

Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee
University of Kentucky
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) of the University of Kentucky (UK) Board of Trustees met on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, in the Harris Ballroom of the Gatton Student Center.

A. Meeting Opened

Chair Rachel Webb called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the ASAC answered the call of the roll: Cathy A. Black, Lee X. Blonder, Ron Geoghegan, Paula Leach Pope, Derrick K. Ramsey, C. Frank Shoop, Bryan Sunderland, Hollie Swanson, Rachel Watts Webb and Courtney Wheeler. Carol Martin "Bill" Gatton was not in attendance.

C. Approval of Minutes

Chair Webb reported that the minutes of the May 4, 2021, ASAC meeting had been distributed. Trustee Sunderland moved approval of the minutes and Trustee Pope seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion, Chair Webb called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

D. Student Government Association Update

Trustee Courtney Wheeler introduced the 2021-2022 Student Government Association (SGA) President Michael Hawse. SGA President Hawse provided an update regarding SGA activities, including:

- Hiring new executive team members to begin work on 2021-2022 SGA priorities.
- Expanding Wildcat Wardrobe services to be offered during the summer and to provide more inclusive clothing.
- Increasing collaboration with graduate and professional students.
- Expanding grant opportunities.

SGA President Hawse thanked Trustee Wheeler for her service as the 2020-2021 SGA President. Trustee Swanson thanked the SGA for their increased collaboration with graduate and professional students.

E. Vice President for Institutional Diversity Report

Interim Vice President for Institutional Diversity George Wright provided an update regarding the institution's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activities, which are a major priority for UK. He reported that implementation of the 17 DEI projects continues during the summer. He highlighted Projects 15 and 16 specifically. Project 15, Create Research Alliance, has resulted in the creation of United In True Racial Equity (UNITE), a new Research Priority Area. Project 16, Expand Postdoctoral Program, has resulted in increasing the number of underrepresented postdoctoral scholars. In addition to these Projects, the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies (CIBS) was also highlighted.

Vice President Wright provided an overview of Juneteenth, including the state and national history of the celebration. He reported that although Juneteenth and Black History Month have similarities, Juneteenth celebrations predate the creation of Black History Month. UK's designation of Juneteenth as a university holiday is consistent with the institution's prioritization of DEI activities.

F. Academic and Student Affairs Update

Provost David Blackwell and Vice President for Student Success Kirsten Turner provided an Academic and Student Affairs update, specifically focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students.

Vice President Turner discussed the impact of the pandemic on retention, defined as first fall to second fall for the first-time freshman cohort with an October 15 census date. She reported that during the last five years, UK has focused on increasing the retention rate in a strategic and data-informed way, keeping in mind that data represents students and their families. Preliminarily, retention of the Fall 2020 cohort is even with that of the Fall 2019 cohort. However, retention of female students, regardless of demographic, in the Fall 2020 cohort has been lower than usual. Vice President Turner provided possible explanations for this decrease, including safety concerns, difficulty in establishing and maintaining social relationships and family responsibilities. Based on this information, targeted outreach occurred and has improved the retention of this population.

Provost Blackwell discussed the impact of the pandemic on student academic performance, measured by grade point average (GPA). He reported that the overall undergraduate GPA had a significant increase from Spring 2019 to Spring 2020. Possible explanations for this change are the adjusted Spring 2020 Pass/Fail grading policy and compassion shown to students based on extenuating circumstances. Regarding the impact of course modality, Provost Blackwell reported that students with fully online course schedules were not as engaged on campus as students who had mixed modality course schedules, which is evidenced by a lower retention rate and GPA for students with fully online course schedules. Based on this information, he concluded that if a student experiences at least some level of traditional instruction, this has a positive impact on their retention and GPA, which highlights the importance of meaningful engagement.

Vice President Turner reviewed targeted student support and interventions that have been undertaken, including personalized text messages and direct mail, based on the data previously discussed.

Trustee Wheeler inquired about UK's future plans to address retention disparities. Senior Assistant Provost and Executive Director of Institutional Research, Analytics, and Decision Support Todd Brann indicated that retention efforts are typically focused on the first-time freshman cohort because students retained for one year are more likely to graduate. However, Mr. Brann pointed out that for the upcoming academic year, there will be two at-risk cohorts: Fall 2020 and Fall 2021. Therefore, the targeted support and interventions mentioned previously will be implemented for both of those cohorts. Vice President Turner indicated there are ongoing national discussions regarding safe engagement for these cohorts. Provost Blackwell added that in terms of course modality, the Fall 2021 course schedule will more closely resemble the Fall 2019 course schedule rather than the Fall 2020 course schedule.

Trustee Shuffett inquired about student engagement requirements in online courses. Provost Blackwell indicated that pre-pandemic, most online undergraduate courses were intended for upperclassmen students and were asynchronous. During the pandemic, access to online instruction, even in traditional courses, was expanded to allow students who were quarantining or isolating to have access to class meetings. Going forward, innovation in online instruction will be driven by pedagogy rather than the pandemic.

Trustee Swanson inquired how the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 cohorts would be welcomed to campus. Vice President Turner indicated that plans for K Week, including the incorporation of events for the Fall 2020 cohort, are in process. She added that in the future, Student Success intends to strategically design enrollment management and orientation processes, so all activities work in tandem.

G. Provost Report

Provost David Blackwell provided an overview of the previous three years of his term. He reviewed the Our Path Forward initiative. He reviewed innovations in several of the institution's key mission areas, including:

- Instruction:
 - Development and growth of UK Online.
 - Provision of an outstanding educational experience and critical instructional support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Global Wildcats program and a large-scale investigation of the pandemic's effects on teaching and learning.
 - Expansion of enrollment opportunities, including Winter Intersession 2020-2021 and a digital badge pilot program.
- Diversity and Inclusivity:
 - Prioritizing of DEI efforts in faculty hiring and retention, in conjunction

- with Institutional Diversity.
- Creation of the Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies.
- Creation of the Education and Civil Rights Initiative with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- Research and Scholarship:
 - COVID-19 research efforts, including the Center for Clinical and Translational Science's participation in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine clinical research study and formation of a COVID-19 Biobank.
 - Publishing of award-winning books by the University Press of Kentucky.
- Engagement and Service
 - Hosting Governor's School for the Arts.
 - Creation of the Next Generation Scholars dual credit program.
 - Partnering with the University Center of Southern Kentucky.

In addition to these mission areas, Provost Blackwell reviewed the College Productivity and Net Tuition Revenue Models, which were created to incentivize growth and innovation in the colleges. He reviewed leadership searches, including those for deans as well as other Provost direct reports.

Provost Blackwell thanked the Board of Trustees for their support during his time at UK. Chair Webb lauded Provost Blackwell for his service to UK and he received a standing ovation.

H. Meeting Adjourned

Hearing no further business, Chair Webb adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Watts Webb
Academic and Student Affairs
Committee

RW/afc