

Faculty Forum

Volume 27, Numbers 1-8 (2014-2015)

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Faculty Forum

from the Coulter Faculty Commons
for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Volume 27
Number 1

Welcome to the new school year and the new Faculty Forum. The WCU *Faculty Forum* is a vehicle for faculty conversation published each month by the Coulter Faculty Commons. It was first published in October, 1988, and while the original purpose was to “spark a lively dialogue about college teaching,” the issues addressed often went far beyond the classroom.

Yes, we are teachers, and that is our main job. But the triumvirate of teaching, research and service make up our work. Then there’s the elusive 4th leg -- collegiality. It’s one of those “hard to define but we know it when we see it” things. We are teachers, but we are more than teachers.

I am fortunate to have taken the college teaching route for my career. Teaching for 26 years at WCU and at Warren Wilson College for many years before, has afforded me a lifestyle where my life and work are fused. I have loved teaching, enjoyed my students tremendously, and rarely been bored with my work. A big part of that joy in my work has come from relations with colleagues across the campus.

Faculty can be isolated, maintaining office hours, being immersed in their scholarly activities, teaching classes, and doing the required service. Or they can branch out and get involved in the life of the University, get to know other faculty and staff from across the campus. And they have the opportunity to engage in lively dialogue about their work at WCU.

The new Faculty Forum is one way to do that.

The first issue of the Faculty Forum this year is “36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee.” It is about living and working in Cullowhee and the surrounding area. It is an update of a forum published a few years ago.. While it’s not a controversial piece about a hot topic, there is an important sub-text. It seems as if more and more of WCU’s faculty and staff forego the opportunity to live close to campus, which can result in a decline in the sense of community on campus. Coupled with the loss of the Mad Batter, Rolling Stone Burrito and Subway, natural places for conversation, and the increase in distance learning, our 125 year old campus is changing in unpredictable ways.

I hope you will take the opportunity to read and write for the new Faculty Forum. This year we are going to change the structure to allow for themed pieces and debates written by several faculty as well as the traditional format of opinion pieces followed by responses. And we are bringing a limited number of printed copies back, at least till we gauge readership; you can also access this issue electronically [at this link](#).

While you’re thinking about your potential contributions to the Faculty Forum, take a look at the 26 years of back issues. They are listed on the Coulter Faculty Commons website on [publications](#), with the most recent years’ posted on a [Wiki](#).

Now, enjoy the first issue of the 2014-2015 school year, “36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee.” I’ll be editing it this year, and I look forward to lively faculty conversations. Send me (mherzog@wcu.edu) ideas about the topics, concerns and issues you would like it to address this year.

Sincerely, Mary Jean R. Herzog

Welcome to Greater Cullowhee!

36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee (a knock-off of the NYT travel column)

**By Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
School of Teaching and Learning**

As we approach WCU’s 125th anniversary, it’s time to revisit the Cullowhee of today. In 1889, families in the Cullowhee Valley hired James Lee Madison to teach their children. He called his mission “The Cullowhee Idea.” You can read about WCU’s history in books, archives and on the web. The [website dedicated to the celebration of this anniversary](#) is a good place to start!

What is “The Cullowhee Idea” today? Cullowhee is an unincorporated town in [Jackson County, NC](#), with the WCU campus as its geographic center. Driving along U.S. 107, past the high rock walls of Catamount Gap, suddenly the campus rises from the valley floor, surrounded by the high ridges of the Black Balsams and Blue Ridge Mountains.

What is there to do if you reside in Greater Cullowhee? Campus cultural events inform and entertain you, but there’s more to Greater Cullowhee than WCU. As the Western North Carolina region becomes increasingly touristy, Cullowhee and the surrounding area offer space to breathe, especially in outdoor recreation. Let me steal from the NYT travel column ‘*36 Hours in...*’ and describe a few things to do when you live near WCU. Following this log, several of our faculty contributed information on specific recreational opportunities.

Friday.

1. 6:30 or 8:00 a.m. Workout. The Jackson County Recreation Center in Cullowhee ([JCRC](#)) is a good place to start your day. From youth programs through senior fitness, from the Greenways Project to county parks, there are [opportunities](#) for all ages. The JCRC has classes throughout the day and evening, and the low membership fee includes use of the facility and all classes. The Center is only a couple of miles from campus, and it’s a modern facility in a beautiful setting surrounded by mountains with playgrounds, soccer and ball fields. It’s right behind Cullowhee Valley School, and parents can drop their children off in time for the 7:55 step aerobics class. Those who attend the 6:30 yoga classes meet in the dark, and they can watch the moon setting over the Plott Balsams as their sun salutation welcomes the morning light.
2. 9:00 or 10:00 a.m. Work. There are plenty of neighborhoods within a 5 mile radius of campus, as well as options for those who want to live in the country. I have lived in a neighborhood adjacent to campus -- three minutes by car or 10 minutes by foot from my office – for 26 years. I appreciate this ‘commute’ every time I leave the house 10 minutes before my next appointment and get there on time with a few minutes to spare. In the past, I would park at the Methodist Church and stop by the *Mad Batter* or *Cat’s Nip Café* for a cup of coffee and a homemade muffin or breakfast. Sadly, a fire destroyed those vibrant shops in November, 2013.

3. Noon. Lunch in Cullowhee. It's always nice to be able to go home for lunch, but there are several options if you want to eat out. For a quick hot dog, you might want to stop at Bob's, or you can head to downtown Cullowhee to *Tuck's Grill*, the *Cullowhee Café* (the oldest restaurant in town at 40+ years), or for Latin fare, *Sazon*. Keep an eye out for some new food trucks on campus in the near future.
4. 3:00 p.m. Slump. Time to take a walk. The entire campus is good for walking, running and connecting with colleagues and students. If you walk between Killian and McKee, you'll see parents waiting for the school bus to drop their children off from Cullowhee Valley School. It reminds me of my own children – now grown – coming to my office after school, meeting their friends, doing their homework, or getting in trouble for skateboarding on the brick walks and ledges.

To celebrate WCU's 125th anniversary, students in Jessie Swigger's Introduction to Public History class created an historic walking trail in collaboration with George Frizzell in Special Collections and Peter Koch at the Mountain Heritage Center. The class selected 18 sites that document the university's rich and diverse history including its physical expansion and growth and changes in WCU's social life. Check it out with this [campus walking trail brochure](#).

Or, on a pretty, warm day, a short drive south from campus takes you to East LaPorte Park on the Tuckasegee River, where people are wading, playing with their dogs or shooting baskets on the courts. Cullowhee is one of the many areas of NC that has a changing cultural landscape, and it's not uncommon to see large groups of people of color at the parks or recreation center playing ball after school and on the weekends.

5. 5:00 p.m. TGIF! Shut your computer down, close your office door and head over to the old part of campus to Moore Hall for the [U Club's](#) weekly wind-down. It's a good place to catch up on the latest campus news and chatter. The UClub also holds special monthly events like the Gourmet Microbrew Tasting and the Chili Cook-off. It is open to all faculty and staff and charges a \$30 per semester membership fee. Members may bring guests.
6. 7:00 p.m. On Friday evening, step out into the Greater Cullowhee area for dinner at one of the many restaurants in Downtown Sylva. From May to December, you can join the crowd for the Art Stroll on the second Friday of each month. The art galleries and shops are open late for strollers who can enjoy a glass of wine, nibble on some munchies, and chat with friends.

Saturday.

7. 9:00 a.m. Outdoor Recreation and Exercise. There are tons of outdoor things to do, and you probably know that WCU was just voted the [#1 Top Outdoor Adventure School](#) in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic states by [Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine](#). All around Cullowhee, you'll see bikers biking, runners

running and walkers walking on tracks around the JCRC, WCU campus and adjacent roads. You might see swimmers swimming in the Tuck above the Cullowhee dam. For indoor exercise, go back to the [JCRC](#) for circuit training, hooping and pilates classes (check out the [schedule](#) for times and other options).

8. 10:00 a.m. Shopping. Most necessities and amenities are available between Cullowhee and Dillsboro. There are far too many businesses to name them all in this short space, but you can go to the *Town of Sylva* and [Visit Dillsboro](#) websites for a complete list.

Produce. The [Jackson County Farmer's Market](#) at the Bridge Park in downtown Sylva is a great place to start your weekend shopping. It's the place to get early greens, garlic and cut flowers, visit with friends, renew acquaintances and see what's on the schedule of the week. You can get fresh produce, eggs and assorted homemade foods at Terry's Produce, a stand just down the street from town, every day of the week.

Seafood. [Eric's Fresh Fish Market](#), on Mill Street, has been providing fresh seafood for several years. It's open Thursday day through Saturday, and there's usually a short line. You can also order by email earlier in the week.

Coffee, Tea and Baked Goods. From Signature Brew to City Lights Café to Perk and Pastry, downtown Sylva has plenty of pick-me-ups. As you head back out of town, take note of Coffee Shop, which provides tasty food at reasonable prices!

Book Lovers. There are plenty of books in Greater Cullowhee - Hunter Library, the Jackson County Library, Friends of the Library Used Bookstore, and [City Lights Bookstore](#). City Lights, is an indy where you can trade your used copies for credit, buy new books or place an order and attend regularly scheduled events, readings, and signings. Treat yourself to a special outing at [Harry Alter Books](#) for used scholarly and rare books, recently relocated to Sylva's Main Street.

9. 6:00 p.m. After a busy day that may have included a 5K for 'Girls on the Run,' a track meet, baseball game or litter pick-up and landscaping on Old Cullowhee Road with CuRvE, the Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor, it's time to relax at home with friends who are coming over for dinner.

Your 36 hour tour of Greater Cullowhee over, now it's time think about adventures for next weekend. WCU's win as the "Top Outdoor Adventure School" is well-deserved. There's great hiking, fishing, biking and paddling on campus or just a few minutes away. There's also plenty for kids to do, and for faculty after work. Read on to see what faculty say about recreation in Cullowhee. As you can see there's plenty to do in Cullowhee, so enjoy!

Hiking by Maurice Phipps, Parks and Recreation

Cullowhee is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains next to the Great Smokies and so is surrounded by many hiking areas. Within a short time you could be in a wilderness area like Shining Rock, Ellicott Rock, recreational areas like the Nantahala National Forest, National Parks – both the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway, as well as the Wild and Scenic River trails of the Chattooga or

National Scenic trails like the Appalachian Trail. Don't forget the State Parks! Gorges State Park is just over the hill near Sapphire.

Closer to home we have trails in Pinnacle Park and to Black Rock both of which overlook Sylva. Just up 107, Panthertown Valley is full of cliffs, waterfalls and overlooks. Over 281 there are short and long hikes to more waterfalls like Paradise Falls (there are two), the Bonas Defeat Gorge for a more exciting challenge and Dismal Falls. Dismal Falls – we have wondered about the name as it is anything but dismal and is actually one of the most spectacular hiking experiences in the region as it is like dropping into the “Lost World” when you climb down onto the ledge beneath the massive cliff there. (Dismal Falls is recommended only with someone who knows the way.)

These are just some examples – there are many more trails and wild areas to test your hiking and navigation skills or to just enjoy a stroll. Right in Cullowhee once the footbridge over the Tuck is finished, we have the new greenway from Locust Creek to Monteith Gap and new trails on the Millennium Campus. You don't have to go far from Cullowhee to use those hiking boots.

