

# Faculty Forum

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# Faculty Forum

*From the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 1

September 1, 2010

## **Community Service – An Alternate Interpretation**

**By Erin McNelis**

Those who know me well will probably not be surprised at the subject of this submission ... SERVICE. It's a topic close to my heart, and in all honesty, central to my personal identity. Yet service, more specifically university service, seems to be the least valued of the three activities by which all faculty are measured: teaching, scholarship, and service.

I am proud to be a member of a university that has been recognized for its innovation in the areas of teaching and scholarship, in particular enhancing educational opportunities for our students through engaged learning and implementing a progressive model of scholarship in the collegial review process. Still, I challenge you to think about the following: central to the mission of engaged learning and at least three of the four areas of scholarship as defined by the Boyer Model is the concept of collaboration – working together for a common goal. In terms of engaged learning, students take an active role in their education, working in collaboration with faculty members and oftentimes with their classmates or community, to achieve the educational goals they seek. Scholarship of Integration can involve inter- or intra-disciplinary work requiring communication and collaboration between areas with the anticipation of adding value to both. Scholarship of Application or Engagement promotes advancement through the collaborative sharing of disciplinary expertise. Pivotal to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is the dissemination of results to enhance the community of educators. My question for us is “Why don't we extend this sense of collaboration and engagement to our university service work?”

Service, by its nature, should be work done for a greater good, be it in terms of a unifying belief, a valuable cause, or the well being of a community. Too often university service can be seen as a chore, busy work, or a means of satisfying a category on a tenure check-sheet. I know there have been times that I have felt that way towards some of my committee work. But I believe that we as a community can change that perception.

First, we must make deliberate choices. Don't say yes (or no!) to every call for participation. Take a careful look at what opportunities there are and choose to get involved in what matters to you! A user's guide to university service at Western Carolina University is nearing completion, developed over the summer by a small group directed by Laura Cruz, and should enable all faculty, especially those in their first year or two of service, to make careful and informed choices about committee membership.

Second, approach your work with a community attitude. Recognize that you and your colleagues have a common interest and goal, and each person brings valuable knowledge, experiences, and talent to the effort. Make community-minded decisions rather than personal decisions. Also, keep in mind that as a part of a team, we must all take our responsibilities seriously and come prepared to do the work at hand.

The final and most difficult adjustment we must make to change the perception of university service is a change of attitude. **We must value work done in service to the university – in our attitudes, in our actions, and in our decisions.** How do we do this? Of that I'm not certain. My personal view is to have that change start with yourself and trust that your attitude will positively influence those around you.

With that, I would like to say that I am honored to represent the Faculty of Western Carolina University as their Chair, and I want to better enable myself, and all members of the Faculty Senate, to make informed and thoughtful decisions on your behalf. In order to do this, I hope that each faculty member will feel comfortable and compelled to share their thoughts with me and with their Senate representatives. A guide to the Faculty Senate including photos and contact information for the members of Senate has been created to help make it easier for faculty to know how to make those connections. I also intend to provide more opportunities for the Senate to directly update faculty on issues at hand and progress on Senate actions. Please join your Senators in strengthening this body of community service.

*Erin McNelis joined Western Carolina University in August 2002. She is an Associate Professor of Mathematics and currently serves as the Faculty Chair and the Coordinator of the Applied Mathematics Graduate Program. She is active in interdisciplinary research, particularly mathematical biology and computational science, and has led national workshops for scientists and educators in these areas. Currently preparing an introductory text on scientific computing, Erin has also published and presented work in incorporating simulation and modeling in mathematics courses.*

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**Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning  
Responses to the May 2010 Faculty Forum article by Mary Jean Herzog  
entitled  
36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee**

*Our April and May 2010 Faculty Forum features by Marie Line Germain and Mary Jean Herzog, respectively, generated a lot of lively discussion among faculty about what it means to live and work in Cullowhee. The articles and discussion reflect the greater Cullowhee community dialog of the future of this community, its growth and leadership in relation to the rapidly growing university. This month's article by Erin McNelis takes that discussion of the community/university interface one step further, placing it into an academic realm. Those who follow up twenty years down the road will know from these Faculty Forum archives that WE were thinking and talking about this university and community of the future. Keep talking!  
Vera Holland Guise, Faculty Fellow, Coulter Faculty Commons*



*Mary Jean makes a good point: some rural prejudiced people think there is nothing to do in Cullowhee. I think it is due to lack of a broader living knowledge and imagination. I do a lot of shopping in Asheville for some specialized foods or certain shoes, etc. But that does not mean I don't have a few choices for food purchase here as well. Maybe this little piece will help out those that have a narrow view of country or suburbia living.*

*Cheers,  
Dan*

*J. Dan Pittillo is a retired professor, WCU Department of Biology*



*That's great! I just hope that won't start the perennial city vs. rural living debate. One precision: Mary Jane wrote I commute every day, driving 2 hours. I would have never accepted the job if I had to commute from Asheville every day. I typically come to campus once or twice a week to teach my courses! That's it. I do my office hours at UNCA, 5 minutes away from my home. Thanks again for offering a great discussion platform though The Forum.*

*Best regards,  
Marie Line Germain, Assistant Professor, Human Resources and Leadership*



*I am putting together for a faculty search packet and would like to include this article. Any chance of getting hard copies?*

*Mickey Randolph*



*Great article! This should be used for recruiting new faculty. I can tell that you understand why Sarah and I are keeping our home here as a mountain retreat from southeastern NC. Later, when we retire, we'll spend a significant amount of our time in the mountains.*

*All the best,*

*kc*

*Kyle R. Carter  
Provost and Sr. Vice Chancellor*

## **A Note From The Editor:**

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The direct link to the main Faculty Forum Webpage is: <http://www.wcu.edu/7480.asp>.

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 2

October 1, 2010

## Seeking Peaceful Co-Existence? Campus Mediation Can Help!

**Jayne Zanglein**  
**Faculty Coordinator**  
**Campus Mediation Program**  
**Business Administration and Law**

Are you involved in an on-going feud with colleagues? Are your students battling with their roommates, fighting with their lab partners, or bickering with their teammates? Do you need a guest speaker to talk to your student organization about ways to manage conflict? The Campus Mediation Program can help!

Mediation is an informal process in which neutral mediators help structure a conversation between two or more people so that they can be heard. Using active listening skills and facilitative techniques, the mediators help the parties to work toward resolution. The mediators don't dwell on the current dispute, but seek to resolve the underlying issues that led to the dispute.

The mediator is not a judge and cannot give advice or suggestions. Instead the mediator creates a safe and confidential environment in which the parties can discuss the issues involved and generate solutions that will prevent the situation from recurring. If agreement is reached, the mediators help the parties draft an agreement to prevent future disputes.

The program has mediated a wide range of cases involving disputes between staff, faculty and administration, students, and teammates. Faculty disputes are co-mediated by two faculty members. Student disputes are co-mediated by a faculty and student mediator. Mediations are free and completely confidential.

Campus mediators have completed the 21-hour North Carolina Community Mediation Training. This training is offered two times a year: once in the Fall, as Law 285, and once in March as an intensive course held over two consecutive weekends. Training is free.

Faculty and students are also available to present workshops on active listening skills, de-escalating anger, dealing with discrimination and stereotypes, conflict management styles, problem-solving, mediation, and negotiation. Workshops are interactive and typically involve role plays.

For more information, contact Jayne Zanglein at x7191 or student case coordinator Matthew Core at x7234.

