

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2024 Interim

September 17, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on September 17, 2024, at 11:00 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Stephen West, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen West Co-Chair; Representative James Tipton Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, Shelley Funke Frommeyer, David P. Givens, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Gerald A. Neal, Reginald Thomas, Lindsey Tichenor, Gex Williams, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise; Representatives Shane Baker, Tina Bojanowski, George Brown Jr., Emily Callaway, Josh Calloway, Jennifer Decker, Steven Doan, Kevin Jackson, Candy Massaroni, Marianne Proctor, Steve Rawlings, Steve Riley, Killian Timoney, and Timmy Truett.

Guests: Dr. Eli Capilouto, President, University of Kentucky; Dr. Kim Schatzel, President University of Louisville; Riggs Lewis, VP of External Relations and Communications, University of Louisville; Dr. David McFaddin, President, Eastern Kentucky University; Dr. Bob Jackson, President, Murray State University; and Dr. Timothy Caboni, President, Western Kentucky University.

LRC Staff: Yvette Perry, Lauren Busch, Emily Wiley, and Landen Holder.

Recognitions

Co-Chair Tipton recognized September 17th as Constitution Day, the 237th anniversary of the ratification of the United States Constitution. Senator Higdon recognized Tiffany Clark, Principal, New Haven Elementary for attending the meeting. Representative Truett recognized the attendance of Mandy Taylor, Assistant Principal, McKee Elementary, and Missy Wade, Teacher, McKee Elementary.

Approval of Minutes – August 20, 2024

Representative Massaroni made a motion, seconded by Representative Timoney, to approve the minutes. The motion passed by voice vote.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Postsecondary Institutions

Dr. Eli Capilouto, President, University of Kentucky, shared a presentation which reviewed the elimination of the University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office. He explained positions associated with this office were not eliminated, but given new job descriptions and absorbed by other departments. He further emphasized the importance of University of Kentucky staff and administrators remaining non-partisan and impartial for the facilitation of education for all demographics.

In response to a question from Representative Rawlings, Dr. Capilouto explained diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness are responsibilities which all staff are expected to uphold. He stated ideas such as microaggressions, victim ideology, intersectionality, white privilege, and toxic masculinity are topics which can be discussed and debated in classrooms, but will not be mandatory training subjects.

Responding to Senator Thomas, President Capilouto stated he worries for the future of education if legislation infringes upon the academic freedom of postsecondary schools.

In response to a question from Senator Funke Frommeyer, President Capilouto testified the University of Kentucky had over 9,000 degrees and certificates successfully completed last school year. He attributed the increase in student graduation to a reduction of the difference between total cost of attendance and available financial aid.

Responding to a question from Representative Josh Calloway, President Capilouto said the mandatory six-dollar diversity fee charged to each student had been eliminated.

In response to a question from Representative Decker, President Capilouto stated the diversity, equity, and inclusion plan which the University submitted in March, as required by state law, has not been revised or altered.

Responding to Senator Tichenor, President Capilouto testified any reported case of discrimination is filed and investigated, with appropriate charges made upon completion of the investigation.

In response to Chair West, President Capilouto testified the disbanded Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion had fifteen to seventeen employees, but could not provide an estimated budget for the department. He concluded by stating the mission of the University of Kentucky is to advance the Commonwealth in all aspects, with a desire to produce a healthier, wealthier, and wiser population.

Dr. Kim Schatzel, President, University of Louisville, and Riggs Lewis, Vice President, University of Louisville, gave a presentation regarding the University's Office of Institutional Equity which includes resources for military veterans, ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, LGBT individuals, Pell-eligible individuals, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students.

In response to a question from Representative Massaroni, Dr. Schatzel testified that the salaries provided by the University of Louisville for diversity, equity, and inclusion employees are not based on race or sex.

Responding to a question from Senator Neal, President Schatzel stated that the committee will be provided data illustrating the Office of Institutional Equity's impact on the progression of low-income and minority students.

In response to a question from Senator Wise, President Schatzel testified there has been no mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion classes for students or training for faculty since her arrival at the University of Louisville in February of 2023.

Responding to Senator Tichenor, President Schatzel stated the decision to choose the term equity, as opposed to equality, when naming the Office of Institutional Equity stems from the intention of the University to meet students where they are. She stated that the word equity shows no bias or preference and is about treating students as individuals with specific needs.

In response to Representative Callaway, President Schatzel testified that no University of Louisville directors are hired based on sex or ethnicity.

Responding to Senator Givens, President Schatzel urged the committee to be ambassadors to the public through encouraging residents to attend and complete a post-secondary education.

Dr. David McFaddin, President, Eastern Kentucky University; Dr. Bob Jackson, President, Murray State University; and Dr. Timothy Caboni, President, Western Kentucky University each gave presentations on diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to their respective universities. Topics of discussion included fostering a sense of belonging, providing support mechanisms for individual students, and celebrating the diversity of thought by protecting freedom of expression and encouraging open discourse.

In response to Senator Neal, Dr. McFaddin, Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Caboni agreed to provide the committee with metrics reflecting the impact of each university's diversity,

equity, and inclusion plans on students of color and low-income students. As requested, they also intend to provide the contact information for a university representative responsible for diversity inquiries.

Responding to Representative Calloway, President Caboni stated Western Kentucky University no longer has a bias response team. He further added the importance geography has on campus demographics, illustrating the need to provide supports for rural Kentucky students as well as metropolitan Nashville students. President McFaddin responded by highlighting the geographic responsibility Eastern Kentucky University has in shaping the greater Appalachian narrative by empowering communities in the region with post-secondary graduates.

Public Comment

Michael Frazier, Executive Director, Kentucky Student Rights Coalition, spoke to the importance of educational administrators providing welcoming, inviting, accessible, and inclusive campuses for all students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

016 KAR 009:030 – Emergency

Professional and provisional certificate for college faculty.

016 KAR 002:200 – Proposed

Probationary endorsement for teachers for English as a second language.

016 KAR 002:170 – Proposed

Probationary certificate for middle school teachers.

016 KAR 002:140 – Proposed

Probationary certificate for teachers of exceptional children and interdisciplinary early childhood education.

016 KAR 002:110 – Proposed

Endorsement for teachers for gifted education.

011 KAR 015:110 – Proposed

Scholarships for Registered Apprenticeship and Qualified Workforce Training programs.

011 KAR 015:090 – Proposed

Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program.

011 KAR 004:080 – Proposed

Student aid applications.

No action was needed on these items.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:11 P.M.