I requested time today to give you a short history and update on COSFL.

COSFL, the Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leaders, was created in 1979. Member institutions include the six regional comprehensives, U.K., U. of L., and KCTCS.

The good news is that the organization is in the process of being revived! Over the semester, email communications have picked up and infrastructure is being restored. COSFL’s web presence has been transferred to Western, and the website is being updated as information comes in from the various schools. The website is <www.wku.edu/cosfl/>.

The COSFL constitution is posted on the website. You may be interested in the membership. Official institutional representatives include four voting members: the chief presiding officer from the faculty body (that is, the Senate Chair), the faculty regent, the president of the local chapter of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors), and one other representative from the faculty (at EKU we elect that person from the Senate). Other faculty who hold or have held leadership positions also attend, but cannot vote.

The COSFL listserv is now being pruned and updated at the University of Louisville. If you are on the listserv and no longer wish to be, or if you are not currently getting emails and wish to be included on the listserv, please send your name and email address to me and I will forward them as a group to the manager at U. of L.

According to the constitution, COSFL’s primary duty is “to function as a collective advocacy body of public higher education faculties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.” In carrying out this mission COSFL may “furnish advice, recommendations, and information on public higher education policies and procedures to [among other bodies] the public and the Council on Postsecondary Education.”

In recent years, COSFL has not been giving advice and recommendations to anyone, and has merely been an after-the-fact receiver of information, and that was only when the group met in person. COSFL has not been following its constitution regarding the stipulated number of times it is required to meet in a year. In fact, COSFL still has not met this semester.

We have, however, received two messages from the faculty representative to CPE, Robert Staat from U. of L. The first, dated November 21, 2016, addresses interstate course offerings (see SARA, State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement) and has us seeking to join about 40 other states. The second came December 2. It references the
agreement, end product of the Work Group, that President Benson addressed as the plan submitted to the Governor’s office for the allocation of higher education monies. Most important for us in these performance metrics are the recommendation that 35% of the allocation go to degree and credential “production and progression”; another 35% go to credit production, and the final 30% go to campus infrastructure and services.

Of special interest to us is that first 35% category, which CPE labels as Student Success. It includes not only a premium on degree completion, but also awards dollars for students’ reaching critical credit milestones (30, 60, and 90 credit hours). That is a positive detail for us, I think.

The potential consequences – intended and unintended – of changing state allocation formulas should be addressed by COSFL, as well as other issues in higher education today. As we look to COSFL’s immediate future, a few of us are hoping to write some position papers on these issues so that COSFL can in fact engage the voice it was created to speak. Some of these issues may include performance funding, but also the need to prioritize the university mission, the status of athletics on campus, shared governance, mushrooming administration and professional staff positions, salary equity among various units, gender and racial inequality, campus construction. If anyone is interested in drafting a position paper on any one of these topics or another that concerns you, please send it to me and I will present your draft, if you wish, to COSFL membership for revision, adoption, and dissemination.

I hope to hear from you.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Kopacz, Faculty Representative to COSFL
Professor of English, Foundation Professor
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