## Campus Mediation Program—QEP in Action

In 2006, Courtney Howard, a senior Business Law major founded the WCU Campus Mediation Program. The program is a successful example of students who are so engaged in their learning that they are looking for ways to move beyond the classroom and apply these skills in their community.

After taking a mediation class at the College of Business, Courtney was so enthusiastic about the benefits of mediation that she vowed to start a peer mediation program on campus before she graduated. To learn how to establish and manage a successful mediation practice, Courtney interned with Mountain Mediation Services, the community mediation program that mediates district court cases in seven counties in Western North Carolina. With this knowledge in hand, she worked for over a year with faculty and staff in the Business Law Department and the Department of Student and Community Ethics to design a program that would meet the needs of the campus community. Courtney was the impetus behind the program and without her dedication and constant nudging, the program would have faltered. Before she graduated, Courtney established the Campus Mediation Program, set up a student case coordinator office, trained a dozen mediators, and held several mediations.

After Courtney graduated, Eric Brailsford-Cato assumed the role of case coordinator for the program. He saw a need to provide continuing mediation education to student mediators. In the Fall of 2007, Eric established the Campus Mediation Society as a student organization whose mission is to “to help facilitate and support conversation while promoting conflict resolution and cross-cultural communication around Western Carolina University and the surrounding community.” The Society meets twice a month to provide educational opportunities to student mediators and to plan outreach events.

In 2009, Student Case Coordinator, Christopher Salerno met with managers of Cullowhee apartment complexes to promote the use of mediation to resolve disputes between residents. As a result, Laurel Oaks agreed to provide the Society with a satellite office where student mediators bake cookies and offer them to tenants while giving them a brief overview of the power of communication in resolving disputes.

Also in 2009, the Campus Mediation Society and the College of Business sponsored a five-person mediation team that placed third in a national mediation tournament held at John Marshall School of Law in Chicago. The team practiced mediation techniques two to three times a week for about six weeks in preparation for the event. Eric Brailsford-Cato was one of the team members and was named All American Mediator.

The Campus Mediation Society also sponsors an event on the third Thursday in October, which is International Conflict Resolution Day. Last year, the Society hosted a viewing of *Gran Torino*, followed by a panel discussion on cross-cultural issues.

The Campus Mediation Program has received the Integration of Student Learning Award. Last year the Society received the student organization award for Cross Cultural Program of the Year.

The Campus Mediation Program meets the University’s goal to “create connections between what they learn inside and outside of the classroom and to afford faculty, staff and students more opportunities to collaborate.” Students prepare budgets and write grant applications to fund the program. They strategize about marketing plans and advertising. They engage in

succession planning to ensure that the program continues after key participants graduate. And, they learn how to effectively communicate, negotiate and resolve disputes. The Campus Mediation Program is one example of what students can do when they are given the opportunity to make a difference in their world, a prime example, we think, of the mission of QEP.

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## **Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning**



### **Responses to the September *Faculty Forum* feature article by Erin McNelis entitled *Community Service – An Alternate Interpretation***

*Erin,*  
*Really nice article in the Forum on university service. Thank you for sharing your thoughts.*  
Carol Burton  
Assistant Vice Chancellor  
for Undergraduate Studies

*And an echo from Glenn Bowen. In a word, DITTO!*  
Glenn Bowen  
Center for Service Learning

*Erin,*  
*Just wanted to thank you for your article on university service in the Faculty Forum! Superb job! I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to write this piece. I hope it makes a difference in attitudes here on campus.*

*Always a pleasure to see and work with you!*

*Best wishes for a pleasant and productive fall semester!*  
Don Livingston  
Professor  
Department of Political Science & Public Affairs

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## **Announcing a New Monthly Addition to the *Faculty Forum***

This month we are adding a new and exciting component to the *Faculty Forum*, a short monthly column from the Faculty Senate. This will place Faculty Senate deliberations and decisions into the *Faculty Forum* archives, leaving behind us a *bread crumb trail in the forest* –23 years and counting, for those who follow us in the great WCU Faculty Alumni Family, to consider and reflect on the issues and decisions of our time and place. Special thanks to Erin McNelis, Faculty Senate Chair, for helping to make this addition happen!

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## News and Notes from the WCU Faculty Senate

In order to keep Western Carolina University faculty informed and to promote open discussion of issues facing the faculty and the university community, each month the Faculty Senate will highlight a topic from an upcoming Senate agenda in the *Faculty Forum* as well as identify additional key issues Senate Councils are investigating. The Faculty Senate serves as the voice of the faculty in university governance; let's make it a strong one!

### CoursEval and Mobile Devices

The October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate anticipates discussion and debate on several personal and emotionally charged subjects, two are highlighted below.

In April 2010, the Faculty Senate approved organization of a pilot study on the effects of current student assessment of instruction (SAI) restrictions, (such as the limited release time and embargos against incentives) on response rate. The Faculty Affairs Council will hear a proposal from the SAI Task Force in their October meeting, asking their consideration of three changes for a pilot study this fall: 1) Early grade notification via email for each course for which a student has completed the evaluation; 2) Countdown notification emails reminding students of the deadline; and 3) Allowing evaluations to be available to students until midnight prior to the start of exam week. The SAI Task Force is basing its recommendations upon student feedback, conversations with the Registrar, and results from last spring's unplanned extension of the evaluation deadlines for CoursEval.

Several members of our faculty have indicated great concern to their Senators over the new mobile devices policy, which will restrict or charge university users for access to email (via tools such as Outlook). The Chair of the Faculty Senate plans to meet with Craig Fowler and Anna McFadden to discuss possible alternatives, but if no satisfactory solution can be identified, the Faculty Senate intends to make clear the voice and will of the Faculty (and staff and administration). Please contact your Senators and Senate Leadership to let them know where you stand on this issue---and all Senate issues for that matter.

Additional issues in Senate Councils include: Post Tenure Review discrepancies between the Faculty Handbook and AA-12 form; Child Care Options – a collaborative effort with the Faculty Affairs Council, Staff Senate, AAUW, and The Reporter; Discussion of Honors College Liberal Studies Proposals in individual college curriculum committees; and non-tenure track faculty's role in the Faculty Senate.

For more details on Faculty Senate activities and business, visit the Faculty Senate website: <http://www.wcu.edu/25121.asp>.

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 3

November 1, 2010

## **Bias on Campus: Fighting the Problem, Embracing a Solution**

By Dr. Thomandra Sam, Psychologist / Diversity Specialist

The long history of our country has demonstrated that persons who identify as members of, or even allies to, particular groups often may be treated unjustly or harshly. Recent events in our country, particularly within higher education, demonstrate that harsh treatment towards members of traditionally marginalized groups (cultural, spiritual, sexual preference, gender identity/expression, etc.) is prevalent and potentially gaining strength. It is imperative that Western Carolina University coordinate its efforts to demonstrate that we do not condone or endorse the thoughts and/or actions of bias incidents and we will act against such hatred and injustices occurring in our community.

To some readers of this article, the question may arise: what is a bias incident and how can I truly play a role in stopping such injustice?

“A bias incident is any conduct, speech or expression motivated, in whole or in part, by bias or prejudice,” according to Tolerance.org. Differing from a hate crime, a bias incident does not involve criminal activity. Similar to a hate crime, both actions adversely impact the learning environment. However, such incidents should not occur and can be dealt with through the utilization of grievance procedures and ethics committees hosted by members of the University community. Therefore, all hate crimes are bias incidents, however all bias incidents may not constitute a hate crime. Bias incidents include, but are not limited to: slurs and epithets, hate/inflammatory symbols, target(s) believe the incident was motivated by bias, and/or a pattern of incidents in which the targets and perpetrators are members of differing groups.