Biking by Chris Cooper, Political Science and Public Affairs

Cullowhee is arguably the best place in the country to ride bikes. Probably for this reason, it's not unusual to see professional cyclists like George Hincapie on the Blue Ridge Parkway less than 20 miles from campus. Our own faculty and staff are chock full of cyclists—from the exceptional (like Darby Harris and Josh Whitmore), to the recreational (too many to name). Some exclusively road bike, while others stay solely on the fat tires, but most of us enjoy both the trails and the roads—and Cullowhee has both to offer.

If you want an easy, but pretty spin on the road bike, you can take off from campus, head over the Cullowhee airport (that's not the easy part), then down and wind your way next to the Tuckasegee River toward Dillsboro. When you get to Dillsboro, just get on the opposite side of River Road and work your way back to Cullowhee. A slightly harder, but beautiful ride would have you heading over toward Caney Fork to the end and back. If you're really feeling like a bigger workout, be sure to try the Ring of Fire--a ride beginning with a grueling climb up Cullowhee Mountain and ending with an exhilarating rocket-ship ride down Tilley Creek Rd. If the 40 mile, 4700' of climbing is not enough, you can always head to the Blue Ridge Parkway through Tuckasegee and tackle the 72 mile, 7500' of climbing aptly named Ring of Hades.

If riding off road is your thing, you can head right out of campus up Wayahutta Rd (which is, oddly, pronounced like "Wurryhut") towards the ATV park where you'll find dozens of difficult, but fun trails. Even closer to home (how wonderful is it that we have a campus where the Wayahutta ride is considered “far”), we have an amazing trail system right here on campus. The WCU trail system has entrance points (trail head in mountain bike lingo) at HSS, NCCAT, and near the Cullowhee airport. This trail system has increased my time on the mountain bike—and made my lunches a lot muddier than they used to be. If you don't mind a short drive, we're only about 30 minutes away from the renowned trails at Tsali and about an hour from the fast, family-friendly trails of Jackrabbit.

If all of this riding takes its toll on your bike, you can just wheel it down to Motion Makers Bike Shop in Sylva where they can work on your bike and give you tips on the next hill to climb. While you're waiting on your tune-up, you may want to visit Innovation Brewery, Heinzelmännchen Brewery, or the (soon to open) Sneaky Squirrel brewery for a terrific post-ride beer (totally gratuitous and unnecessary beer references, I know, but there's no beer section of this guide, so hopefully you'll forgive me--after all, the Sylva/Dillsboro metroplex has more breweries per capita than beer city USA).

Childrens' Activities by Libby McRae, History

For my children, the problem is too much to do - not too little - and much of that (school included) can occur within 10 minutes of campus. They can swim, fish or tube on Caney Fork Creek or the Tuckasegee, visit East LaPorte Park, play soccer, ride their bikes, or play disc golf at the Jackson County Recreation Center. The Recreation Center also offers exercise classes and the weight room for high school students, First Aid and CPR certification, outdoor education programs and recreation league sports including skiing and snowboarding. The Jackson County Swim team practices year around. The new hiking, biking, and running trails on campus (and the soon-to-open Locust Creek greenway) provide additional hours of outdoor fun, and a new grant-funded and community built state of the art playground opens at Cullowhee Valley School in late August.

Beyond the great outdoors, there are dance, karate, and art classes in Sylva and music and yoga classes in Cullowhee. A family can catch dinner and a movie downtown at the Mad Batter. On Saturday mornings, younger children can attend Art in the Park, reading programs at City Lights or at the Jackson County Library. And the Library also has a series of evening activities for teens. They can visit the Curriculum Center at Hunter Library. The Community Table, the Community Garden, as well as The Christmas Store, the Hospital Auxiliary, and various church youth organizations offer hands-on opportunities for teenagers to make their community a better place. Kids (and adults) can paint pottery in Dillsboro or sell their produce and artwork at Jackson County Farmer's Market. The JAM program involves local musicians who teach banjo, mandolin, guitar, and fiddle in afterschool programs.

In warmer weather, they can hang out at the Sylva Public Pool or attend WCU's camps which range from theater to soccer to outdoor adventure. And if scheduled activities aren't their thing, they can spend their time hunting for morel mushrooms or seek at attitude adjustment at one of the awesome rope swings hidden along the banks of several of the area's creeks or lakes.

"Surf's Up!" WCU and Whitewater Recreation by Hal Herzog, Psychology

Western Carolina University is situated smack in the middle of the world's best whitewater. This is not hyperbole. With a year-round paddling season, dam-controlled rivers that can be turned on with the flick of a switch and levels of difficulty ranging from placid Class II to the terrifying Class V+ rapids of the Upper Raven's Fork, Jackson County is as close to canoe/kayak nirvana as it gets. No wonder [*Backpacker Magazine*](#) named Sylva the best town in America to raise a whitewater family.

A beginner-friendly section of the Tuckasegee River practically flows though campus. One of my favorite spots on the Tuck is The Slab, a "park and play hole" that attracts kayakers from four states. While it's an hour and a half drive for the hotdog Asheville regulars, the Slab is eleven minutes from my office door. (And, yes, I have gone play-boating between classes.)

Admittedly, whitewater sports are not for everyone. (One colleague told me he quit when he realized there are two types of kayaking injuries – shoulder dislocation and death.) But if you think you might want to become a whitewater rat, I recommend taking one of the weekend courses offered by Base Camp Cullowhee or showing up at a free kayak rolling clinic that Base Camp regularly conducts in the toasty waters of Reid Gym.

Keep in mind, however, that whitewater kayaking is the crack cocaine of outdoor recreation. Pretty soon your car will smell like moldy socks and your friends' eyes will glaze over when you launch into yet another

monologue on “aerial loops,” “terminal hydraulics,” and “flat-water cartwheels.” You’ll know you are hooked when it starts to rain and you get a text message that the West Fork is running, and you think, “The hell with tenure. I can finish my critical analysis of the influence of Wittgenstein on the E Street Band later.” Surfs up, dawg! Gotta go...

Fishing by David Claxton, School of Teaching and Learning

Need a break at the end of the day? Why not go fishing? After all, we are the only university in the UNC system that has a trout stream running through the middle of campus.

The 4-5 miles of the delayed harvest section of the Tuck from the bridge over 107 down to the riverside park in Dillsboro is heavily stocked with big trout, and attracts fisherman throughout the Southeast. The river is not too big to make wading difficult, and in most places it’s wide and open enough to make a good cast without getting your fly caught in the rhododendrons. You have to use a single hook and artificial lures in that section of the river, and you have to turn your fish loose, but if you want to pretend you’re starring in *A River Runs Through It*, that’s a pretty cool place to do it.

The rest of the river, from East LaPorte to the 107 bridge at the old Jack the Dipper and from Dillsboro to Fontana Lake is hatchery supported, which means you can keep up to seven fish a day. You can fly fish those waters if you want, but you can also use lures with more than one hook (although Pete Bates in NRM likens that to the use of dynamite to catch fish) or live worms or even corn (yes, yellow sweet corn right out of the can) if you want your 9-year old to have a pretty good chance of catching one just below the Cullowhee dam or somewhere else in the hatchery supported sections.

If you want to go after more “natural” trout, try the upper Tuckasegee around Panthertown or in the streams of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Those waters require an artificial lure and a single hook, and they take a little more skill than the fish in the Tuck. But if that’s the kind of fishing you’re looking for, you can easily get to Deep Creek on the other side of Bryson City and have a fly in the water before you can get to your house in Asheville.

Miscellaneous Joys of Not Commuting by Brian Gastle, English

The choice of where to live is a deeply personal one and affected by a host of issues, including partners with jobs elsewhere, availability of housing, preference for K-12 schools, and other familial, personal, and professional concerns. As long as we do our jobs well, it should not matter where we decide to live. But often new faculty/staff discount the Cullowhee area, for a host of reasons already addressed. I would add one further issue that may seem obvious, but contributes significantly to quality of life.

The lack of commute is a wonderful benefit of living close to your job. Two hours on the road (to and from Asheville) vs. two hours drinking G&Ts on my porch (or Kinser’s porch, or Heffelfinger’s porch, or, well, you get the point), or gardening, or reading, or writing, or really just about anything but spending two hours in the car on I-40, is quite nice. Many folks enjoy that time in the car to decompress (listening to NPR or podcasts, thinking about scholarship or teaching, or just decompressing after a day of work), but I appreciate having that time – what amounts to 8-10 hours a week – at home with my family. And the financial and environmental benefit is not inconsequential. A three-day-a-week commute from Asheville in a 50 mpg hybrid requires 6 gallons; at \$3.50 a gallon that’s about \$21/week, \$336/semester, or \$672/year. If you drive a vehicle that gets 25mpg, double that (\$42/\$672/\$1344). In that latter case, commuting contributes approximately two tons of CO2 emissions per 16-week semester, over four tons in an academic year. Living within four miles of campus

reduces that to .15 tons per semester. So for a variety of quality of life issues, the greater Cullowhee-Sylva area is an excellent option.

While Asheville is a small city, Sylva and Cullowhee are small towns in every sense of the term. Most of us “aren’t from around here” (as they say around here) – we weren’t born here nor do we have ancestral ties to the area – but the community makes this home for us: when Terry at Terry’s produce congratulates Catherine on a poetry award announced in the Herald, when I don’t need to ask for extra pickles at the Cullowhee Café, when Hollifield Jewelers helps me hide the surprise present, or when Randy Hooper at Bryson’s farm supply offers advice on bees, we feel like we are truly part of a community; it is a great place to live for the kind of life I want. I have friends and colleagues who feel the same way about Asheville, and I certainly respect that, but I hope folks recognize the benefits of living the Cullowhee life.

As for other things to do:

Catch a movie – at \$5.50 to 7.50 per ticket Sylva’s [Quin Theater](#) is less expensive than most. And WCU’s [University Center](#) has a regular selection of first-run and foreign movies as well as other special movie events on Fridays and Saturdays, or stop by for dinner and a film at the new [Mad Batter](#) in Sylva.

Volunteer – organizations like [A.R.F.](#), the [Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee](#), [Friends of the Library](#) and the [Community Table](#) offer opportunities to engage with the Greater Cullowhee community.

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 mherzog@email.wcu.edu and we will post them to the Responses to the article.

