Minutes of the Meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee
University of Kentucky
Monday, December 2, 2024

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) of the University of Kentucky (UK) Board of Trustees met on Monday, December 2, 2024, in the Harris Ballroom of the Gatton Student Center.

A.   Meeting Opened

Chair Alex Boone called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

B.   Roll Call

The following members of the ASAC answered the call of the roll: Hubie Ballard, Cathy Black, Maddie Duff, David Figg, Ron Geoghegan, Brenda Gosney, Hannah Myers, Paula Leach Pope and Hollie Swanson.

C.   Approval of Minutes

Chair Boone reported that the minutes of the September 13, 2024, ASAC meeting had been distributed. Trustee Ballard moved approval of the minutes and Trustee Gosney seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

D.   ASACR 1: Candidates for Degrees: December 2024

The recommendation was that the President be authorized to confer upon the individuals whose names appeared on an attached list the degrees to which they were entitled, upon certification by the University Registrar that the individuals had satisfactorily completed all requirements for the degrees for which application had been made and as approved by the Colleges and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

By way of background, considering the University of Kentucky will hold the December Commencement ceremonies immediately following the completion of examinations, it is not possible for the University Registrar to certify satisfactory completion of requirements prior to the ceremonies for those candidates who complete their requirements in December.

This proposed action has the approval of the Colleges. The Provost of the University supports this recommendation.

Trustee Duff moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Swanson. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

E.   ASACR 2: Academic Degree Recommendation: College of Medicine

The recommendation was that the Board of Trustees approve the establishment

of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Biomedical Informatics and Data Science, in the Department of Internal Medicine, within the College of Medicine, beginning in the 2025 Fall Semester.

By way of background, the proposed PhD in Biomedical Informatics program is intended to prepare students to become leaders in developing and applying novel analytical methods and tools to address challenging problems across the spectrum of biology and medicine. This unique program offers a rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum that fosters creativity, collaboration, and communication, while also providing students with opportunities to conduct cutting-edge research in collaboration with world-class faculty and mentors spanning various domains.

This program will be delivered in person and was specifically designed to solve an unmet need in Kentucky by preparing the next generation of scientists with the computational skills necessary to effectively analyze large biomedical and genomics datasets that may be used to improve disease research and personalized medicine, as well as fill a critical gap in interfacing between basic science programs and clinical/translational science programs currently offered at the University of Kentucky. The program has a core curriculum that teaches proper techniques to computationally analyze large-scale datasets with the potential of providing better health to Kentucky residents and beyond.

The program has the approval of the College of Medicine. The Provost of the University supports this recommendation. Pending approval by the Board of Trustees, the program will begin the review process of the Council on Postsecondary Education.

Trustee Ballard moved approval, which was seconded by Trustee Swanson. Hearing no discussion, Chair Boone called for a vote and the motion passed without dissent.

F.   Provost Report

Provost DiPaola, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration (EVPFA) Monday and Acting Vice President for Research (VPR) Messaoudi presented key aspects under the framework of leveraging resources to advance Kentucky. Provost DiPaola highlighted the importance of optimizing the University's financial allocation model to support institutional growth. He reported that attention must be paid to resource allocation to foster innovation, support current talent and expand infrastructure. He quoted Stephen R. Covey's principle of treating time as a valuable investment to emphasize the importance of maximizing the efforts of faculty and staff.

Provost DiPaola underscored the University's mission to grow enrollment, close educational gaps, and conduct research addressing Kentucky's critical needs. He stated that the discussion would focus on resources aligned with the University's strategic plan, including priorities such as student success, academic quality and community building.

EVPFA Monday discussed the financial allocation model, which aims to invest University resources efficiently. He reported that the model's framework focuses on four components:

1. Net Tuition Revenue (NTR): NTR incentivizes colleges to increase enrollment and credit hours. Forty-five percent of net tuition revenue is allocated to colleges based on their contributions.
2. College Productivity Model (CPM): CPM focuses on metrics such as degrees awarded per faculty member, research funding and faculty diversity. CPM is under review this fiscal year to align with institutional priorities.
3. Performance Funding Allocation (PFA): PFA is aligned with the state's funding formula and focuses on enrollment, graduation and workforce needs.
4. College-Based Reallocation: This is a mechanism to accelerate resource distribution based on colleges' strategic goals.