Although not illegal, bias incidents demand a unified denouncement from our community and its leaders. In its 2005 National School Climate Survey, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found:

- 75% of students heard derogatory remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently or often at school.
- 89% reported hearing "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" frequently or often as a means of identifying something or someone as useless or stupid.
- 17.6% of students had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation while 11.8% of students reported it due to their gender expression.
- The average GPA for LGBTQ students who were frequently physically harassed was half a grade lower than that of LGBTQ students experiencing less harassment.
- LGBTQ students who experience more frequent physical harassment were more likely to report they did not plan to go to college.

GLSEN's 2004 State of States Report revealed that LGBTQ students who did not have or were not aware of policies protecting them from violence and harassment were 40% more likely to report skipping school out of fear for their personal safety.

Notwithstanding, North Carolina, as of June 2009, is one of fourteen states in the USA with a law that addresses hate or bias crimes but does not address sexual orientation or gender identity as a means for bias. At Western Carolina University, however, students do have the ability to file a bias-related complaint no matter its relation to culture, spirituality, sexual preference or gender identity. This action can take place in person at either the Western Carolina University Police Department (in emergency) or with the Assistant Vice Chancellor's Office.

In learning to advocate and create a more inclusive community, there are some actions and resources that can help to facilitate such proactive change by individuals. Below are three tools that may prove helpful in energizing one's self as an advocate of justice.

1. **Gentle Identification of Bias.** Identifying a behavior candidly may help someone to better hear what they have really said or are saying. Therefore, in the goal to communicate, loaded terms are the least helpful. When identifying behavior, however, avoid labeling, name-calling or the use of loaded terms. Describe the behavior; don't label the person. For instance, "Jane, what I hear you saying is..."
2. **Enforce Your Boundaries.** You do not have the power to control other people; the progression towards social justice is still about acknowledgment of each other's rights. With that, everyone has the right to control their own space. Persons advocating for social justice and fighting against bias cannot control another person, but you can say, "Please don't tell racist jokes in my presence anymore. If you do, I will leave." Or, "My workspace is not a place I permit such remarks to be made. I can't control what you say outside of this space, but here I ask that you respect my wishes." Then follow through. Bob Carolla, spokesman for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill believes that, "even if attitudes don't change, by shutting off bad behavior, you are limiting its contagion. Fewer people hear it or experience it."
3. **Be Vigilant.** It is important to remember that change happens over time, however it is important to stay prepared and continuously speak out against injustice. The greatest risk to justice is silence in the face of injustice. Ron Schlittler, acting executive director of the national office of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, states, "There's a sense of personal disappointment in having not said something when you felt you should have."

To discuss such matters, faculty and staff members in the Western Carolina University community are encouraged to consult or seek support from Intercultural Affairs, Counseling and Psychological Services, and/or fellow co-workers who have been identified as advocates or allies in other areas. We especially need to remember to point our students toward these resources if they express a concern about bias or if we recognize a problem. For more information on how to be a more active agent for social justice and to help to stop bias incidents in our WCU community and your personal surroundings, the following resources are recommended:

**Human Rights Campaign:** <http://www.hrc.org/>

**Equality North Carolina:** <http://equalitync.org/>

**Southern Poverty Law Center (main):** <http://www.splcenter.org/>

**Teaching Tolerance:** <http://www.tolerance.org/>

**Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN):**

<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/educator/index.html>

**TransYouth Family Allies:** <http://www.imatyfa.org/educators/index.html>

**Stop Bullying Now – U.S. Government site:** <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/default.aspx>

*Remember that "if you don't speak up, you're surrendering part of yourself." (Carolla)*

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 4

December 1, 2010



## Progress of an Idea *Looking Forward – Looking Back*

*By Vera Holland Guise, MPA  
Visiting Instructor and Faculty Fellow  
Coulter Faculty Commons*

*“Neither accident nor miracle placed Western Carolina University here in the heart of the rugged mountains of Western North Carolina” wrote former president William E. Bird in his 1963 publication, **The History of Western Carolina College.**<sup>1</sup>*

Bird relates an event in 1944 in which WCU founder, Robert Lee Madison, appeared to reflect on the early years of sacrifice and struggle in moving his dream to reality. “*My heart bled*”, said Madison, “*to find such staggering absence of any forms of meaningful education for the youth of the mountain region, and I felt that something must be done about it.*”<sup>2</sup> But “*dreams of themselves*”, declares Bird, “*however vital (become) mere dreams or realities*” depending on the dreamer’s understanding of the laws of cause and effect and their expression through the labors of the dreamer.<sup>3</sup>

The citizens of the valley were, from the outset, writes Bird, determined to have a permanent school in their midst, at whatever cost. They not only provided what meager monetary support they could, they opened their homes and barns as housing for the students who came from across the mountain ranges to study at the new academy, with only one small instruction building on just ½ acre of land, with no provision for housing or dining facilities. The Cullowhee Baptist Church lent its facilities for use in music instruction, and school neighbors saw that wood was hauled in for heating and food was shared from their bounty. Eighteen students met President Madison for the first day of classes and by the end of that first year, 100 students were enrolled, creating serious crowding in that one small building. To solve the problem, local loggers used their sleds and teams of mules and oxen to move the previously closed one room Liberty School House from the East La Porte community to the new Cullowhee Academy, a feat which required taking the building apart in order to transport it, fording the Tuckasegee River and re-constructing it on a site known as the Madison Memorial on the Academy grounds on the top of the hill overlooking the valley. That early campus, consisting of only one building, is pictured here, courtesy of Hunter Library Special Collections.

From the school’s founding in 1889 until 1901, when the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated the first mere \$5,000 in operating capital for the new academy, total support for the school came from the people of Cullowhee Valley and from the students who came from a widening regional scope. Through the years, the school survived a Great Depression, though like everyone else, it lost all its cash assets deposited in a Sylva bank. It also survived two world wars and several

<sup>1</sup> The History of Western Carolina College, William Ernest Bird, University of North Carolina Press, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Lee Madison, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> The History of Western Carolina College, William Ernest Bird, University of North Carolina Press. 1963

“conflicts” that adversely affected enrollment, taking young male scholars out of school and away to the battlefields.

Despite these hard years, the Academy continued to grow and make improvements and acquisitions, some by outright donation. In the summer of 1923 Madison, having served a total of 24 years as the institution’s dreamer and guide, retired as president, but continued as a member of the faculty, bringing his service to a total of some 40 years. Madison was succeeded in the presidency by Hiram T. Hunter of Wake Forest College, who continued in that role for over 24 years, again providing the continuity and the vision necessary to moving the Madison legacy forward to many of the essential elements of what the university is today. By the time the looming Great Depression forced the NC General Assembly to make deep cuts in its modestly increasing appropriations, the Academy was seeing record enrollments and the school was on the cusp of moving to a four year degree school, which came at last in 1929. The decade to follow, known for its austerity and trials, were, perhaps the most telling years. The state budget cuts of 1930-1931 forced a decrease in faculty salaries by one-half of the \$240 normal salary for a six week term, and then another 10% off that. I wonder how many of us would stay today if we had that severe a cut?