Web Links for This Issue

36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee

<http://www.wcu.edu/celebrate125/history.html>

<http://www.jacksonnc.org/geography.html>

<http://www.jacksonnc.org/parks-and-recreation.html>

<http://www.jacksonnc.org/jackson-county-recreation-center/projects.html>

<http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2014/07/students-produce-walking-trail-brochure/>

<http://www.wcu.edu/faculty-staff/uclub-the-university-club/>

<http://news-prod.wcu.edu/2014/08/wcu-named-top-adventure-college/>

<http://www.blueridgeoutdoors.com/>

<http://www.visitdillsboro.org/index.html>

<http://jacksoncountyfarmersmarket.org/>

<http://ericfreshfishmarket.com/index.html>

<http://www.citylightsnc.com/>

<http://harryalterbooks.com/>

Surf's Up

http://www.backpacker.com/august_09_top_cities_to_raise_a/destinations/13127

Fishing

<http://www.flyfishingtrail.com/3/miscellaneous2.htm>

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2009/05/15/travel/escapes/15fly.html?scp=2&sq=%27cullowhee%27&st=nyt>

Miscellaneous Joys of Not Commuting

<http://www.quintheater.com/>

<http://www.wcu.edu/student-life/division-of-student-affairs/departments/ak-hinds-university-center/programs-events-at-the-uc/>

<http://www.madbatterfoodandfilm.com/>

<http://www.a-r-f.org/arf/>

<http://watnc.org/>

<http://www.fojcm1.org>

<http://www.communitytable.org>

Electronic Version Available at: <http://media.wcu.edu/wiki/projects/facultyforumvol27/>



WHERE WE LIVE AND WHAT WE DO

Catherine Carter
English

I enjoyed the recent Faculty Forum highlighting the joys of life in the Greater Cullowhee Metro Area. Many thanks to Mary Jean Herzog, and collaborators David Claxton, Chris Cooper, Brian Gastle, Hal Herzog, Libby McRae and Maurice Phipps for singing all the praises of Jackson County that I would've sung.

However, I too would like to address the sometimes-fraught issue of where faculty live. It's become common to hear talk of "encouraging" new faculty to live close by. Those of us who've been here more than a few years have almost certainly heard the complaint that further-afield faculty don't pull their weight. This assumption is hard on the Asheville-and-beyond dwellers who make the long commute *and* pull their weight; I'd like to address it for that reason, but also because it may speak to a larger, even more fraught assumption about what academic life is supposed to be. Perhaps it's time to let go of the conversation which judges job performance in terms of where people live and consider that there may be a "we should always be here" subtext to this issue

I live in in Cullowhee, 1.8 miles from WCU—yay me. That's a choice: it saves gas, time and money, and it makes life easier at every early-morning, weekend, or evening event. It also works because my spouse and I enjoy rural settings, small towns, as well as those whitewater rivers that Hal wrote about. I'm lucky to live here, and glad to have the choice to do so.

But these factors, plus a few others, constitute one situation, not a universal order; they also constitute a state of privilege. My spouse and I are tenured faculty in the same department, a situation whose odds are lower than those of winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse...but not that much lower. We don't have children (with special needs or otherwise), we don't have the primary care (yet) of elderly relatives who need specialized treatment, and we're more or less okay with work being the center of our lives. Also, we're white and heterosexual. The fact that Jackson County works so well for us proves nothing about whether it works for other people.

So when we hint to new faculty or staff that they really ought to live nearby, when we encourage them to stay in the county, what are we really asking of people whom we hope will be our friends and colleagues for the foreseeable future?

Foremost, we're asking that they subordinate their families' lives to one job. In the 1970's, with lower property values and different social values, a single WCU salary supported a non-working partner and children, and kept the bills paid in something like comfort; now it won't. Since WCU can't offer appropriate employment to all domestic partners, it's asking a lot of a family that it revolve in tight orbit around one job...in a county whose unemployment rate is 5.2%, in a state whose unemployment rate is

6.2%, and at a university many of whose salaries run low relative to comparable jobs in other states, other regions, and even other UNC schools. Some domestic partners can work in Jackson County; many can't. And there are many reasons why parents might need to live elsewhere, including childcare and health care options, school reputations and amenities, choices in home or private schooling, and what's available in accommodating special needs. These aren't trivial reasons to choose a home.

We're also asking that all of our employees love rural settings and small towns, implying that every family's structure will fit easily into traditional rural settings: white, heterosexual, married, Christian. For instance, are there any synagogues west of Asheville? And might there be good reasons why a colleague who is transgendered or gay might prefer Asheville, a city which the latest census has shown to have 83% more LGBT identified people than the typical American city or town?

Moreover, the idea of "encouragement" can be problematic. Of course we wouldn't dictate where people live, we say; but we can *encourage* them...ignoring the fact that when senior faculty and administrators "encourage" junior faculty and staff to do something, that generates a certain pressure.

"But those commuters aren't doing their *jobs!*" is the usual cry at this point. "They're never *here!* And then I have to pick up the slack!"

This seems to be the crux of faculty-on-faculty judgment about living arrangements: we feel potentially ill-done-by. I'm afraid that while I'm rewriting the DCRD and dealing with the fifth e-mail from the same student in the same day, you're out dancing.

I don't have the data to absolutely refute this charge—though I'd be very interested in seeing it, if Institutional Research chose to collect some. But if you'll excuse anecdotal evidence, I have not found it to be accurate. What I see is that *some* people are "never here" - generally difficult to find, reluctant to attend university functions or volunteer for service work, persistently invisible at their departments' and colleges' signature events and key meetings. But what I haven't seen is a clear correlation between that behavior and where people live. Some never-heres live minutes away. Plenty of go-to, can-always-find-them, utility-infielders live in Asheville or beyond; if it wouldn't embarrass them, I could name a host of such colleagues.

I'd venture to say that many faculty and staff put in well over forty hours a week—at the office, at home, when traveling. I venture this because our levels of productivity show it...and that should speak for itself. The fact that every institution has less active employees doesn't mean we should be suspicious of everyone in Asheville or Murphy; it means that the criterion of judgment should be whether we're doing our jobs—period. If we're not, that's for department heads and supervisors to address. We have documents with which to address it.

So maybe it's time to stop worrying about where our colleagues live? It's not like any of us lacks for other things to do, or other issues to worry about.

But I'd like to close by returning to a larger question: what we're really asking. Perhaps the subtext of "live in Jackson County" is actually part of the past decades' shifting relations between management and labor. Perhaps the real encouragement is to treat our jobs as more than jobs, centering our family and social and personal lives around Western...and encouraging employees to live in the area is just one way to, er, encourage that commitment. Perhaps the implication is that "good" academics *should* be here on weekends for Open Houses and athletic breakfasts (complete with sectarian prayer), should be available to our students before eight and after five, should continue advising students and writing recommendations and filling Blackboard shells during periods when nine-month employees are allegedly

“off”, and should compel our families to arrange their lives around these offices. No matter how much we’re doing, *good* academics should be always-here, in order to do more.

If this is the subtext of our ZIP-code-based judgment, it wouldn’t be entirely surprising. This is increasingly the corporate culture of the United States, modeled on the sweatshop culture of the industrial revolution and of countries whose primary growth is in manufacturing. There’s a sense, post-2008 and post-Microsoft, that employees should be so grateful to be employed at all, let alone in a congenial setting, that we should be glad to take on ever more uncompensated work, work that’s not in our job descriptions, and off-duty-hours work. And I’ve heard faculty members say as much. It’s not just a top-down management philosophy; it’s a widespread state of mind, common to academics, in which obsession equals status.

Despite living in Cullowhee, logging a lot of office time, and having one or two tiny obsessive tendencies, I think this is an unfortunate philosophy. If it ever found its way into actual policy, it would be frightening. Always-being-here clearly works for some academics; but it’s not actually part of the job description. (Psychology faculty might be able to tell us whether it’s a description of anything else.) And not-always-being-here has traditionally been one of the benefits helping to balance the student debt and non-earning years which go with terminal degrees, the salaries which remain low relative to both the cost of those degrees and the hours worked, the weekends and evenings spent grading, the “breaks” which include meetings and internship observations, and the vacations which include answering daily work-related e-mails.

I lack space to discuss all the larger implications of always-being-here. But, my colleagues and neighbors, perhaps we should discuss them—over lunch, at Innovations, or perhaps at the U-Joint in Asheville. If we judge colleagues for living in Asheville or for being “never here”, when what we mean is “you’re not *always* here”...we should ask ourselves whether always-being-here is really the work climate we want to foster.

Catherine Carter is a poet who teaches in the English Education and Professional Writing programs in the English Department, lives in Cullowhee, paddles gentle rivers, and (attempts to) keeps bees.

Editor’s Note – Write for the Faculty Forum!

The Faculty Forum will be published on the third Monday of each month during the fall and spring semesters. Please consider contributing to campus conversations by submitting to one or more of these three sections.

- 1. Lead Commentary.** This is an essay written by a faculty member addressing an issue, hot topic, or general faculty concern. They usually run anywhere from 750 to 1000 words, but they can be longer or shorter.
- 2. Responses.** These are faculty comments about and reactions to the previous months’ FF. They are often substantive, even critical responses to the essay of the previous month. The **Responses** section is a great way to engage in discussion around campus.
- 3. Teaching Tips.** This section can be about an effective teaching method you developed or tips from an article you think worth sharing. If the later, please include the reference.

Email any of the above to me at mherzog@wcu.edu.

Responses to the September Issue, “36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee”

I received enthusiastic email and personal responses to last month’s Faculty Forum. Most of them were expressions of thanks and appreciation. Here is a sample: “Thanks to all of you. I think this is great opening year forum piece—it’s nice, positive, and informational. This could be a great addition to the materials we send new faculty/staff as soon as they are with contract and beginning the sometimes challenging decision about where to live.”

Sneak Preview of the Next Faculty Forum

Finally, here’s a sneak preview of the October issue: Have you wondered and worried about how to meet the needs of all the students in your classes? Stay tuned for the perspectives and insights of a couple of faculty who grapple with how to effectively teach students with disabilities.

Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
Faculty Fellow for Publications

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. Send your comments to mherzog@wcu.edu.



Editor's Note

This month's Forum has a slightly different format. Vicki Faircloth wrote the opening essay, in which she shares her recent experiences having students with disabilities in her classes. Following Vicki's essay, Lisa Bloom offers an explanation of some of the laws, rights, and opportunities related to working with college students with disabilities.

A response to last month's forum by Catherine Carter is in the final section. Though I received only one response for publication, several faculty verbally shared their appreciation for her article.

The Faculty Forum will be published on the third Monday of each month during the fall and spring semesters. Please consider contributing to campus conversations by submitting to one or both of these sections:

1. Lead Commentary. This is an essay written by a faculty member addressing an issue, hot topic, or general faculty concern. They usually run anywhere from 750 to 1000 words, but they can be longer or shorter. And, like this month, faculty may collaborate on a Forum.

2. Responses. These are faculty comments about and reactions to the previous months' FF. They are often substantive, even critical responses to the essay of the previous month. The **Responses** section is a great way to engage in discussion around campus.

Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
(mherzog@email.wcu.edu)
Faculty Fellow for Publications

The Challenges - and Rewards - of Teaching WCU Students with Disabilities

Victoria Faircloth
School of Teaching and Learning

"If we want to grow as teachers—we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract." (Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*)

When I inquired about writing a Faculty Forum on working with my students with disabilities, I thought of challenges I feel as one professor, on my own solitary journey through academia. We each choose a course with a predetermined set of values that support our journey as human

beings and as academics. Parker Palmer's landmark book, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, has influenced my work for years, but my new experiences teaching students with disabilities has reminded me that "we teach who we are...in times of darkness as well as light."

Looking for Paul*

And so it began spring semester, 2014. I had no plans to explore the inner landscape of my teacher-self. I was aware of WCU's [University Participant Program \(UP\)](#) which gives students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity for a full college experience, but I was unaware of the impact having a UP student in my class would have on me.