EVPFA Monday reported that $113.8 million has been allocated to colleges over five years, fostering innovation and growth. He emphasized the transparent review process and the availability of data for college leadership to assess their performance.

Provost DiPaola provided examples of how the financial allocation model supports new programs. He stated that the Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences, a collaboration between the Colleges of Pharmacy and Arts and Sciences, exemplifies the model's success. He reported that the program's five-year financial plan ensured sustainability, breaking even by year three.

Acting VPR Messaoudi presented an overview of research efforts, focusing on opportunities to enhance productivity and secure external funding. She stated that research aligns with the University's goal to address Kentucky's pressing challenges, particularly in health and workforce development. She reported that ongoing reviews of the financial allocation model will include adjustments to incentivize research growth. She reiterated the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and strategic investments.

Provost DiPaola reiterated the University's commitment to advancing Kentucky through education, research and strategic resource management. He addressed recent developments and progress in academic programs and research initiatives by highlighting the success of the new Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in Criminal Justice programs.

Provost DiPaola reported that initial concerns about long-term sustainability due to staffing and resource costs were mitigated through careful financial planning. He stated that enrollment surpassed projections, with over 100 new undergraduate students this fall, exceeding the originally projected 38. He emphasized the program's collaboration between the College of Social Work and the College of Arts and Sciences, showcasing interdisciplinary efforts to provide workforce-ready opportunities for students.

Acting VPR Messaoudi presented an overview of the University's research breadth and impact. She reported that measuring research productivity is complex due to its diverse outputs across disciplines. Categories of productivity are as follows: dissemination (publications, exhibitions, curriculum), innovation (patents, clinical trials, medical procedures) and societal applications (behavioral interventions, collaborations). She stated that societal benefits include advancing health, wealth and knowledge across the state, with over $500 million in research generating nearly $1 billion in economic activity.

Acting VPR Messaoudi noted the University's statewide reach, with cooperative extension offices and healthcare networks fostering economic and societal growth. She shared an example of collaboration between the College of Pharmacy and the Center for Applied Energy Research that led to groundbreaking antibiotic discoveries, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches.

Acting VPR Messaoudi outlined the various funding sources, including government grants, industry contracts and philanthropy. She explained the role of Facilities and Administrative (F&A) rates in subsidizing research costs. She emphasized the need for University funding in early-stage research, which often leads to significant external grants and impactful outcomes.

Acting VPR Messaoudi reported that approximately 47.8% of research distribution of effort (DOE) is currently funded by external awards, with the remainder subsidized by institutional funds. She stated that increasing grant-supported DOE correlates with impactful research and economic benefits, highlighting the importance of faculty support in securing grants.

Provost DiPaola reviewed the financial allocation model, emphasizing the link between grant-supported DOE and research growth. He reported that external funding not only supports salaries but also enables broader investments in faculty recruitment and research development. He stated that the University aims to increase external funding to further enhance its research impact and financial sustainability.

Provost DiPaola reported that, on average, 50% of research DOE across colleges is covered by grant support, while the remaining 50% is supported by the University. He emphasized that this balance is critical for onboarding new faculty who may not immediately secure grants, ensuring their continued contribution to research. He highlighted variations across colleges, noting that the College of Medicine covers 70% of research DOE through grants, leaving 30% uncovered, while the College of Public Health achieves 95% coverage. He stated that this variability reflects differences in research funding opportunities between disciplines. He emphasized the importance of optimizing time and talent recruitment to improve grant-funded DOE and noted that efforts like faculty mentoring and resource allocation can increase research productivity over time.

Provost DiPaola discussed a 2016 program launched by the College of Medicine that allocated funds to form focused research teams. He reported that this initiative targeted areas such as stroke research, e-cigarettes, pediatric studies, diabetes and precision medicine, fostering collaboration and mentoring for faculty without initial grant funding. He provided an example of collaboration between researchers in regenerative medicine and neurosurgery, which combined expertise on axolotl regenerative capabilities with advanced Parkinson's disease treatments. He stated that this approach amplified the University's research impact by uniting distinct disciplines.