Western Carolina College survived, sometimes held together by a “slender thread of faith and hope”, while many other similar institutions gave up and closed their doors.<sup>4</sup> Throughout those formative years, institutional leaders and state officials re-stated our founding purpose, which I would argue is no less critical today “to prepare teachers for the public schools of North Carolina.”<sup>5</sup>

More than seven decades have come and gone since those trying years, including many other economic down-turns and periods of international conflict that continue to snatch away the promise of education, community leadership and prosperity from our youth. As the college transitioned in 1967 to a full-fledged regional university, we expanded our academic offerings to include degree programs in many disciplines other than education, leading to greater success in growing enrollment beyond those seeking an education degree. Today, prospective students can find almost any discipline available right here in the Cullowhee Valley.

So, here we are on the eve of the institution’s one hundred twenty-second birthday, and again we find ourselves faced with a struggling economy that is forcing difficult budget cuts, and the impending transition to a new leader at our helm. I grew up here in Cullowhee, lived and worked in Asheville many years, and have been back on the mountain here for eight years now, teaching part-time at the university and as a Faculty Fellow in the Coulter Faculty Commons. It warms my soul to be here in your midst, surrounded by such an august body of intellectuals and scholars, and I share in your dismay at the budget cuts, but I revel in the opportunity to be a part of planning and dreaming the next century of this noble institution’s future.

A few months ago I bought an original autographed copy of former president Bird’s *The History of Western Carolina College – The Progress of an Idea* at a local thrift shop for a measly \$1.00, and reading it prompted a deeper understanding of where we’ve been, and where we must go in the future. My observations and communications with students and local folks tell me that we have strayed too far from the original vision. Still too many mountain youth do not finish high school and go on to higher learning. Why? Is it related to our watered-down recruitment from mountain high schools compared to the efforts we make to attract out-of-state students and those with successful parents living in Charlotte and Raleigh? How, I ask myself, can this institution be more effective in embracing and inspiring the people who live here in our shadow? I was a product of the McKee Training School, which was then THE public school, a quasi-extension of the college, providing a training ground for future teachers who did their practice teaching in our classrooms. Was it this that motivated me, a first generation high school graduate, to dream of a college and graduate school

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 1925 General Assembly Re-authorization of the Charter of Cullowhee State Normal School.

education? Maybe. Why, I ask myself, were local farmers who struggled to survive a crushing economy then, willing to invest their limited resources in helping Madison establish the Cullowhee Academy, when today few local folks will even show up for public forums and educational events sponsored by the university? What has changed and how might we re-invigorate the people of this region to see that their children finish high school and come here to learn? How might we engage them as prime supporters of this institution into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond?

The answer, I believe, lies in careful selection of the next leader. We must find that unique person who embodies not only the necessary professional training and experience, but also the well-honed people skills and a broad grasp of the culture of this unique region and its people—a person who can deploy that magic combination to build on the legacies of all the presidents and chancellors who have come and gone, including Chancellor Bardo. Thanks, in large part to Bardo, we now have a stellar campus with stunningly beautiful buildings. It is time now to draw our own youth to this magnificent campus to learn and develop the skills they need to teach and inspire subsequent generations of people of our state and region, and to arm them with the knowledge and talents they need to lead us and our grandchildren into the future.

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## **Responses to November Faculty Forum Article Entitled**

### **Bias on Campus: Fighting the Problem, Embracing a Solution**

#### **By Thomandra Sam**

**Henry Wong, EOE and Employment Relations:** *My thanks to Dr. Sam on a well written, important, and timely article re Bias. Thanks.*

**Nancy F Davis MC RD LDN:** *Dr Sam, Thank you for the attention you bring to the issue of bias. The review of the framework for recognizing healthy dialogue, biased interaction, and hate crimes or aggression is useful.*

*"Nipping behaviors in the bud" is the best way to prevent escalation and the suggested strategies for individuals who are the target of bias or who may be in a place to observe the incident(s) are applicable across the board. Early identification and intervention will allow WCU administration to work toward an outcome that is a win win for the involved parties and hopefully more self assured, open minded, inclusive people. There is value in the notion that what goes around comes around, and completely understanding that attempting to hold someone down does not lift you up.*

*Soon after this article was published I noticed a prompt on a commercial vehicle: "Compliments or Concerns".*

*My mind is organized in a way that I recognize extremes by comparing to neutral; so that I must be able to understand neutral or my assessment of the situation is skewed. I believe that students who are accustomed to bias from one of the extreme poles, do not understand neutral or the polar opposite from which they consider "usual climate". We all have had the moment of decision to take action, and we lacked the confidence or the energy to "report" bias (against ourselves or others); it was easier to be supportive or recognize it "out there" than it was to own it as wrong. Too often, there is a climate of deserve it, attract it, or had it coming and therefore no need to report it.*

*Thank you for raising awareness to the chain for intervention. I hope it is used to accentuate both extremes as well as neutral: #1 relationships that are healthy and facilitate inclusiveness; #2 those that are in need of repair and intervention. Every time one person moves independently toward complimenting, equity and healthy interaction the ripple of growth is realized by all of us.*

*We all need to be aware of the confidence gained and the peace that is present when non-biased dialogue is the climate of choice. The presentation of this information challenges me to observe and be aware of my own actions/reactions, as opposed to being defensive and looking for the "bad guys".*

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## **News and Notes from the WCU Faculty Senate**

**By Erin McNelis  
Chair, Faculty Senate**

The December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate promises a lot of business as well as discussion and debate on several important topics on faculty's minds.

- A call for a university-wide prioritization plan that is visible to and involves input from all divisions and members of the university community
- Collegial Review Issues – clear charges to collegial review committees and confidentiality requirements
- Proactive call for review of DCRDs in anticipation of a need for increased teaching loads; the need to systematically reduce research and service requirements in proportion to the increase in required teaching load

Additional issues in Senate Councils include: an Honors College Liberal Studies Course Replacement form; SACS Distance and Correspondence Education Policy; Revisions to Section 4.0 of the Handbook (PTR wording and inclusion of DCRDs); clarifications on elected and appointed terms to the University Collegial Review Council; an update on the Faculty and Staff Memorial; clarification of requirements and procedures for Emeritus Faculty status; revising Graduate Faculty Status; clarification of who can serve as a Faculty Senator; and revising the Faculty Scholarship Task Force report deadline.

For more details on Faculty Senate activities and business, visit the Faculty Senate website:

<http://www.wcu.edu/25121.asp>

**Update on the Chancellor Search Open Forums:** The turnout for the session for faculty was very good and members of our faculty were very involved and shared their views on the initial questions posed:

1. What is your perception of the “state of the union” of the University?
2. What are the priorities of the chancellorship?
3. What background do you think candidates for this position should have?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Plus the additional questions:

5. What are you proud of/what do you do well?
6. If it's a year in the future and you're about to grade the new Chancellor, what would he or she need to have done to get an “A” from you?

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## **Note From The Editor**

We urge you to add your comments to Faculty Forum articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. Comment to this article by clicking on this link then select the article under What's Hot on the top right: <https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, so this is our method of limiting access.

To access the article as a PDF, please select the article link at the following URL:  
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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 5

January 10, 2011

## **2011: A Year of Tremendous Change and Opportunity**

**By Erin McNelis**

Last fall we started off the academic year with a focus on strategic planning and WCU's future with "Vision 2020". Yet, with announcements of turnovers at WCU and the UNC system leadership, and continuing budget woes, it is challenging to focus on the long-term when the New Year holds so many unknowns. At times I find it hard to see past the day, the classes, the meetings, and the deadlines, let alone the week, the semester, or the next decade; but that is exactly what we're called to do, and where publications like the *Faculty Forum* can help. We all have conversations about the impending changes and our opinions about the mission of WCU with our friends, our colleagues, and our departments. I hope that you will be willing to take some time to write down some of your thoughts and share them with the greater community of Western's faculty.