First day of class. I am nervous. As soon as everyone settles into their desks, I begin searching for Paul, expecting to be able to easily find a student with Down syndrome. I cringe at my insecurity, a seasoned professor of 24 years. Soon I locate him among the 35 sophomores: Public Law 94-142, in the flesh, row two, three desks back. ([Public Law 94-142](#) is the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. See below for Lisa Bloom's explanation of this and related laws and policies.)

I feel inadequate. I teach people how to teach. Yet, here I stand, in a room full of sophomores, trying to figure out which one is Paul, because I am looking for some sign, some direction about how to *teach* him. When we go over the features in the textbook, I canvas the room, noting if Paul is attentive and keeping up with class discussion.

The truth is I do not know if this young man will be able to comprehend the course material. I am reluctant to say this out loud, to myself, to the Office of Disabilities staff, or to the Director of the UP Program, Paul's home base.

After class, we had time to speak briefly, and that was when I had my second moment of inadequacy. I could not understand most of what he said. Do I ask him to repeat himself, maybe more than once? Is it better to pretend I understand him? If I do that, am I trying to save face here, for him and for me, too? He is my student, and it is my job to communicate effectively with him, today. I walk back to my office, hoping that my face doesn't reveal that I am embarrassed, a little scared, and seriously wondering how I can possibly model for a group of college students how to teach Paul. In fact, I have already decided I will likely fail, and all the students will be aware of this fact, and why don't I just go on and retire before the course evaluations come in.

A New Adventure in Teaching

And thus began the challenging but enlightening adventure of teaching a student with Down syndrome. My knowledge of the effects of Down syndrome on comprehension and cognition was minimal. In fact, I found myself doing Google searches, rather than asking folks who knew more than I did. My preconceived notion was that students with Down syndrome were not capable of comprehending college level work.

Each Tuesday and Thursday, I found myself looking for indicators that Paul was keeping up. Our roles became reversed: the first lesson I learned was when he spoke up in a discussion on Chapter 2, Different Ways of Learning. What he taught me that day was that although his communication skills were difficult to understand, he got the concepts. Each class period, it

became easier to understand what he was saying. In time, I realized that it was not his communication skills that were improving, it was my listening skills that were getting sharper each time he spoke. Eventually I understood his words without having to hear each sound in each word.

My next realization was that being in a college class setting was an honor for Paul. The way he carried himself into class, his eagerness to participate in discussions, to ask questions, his confidence steadily growing. But the chapter on educational philosophy was going to be a significant challenge, with so many unfamiliar, abstract, multi-syllabic terms. I prepared myself for him to struggle, and I worried that he would not be able to complete the required assignment.

Wrong!

Once again, I had to be hit in the head: communication skills are not always an indicator of comprehension skills. The college student volunteer who attended class with Paul and assisted him with class activities, suggested that since writing was difficult for him, perhaps I could allow him to do a PowerPoint presentation. I had no idea what to expect, but what I got was a well-developed presentation that addressed all the questions required in the paper. Clearly his work indicated that he understood the philosophies, and how one or more of them fit with his personal philosophy of educating young children in a daycare setting. He “wrote” his paper in a way that reflected his understanding of the requirement in a pre-dominantly visual, non-text format.

Paul did every assignment, with some adaptations, took all ten chapter quizzes, participated in every group project, and made a short speech at the end of the semester about how much it meant to him to be part of our class. He got his certificate of completion at the University commencement ceremony, is able to live an independent life, gainfully employed at a day-care center, where he rides public transportation to work every day.

And Along Came Rachel

If that wasn't enough to tug at that inner landscape of my teacher-life...along comes fall semester, and two minutes into my first class, a young woman interrupted me with an announcement for the entire class. Twenty-four years as professor, and I have never been interrupted by a student at the beginning of the first class. She stood up and said she had Tourette syndrome and gave a brief explanation of the condition with specific details of the types of noises she might make. She assured everyone if noises reached the screaming level, she would dismiss herself from class, as she had no desire to be disruptive. I had no idea what to expect and was, again, a bit nervous. Over the next couple of class sessions, I listened carefully to the tics so I could learn to make adjustments, if needed. And yes, I did more Google searches, hoping to be a fast learner, so the inadequacy I felt from lack of knowledge of Tourette syndrome would not lower my status as the learned professor.

Meeting Virginia

And then came Virginia, who is deaf, to another course in my fall schedule. I quickly learned how to teach with an interpreter in class. Basically, all I had to do was just teach, and the student who is deaf and her interpreter followed my lead. Not nearly as anxiety producing as I had felt for the other two students. After all, my inadequacy regarding the most effective learning

arrangement was not an issue in this class. I had a helper who was paid by WCU for each class session.

Learning from My Students

What pushed me into my inner landscape was the realization that I actually had helpers in *each* of those classes. I had spent so much time worrying that I was slow to see all my students had become my teachers. Every time Virginia spoke in front of the class, the students gave her hardy applause, even though she could not hear it! Students admired Rachel because she was so brave to speak to the class about having Tourette syndrome. And the students applauded when Paul told them how much it meant to him to be part of the class.

The disabilities of the three students in my classes were visible to the rest of us while we keep ours out-of-sight. What grit they have, what willpower to face fear and stay on their journey, determined to have a life goal that was denied in the past. They attend classes every day, knowing they may be the only student with a disability and hoping, just hoping they will be accepted.

*Pseudonyms have been used throughout this essay.

FYI: Laws, Rights and Opportunities

Lisa Bloom
School of Teaching and Learning

*[Public Law 94-142](#), the federal legislation that became law in 1975 guaranteed a free and appropriate public education to all. Prior to 1975, school age individuals with disabilities were kept at home, sent to special schools or institutionalized. The law has undergone several revisions and is now referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or [IDEA](#). IDEA covers the rights of school-age children and youth, but a “free” postsecondary education is available to very few people.

The [Americans with Disability Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) protects the rights of adults with disabilities. While this legislation does not provide for a free education, it does protect the rights of individuals who are “qualified” by requiring universities to make programs accessible and forbidding discriminatory admissions practices such as screening out individuals with physical, mental or intellectual disabilities. This legislation covers individuals who meet the general requirements for admission to a university and requires the university to make accommodations and modifications to make programs accessible. Guide dogs in the classroom, interpreters, note-takers, taped lectures, accessible buildings and classrooms are examples of accommodations that might be required.

Individuals with an intellectual disability may not meet the standards and rigor required for admission to a 4-year college. Even so, as Dr. Faircloth illustrates, those individuals can benefit from the intellectual and social climate of a university.

Many of us grew up in an era when individuals with disabilities were excluded from our schools and classrooms. Even today, while children and youth with disabilities are educated in public

schools, they are often served in separate rooms or separate corners of a classroom. Hence, few of us have seen good models of full inclusion of individuals with disabilities. WCU is becoming such a model: student support services provides support to students with a range of disabilities and helps students develop a plan that outlines their accommodations. More recently, the [University Participant](#) (UP) program, a nationally recognized program founded by Drs. Kelly Kelley and David Westling, gives students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity for a college experience culminating in a Certificate of Accomplishment received during Commencement ceremonies.

Dr. Faircloth's trepidation with accommodating students with disabilities is not uncommon. Faculty are not always sure how to deal with the challenges of having an individual with a disability in a university classroom. I believe the trepidation, in part, comes from our early experiences with exclusion. Dr. Faircloth has bravely and compassionately shared her journey.

The question is not whether individuals with disabilities should be included and accommodated but how to best meet their needs. The answer to the latter question is quite simple. Ask. Ask the individual with a disability first and then if needed and appropriate, ask the staff and faculty involved with their support.

Response to Last Month's Forum "Where We Live and What We Do" by Catherine Carter

John A. Williams

Forensic Anthropology & Western Carolina Human Identification Laboratory

I don't wish to stretch out what has been said in the past two issues of the Forum but I felt the need to respond. I am a commuter (30 minutes each way) and live in Haywood County. The drive, by the way, is one of the things I look forward to both coming and going each day. I chose to live in Haywood County not for reasons of not wanting to be in the WCU Community but for medical ones. My wife requires medical care available in Asheville. Clyde where we live seems to be good compromise in distance traveled by either of us.

We do miss at times the events on campus that living away makes it difficult to attend. At the same time after 35 years as a professor I don't miss the urge to drop in the office at night or on weekends. When I was at my former institution I lived less than 10 minutes from campus. I spent too much time away from home when my girls were growing up. I vowed that when I came to WCU my job was going to be Monday through Friday 8-5. I have for the most part kept that vow. I will if need be stay after 5 and if I come in on a weekend I must have a very, very good reason to do so. Now does living away from Cullowhee mean I shortchange my students and that I wish not to be collegial. It doesn't. It simply means that I have other priorities in my life that are simply far more important than going to the UClub on Friday evenings.



Who has an ACE at this Place?

Benjamin Tanner

Geosciences and Natural Resources

This year I am serving as the provost fellow for Academic Community Engagement (ACE). Parachuting into this position has required me to think about what academic community engagement means, and my understanding is still in flux. The problems I have defining ACE are similar to issues defining sustainability for my students. I usually know it when I see it; it's easy to give examples but a bit more difficult to define precisely. Formal definitions* typically involve some combination of terms like exchange, reciprocity, partnership, and collaboration between institutions and their communities. I know that many faculty participate in community engagement projects in one way or another and suspect that some are active in ACE without even realizing it.

Academic community engagement looks different in different disciplines. Here are a few examples from WCU's application:

- River Cane Project. This was a scientific study of the environmental characteristics of river cane sites to determine ideal growth conditions. It was a collaboration with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and led to a restoration project at Cherokee Central Schools.
- Publicizing Local Charity Work. Film and Television Production faculty and students helped local charities increase awareness about their services and raise money by providing video documentaries.**
- Economic Impact of GSMNP Closure. Local businesses in the region suffered due to the closure of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 2013 resulting from sequestration. A faculty member and his capstone class in Hospitality and Tourism Management estimated the economic impact of the Park's closure on the region and provided useful information for local and state government agencies.**

*(e.g. see [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching definition](#), [WCU definition](#))

**WCU 2014 Elective Community Engagement Classification Application

Faculty Outreach

Some of my work this year includes outreach to faculty to promote, support, and assess community engagement in teaching, service, and scholarship; development of recommendations for institutional academic community engagement; and communication and marketing of academic community engagement. Through reviewing faculty survey results, meeting with faculty members involved in ACE, and poring through documents such as our application for the Carnegie community engagement classification, I have been amazed at the extent of work (teaching, scholarship, and service) being done in the community. I am convinced that there are additional opportunities for engagement that could be pursued if we all had a better idea of what others were doing. There also seems to be a general sense that more should be done to recognize and reward our community engagement efforts. My goal is to now put this feedback to use.

Publicizing and Rewarding ACE Projects

One way to do that is to create a centralized portal identifying ACE projects and resources. As part of a larger redesign effort, we can modify our ACE webpage so that all relevant resources on and off campus, including funding sources, professional development opportunities, and instructional resources are available in one, easily accessible location. Also, we can modify our current Faculty Survey of Curriculum-based Community Engagement Activities so that it is easy to identify ACE projects and migrate them over to the website. Ideally, the website would include a brief synopsis of each project, along with the faculty contact. We could then easily see what others are doing, have a contact if there is the potential for collaboration, and have a vehicle for recognition of the broad range of engagement activities that are taking place at WCU. We could also use this information to recognize and reward exceptional faculty projects. For example, a committee could select a number of projects to further highlight over the subsequent year and potentially reward project leaders with professional development funding. This would encourage us all to report our engagement efforts and would also serve to recognize individuals who have significant engagement activities.

