these schools can snowball very quickly. Several universities have presented budgets without deficits, but almost all of them had to reduce expenditures significantly.

He concluded by saying that that three categories account for 75% of the total Kent State budget: salaries, benefits, and student aid.

Additional challenges he foresees include that enrollment for Fall 2024 will be about the same as Fall 2009; however, there has been a 25% increase in space that needs to be maintained since that time. Some buildings, including the current Business Administration Building, will need to be demolished. Kent State will also be upgrading the Banner system, which will cost an additional \$15-20 million. Depending on the political situation, there could also be a dip in international enrollment in the future.

Despite the challenges, President Diacon concluded that the University will survive. There is currently no deficit, and leadership from faculty and administration at the university is strong.

He then invited comments or questions.

Senator Taylor asked whether President Diacon had already presented the Board of Trustees with budgets through FY 2027.

President Diacon said they already approved FY 24 and they will receive FY 25 budget in May.

Senator Piccirillo-Smith asked about the former WKSU property and wondered whether the building or land could be sold.

President Diacon said they will look into the possibility.

Senator Seelye thanked the president for his forthrightness. He then asked whether the employment cuts mentioned would apply to staff, faculty, or all employees.

President Diacon replied that he is hopeful that much of the reduction can be done through attrition, but he added that he did not have further numbers at present.

Senator Kaplan asked about the sunseting of programs. He wanted to know whether metrics would be established beforehand to let programs know what is expected for them to stay open.

President Diacon agreed that this will happen and be important in the spirit of shared governance. He repeated that he hopes not to eliminate programs or staff other than through attrition.

Senator Vande Zande asked whether proposed construction projects had been canceled.

President Diacon said he did not believe anything large was on the horizon that would have to be canceled.

Senator Banks asked about how endowments related to the budget strategy.

President Diacon replied that foundation leadership is doing amazing work and that the metrics the foundation uses to measure success show that the endowment itself is growing well. The challenge with endowments is that the expenditures can only go to specific programs or are in bequests that are only realized upon the death of the donors. Currently, the endowment is about \$260 million.

There were no further comments or questions.

Chair Laux then made comments about shared governance and his experience with the Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee (FaSBAC). He stressed that the remarks by President Diacon were very accurate and added that the numbers are no one's fault. He also mentioned that the upcoming decline in enrollment, the challenges from politicians in Columbus, and the decreasing SSI are also clear. He stressed that faculty leaders are aware of the problems and that there are no nefarious plans by administration to claim a crisis to gain power. He concluded by mentioning that FaSBAC and other groups will look to advise administration about growth possibilities because budget cuts alone cannot prevent all the deficits.

7. Discussion Item: Update on the Regional Campuses (Presented by Provost Melody Tankersley and Vice President Peggy Shadduck)

Provost Tankersley and Vice President Shadduck presented a PowerPoint that illustrated the enrollment decline across the regional campuses. Full-time enrollment (FTE) has decreased by 52%. 25% of the students on the regional campuses are College Credit Plus (CCP) students; these students bring no revenue to the university and tend not to matriculate into the Kent State System after leaving high school. Vice President Shadduck also noted the decline in the size of first-year classes across the northeastern part of the state. She said that enrollments at regional campuses have declined from 25-70%. This makes it very difficult to balance expenses.

She stressed that we need to be strategic in our approaches to reorganizing the Kent State regional campuses. These include (1) optimizing online educational experiences to balance in-person classroom experiences; and (2) decreasing expenses through strategic consolidation and streamlining.

Provost Tankersley added that it is important to see the regional campuses as a system rather than individual units in competition with one another. She said that none of the campuses are in a secure financial situation. To help alleviate this, some areas are being consolidated: (1) marketing and communications; (2) instructional design support; (3) veterans processing; (4) business affairs, and (5) academic support. There will be a reduction to four regional campus Deans and four

Assistant Deans rather than the current configuration of six of each. The deans will be assisted by the campus support staff and one lead schedule administrator with two support staff. The plan should save the university about \$815,000 per year.

Provost Tankersley and Vice President Shadduck presented both the earlier proposals that had been sent to the regionals and the results of a conversation after the regional campuses submitted counterproposals. They concluded by stressing that the question is not a choice between doing these things or keeping the status quo. The status quo will now allow the regional campuses to exist as they have been, so the changes will be necessary to achieve common goals. They finished with talking about how to complete this successfully moving forward.

They then invited comments or questions.

Senator Seelye thanked them and the regional campus faculty for their work. He added that many things have been streamlined on the regionals and said that, at times, they have to offer classes with two or three people to get students through a program. He worried that there could be an arbitrary number set for enrollment in order for a course to proceed.

Provost Tankersley replied that this was not the intent. A regular rotation of classes could be set up, and students could be made aware of it to make this happen as rarely as possible.

Senator Seelye asked what the hopes were for adding new programs or keeping successful ones rather than cutting everything.

Vice President Shadduck replied that there was no intention to do either, but some smaller programs might need to be reorganized to help students complete their degrees. She said there is no metric for sunseting programs at this point and that the decision needs to be holistic.

Provost Tankersley added that she hopes to work together with faculty rather than relying on any sort of metric that applied to everyone.

Senator Taylor asked whether the changes will result in new hires or new administrative and staff positions will be internal.

Vice President Shadduck said they will be internal.

Senator Taylor asked about a timeline for implementation of the changes.

Provost Tankersley said it will begin very soon.

Senator Taylor asked whether the new position would be called a regional campus scheduler or coordinator.