The upcoming **Faculty Caucus** has been re-scheduled due to the weather, for **Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 3 – 5 p.m., Illusions (in the UC)**. This is another excellent opportunity to get faculty together to discuss and develop a unified vision. Goodness knows that we will never agree on everything, but I believe there is a core philosophy about the future of our university that we all share and that needs to be articulated.

The forums with the Chancellor's Search Committee last November were very well attended, and individuals still continue to provide information to the Search Committee via the comment buttons on the search's website, but this is a chance to come together as a community and decide what Western Carolina University can and should be in the future. As one of my colleagues put it, we, as faculty, have the ability to shape our adaptation to our new circumstances, particularly our new budget, and to position ourselves not only to survive but to make smarter decisions. Rather than seeing WCU's administrative turnover as a hindrance or lull in our momentum, we should see it as our opportunity to shape the vision and mechanisms of our university that will enable us to leap into the future with purpose and drive.

For those who were unable to attend the faculty forum with the Chancellor's Search Committee or have not had the opportunity to read the transcripts on the web site, I'd like to present some of the thematic comments that were made, as well as others that I have received when asking for comments for this article. I hope that these will stir your thoughts, not just about our next Chancellor, but about the dynamics of the university, our mission, our strengths, and our obligations to our students, our region, and beyond.

### **Western's Strengths:**

- Our focus on quality teaching
- We serve the "late bloomer"
- Our Unique resources (cultural, ecological, etc.)
- Our Quality Enhancement Program (QEP)
- We produce citizens who care about this part of the country

**The Chancellor, WCU, and the Region:**

- The Chancellor needs to have knowledge of our region and our sense of place.
- The Chancellor needs to bring economic opportunities to the area; to continue that part of Chancellor Bardo's mission.
- The Chancellor must be a partner with the community, both civically and socially.
- The Chancellor must understand what it means to be a comprehensive university.
- The Chancellor should creatively explore options for bringing education to people here who find it difficult or impossible to access now.

**Leadership Style:**

- The Chancellor must foster a culture of openness and collaboration.
- The Chancellor must be able to connect and relate with students, faculty, and staff.
- The Chancellor must recognize the important role faculty play.
- Communication is key.
- The Chancellor should put together a leadership team with accountability and transparency, with expectations of teamwork across divisions.

**Academic Qualifications:**

- The Chancellor would not be required to have a scholarly record, but must understand scholarship.
- The Chancellor and Provost should function as a team, with the Chancellor willing to defer to the Provost in terms of academic qualification issues.
- A person who can lead an academic institution without a scholarly background is rare, and WCU should not be run like a business.
- The Chancellor must understand the importance of expertise and scholarship for the faculty, and how to convey that.

**Miscellaneous Comments:**

- We're trying to be all things to all people – we have too many things going on and we need to focus.
- The Chancellor must understand the importance of liberal studies in producing future citizens.
- The Chancellor must be invested in and an advocate for the humanities.
- The Chancellor must be committed to employment equity, particularly for our contingent faculty.
- The Chancellor must be a visionary.

I hope these comments and themes have helped to stir your thoughts, and that you'll consider sharing YOUR UNIQUE thoughts with the rest of us by responding to this *Faculty Forum* piece. I wish you a healthy and rewarding new year!

*Erin McNelis joined Western Carolina University in August 2002. She is an Associate Professor of Mathematics and currently serves as the Faculty Chair and the Coordinator of the Applied Mathematics Graduate Program. She is active in interdisciplinary research, particularly mathematical biology and computational science, and has led national workshops for scientists and educators in these areas. Currently preparing an introductory text on scientific computing, Erin has also published and presented work in incorporating simulation and modeling in mathematics courses.*

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## Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning Responses to December issue of Faculty Forum Entitled

### Progress of an Idea: Looking Forward Looking Back



*We got mail!*

#### **From Mae Claxton, English Department**

*Vera, I really appreciate your article. This message was particularly appropriate coming from you with your connections to this community and the university. It is so timely to remind ourselves of our inspirational past and our historic connection to the community. I have always been proud to be part of a university with such a dedicated faculty and staff. I hope we can find a chancellor who really appreciates our history and our community. The word "community" is just as relevant now as it was at the beginning of our history. All the best, Mae.*

#### **From Catherine Carter, English Department**

*Thanks, Vera, for the December 2010 Faculty Forum piece, "Progress of an Idea." One particularly illuminating point is that the split universities often take for granted, "town and gown", didn't always exist here, and doesn't need to exist here, either. Western Carolina University, in its early days, was meant to serve a very particular region, and it can still do that. I hope our incoming Chancellor will take every opportunity to maintain and strengthen good relations with Sylva and with Jackson County, and to serve their very local and particular needs.*

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## Editorial Notes

We urge you to add your comments to **Faculty Forum** articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. This is a particularly poignant time for faculty at WCU, as we contemplate a new Chancellor. Please take this opportunity to add to this important discussion. You may comment to this article by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What's Hot** on the top right: <https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, but we do invite comments from staff, who are equally important in the pursuit of excellence here at WCU .

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 6

February 1, 2011

## **Climb Higher! See Beyond our Borders**

### *Strategies for Internationalizing WCU*

**By Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki**

Our world is changing dramatically. Increasingly we are being challenged by our academic organizations, administrators, UNC-Tomorrow and other international organizations to make our students more globally aware, to provide opportunities for students to learn how other cultures think and reason, and to introduce our students to people different from themselves. If we don't, our students will not be ready for the new types of jobs and opportunities that await them in this new interconnected society. And they will not be prepared to be the peace-making citizens the world so desperately needs, as technology shrinks our geographic divisions as never before.

Our borders can be philosophical and practical, sociological and personal, real and imagined. They should not prevent us from engaging in activities that take us beyond these borders. An international experience for faculty and students can be challenging and daunting, but truly worth the effort. There are many ways that these experiences can be woven into the current curriculum fabric at WCU, and have been, by a number of departments over the last five years. However, it is important that these experiences are integral, sustainable and owned by all faculty members in the department or program.

In these difficult economic times, the office of International Programs and Services has funding that can assist departments and programs in initiating meaningful international efforts, such as those developed by some WCU departments and colleges:

- Developing dual degree programs, like those by the College of Business with university partners in the Netherlands and Ireland;
- Creating international internships for TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language), geology, and sport management students;
- Creating internships, like those in the forensic science program for Dutch students from AVANS University of Science and Technology;
- Establishing specific study abroad programs for students in Stage and Screen, Japanese, business, heritage studies, Honors College, and outdoor education;
- Encouraging students to study abroad at over 250 partner universities;

- Leading WCU students overseas on a faculty-led travel course during the semester or summer (18 courses in 2010-11);
- Developing collaborative research projects with international colleagues, like those by Jack Sholder (Stage & Screen), Mark Wilson (Chemistry & Physics), and Cheryl Johnston (Anthropology and Sociology);
- Initiating faculty teaching exchanges, such as Sociology's efforts with a university in Ireland;
- Inviting international faculty to teach or research for a semester or year, as Math, Sociology, Modern Foreign Language, and College of Business have done;
- Participating in WCU's international campus programs, such as the annual International Festival and International Education Week;
- Recruiting international students to your program, like James Zhang (Kimmel), Brian Dinkelmeyer (Chemistry), and Steve Ha (MBA);
- Recruiting international students to the new WCU Intensive English Program, which develops students' listening, writing, and speaking skills to the level that they can succeed in a variety of WCU bachelor programs.