I plan to work closely with Coulter Faculty Commons and the Center for Service Learning as they develop community scholarship incubators (CSI). Laura Cruz and Lane Perry have been busy developing this concept for WCU, and I am excited about the potential to be a part of getting it off of the ground. You will be hearing more about this initiative over the coming weeks and a CSI theme will likely be used for a community scholarship incubator retreat in February.

Faculty Participation

These initiatives will require much behind the scenes organization and work. Also, they will only be carried out successfully if there is significant participation by faculty across disciplines. For example, the availability of resources for an academic community engagement webpage will

require contribution of material from many individuals across campus that have developed successful projects, evaluation instruments, community contacts, etc. If you are interested in academic community engagement, I ask for your help in this endeavor, both in the sharing of ideas and also potentially in the sharing of resources. I also continue to welcome all feedback and look forward to working to further our efforts in academic community engagement over the coming year.

For more information or to share your ideas, contact Ben at btanner@wcu.edu.

Responses to Last Month's Forum, "The Challenges - and Rewards - of Teaching WCU Students with Disabilities" came from School of Teaching and Learning faculty members:

I enjoyed reading the piece by Vicki Faircloth in the recent Faculty Forum. I was struck by Vicki's honesty and forthrightness about teaching students with disabilities in her undergraduate classes. But why the feelings of nervousness and inadequacy?

When we think about it, every student that we have in a class will take away something different. Some will learn more than others, some will enjoy our presentations and class activities more than others, and some will wish they could be anywhere else rather than in our class more than others. It is the same with people with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities.

We all should do our professorial best to facilitate our students' learning, but we also need to recognize the variability of our students. In the last several years, we have been studying what students in the UP program get out of their classes. We have found that some relish the content and often comprehend it more than we thought they might. But we have also found that some seem to enjoy the discussions and interactions with other students more than the content per se. And yes, we have found that some would rather cut class than attend. In other words, we have found that our UP students are much like other WCU students when it comes to taking classes.

So I thank my friend and colleague for her comments, but I hope we will all learn that if we can come to grips with our concerns about differences in ability, we may find that for most students, our courses can add meaning to their lives and perhaps help them enjoy a better future.

David Westling

I had so many other things on my agenda this morning, but am so glad that I took the time to read Vicki's essay. I have chills after reading her experiences. Those three students, and others probably untold, are fortunate because she cared so much to make their learning possible. How many other learning situations are missed because we don't stop to really get to know the students who could teach us something about ourselves and humanity, through their different

lives and experiences? Thank you for sharing your story, Vicki, and Lisa for sharing understanding of the history of IDEA. We should all be more willing to discuss our hesitations of teaching to meet the needs of all students. We'd all be better for it.

Pam Buskey

I read Vicki's Faculty Forum earlier today and want to thank her for sharing her thoughts and feelings with all of us. I found the article inspiring. It is refreshing to read such a personal reflection, crafted with such insight. I really appreciate Vicki's taking the time to write such a fine commentary.

Dave Strahan

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Email me at mherzog@wcu.edu to discuss your ideas or responses.



This issue features commentaries by Laura Wright and Hal Herzog on gender differences in faculty salaries.

Gender (In)Equity

Laura Wright
Associate Professor & Department Head
English Department

The WCU branch of the Tar Heel Chapter of the AAUW requested a campus gender equity study in 2011. It was completed and presented in an open forum last semester. One of the main conclusions was "...the faculty portion of the study states that no person's salary was two standard deviations or more from the mean salary for his or her employee group, and thus not large enough to suggest potential discriminatory bias based on Department of Labor guidelines."¹

While WCU appears to be in legal compliance on gender equity, the study shows us (among other things) that female faculty members earn \$2,234 less than male faculty members when controlling for all predictor variables. Consider that over the course of a 30-year career, the difference by simple multiplication amounts to \$67,020. (In reality, differences are compounded annually.) Even if the disparity revealed in the study is not sufficient to mandate action, that's not to say it shouldn't warrant it.

I'd like to take this opportunity to examine how this faculty and institution might address this inequity because, while legally things may be a-okay, to my way of thinking, ethically, if WCU's female faculty members are earning over \$2,000 less than their male counterparts, we are in rather shabby shape.

According to our study, men earn higher average salaries in all ranks. Male full professors at WCU earn – get this -- \$25,363 more than their female counterparts. Say that one is a full professor for 10 years of their career. That's more than \$250,000 that women are getting shorted (again, figures are not compounded).

Suddenly, this legally defensible inequity, I hope you agree, is rather staggering.²

What we see in the higher education gender gap at WCU isn't really abnormal – in fact, we're in better shape than lots of places. WCU's average faculty salary for all men is \$68,667 and \$59,551 for all women; women earn 87 cents for every dollar earned by men. According to Jonah Newman,³ "at doctoral universities . . . women across all faculty ranks make about 78 cents on the dollar, nearly the national average ratio for all women." He also cites work by Kelly Ward, which "cautions that women tend to drop out of the

¹ <http://thereporter.wcu.edu/2014/10/summary-of-faculty-results-from-gender-equality-survey-to-be-presented-oct-29/>

² Furthermore, the salary average for the College of Business, the highest earning college with the most male faculty members, is \$90,470.00. For the College of Arts and Sciences, the lowest earning college with the highest number of female faculty, the average salary is \$56,584.00.

³ <http://chronicle.com/blogs/data/2014/04/11/there-is-a-gender-pay-gap-in-academe-but-it-may-not-be-the-gap-that-matters/>

academic pipeline more often than men do, choosing to stay at the associate-professor rank due to discriminatory workplace practices, parenting choices, or being overlooked for promotion to full professor because of a focus on teaching and service rather than research.” This phenomenon can be seen at WCU, where 69 percent of the 74 full professors included in the study were male.

So we’re doing better than the national average cited above, and while the inequity we do see is not “statistically significant” or legally actionable, gender inequity very much exists at WCU. My sense is that the body of people within our institution who might have believed men should earn more than women is shrinking, and I’m optimistic about a generational shift that will keep women from starting at this particular disadvantage.

If you are in a position to hire, first and foremost recognize the historical tendency to offer women less, and then don’t. Don’t ever offer a woman less than you offer a male counterpart with the same credentials. Ever. She has the same credentials and the same experience; she deserves the same salary. End of story.

But offering is the easy part.

There’s more to consider, both for the potential female hire and for the person doing the hiring. Even if you do offer women and men the same thing, there’s plenty of evidence to suggest that women don’t negotiate, so men will still make more. Linda Babcock’s 2003 *Women Don’t Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation* discusses the problem in detail. And there’s more at stake than simply telling women to negotiate – which you should do, and which I do whenever I make a job offer to a woman (or to a man, for that matter) – because research indicates that women are penalized for daring to negotiate.

What might those of us at WCU do to address these very, very real issues?

First, don’t offer women less, and recognize that women have a harder time with negotiations.⁴ More importantly, we need to acknowledge that there is a very real bias against women who dare to negotiate – and male and female employers are guilty of this bias. We need to encourage women to negotiate and let them know that we won’t hold them to a standard to which we wouldn’t hold a man. And we need to mean it. That means being aware of our own tendencies to engage in this bias and making sure we don’t hold against women things we wouldn’t hold against men.

Second, we need to recognize that gender inequity isn’t just a women’s issue; it’s as important for men to take responsibility for changes as it is for women to call the system to account for its inequity. If you are a male department head or dean (and nearly all department heads and deans at WCU are men), then gender pay inequity is very much your issue *because it is something you can actively do something about*; it’s something you can recognize and change.

Finally, if you are a male faculty member with a female faculty member partner who has a child, you should seriously consider taking paternity leave.

Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993, and that act requires companies to allow 12 weeks of leave to new parents. While men can take such leave, they seldom do, and their female partners lose time at work (which translates as time to build one’s CV in order, in particular, to attain full professor status, a metric that could very well shift the inequity dynamic in significant ways). I know exactly one man who has taken paternity leave in the time that I’ve been at WCU, which isn’t to say that there aren’t others out there. But I know of only one. And to my mind, he’s done something powerful in terms of changing the culture at WCU. He’s shown both his colleagues and WCU he thinks childcare is as much his responsibility as his partner’s.

⁴ <https://hbr.org/2014/06/why-women-dont-negotiate-their-job-offers/>

According to Clare Cain Miller, “peer influence can change workplace culture, too, according to a study published in the *American Economic Review* in July. The study found that when a man’s co-workers took paternity leave, it increased the chance he would take it by 11 percentage points.”⁵ Such a move not only allows women to better maintain their career agenda, which, in turn allows them access to more money and more professional opportunities, but it also indicates that men – and in turn the places they work – place a real value on childcare, which has been a historical nightmare for WCU. My very real belief is that when childcare becomes a men’s issue as well, we might see some change in that area.

I would love for WCU to be the campus model of an institution where women earn the same salaries as their male counterparts. And, when I go to my dean and say “I want x,” he often tells me “people in Hell want iced tea.” But I know and respect the wisdom, insight, and ability of my colleague to bring real change to fruition. As faculty, we are the highly educated, the elite; we are the people in the world who have the most information about injustice and inequity. We should find it our duty to address such circumstances wherever we see them, to call them out and to refuse to participate in them.

These are my thoughts, but I’d love to hear yours. If you have ideas about how we move forward from here, please send a response to be published in next month’s Faculty Forum. It’s time for serious conversation about solutions to the gender inequity problem on this campus.

