

What Faculty Senate can do:

- Hold public fora for faculty, staff and students to air grievances and propose solutions. Try to set schedules and keep up the “feedback loop” even after conditions have improved. Try to set the stage for open dialogue that always occurs—not just for angry conversations in times of crisis.
- Work on instituting standardized feedback, both in the IR mode and in user-friendly methods that will get faculty “buy-in.” Right now, many faculty and staff are suspicious of IR and of what can and cannot be said using “institutional” data. We need to pursue both official and unofficial paths (through survey mechanisms) and show these results in conjunction with one another until we can finally demonstrate that both paths are saying the same thing. When we do that, we’ll be able to establish trust in IR and institutional methods.
- Create working definitions that are easily accessed by all. In many cases, the administration and faculty are operating from different definitions of “regional comprehensive university,” “student success,” “transparency,” “faculty voice,” and “consensus.” Faculty need to clearly articulate definitions, and show how those definitions work in operation, and they need to ask the administration to do the same. Once the cards are on the table, a conversation can begin.
- Use the appeal, response to appeal, and censure document as diagnostic tools that can help generate solutions. Determine concrete measures that can be taken to ensure that problems do not recur. (Keeping in mind that definition is key—much of our disagreement has been over what constitutes “transparent,” “faculty-led” and “shared governance”—how would we realize those terms in practice?)
- Identify some common sense solutions to some of our gen ed and assessment woes. Not as a way to circumvent current structures, or to critique people on current committees, but to show how many of our problems are self-inflicted because we’ve created byzantine methods that do not need to exist.
- Identify particular faculty or departments that can aid in institutional initiatives. For example, might folks in Marketing be called on to help with university marketing? Could Math, Econ, and Finance folks be used as a final check in number crunching? Might some press releases be run by writing specialists to make sure that we’re always on target with what we say? Could Education and Government/Public Policy folks work together to craft a compelling competing narrative to one we see in Frankfort, one that we can disseminate on campus and in the community?
- Work in collaboration with Staff Congress to shore up the core mission of the university (this would require an identification, on our part, of staff positions and roles that are key to academic success).
- Look into starting an AAUP chapter, hosting the KY AAUP conference in 2017, and getting an AAUP budgeting expert to come to campus to give us all a helpful tutorial on the budget.
- Keep up the Faculty Senate BlackBoard site and maintain the commitment to Senate transparency. We have to model what we wish to occur.
- Canvass students to determine their priorities and concerns.

What the admin can do:

- Rewrite the UAR that prohibits mass communication and allow faculty to communicate with one another.
- Create a joint faculty and administrator committee to investigate the financial health of the institution and its budget priorities (possible composition—four faculty members, selected by the Faculty Senate, four administrators drawn from outside of the President’s cabinet, selected by the President, and, at the discretion of the Board of Regents, an outside auditor or forensic accountant).
- Build on the progress re: enrollment projections and continue to share more information regarding our formulations. Identify faculty who do modeling and draw on their expertise to help us refine our system.
- Consistently recognize the Faculty Senate as a representative body that speaks on behalf of the faculty.
- Reduce the use of ad hoc and reconciliation committees and work in concert with the Senate to openly address important issues.
- Include a wide variety of faculty early in decision-making processes. Large numbers can be unwieldy, and discussions of controversial ideas that are never realized could engender some ill-will, but these potential problems are easily offset by the sense of community and involvement that will be fostered by transparency and recognition.
- Consider adding more academics to the President’s Cabinet. Right now the Chief Academic Officer is the only academic voice on the Cabinet.
- Consider openly addressing uncomfortable truths. If, for example, we start discussing costs of programs and ROI, acknowledge that there are certain programs that will more than likely be exempt for particular reasons, such Space Science. Resentment grows in the dark. It can be addressed and banished in the light.
- Allow faculty to interact with the Board of Regents in both formal and informal settings. It’s laudable to have a Faculty (and Student and Staff) Regent, but the Regents need to interact with faculty as a body and hear more about the academic mission of the university.