The Office of International Programs and Services has been in existence since 1996. In that time, we have seen remarkable changes in the way WCU faculty participate in internationalizing their curriculums and providing international opportunities for their students at WCU.

If you want to *Climb High and See Beyond the Borders*, International Programs and Services (227-7494) can assist you with study abroad opportunities (**John Schweikart and Josie Bewsey**), faculty-led travel courses (**Claudia Bryant**), recruiting international students (**Christopher Pedro and Kevin Childers**), intensive English students (**Connie Hanna**), faculty exchange/teaching opportunities (**Claudia Bryant or Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki**), and hiring or inviting international scholars (**Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki**).

*Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki is the Director of International Programs and Services. She came to WCU in 1990 as the Art Educator for the Art Department. Prior to coming to WCU, she taught at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (laboratory school and art education, and at the Ohio State University. After receiving her bachelor degree in Painting from Carnegie-Mellon University, she taught in the German public schools for 5 years in Rotenburg (north Germany) and in Ehingen/Donau (south Germany). She returned home to earn her Masters Degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and her Ph.D. from Purdue University in art education.*

*In 1998 she acted as interim Director of the International Programs and Services Department while continuing to teach part-time, and in 2001 became the Director. She continues to serve as Associate Professor in the Art Department. Petrovich-Mwaniki speaks German and some Spanish and was instrumental in getting the Japanese and Chinese language programs started at WCU.*

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## Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning

We did not receive any comments or feedback on Erin McNelis' January Faculty Forum article entitled *2011: A Year of Tremendous Change*, despite a follow-up prompt. We were so sorry not to get your feedback, as her summary and insights about the search process for a new chancellor from the Faculty Senate were enlightening and informative. You may still add your comments to her article when you send your feedback to this month's column by Dr. Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki. Please do so; your articulated insights and thoughts about the feature articles in the **Faculty Forum** are crucial to the dialogue.

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### Editorial Notes

We urge you to add your comments to **Faculty Forum** articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. This is a particularly poignant time for faculty at WCU, as we contemplate a new Chancellor. Please take this opportunity to add to this important discussion. You may comment to this article by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What's Hot** on the top right: <https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, but we do invite comments from staff, who are equally important in the pursuit of excellence here at WCU.

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 7

March 1, 2011

## **General Education at WCU: Evolutionary or Revolutionary Change?**

The half-life of university general education programs is not very long. About every 12-15 years reviews are likely to occur, and Western has followed that pattern over the past 30 years. General education is the responsibility of the entire faculty. It was our Faculty Senate that designed a procedure for electing the General Education Review Task Force and provided its charge at the end of the semester last Spring. This *Faculty Forum* provides a progress report each month on the work of the Task Force.

The Faculty Senate's resolution charged the Task Force with reviewing programs at institutions similar to Western, assessing concerns of our own faculty about our current program, considering the requirements of employers and accreditation agencies, and examining the needs of the students we are serving today. We are also charged with making recommendations for changes in our current program.

Our Task Force has initiated a number of activities to meet the charge of the Senate. We have begun to examine the general education programs of more than 100 other universities, mostly those like Western. We have invited college position statements and conducted three public forums attended by faculty members from across campus, and we have begun to review the recent literature on general education. Our texts have included the Lumina Foundation report on degree qualifications, and journal articles about general education and internal documents, including the Honors College proposal on general education, the Liberal Studies Assessment report, and the Liberal Studies Action Plan. Finally, we have developed a set of General Principles for General Education at Western.

Our immediate to-do list is ambitious and may require more than the Spring 2011 semester to complete. We are planning a brief survey of the faculty about general education, an analysis of the data we collected on the programs at other universities, a summary of information from internal and external reports, and the development of a set of learning outcomes for general education.

The Task Force is aware that we face several important challenges in proposing changes in general education at Western. One is to balance student interests, the need for training in particular disciplines, and concerns about the breadth of knowledge expected of a liberally educated student. Faculty members are creatures of their disciplines. Sometimes it is difficult to avoid seeing general education through the lenses of those disciplines. Another challenge is to design a program that is realistic about the secondary school preparation of our students. While we can complain about what our students do not know when they get here, we are responsible for what they do know when they leave. We also know that we face the challenge of being sensitive to the internal political problems of shifting responsibilities for the education of our students. Changes in the general education curriculum can have significant implications for patterns of staffing.

So, reorganizing general education can be controversial and even threatening. There are many owners and many constituencies. There are many different curricula and many differences in student abilities

and interests. As a result, general education programs inevitably represent compromises that rarely please everyone. Here is a sampling of some of the specific issues we will be dealing with that may engender controversy.

1. What proportion of a student's education should consist of general education? What responsibility does the university have for broadening students' educations beyond their current interests or even helping them find new interests? Perhaps most important, what can we do to help students prepare for a future that neither they nor we can envision? How important is the "general" part of a student's education in a world where many students, perhaps a majority, are no longer working in the areas they majored in five years after graduation? The proportion of general education in our current program is among the smallest: 30% (for 120-hour degrees) or 20% (for 128-hour degrees) of proportions among our peer institutions (using the 83 university comparison group the Task Force has identified). Reducing our program to 39 hours would make ours one of the smallest general education programs at state masters universities.
2. How should general education be related to the major in the era of the QEP? Is the provision of a capstone experience the responsibility of the general education curriculum or should that be left to the major?
3. Should the learning outcomes of general education be addressed by a large number of courses from a wide array of disciplines, basic and applied, or by a limited set of courses from more traditionally basic disciplines? Should there be limits on the participation of any one discipline in the general education curriculum?
4. How can we deal with the widely held perception that general education courses lack rigor and are too much like high school courses?
5. How should the outcomes of the GE component of our curriculum be assessed?

As we deal with questions like these, the members of the Task Force wish to be transparent. Minutes of our meetings are available to the faculty on the H-drive. As we complete sub-tasks (e.g., the faculty survey, the analysis of other programs, the identification of learning outcomes) reports also will be provided on the H-drive. When we are ready to propose changes, we plan to hold another set of public forums. We ask the Western faculty to take a positive attitude toward possible changes and to try to take a university-wide perspective on what is best for all of our students. We invite you to share your concerns and ideas with any member of the Task Force.

**Bruce Henderson, Chair**  
**The General Education Review Task Force**  
**828-227-3784, [henderson@email.wcu.edu](mailto:henderson@email.wcu.edu)**

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## Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning



Numerous faculty members tell us each month that they read the Faculty Forum articles, but we regret that we do not receive many responses. So, we did not hear from any of you in response to last month's Faculty Forum feature article by Lois Petrovich-Mwaniki entitled **Climb Higher! See Beyond our Borders--Strategies for Internationalizing WCU**. PLEASE do let us hear from you! The Faculty Forum is now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year; PLEASE help us keep it going!

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### Editorial Notes

We urge you to add your comments to **Faculty Forum** articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. This is a particularly poignant time for faculty at WCU, as we contemplate a new Chancellor. Please take this opportunity to add to this important discussion. You may comment to this article by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What's Hot** on the top right:

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# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 23, No. 8

April 1, 2011

## Earth Day Reflections at Western

By David G. Henderson

There is a lot of wonderful talk these days about the environment here at Western. As part of UNC Tomorrow, we have committed to sustainability as a core institutional value and accepted the charge to “assume a leadership role in addressing the state’s energy and environmental challenges.”<sup>1</sup> We have embraced the idea that as a public institution we must be good stewards of place. This latter concept has been applied mostly to the civic and economic health of our local community, but it can scarcely be denied that being stewards of place commits us to the environmental health and ecological integrity of the land as well.