“In Compliance” Is an Unreasonably Low Bar

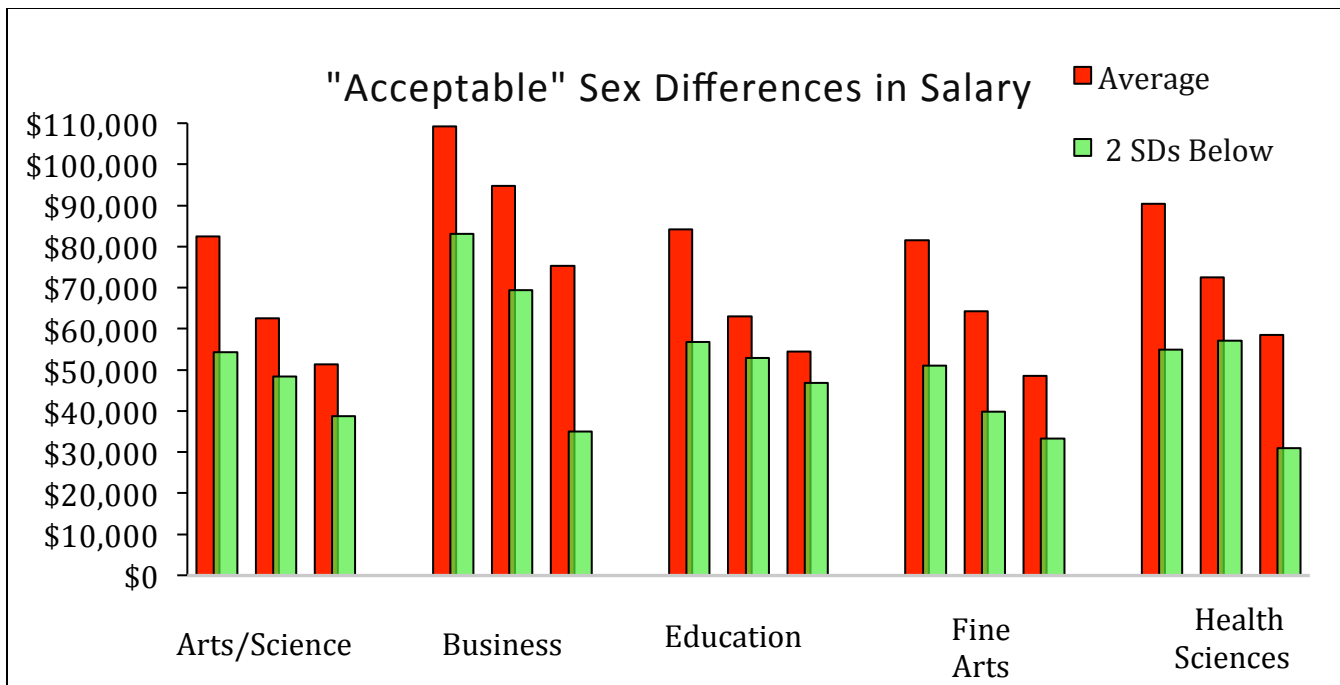
*Hal Herzog, Professor
Psychology Department*

The WCU salary study found that, on average, female faculty members make about \$10,000 less than males. However, Henry Wong and University legal counsel Mary Ann Lochner repeatedly emphasized in their presentation to the faculty in November that the study’s most important finding was that WCU is “in compliance” with federal regulations on sex differences in pay. This claim is, in fact, true. But, as Laura Wright indicated above, there is a difference between what is legal and what is right. And the devil is in the statistical details.

Wong and Lochner emphasized that to be “out of compliance” with federal guidelines means a woman is paid more than *two standard deviations* (2 SDs) below a male with similar qualifications. For a perspective on the meaning of two standard deviations, consider IQ scores. A person with an IQ two SDs below the average would have a score of 70, which falls into the American Psychiatric Association’s category of “mentally disabled.” The problem is that SDs tend to be especially large when group sizes are small. This was true of the groupings used in the WCU salary study. Indeed, a footnote at the bottom of Table 4 in the report acknowledges that “most of the WCU faculty groupings did not meet the federal minimum size of 30.

The upshot is that, according to the “two SD rule,” very large sex differences in salaries at WCU would still -technically- be “in compliance.” This is shown in the graph below which is based on data from the report. The red bars on the graph indicate the *actual* average salaries (in declining order) for professors, associate professors, and assistant professors in each of the five colleges at WCU. The green bars indicate legally acceptable salaries 2 SDs below the average.

⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/09/upshot/paternity-leave-the-rewards-and-the-remaining-stigma.html?_r=0



The graph shows, for example, that if a male assistant professor in the College of Business were to make \$77,353 a year (the college average), WCU would still be in compliance even if his female counterpart was paid \$36,000. Clearly, the two-SD rule is an unacceptably low bar which does little to assuage concerns about gender bias in faculty salaries.

Ironically, the University did not need to go the two-SD route in justifying the present salary schedule. The gender study was well-done, and the authors were correct in arguing that most of the gender pay gap at WCU is attributable to structural factors and not overt discrimination. These include differences in career longevity, promotions, prestigious positions such as distinguished chairs, and, most importantly, what college you are in. For example, female associate professors in the College of Arts and Sciences earn, on average, \$30,000 less than women at the same rank in the College of Business. Large sex discrepancies in pay will remain a problem at WCU until these structural issues are addressed. This can be done by increasing salaries in low-paid departments which are often disproportionately female, by recruiting women at the associate and full professor levels, and by hiring more women in high-paying departments.

Editor's Note

The Faculty Forum will be published the third Monday of each month during the fall and spring semesters (except holidays). Please consider contributing to these campus conversations.

1. Lead Commentary. This is an essay written by a faculty member addressing an issue, hot topic, or project of interest to the general faculty.

2. Responses. These are faculty comments about and reactions to the previous months' FF. They are often substantive, even critical responses to the essay of the previous month. The **Responses** section is a great way to engage in discussion around campus. See the attached response to the November issue.

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The Academic Game of Thrones: Scholarship as Bloodsport

Roya Scales

School of Teaching and Learning

I just finished reading the *Game of Thrones* series by George R.R. Martin, and I was struck by a parallel between its dystopic fantasyland and the academy. I do not have cable, satellite TV or Netflix so I have not seen the show. Based on the content of the addictive books, I'm not sure I want to see it.

If you are not familiar with *Game of Thrones*, here is a quick overview without any spoilers: Everyone wants to be King (or Queen). That strong desire to rule (to be "in charge") leads those close to the King to constantly jockey for position. The tale contains twisting plots with betrayals, double-crossing, and triple-crossing. Heads roll, characters disappear, new characters emerge, and dead characters often become the frozen undead "Others" (zombies!). Some of my favorite *Game of Thrones* quotes are, "When you play a game of thrones you win or you die. There is no middle ground," "The answer is flying not crying... Every flight begins with a fall," and "A bruise is a lesson... and each lesson makes us better." It's pretty gruesome. But it is also a metaphor for life in academia.

"Why are you at Western Carolina University?" "Are you *really* happy there?" "Where the heck is Cullowhee anyway?" are the three questions I am asked repeatedly at the annual meeting of the Literacy Research Association (LRA). In 2009, I accepted a position here at WCU: I thought the faculty were friendly and collegial, the support systems in place seemed strong, and the atmosphere was relaxed and at the same time productive. This mid-sized regional campus appealed to me because of the opportunities to collaborate on research projects both within and beyond our University without the publish-or-perish *pressure* to do so. Yes, as a tenure-track faculty member I am happy. I am *really* happy with my decision to work at WCU.

As a doctoral student and instructor at an R2 institution, I experienced and witnessed situations that reminded me of the *Game of Thrones*. The competition for publications, turf wars, jockeying for position, and disappearing faculty members made me reconsider my original goal of holding a position at a research-intensive institution. The lure of a 2/1 teaching load with a semester off for writing every fourth or fifth year is hard to ignore, but it comes with a hefty price that I decided I was not willing to pay. I realized that I wanted to be on a campus that offers a collaborative environment for *colleagues* instead of playing an academic version of *Game of Thrones*. At WCU, I teach, engage in service to local educators, and conduct my research without pressure. I don't have to play the *Game of Thrones*.

Since 2004, the LRA has been my research home. It provides me with stimulating professional development and opportunities to collaborate with like-minded colleagues on cross-institutional, national research projects. I have had the great privilege of working with masterminds - rock stars - in the fields of teacher education and reading research. While these research projects are enlightening, rewarding, and push my thinking forward with every step, they also provide another lesson in the R1 and R2 *Game of Thrones* mindset.

Let me explain. I was lead author on a manuscript I designed and drafted from one piece of an on-going, longitudinal study. When a co-author decided I was not moving the manuscript along fast enough, I experienced a hostile takeover and was demoted to second author. On another manuscript, I retained my lead author status, but I

noticed the co-authors were jockeying to be closer to the top. If you miss a deadline, you may be out of the author line-up. Rework a colleague's part of the manuscript and suddenly you are promoted in the author list. Share an idea and someone else may publish it without consulting or including you. "When you play a game of thrones you win or you die. There is no middle ground" – *Cersei Lannister* (Martin). While I have technically "won" by being part of some amazing research projects, I have also fought many battles to keep co-authors (colleagues!) in the line-up and have found myself serving as negotiator (call me *The Godfather*) to move manuscripts forward while keeping the peace among group members.

As a faculty member who feels lucky to be at WCU, I am committed to preserving our focus on teaching, scholarship and service. As various units across the campus revise their tenure and promotion standards, I hope we will preserve our mission at WCU to serve the region and protect against the *Game of Thrones* mentality. I am a researcher who teaches to support my research habit, and I find the collaborative atmosphere in my program, department, and college refreshing.

Responses to the January Faculty Forum about Gender (In)Equities and Compliance by Laura Wright and Hal Herzog

As you will see below, we received an unusually large number of responses to the January issue. In fact, this Forum received the largest number of responses in its 27 year history. I have arranged them in order of length, shortest to longest. A limited number of printed copies will be distributed to departments. Take your time. Every response is well worth reading from Gael Graham's 22 words to Jayne Zanglein's at 1423 words.

Gael Graham, History: I really don't have anything to say in response to Laura's well-written and researched article, other than heaving a large, useless sigh.

Tom Ford, Psychology: I would like to express my appreciation for Laura's and Hal's commentaries. For me the commentaries were a much needed reminder that gender inequality in salary is an important injustice that should be kept at the forefront of our attention at WCU until we actually take it seriously.

Tony Hickey, Anthropology & Sociology: We have discussed whether we have a gender equity problem here at Western forever. I remember Jack Wakeley raised this issue when he came in the late 80's, and Henry Mainwaring had a committee looking at inequity in Arts and Sciences. Both Laura and Hal are compelling....so when are we going to do something? Equality is damn near impossible but what we have here is inexcusable.

David McCord, Psychology: Human history would suggest (arguably, of course) that gender-based salary differentials derive from ancient patterns of division of labor as well as characteristics of labor itself (e.g., physical capabilities required). Modernity in general, and technology more specifically, have rendered these factors irrelevant for most of us. Of all occupational categories, there are probably none in which equality in pay is more obviously warranted than ours (professors). And, as thought-leaders in our societies, we should certainly lead the way in establishing full and absolute gender equity in salary.

Chris Cooper, Political Science: What's there not to agree with? Laura hits a number of important points, including the fact that gender inequity can only be remedied through policy change. It's convenient to suggest that we can ameliorate this problem by adjusting attitudes, but these attitudes are deeply ingrained (and we all have a difficult time seeing our own shortcomings and biases). If the solutions are about policy, then that also means that all of us can and should be a part of the solution. Hal's points, too, are indisputable. The legal standard is important, but it should not govern us—it's too low a bar. What should govern us instead is a sense of what is truly equitable.

Mickey Randolph, Psychology: As I considered my response to the Faculty Forum piece on gender inequity, I realized that I could do no better than my two colleagues Drs. Wright and Herzog. Dr. Wright made two points that resonated with me: "Male full professors at WCU earn – get this -- \$25,363 more than their female counterparts", and "Women earn 87 cents for every dollar earned by men."

The title of Hal Herzog's ('unreasonably low bar') was especially eloquent when you look at the (bar) graph. It has been interesting listening to explanations of the data – the one most often repeated is that we are "compliant" – I'm not really sure that is sufficient considering the issues my colleagues brought up.

I look forward to the next university led meeting which will further discuss this issue and possible solutions. I would like to encourage faculty and staff to attend the meeting – this is an issue that not only impacts women on campus, it should concern us all.

