

Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Colleagues:

I met with President Caboni on Monday, Jan. 27. The meeting lasted 75 minutes well over my allotted 45 minutes, and we covered a lot of ground:

- The discussion around daycare for faculty was productive. The president's staff has been working on it. Once hurdle, space for additional daycare has been cleared. The president said space on South Campus is available. Now the other hurdles, staffing and cost, need to be addressed. The president said discussions are ongoing. I suggested that training top students in early childhood education for internships or apprenticeships might be an option. This falls in line with better utilizing our students to serve university needs and to help make our students "workforce ready," which aligns with WKU's mission and lawmaker expectations. I will continue to track this issue.
- We discussed athletic spending, and the president acknowledged that increases in revenue from athletics likely will not happen, so work must focus on efficiency and cost-cutting. The future of college athletics remains fluid with NIL impacts and the possibility that college athletes could be considered university employees. The president said discussions within CUSA about reducing travels costs and creating other efficiencies as ongoing. The president serves on the College Football Playoff Board of Managers, so he is plugged into a lot of discussions about the sustainability of athletic programs. However, he said WKU is not going back to the FBS. This story in the Herald (<https://wkuherald.com/81695/sports/stewart-talks-wku-athletics-with-herald-sports-staff/>) and the Budget & Finance Committee report on this agenda offer more insight into the affordability of athletics at WKU.
- The president reaffirmed some of the comments made by the provost during the January Faculty Senate meeting (/Volumes/shared/UNIVERSITY-WIDE-SHARED/Senate Documents/Faculty Senate Recordings/2024-2025 Senate Meeting Recordings/012325/FacultySenateMeeting-012325.MP3) regarding plan for increased doctoral programs at WKU. He acknowledged that the grant situation under the Trump administration remains unclear, and he referenced House Bill 118 that specifically addresses WKU (<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/25rs/hb118.html>). The president offered these ideas about additional doctoral programs at WKU:
 - They could energize the master's programs at WKU.
 - They could energize undergraduate/graduate engagement.
 - The dissertation process and the educational process go hand-in-hand.
 - They could lead to development of programs and apprenticeships.
- We discussed the work group looking at the Colonnade and said the charge is to examine ways to enhance the current model and assess its curriculum to ensure that students see its value.