But talk is the easy part. It is easy to boast that we love the beautiful nature that surrounds us. Who wouldn’t love these mountains and this river? I often think of Aldo Leopold’s response to those who sing of their love for their country:

*Yes, but just what and who do we love? Certainly not the soil, which we are sending helter-skelter down river. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species.*<sup>2</sup>

So how are we really doing? Have we put our love into practice? Of course, the answer is mixed. In some ways we are doing remarkably well, in others not so well, and in still others we are making progress. I offer these reflections, not in the spirit of a comprehensive impact assessment, but as some reasons to be proud, some reasons to be sad, and some opportunities to do better.

A clear and obvious reason to be proud of our university this Earth Day is our great improvement in energy conservation. While all the schools in the UNC system were mandated to reduce energy usage by 30%<sup>3</sup> before 2015, we were the first to reach the goal and the only school so far to maintain it. Our many efficiency projects include a stimulus-funded overhaul of the HVAC system in the HFR building. Our recycling program is strong and growing. And construction on our solar-panel tree is expected to begin this summer.

Another reason to be proud of Western is our devotion, curricular and extra-curricular, to biodiversity. Our work here includes a great deal of wildlife and botanical research, cooperative projects with the Highlands Biological Station and local protected areas, and significant outreach endeavors like the *Cullowhee Native Plants Conference*.

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<sup>1</sup> University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission, “Executive Summary” (December 2007.)

<sup>2</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford: 1949), p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> From 2002 usage levels.

This October will see the second annual *Rooted in the Mountains Conference*, which advances the idea of land health beyond biodiversity preservation to also include the healthy situation of peoples and cultures within their ecosystems. *Rooted in the Mountains* focuses especially on the environmental challenges of our regional place, Appalachia, such as mountaintop removal mining. Unfortunately, while this conference is something to be proud of, mountaintop removal mining is an occasion for great sadness.

Despite our great strides in energy conservation, the electricity we do use comes largely from plants burning coal acquired from mountaintop removal mines. We are indirectly participating in one of the greatest environmental atrocities in American history—the wanton and utter destruction of some 500 mountains and 2000 miles of stream here in Appalachia. When I go into the McKee Building and turn on the lights in order to discuss the theories of environmental ethics and justice with our students, I am helping to destroy ecosystems and poison the water of our impoverished neighbors in West Virginia. If sustainability is really to be a core institutional value at Western, then we must care not only how much energy we use but also where it comes from.

Reflections, whether encouraging or distressing, must ultimately find their meaning in the actions they lead to. So where are the opportunities to do more and to do better?

- When feasible, join with your colleagues—from construction management to the humanities—in incorporating sustainability and environmental values into your teaching.
- Support sustainability initiatives and events on campus. Earth and Wellness Day will be on Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. More than thirty vendors and organizations will participate this year, and we will have our first tailgate farmer’s market.
- Know about local environmental and sustainability efforts off-campus, like the Jackson County Greenways Project and the Green Energy Park, so you can support them, volunteer with them and send students to them for service-learning experience.

And come join the Sustainability Council. No elections needed; we can put you to work.

*David Henderson came to WCU in August of 2008 from Texas A&M University, where he completed a Master’s Degree in Wildlife Science and a Doctorate in Philosophy. He is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy and Religion Department and teaches “Environmental Ethics” and “American Wilderness Ethics and Aesthetics”.*



We Got  
Mail!

## **Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning**

### **Responses to the March Faculty Forum article entitled:**

#### ***General Education at WCU: Evolutionary or Revolutionary Change?***

From: John T. West  
Professor/Associate Dean  
College of Fine and Performing Arts

I believe that all of the faculty can buy into the notion of the “well-rounded” college graduate. We would like for all of our students to be able to think and communicate clearly and effectively; to be aware of the world in which they live and work; to have some understanding of history; and at least a basic understanding and appreciation of art and culture. Beyond that, there is probably no consensus as to what should constitute a “general education.” I wish the committee good luck in their task!

My issue with Bruce’s article centers mainly around item #1 which addresses the proportion of the curriculum devoted to general education. I find some of the statistics either incorrect or misleading. As dangerous as it is to argue statistics with a researcher of Bruce’s status, my math doesn’t yield the same percentages. Our Liberal Studies (general education) program is 42 hours which is 35% of a 120 hour degree and 32.8% of a 128 degree (I hope my colleagues in math can verify this as musicians rarely have to count past 4).

The second issue is when Bruce states that our proportion of general education courses is among the smallest in our peer group. If you look at just the published number of credit hours, this may be true but there are certainly other factors to consider. Appalachian State, for example, requires 44 hours of basic studies. However, they allow programs to double count classes within majors. To use my own area as an example, music education students at App can count 9 hours that are required in the major toward the general studies requirement. Therefore, the “real” hour requirement is 35. I realize that some programs at WCU are also allowed to do this but it is inconsistent at best and requests for double counting have been denied for unfathomable reasons.

My third (and final) point is the implication that in a constantly shifting labor market, it is worthless to pursue a specific major as that field may change dramatically in the future. I would argue that the pursuit of excellence in a specific field is more important than ever. That dogged pursuit of mastery can transfer to other areas more effectively than the Platte River approach (a mile wide and an inch deep)!

My recommendation to the committee is to allow for flexibility within our general education program. Either reduce the total number of hours required or allow for significant double counting (6 – 9 hours for most degree programs). This would have the added benefit of improving our time to degree numbers and possibly even graduation rates.

----John

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## Editorial Notes

We urge you to add your comments to **Faculty Forum** articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. This is a particularly poignant time for faculty at WCU, as we contemplate a new Chancellor. Please take this opportunity to add to this important discussion. You may comment to this article by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What's Hot** on the top right: <https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, but we do invite comments from staff, who are equally important in the pursuit of excellence here at WCU.

To access the article as a PDF, please select the article link at the following URL:  
<http://www.wcu.edu/27638.asp>.

The direct link to the main Faculty Forum Webpage is: <http://www.wcu.edu/7480.asp>.

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## Disclaimer

The opinions printed here belong solely to the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Faculty Commons. If you would like to respond, you may input your comments directly through the wiki on the Faculty Forum webpage, or e-mail your comments to [vguise@wcu.edu](mailto:vguise@wcu.edu) and we will post them to the Responses to the article.



# Faculty Forum

*From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

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WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

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## Conducting a Salary Equity Analysis

OR

*Am I being paid equitably compared to others in my workplace?*

By

*Henry D. Wong*

*Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs*

We all wish to be treated equitably, especially in the area of compensation at work. Legislation under the Fair Pay Act, the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and U.S. Supreme Court decisions have focused attention on salary equity for women in the private business sector, as well as state and federal government. The purpose of this article is to briefly summarize the elements of compensation analysis based on the methodology by the Office of Federal Contracts and Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and the EEOC.