John F. Whitmire, Jr., Philosophy & Religion: Please allow me to concur with Laura Wright's and Hal Herzog's assertions in the Faculty Forum piece from last month, that whereas the Gender Equity study appears to demonstrate the University is in legal compliance on gender equity salary issues, that is also a relatively low bar to aim for. There is more that all of us can do in order to achieve a more equitable work environment, and Laura has helpfully pointed to a number of these things. I'd like to re-emphasize just one.

As Anne-Marie Slaughter has recently argued, "real equality means valuing family just as much as work," and we ought to be measuring male-female equality not only in terms of the number of women serving as presidents, CEO's, and full professors, and whether their salaries are equal to their male counterparts – valuing women in traditionally male terms – but also "recognizing that the work that women have traditionally done is just as important as the work that men have traditionally done, no matter who does it... Breadwinning and caregiving are equally necessary for human survival." The importance of valuing both kinds of work as genuinely important, and of de-gender-norming our traditional categories that privilege breadwinning over caregiving, has obvious social implications for both same-sex as well as different-sex couples. As Laura argues, our moral responsibilities may well extend beyond advancing and paying women equitably, to the choice of at least some women *and* men to take parental leave when that is appropriate, in order to demonstrate that caregiving is as legitimately valuable human work as is breadwinning. I hope that her piece will encourage all of us to look for our own blind spots in how the choices we make demonstrate our values, and how those choices contribute to shaping both our familial and work environments in incredibly important ways.

Marsha Lee Baker, English: In one of my first-year classes last week, we were discussing a recently published text that raised concerns about the rights and treatment of women in America, including stereotyping, sexual assault, and income. A few students expressed serious doubt that income any longer remains unequal among men and women in the United States. When I shared with them a few examples of salary inequities among Western faculty, as recently reported in the “Gender Equality Salary Survey,” their reactions followed this sequence: (1) Disbelief. “They must not have compared the same work, experience, knowledge, or *something* that would explain the difference!” (2) Disdain. “If that’s true, it’s horrible! That should *not* be happening anymore!” (3) Outrage. “Then why aren’t we seeing a lot of news coverage about it? Why aren’t people protesting on campus? What are they going to *do* about it?” Writing this anecdote now, I’m struck with its similarity to Kubler-Ross’s five stages of loss and grief. Students certainly conveyed the first stages of denial, isolation, and anger. Then they looked at me for, what next?

Bargaining is the third stage, and I’m glad that faculty are speaking up to not accept the offer of “in compliance.” Indeed, compliance was not why faculty urged a comparative study of salary based on sex. We didn’t ask, is Western in compliance with a law? We asked, is Western paying its faculty men and women equitably, ethically?

Bargaining will continue between faculty and administrators. None of it will get us anywhere, however, if we aren’t first sure that everyone comes to the table holding the common belief in equal pay for equal work. Further, everyone needs to be willing to re-examine the individual and collective assumptions and actions occurring in our particular work settings. We need to replace stage four, depression, with collaborative encouragement to transform circumstances into a lively, livable work environment. We’re no longer stuck in some version of stage five, acceptance. Insightful, compassionate, hard-working people have helped bring us to this moment of public knowledge and action. Onward!

Gayle Wells, Teaching and Learning: Growing up in the South, I learned that certain subjects were taboo - religion, politics, weight, age and salaries. Coming to WCU from a private college, it was a great surprise to me to discover that our salaries are public information. If we choose to look, we can compare salaries by department, rank, gender, and age or —even worse - by our perception of who is working the hardest. All this comparison creates a bigger problem for the University—a problem of morale.

I suspect that most of us really like our work. We like our students, our colleagues, and our University; actually, we have the best job in the world. Let’s face it—we spend our time thinking about, reading and writing about, and talking about our passions. Not too many people can say that. It’s the intrinsic value we find in our day-to-day work that keeps us motivated. That moment in class when a student responds to the material and the proverbial “lightbulb” pops up over her head—that is a priceless moment. If we could, most of us would come to work every day just for THAT moment. But, we live in the real world—the world of mortgages, braces, college tuition, and the ever-present fear that we won’t have enough money to retire when the time comes. This makes us stressed about money, which makes us compare our salaries, which creates a morale problem on campus.

The fact that we have a gender gap just adds fuel to the fire. In 2015, there should not be a gender gap at WCU. As Laura Wright points out, women at WCU are making roughly \$2000 less than their male counterparts at the same rank. Women are doing the exact same jobs on campus as men, and

they should be paid the same. Salary differentiation and salary compression are two areas that must be addressed and fixed. The first step in solving a problem is admitting that you have a problem. The university has done that. Now we have to solve this issue because it's more than just a numbers problem. It's a morale problem.

When morale suffers, there can be dire consequences. Good faculty and staff may leave the University for higher salaries. We have all seen this happen in the last few years. Or, even worse, good faculty and staff may stay, but disengage from the University. To be a true educator means you are engaged. To be engaged, you have to be committed. When faculty emotionally *check out*, the whole system suffers.

I have spent most of my career dedicated to public health, and my discipline focuses on the Dimensions of Wellness that encompass six different areas. To neglect one of the dimensions of wellness — emotional health — is to risk total well-being. The same idea applies to the University. To fail to recognize the morale issues related to salary inequity is to seriously jeopardize the well-being of the institution.

As a woman, as a faculty member, and as a citizen of WCU, I think we have to go beyond the taboo of talking about salaries. It's time to make them more equitable among all faculty. The health of our University depends on it.

Kadie Otto, Sport Management. *A Tale from the World of Sports & Ethics*: “Line up to get your uniform!”¹ Coach Law barks. All players dutifully line up. He gives shirts and shorts to some players (who, as it turns out, have blue eyes). The remaining players (those with brown eyes) are given a shirt only.² A brave player with brown eyes, we'll call him “Justice”, although his full name is “Justice E. Fairness (“E.” for Equality), speaks up, “but Coach, we don't have a proper uniform”. “No worries, we're within two standard deviations of compliance,” Coach Law assures. “So what am I to do, go on the court with no shorts? Seriously?” Justice quips. Quizzically, Coach Law ponders the question as two scenarios play out in his head.

In his first vision Coach Law imagines subbing Justice into a game. “Now entering the game, #1, Justice Fair—,” the announcer's voice screeches to a halt as a bare-naked-bottom-of-a-boy runs onto the court. The fans' cheers freeze like raindrops turning to snow. All that can be heard is the rapid fire of the cameramen snapping pictures of the half exposed boy. The next day the front page of the newspaper reads, “WCU Player Enters Game Half Naked, University Officials Cite Compliance”.

“That's not going to look good—half my team dangling up and down the court short-less. Ugh!” Coach Law shakes the picture from his mind like a wet dog after an unwanted bath. With that, a second vision appears. The regular season is over and somehow, even with guys playing with no bottoms, WCU makes the tournament. The team's leader, Aware, points out that some of the guys have had to play the entire regular season without shorts. Indeed, it's rather arbitrary that he got a full uniform solely because his eyes happen to be blue. Aware suggests that *now* is the time for the *entire*

¹ Marx delineated between a “basic need” and a “scarce benefit”. Clearly, a uniform is a “basic need”; so too is equal pay.

² The lyrics of Bob Marley's “War”, on his 1995 album *Natural Mystic*, are particularly fitting here: “Until the philosophy which hold one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned... That until there are no longer first class and second class citizens of any nation... Until the colour of a man's skin is of no more significance than the colour of his eyes... That until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all, without regard to race” [and sex (author added)].

team to be fully uniformed. The guys start to mumble and rumble and something out of Orwell's *Animal Farm* begins to stir. The facts are the facts: After multiple requests, and even with all of the media exposure, WCU has failed to provide *all* members of the team a *full* uniform. The players represent a unified front. Their decision is final. It's game time. The official tosses the jump ball into the air. The opposing player leaps. And in that moment all of the WCU players walk off the court. A ghostly silence blankets the arena. With their backs turned, their message comes into focus. White athletic tape covers the backs of their jerseys, and with a black sharpie the players have written: "No shorts. No play."³

It appears that, like Coach Law, WCU recognizes the importance of adhering to laws; as such, it could be making its "moral" decisions based on what it's *required* to do.⁴ However, when said system perpetuates injustice, it is the duty of "the morally aware"⁵ to act in ways that are beyond the system.⁶ Failure to afford equal pay suggests partiality, lacks systematic consistency, and disregards the duty to adhere to well-established moral principles.⁷ A "good" WCU is one in which both female and male faculty are fully clothed.

Yanjun Yan, Engineering & Technology: I joined WCU in fall 2013, and at that time I was the only female faculty member in the Kimmel School. Now we have two women faculty members in our college. Perhaps because I am in the traditionally male-dominated major, I am encouraged to comment on the January Faculty Forum about Gender Equity in salaries at WCU regarding the "GENDER EQUALITY SALARY SURVEY". After some recollection of my life experiences, I do feel that there are a couple of events that I would like to share, and I believe that I am not alone in those experiences.

I still remember that on Aug. 26, 2013, a few days after I arrived on campus, I got a campus email about the AAUW (American Association of University Women) fall kickoff event with a suggested book to read. Being very new here and curious about everything, I excitedly signed up. At that night on Sept. 5, 2013, we talked about a book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* by Sheryl Sandberg, but that gathering turned out to be not a typical book-club social; rather, there were heated discussions on issues that were related to women. As early as in that gathering, the attendees were already expectant of the results from this salary survey, since this project was initiated in 2011 and all the data were collected in March 2012. However, the results were not available until Oct. 29, 2014. In this much-anticipated report, the salary gap at WCU was stated to be within two standard deviation and hence in compliance. No matter what the conclusion is of such a report, the findings in this report are not unique to WCU. According to a recent *Inside Higher Ed* article⁸,

³ Kohlberg stage 6 – universal principles (specifically, a moral duty to protest unjust laws). If the faculty wish to engage in similar fashion, Coulter parking lot might be a good spot as it affords plenty of space.

⁴ Kohlberg stage 4 – concern for social systems.

⁵ One might argue that institutions of higher learning are among "the morally aware" since they purport to espouse the high-minded values of truth, wisdom, justice, and equality.

⁶ Kohlberg's level III - post-conventional, focusing on what one *should* or *ought* to do; also Kant's categorical imperative.

⁷ Rawls' logical moral reasoning criteria.

⁸ <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2015/01/28/berkeley-finds-faculty-salary-gaps-gender-and-race>

The University of California at Berkeley has found -- and pledged to take action on -- gaps in the average salaries of female and minority professors compared to white male professors. Underrepresented minority faculty members trail their white male counterparts by 1 to 1.8 percent, on average. The gaps between women and white males were larger, between 1.8 and 4.3 percent.

To make a fair comparison, we can read page 5 of our report: “At WCU, women earn 87% of salary compared to men,” which translates to a 13% difference, a much larger gap than the 1.8%-4.3% difference at UC-Berkeley. UC-Berkeley has pledged to take action on their salary gap issue. The question to us is, are we going to do anything about this 13% gap at WCU.

