

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report for November 2020

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Faculty Senate Vice Chair, Chair of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee had one regular meeting, and minutes will be duly available once approved at a future meeting. The Executive Committee also met with President Neeli Bendapudi and Provost Beth Boehm.

November 18

Vice President and CFO Dan Durbin gave a detailed analysis of the measures taken to mitigate the budgetary impact of the Covid pandemic during the past fiscal year (FY20). Those measures resulted in a \$5.9M surplus, and 75% will be returned to budgetary units with little or no restrictions on their use. A question was raised about whether the measures that directly impacted faculty (salary cuts and retirement contribution suspension)—though certainly prudent—were necessary given the surplus. No analysis that allows certain answering of that question has been done. The current fiscal year (FY21) budget and fiscal threats of the continuing pandemic on were also presented with clarity and thoroughness, including spring enrollment and potential avenues of increased aid (CARES Act funds from Frankfort and a FEMA application), and uncertainty over the allotment to U of L the Kentucky budget. Given these uncertainties, the planned re-evaluation of the need for reduced retirement contributions will be moved into 2021 from the planned decision in December 2020. Questions were raised about the financial status of U of L Athletics (addressed in more detail at the meeting with President Bendapudi and Provost Boehm on November 19, *below*).

Senate Chair David Schultz reported that a revision of space policy is in the offing, news from the Pivot to Fall/Spring Coordinating Committee, the resumption of meetings by the Budget Planning and Monitoring and Student Wellbeing Committees, and the search for a new General Counsel.

The U of L conflict of interest policy is under revision, and it returned to the Executive Committee with changes addressing the concerns that had been expressed by the committee in October. A new member of the committee raised additional concerns that the whole committee will consider at the regular December meeting after review and contemplation.

The comments of Executive Committee members on the finalists in the search for a new provost were gathered and forwarded to the search committee.

November 19

President Bendapudi updated the Executive Committee on the status of the provost search and gave her thoughts on the current FY budget (discussed in more depth by Dan Durbin at the November 18 meeting). At the committee's request, she expanded on the impact on the U of L hospitals and clinics, and she reported that the planning to receive and distribute Covid vaccines is well underway and includes close cooperation with Norton and Baptist Health.

To address the impact of the pandemic on U of L Athletics, President Bendapudi invited Athletic Direct Vince Tyra, who gave a thorough overview of all mitigation measures, including a \$30M loan to cover losses in anticipated revenues. A firewall protects the general fund from impacts

to Athletics. Funding for the new dormitory is from funds donated particularly for that project, and donor commitments are in place.

Provost Boehm gave a detailed picture of the spring enrollment, which is down. However, a survey of continuing students who had not yet registered indicated that 90% planned to do so but faced some cause for delay, but the response rate to the survey was typically low. Provost Boehm also addressed effects of the announcement on the previous day by Governor Beshear of new Covid restrictions (strong encouragement to take online any class meetings on the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving if abandoning in-person meetings did not negatively affect pedagogy or planned assessments). Spring semester Covid testing policy was also discussed; testing will be required upon return to campus. U of L has sufficient cryostorage capacity to handle arriving doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and distribution at a drive-through station at the Fairgrounds is envisioned.