

## Chair's Report

September 2018

John Smith

Three, that is how many reams of paper I have killed so far. Required reading for the Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board of Directors orientations. It is not stimulating reading I can assure you. During my swearing in for the Board of Trustees, I also had to assure that I had not been part of a duel in the past 6 months.

So far, I have attended 17 meetings related to the Senate.

One of those is the Planning Committee for Dr. Bendapudi's inauguration. I am very happy to report that the Staff Senate Executive Committee will be part of the processional of the inauguration and will be able to represent staff at that exciting activity. I hope as many of us as possible can make plans to be part of what will be a historic day in our University's history. I think it is very noteworthy that staff are going to be represented in a part of the ceremony that often has been faculty only at other institutions.

Dr. Bendapudi also hosted a cabinet meeting comprised of deans, vice presidents, and the three constituency representatives. The meeting was all all-day affair. A lot of the day was devoted to team building activities since a lot of the senior leadership of the University is new, and some exercises designed to identify things that are the most important to us. People in the room that day commented that it has been at least 7 years since they can remember anyone getting that group together. Dr. Bendapudi has committed to doing so every semester. That meeting will give us a unique platform to make sure our views on matters are heard. I can assure you that all of the constituency representatives were active participants at this meeting. The best thing I can report to you from that day is that not only were we invited to the meeting, we were desired at the meeting and that makes a huge difference. The opinions input and feedback of the constituency groups was specifically asked for at different points of the day and offered many other times.

A very interesting part of the day was a visit from Aaron Thompson, Executive Vice President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Mr. Thompson went into the new performance based budgeting model that the state is implementing. Here is the bottom line and how it directly applies to us. Think of a degree as worth \$1. The real amount is obviously different but do so just for ease of understanding. Now, also understand that a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degree is worth \$1.33. A degree awarded to an African-American or Hispanic student is also worth \$1.33. Here is how that affects us. As staff, we have numerous opportunities to influence a student's retention. We have those opportunities whether we interact with students directly or not. Everything we do can have some impact on a student's retention. Physical Plant people out mowing the grass may not realize it, but the way they keep our campus so nice has an impact. Every person who deals with a student, who walks into any office, has an impact. People who work with hundreds of students every day has an impact. The point is we all are vested in the retention of students because the funding we receive is going to be tied directly to how well we do things to increase our retention rate. There is a 1% floor on loss of funding this year and a 2% floor the following year. After that, in theory, there is no floor for what amount of funding any university may lose. For us, having a positive impact on the retention of our students is the biggest thing we can do to not only help prevent the loss of funds, but to also increase our funding.

At the most recent Board of Trustees meeting, we approved the hiring of Dr. Beth Boehm as Provost and Tom Hoy as Counsel. SACS is returning to campus in September. One of their biggest concerns was the large number of interim positions we still have in senior leadership. By removing the interim tag from those positions, we have improved our standing for that visit. Both of those positions were given two-year terms. In 2019, a national search will be initiated for each position. Each of those two people will make their own decision as to whether or not be a candidate for the position again at that time.

The executive officers and Gretchen meet every Monday morning. We are in a unique position in that we are all new to our roles. We are doing everything we can to make sure we are not missing anything we should be doing and going through the learning curve as quickly as we can. We are all humbled by the opportunity to serve and represent you.

Dr. Han, COO, hosts a meeting with the executive officers each month. That gives us a great opportunity to get clarification on items as well as bring ideas to the table. Director of Human Resources John Elliott is also in those meetings.

Thank you for all you do.