Vice President Shadduck said there will be a schedule coordinating administrator and two support staff that would report to that person.

Senator Mechenbier mentioned that the posted positions for assistant deans had a fast turnaround time and asked whether there would be at least one faculty member per campus on the search committees for those positions.

Provost Tankersley replied that they are currently working on the process for those search committees, so she could not give a direct answer.

Senator Winkler asked how institutional knowledge will be passed on to new hires unfamiliar with more than one campus. He also asked for what the timeframe was for transfer of such knowledge.

Vice President Shadduck agreed about the importance of institutional knowledge and said that people currently in the position will document their knowledge as we begin the transition into the new structure.

Senator Wamsley added that the statistics for CCP continued enrollment at Kent Campus is 35%. She asked how that compared to continued CCP enrollment at regional campuses.

Vice President Broghammer said that it is around 35%.

Senator Ewing asked why CCP students are not continuing at Kent state.

Provost Tankersley said that there is more effort being made to recruit them, but they are normally very high-achieving students, and they may go to other institutions. Enrollment management is working with methods to engage them in a stronger way.

Senator Rose asked about the decrease in faculty, staff, and resources at the East Liverpool campus. She mentioned that they are financially healthy in some sense, and she acknowledged that the population and enrollment may not grow, but she wanted to make sure we can still provide for programs and students that are place-based. She said that when jobs are eliminated (such as business manager), it could be problematic if a new manager cannot do the job as well. She asked for assurances that the new people would be able to do the job.

Provost Tankersley said that everyone is doing great work, but there is no way to retain all the employees. Changes will have to happen. Campuses cannot operate independently in their own way when it comes to budgets. We cannot rely on one specific individuals and be efficient. The existing people will have a voice in the transition to the new system where all regional campuses will work together.

Senator Rose disagreed with the provost and did not see how the budget manager could be at the table if she loses her job.

Provost Tankersley replied that the work will start now with the current manager.

Chair Laux suggested that the university could simply shut down regional campuses as other public universities have done. He said that Kent is not seeing that as an option, but that if we are not open to change, campuses would have to be shut down. He added that FaSBAC is looking at a set of in-depth numbers and considering whether they are seeing the right numbers when they make financial decisions about the regionals. There may be a new set of numbers used, but whatever is used will need to be unified across the regional system so that we can make good decisions.

There were no further comments or questions.

8. EPC Action Items

a. College of Communication and Information: School of Media and Journalism: Journalism Education—M.A. (Fall 2024) (Presented by Dean Amy Reynolds)

Senator Dauterich moved to approve the item.

Dean Reynolds explained the item and the population that would be interested

She then invited comments or questions.

Chair Laux asked whether any additional faculty would need to be hired.

Dean Reynolds said there would not.

There were no comments or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

b. College of Communication and Information: Applied Media—B.A. (Fall 2024) (Presented by Dean Amy Reynolds and Assistant Dean Matt Rollyson)

Assistant Dean Rollyson explained the item and the need for the degree. It will help people who earned a significant number of credits but ran into barriers to graduation to complete their degree.

A motion was made to approve the item (Piccirillo-Smith).

Chair Laux then invited comments or questions.

Chair Laux asked whether anyone would need to be hired.

Assistant Dean Rollyson said no.

Senator Taylor asked what “programmatic barriers” made this necessary.

Assistant Dean Rollyson mentioned the required internship in Visual Communication and Design (VCD) as an example.

There were no further comments or questions.

The motion passed unanimously.

c. College of Public Health: Biostatistics—M.P.H. (Fall 2024) (Presented by Dean Sonia Alemagno)

A motion was made to approve both this and the following item (Evey).

Dean Alemagno explained that the concentration was high in demand, so it was being replaced with a major. No change in curriculum, faculty, or resources will be required.

There were no comments or questions.

The motion p[passed unanimously.

d. College of Public Health: Epidemiology—M.P.H. (Fall 2024) (Presented by Associate Dean Melissa Zullo)

e. Office of Curriculum Services: Private Lesson Schedule Type (Fall 2024) (Presented by Dauterich and Tankersley)

Senator Taylor moved to approve the item.

Senator Dauterich explained the purpose of the item, and Provost Tankersley added that this was for accreditation reviews as well.

Chair Laux invited comments or questions.

Emeritus Professor Janson asked about adding a course for one credit which is not a course in the catalog and wondered why it was not a course change.

Associate Vice President Tillett said that a course would be added to the catalog as a 1-credit-hour course for the Fall 2025 semester.

Emeritus Professor Janson also made comments about how the change to a fifteen-week schedule from what had been a fourteen-week studio session would have an effect in both summer and regular semesters.

Chair Laux called upon the voting members to consider Emeritus Professor Janson's input and to vote as they willed.

The motion passed unanimously.

9. Additional Items.

Chair Laux explained that Senators Stroup, Winkler, Seelye, Courey, and Banks were working as alternates this semester based on current senators being on sabbatical. He also announced that Emeritus Professor Janson had replaced Emeritus Professor Farrell as the Emeritus representative. He also announced the three new observer positions for colleges without resident faculty. They will be senator positions next year. Kelly Cichy, Brett Tippey, and Susan Roxburgh will serve as observers for the University College, the Honors College, and the Graduate College respectively.

10. Announcements/Statements for the Record

There were no announcements or statements for the record.

11. Adjournment

Chair Laux adjourned the meeting at 5:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Edward Dauterich
Secretary, Faculty Senate