Chair Boone called for questions. Trustee Swanson asked what has or has not been working well regarding the CPM model and how the increase in class sizes is balanced with the quality of education.

Provost DiPaola emphasized that the current model is progressing in the right direction. He reported that EVPHA Monday presented data showing that colleges are achieving substantial earnings under the CPM model. He noted that in recent years, colleges have excelled more in the CPM and NTR metrics, demonstrating that the model is functioning effectively. He added that discussions are ongoing to analyze and refine the separate metrics. He stated that ongoing adjustments to the model aim to align incentives with both research growth and educational excellence. He addressed concerns about the CPM model rewarding larger class sizes and its potential impact on education quality. He explained that the model includes various metrics, balancing growth in enrollment with other considerations.

Trustee McCoy questioned the disparities among colleges because of factors that are a result of the funding models. Provost DiPaola reported that in fiscal year 2024-25, the CPM model distributed $7.5 million, with additional funds allocated through NTR (tuition-related revenues) and other sources. He emphasized the importance of ensuring all colleges benefit from these investments, regardless of size or focus area.

Board Chair Brockman asked how the quality of research was measured for unfunded research. Provost DiPaola clarified that non-sponsored research time is necessary for scholarly activities such as peer review, panel participation and grant preparation, which may not directly generate funding but are vital for academic excellence. He stated that supporting faculty in these efforts reflects the University's commitment to advancing research and fostering a collaborative academic community.

Provost DiPaola continued by addressing the strategy for supporting graduate students through University funds. He stated that the goal was to ensure measurable outcomes, such as producing PhD graduates, generating defendable publications or securing grants. He emphasized that it currently takes approximately 18 months to secure National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding due to the application and revision cycle.

EVPFA Monday reported that regular performance evaluations are crucial in assessing faculty appointments and promotions. He explained that these evaluations often include mentoring and monitoring processes, ensuring alignment with departmental goals. He further noted that if faculty are unable to secure funding after a certain period, their strategies are reevaluated.

Acting VPR Messaoudi highlighted the strength of the University's collaborative and transdisciplinary approach. She reported that this collaborative environment enables the institution to adapt quickly to challenges and explore innovative funding strategies.

Board Chair Brockman raised a question regarding potential changes in NIH funding. EVPFA Monday responded that the University remains uncertain about future funding adjustments but is confident in its ability to adapt due to its unique interdisciplinary strengths.

Trustee Pope inquired about adjustments to diversity metrics in faculty evaluations. EVPFA Monday stated that no final decisions had been made but emphasized that the issue is under review.

Trustee Swanson asked how metrics are allocated for dual degree programs. It was reported that these metrics are weighted across colleges, with discussions involving deans to ensure fairness in resource allocation.

Trustee Gosney raised concerns about faculty satisfaction with revenue-sharing models. Provost DiPaola explained that transparency is maintained through regular updates, allowing faculty to understand the impact of their contributions on departmental finances. He noted that some colleges have begun specifying percentages of shared revenue, fostering greater faculty engagement.

G.   SGA President Report

Maddie Duff, Student Government Association (SGA) President reported on successful collaborations, including the Bluegrass Ballot Bash, which encouraged student voter registration across SEC universities. She stated that nearly 20,000 students were registered. She highlighted several impactful programs:

- The Wildcat Wardrobe provided over 700 students with free business attire.
- The Wildcat Market distributed fresh produce to more than 800 students.
- A food donation drive with the University of Tennessee resulted in over 6,500 contributions.

SGA President Duff reported increased student participation in SGA elections, with the highest voter turnout in seven years. She emphasized ongoing efforts to maintain momentum in the spring elections.

SGA President Duff spoke about a new initiative where a student, senator and executive branch member are highlighted each month.

Trustee Swanson asked what SGA advocates for with respect to higher education. SGA President Duff stated that the SGA is focusing on advocating for mental health resources and addressing food insecurity during their upcoming rally at the Capitol.

Chair Boone called for questions. There were none.

H.   Meeting Adjourned

Hearing no further business, Chair Boone adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shavonna Ross
Academic and Student Affairs Committee
Secretary