### **What drives pay for a position? There are many factors driving pay which include:**

- Market value of a job
- Job content and duties
- Skills and education
- Effort in terms of quantity and quality of work
- Revenue generation (i.e., does the person do fundraising?)
- Business impact
- Degree of responsibility – number of supervisees
- Supply and demand for the job
- Business focus
- Salary vs. hourly (e.g., full-time or part-time, 12 months vs. 9 months contracts)

### **What drives pay for people in a position? Factors driving pay for people in a position include:**

- How long have they done their current position vs. prior positions?
- How well do they perform their job (e.g., performance and education)?
- Other factors like additional duties assigned and skill level

The OFCCP prefers to evaluate at least 500 employees and 75% of the employer's workforce as it will conduct a statistical analysis of the groups involved (e.g., gender and/or race). Once a complaint is filed the focus is to determine what employees do, how they do their jobs, and at what level of skill relative to compensation. Generally, the analysis is comprised of the following:

## **Planning the Analysis by the Investigator**

Identify the occupational field in which to narrow the focus.

- Identify the similarly situated employee group (SSEG). This is the job grouping of workers by similar tasks, duties, skills, effort, responsibilities, working conditions and complexity and difficulty.
- Review job descriptions, conduct interviews with the employer and employees and the Office of Human Resources to ensure the SSEG is correct.
- Review other sources of labor market data from the Department of Labor and/or O\*Net Online to assist in the analysis.

## **Job Classification: Determining how jobs are defined**

- Determine the job title(s).
- Identify the job by career band or salary grade. North Carolina state government now uses career banding for employees subject to the State Personnel Act (SPA).
- Determine if the job is SPA or exempt from the State Personnel Act (EPA). EPA is the classification for university faculty and is subject to different university policies.
- Determine the department and function of the job.
- Determine if the job is based on contract vs. salary.
- Examine other factors like full-time vs. part-time employment and full-time equivalence (FTE).

## **Placing employees into SSEGs**

Once the above data is synthesized, the investigator is ready to place employees into SSEGs. This grouping allows analysis by similar job title, similar responsibility level, and total number of employees, number of females and males, and minority groups. The SSEG must meet a minimum threshold of 30/5 (i.e., 30 employees assigned to a group with 5 being female or minority).

## **Analytics**

Descriptive statistics are obtained like the median, mean, and standard deviation for pay and sorted by gender. The median is the preferred statistic by the OFCCP and the Department of Labor when making comparisons. However, the mean may also be used. If the average salary deviates more than 2% for men and women or two standard deviations from the mean, then more sophisticated analyses are done. Caution is required if the investigator uses the mean only on which to make decisions of equity. This is due to the influence of other pay factors needing evaluation such as the mean years of experience, a seniority or merit system, incentives based on quantity/quality of work, revenue generation, 12 months vs. 9 months employees, prior experience, and completion of training and annual performance ratings.

Sophisticated statistics like t-tests, chi-square, and multiple linear regression are performed if the SSEG meets the 30/5 threshold. The gold standard by the OFCCP is multiple regression. If the 30/5 threshold is not met then other non-statistical methods are used for smaller groups based on cohort comparisons and outlier analysis (i.e., persons who stand out with no comparators).

The use of regression produces many types of statistics and helps describe how much variation in pay is explained by the pay factor variables in the regression model. Hypothetically, an adjusted R square of 0.7815 indicates that 78% of the variance in pay is explained by the pay factors in the regression model. However, 22% of the variance in pay remains unexplained.

The benefits of regression accounts for the effects of multiple pay factors in measuring salary differences by gender and/or race and is a convenient way to summarize the pay system.

## Conclusions

Analysis of other pay factors is warranted if salary disparities are found. It is important for the investigator to interview the administrative decision-makers to explore the reasons underlying disparities and confirms employees have been placed in appropriate SSEG's based on similar tasks, duties, and qualifications. It is incumbent upon the institution to redress and make pay adjustments if the disparities cannot be legitimately justified.

Employees who believe they may be experiencing a salary disparity in the workplace should discuss it first with their immediate supervisor and other administrators in the chain of command to gain understanding as to how the salary was calculated, as well as, determine who the similar comparator is by which to evaluate the salary differences. Often, misinformation and misunderstandings can be clarified and resolved when people talk to each other. Under university policies #64 and #79 for Performance Pay Dispute Resolution, the Office of Human Resources in consult with the appropriate Vice Chancellor, Deans, Directors and Department Chairs are responsible for making in-range salary adjustments for SPA employees and processing grievances. Appeals may be made to the Performance Review Committee through the Office of Human Resources, and finally, to the Chancellor for SPA employees. Grievances by EPA Non-faculty are outlined by university policy #112. Grievances under university policy #53 alleging discrimination of EPA and SPA employees should be reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs.

*Henry Wong is the Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs at Western Carolina University. In this role, he investigates complaints of discrimination and grievances based on the protected groups under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (2008). He serves as the chairperson for the Council on Diversity and Inclusion and Title IX for gender equity under the Education Amendments Act. A graduate of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, he holds a doctorate in Rehabilitation and is a nationally certified rehabilitation counselor. Some of his roles prior to coming to Western Carolina University include: Teacher/houseparent for a group home serving autistic children, a Correctional Officer and Program Assistant with the NC Dept. of Corrections, Rehabilitation Counselor with the NC Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Program Manager with the Region V Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program. He is a former Assistant Professor in the Division of Rehabilitation Counseling from UNC-Chapel Hill, and Fellow from the NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching with numerous publications, grants, and research. He is an Adjunct Assistant Professor teaching via distance learning courses for East Carolina University and an Adjunct Professor for Southern University at Baton Rouge in the Departments of Rehabilitation.*

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## News and Notes from the Faculty Senate

### From Erin McNelis, Chair

The Faculty Senate has continued to keep a very busy calendar for each meeting this spring, running into overflow meetings each month. The final Faculty Senate meeting will take place, Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. in the UC Multipurpose room and everyone is encouraged to come. The potentially largest topic for discussion at the meeting is the proposal from the Honors College for its own Liberal Studies Path. This proposed curriculum has gone through all of the college curriculum committees, the Liberal Studies Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate's Academic Policy and Review Council and is now being presented to the Faculty Senate for a vote. Additional issues to be discussed at the last meeting include:

- Task Force Reviewing Seven Dimensions of Teaching for Evaluating Teaching
- Graduate School Enrollment During Semester of Degree Conferment
- Graduate School International Student Admission Policies

- Reports from the Employee Memorial Task Force, the Child Care Task Force, and the Faculty Scholarship Task Force
- Resolution requesting Prioritization of Financial Support for Graduate Students

Previous Faculty Senate issues from the Spring semester include: the College of Education and Allied Professions Restructuring, Restructuring Process for Academic Affairs, Graduate and Emeritus Faculty Status, Honors College Liberal Studies Course Replacement Form, multiple modifications to AFE and TPR guidelines and procedures to allow for smaller reappointment applications in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years, and Election of a Faculty Liaison to the Executive Council.

For more details on Faculty Senate activities and business, visit the Faculty Senate website:

<http://www.wcu.edu/25121.asp>

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## Editorial Notes



We looked and looked in our mailbox, but found *nary* a response to David Henderson’s excellent feature article last month entitled *Earth Day Reflections at Western*. What happened? We know you care about our environmental practices and about the campus and Cullowhee valley; your reactions to proposals last year to expand Cullowhee proved that! We also know how busy faculty is this time of year. Sometimes we get responders who want to remain anonymous, but we need YOUR feedback to the feature articles, so please take a moment to read this month’s article on salary comparison and analysis and let us hear from you! This month’s feature – MONEY—should get your attention for sure!

Right now while it’s on your radar, please take this opportunity to add to the important discussion about this month’s article or any of the five really excellent articles written by faculty this semester. You may comment by clicking on this link, then select the article under **What’s Hot** on the top right:

<https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, but we do invite comments from staff, who are equally important in the pursuit of excellence here at WCU.

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