When I read Laura Wright’s commentary in the January Faculty Forum, one paragraph literally jumped out that I could very much relate to: “Offering is the easy part. There’s more to consider, both for the potential female hire and for the person doing the hiring. Even if you do offer women and men the same thing, there’s plenty of evidence to suggest that women don’t negotiate, so men will still make more.” For the record, when I got the offer from Kimmel School, I did not negotiate my salary. One of my colleagues, however, said that he negotiated it when he got his offer, and I don’t think that he was the only one who made that choice. Why didn’t I negotiate? I will explain below, or maybe I am justifying.

In a typical offer to a tenure-track, assistant professor position in engineering, there would be salary, start-up funds, course release, and office/lab space with computer/equipment, etc. Before my interview at WCU, I had an offer from another university that I hadn’t signed yet. I, of course, was in conversation with them regarding their offer. In retrospect, it is interesting even to myself that I did not ask them for more salary, but I asked them for more start-up. The department head there could not get me more start-up, but he kindly and unexpectedly got me more salary without my asking. That process surely was negotiation, but I did not negotiate my salary, and I do not know whether a male colleague would conduct a negotiation in the same way.

Using that offer as a comparison, I made mental notes on the offer from Kimmel School: salary (similar, check), no start-up (flag, think again...) but strong department and college support on research and travel (need to confirm), course release in my first year (similar, check), and everything I would need in an office (similar, check).

What finally convinced me to accept the WCU offer was the leadership, faculty, and students here. At that time, I did not know how much effort people had spent to create such an environment, but when I visited here, I was deeply impressed by the collegiality and vision of the department and college. I accepted the WCU offer without a second word on my salary.

The argument I got on why we didn’t offer start-up here was that faculty would be strongly supported if our projects were well-designed and widely utilized, and we do not want to see some professors who have to use up their start-ups to accumulate something that no one else really uses later on. To a large extent, this is true to me. Despite a salary that I did not negotiate, I feel extremely blessed and grateful to have had colleagues, department heads, and deans (I do need to use plurals as we have had leadership changes in the past two years and all of them are equally supportive) to help me revise my proposals in multiple rounds and secure what I now use as my start-up funds. I would say that a welcoming environment such as in Kimmel School where I feel genuinely supported and appreciated is worth more than a few thousands dollars, but why can’t we have both?

Salary negotiation is a big deal, and yet I have treated it as if it was a topic that should not be mentioned. On the other hand, if the negotiation was not about “me,” but about my students or my research, the things that I feel responsible for like a mother who is responsible to take care of her

children, I was so much more comfortable to talk about those. I know in my heart that I am not alone in this. When Sheryl Sandberg accepted her offer from Facebook, she almost did the same thing I did, aka, not to negotiate. What made a difference was that she had a mentor who strongly encouraged her to negotiate, and she asked tentatively. Sure enough, she got a much better salary than she expected, in the same way I did not expect a higher salary from another university!

So, what needs to be done? Laura Wright has proposed several actions that are very feasible to do, and I would like to second those to raise awareness on this issue further.

Men and women are perhaps psychologically different while approaching this matter, and we can all do our part to make these changes happen. I am proposing this because I do not think that the hiring leaders at WCU are intentionally taking advantage of women faculty/staff, and therefore, with all the good intentions to promote gender equality and diversity on campus, we should make our actions more effective to lead to those positive changes: As Laura said, this is not simply a women's issue. Men and women, faculty and administrators, should work together to ameliorate the inequities.

Do I regret that I did not negotiate my salary? The answer is yes and no. I regret that I would never know what would happen if I negotiated, but I do not regret my salary, as I knew it was a comparable offer. However, what will I do if I am in a position to negotiate my salary again? You bet that I will negotiate! And, I encourage all the women to do the same.

Jayne Zanglein, Business Administration & Law, *We Care, But Not That Much*: “Equal Pay for Equal Work.” Need I say more? Not “pay that is within two standard deviations” of a male professor’s pay, as stated by the Gender Salary Equity Report.⁹ As the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals recently noted, “Even a dollar's difference based on sex violates both Title VII and the Equal Pay Act.”¹⁰ It also violates basic notions of fairness and equity.

WCU’s 2014-2015 EEO Plan states that if an annual review of compensation shows that “on average, females and/or minorities are being paid less within the same salary band and/or job title, and the difference in pay cannot be justified, Western will put a plan in place to rectify the difference in pay for the protected class member(s).”¹¹ The University had three options to choose from when calculating whether pay inequity existed: “the Any Difference Test; an 80% Test; and a standard deviations test.”¹² WCU selected the standard deviation test, a test that posits that perfect parity will never exist, even in the absence of discrimination, and therefore, correction is needed only if there are statistically significant differences (defined as equal to or greater than two standard deviations).¹³ As Hal Herzog observed,¹⁴ WCU used this test even though few¹⁵ job groups examined were large enough to warrant the use of regression analysis.

Despite the fact that the study concluded that no faculty were two or more “standard deviations from the mean salary for her/his respective similarly situated employee group,” WCU awarded equity raises last spring. I do not know how many salary adjustments were made, or what factors the university used to decide whether to make an adjustment but I received one.¹⁶ The raise brought me up to the

⁹ Henry Wong & Gregor Koso, Gender Equity Salary Survey, at 15 (2014).

¹⁰ *King v. Acosta Sales & Marketing, Inc.*, 678 F.3d 470, 473 (7th Cir. 2012).

¹¹ WCU, 2014-2015 EEO Plan, at 86.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Hal Herzog, “In Compliance” Is An Unreasonably Low Bar, Faculty Forum, Jan. 2015.

¹⁵ Only 16% of the job groups (5 out of 30) were larger than 30. *Wong & Koso*, at 29.

¹⁶ My guess is that I was within two standard deviations until I was promoted to full professor, which was after the report was issued. Plus, I asked for a raise.

average salary of a male full professor at the *university*, but still 16% less than the average male full professor in my *college*.¹⁷ Still, it is progress.

Inequities persist in other areas. More male faculty members have administrative titles than women (46 male, 13 women).¹⁸ More women are lecturers or instructors than men (24 men, 27 women), but the women earn 2-5% more than men.¹⁹ Different disciplines earn more than others because the market places a greater value on that discipline—hence, the difference in salary between finance and modern foreign languages, which are both valuable professions. Faculty members with the same degrees earn different wages depending on which college they are in. It appears that females are hired at lower ranks than men, which means that it will take longer for them to catch up with a man who has comparable skills and experience, but a higher rank. Likewise, it appears that women also tend not to apply for promotion to full professor as often or as quickly as men. It takes women 7.27 years to become tenured, as opposed to 5.91 for men, even though more men than women are hired as fixed term employees.²⁰ All distinguished professors are male but there are two endowed professors: one male, one female.²¹

These disparities have an enormous impact not only on the financial well-being of faculty members, but also their psychological health. An earlier faculty forum explored the reasons that faculty work at home rather than in the office.²² There are many reasons for this, including efficiency, convenience, burnout, pay inequity, and discouragement over meager cost of living adjustments and raises. Pay inequity can decrease motivation and productivity. Why publish an extra article if it consumes your weekends and summers?

Over recent years, the demands on faculty time have increased. We have larger classes, more students who present special challenges,²³ more committee work, more engagement activities, less secretarial support, more paperwork and reporting requirements, more academic dishonesty,²⁴ less parking spaces²⁵, and more videos to watch on information security. We are expected to spend quality time supervising independent studies, honors contracts, undergraduate research, internships, advising, and field trips, all without any additional pay. Some faculty members don't get load credit for each hour they teach. For example, music faculty get .66 hour of load credit for each hour they spend teaching ensembles, labs, or private lessons. They also have a greater load than most other faculty: they are required to teach somewhere between 11-13 credits a semester. If they teach more than 13 credits (which can easily be 18 hours a week), they are not paid an overload.

Neither starting salaries nor titles are uniform. For example, there are department heads, chairs, program directors, program coordinators, and miscellaneous other titles that may or may not entitle the faculty member to additional compensation. Some faculty members are asked to work on projects over the summer for extra pay, while others are expected to work without compensation for weeks after graduation. Some faculty members are given release time for a task that takes 200 hours, while others

¹⁷ In the College of Business, where I teach, women full professors make more than men full professors. I am not sure why. Perhaps it is due to longevity.

¹⁸ *Wong & Koso*, at 29.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 13, 30.

²⁰ *Id.* at 12.

²¹ *Id.*

²² Catherine Carter, *Where We Live and What We Do*, Faculty Forum, Sept. 2014.

²³ Victoria Faircloth, *The Challenges—and Rewards—of Teaching WCU Students With Disabilities*, Faculty Forum, Oct. 2014.

²⁴ Catherine Carter, *Academic Dishonesty*, Faculty Forum, Oct. 2012.

²⁵ Bill Yang, *Parking Blues*, Faculty Forum, Oct. 2013.

are given releases for work that takes 50 hours. Some faculty are given release time to work on scholarly or creative activities; most are not.

These small injustices add up to death by a thousand cuts. Is it any wonder that faculty express concern over the administration’s statement that a two standard deviation difference in pay is perfectly legal? It may be true, but is it the best way to build a healthy and productive workforce? Is it fair?

Let’s look at a concrete example. Assume a male and female are identical in all respects except for gender and pay. They have the same work history and educational background, the same job and job performance, but the man makes \$68,667 and the woman makes \$59,551.²⁶ They both work at WCU for 20 years and are in the Teachers Retirement System. They are solid teachers and productive scholars who are committed to service. WCU is the only employer for whom they have worked. To keep it simple (and perhaps realistic), they never get raises, promotions, cost of living adjustments, or extra pay of any sort. They both retire at 66 and live for another 20 years. They receive no COLAs in retirement.

At death, the female employee will have made about \$270,000 less than the male employee, solely as a result of pay inequity while working for her only employer, WCU.

| | Male | Female | Difference |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Salary ²⁷ | \$68,667 x <u>20 years</u> \$1,373,340 | \$59,551 x <u>20 years</u> \$1,191,020 | -\$182,320 |
| TSERS Retirement ²⁸ | \$18,746 x <u>20 years</u> \$374,920 | \$16,257 x <u>20 years</u> \$325,149 | -\$49,771 |
| Social Security ²⁹ | \$19,992 x <u>20 years</u> \$399,840 | \$18,108 x <u>20 years</u> \$362,160 | -\$37,680 -\$269,771 |

The Bottom Line?

The female employee has worked the equivalent of 4.5 of her 20 years at WCU for “free”.³⁰ That’s 22% of her time. If we altered the scenario by one factor and made both of our hypothetical faculty members administrators, then the woman would have only “given away” only 4% of her time.

The gender equity issue is about more than gender. It’s about fairness and treating all employees at WCU with dignity and respect. The administration’s statement that “we are in compliance because we are within two standard deviations” reminds me of a banking law professor I had years ago, who often recited his bank’s pat response to a borrower’s tale of financial woes: “We care, but not that much.”

²⁶ These are the average salaries for a male and female faculty members at WCU. *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ <https://orbit.mynretirement.com/Orbit/Info/Pages/PublicCreateEstimate.aspx>

²⁹ <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/quickcalc/>

³⁰ \$269,771.20 / \$59,551. Even if retirement differentials were not considered, the woman would have worked the equivalent of 3.06 years for free.

Editor's Note: The Faculty Forum is published and distributed on the third Monday of each month during the fall and spring semesters (except holidays). Please consider contributing to campus conversations with a lead commentary or a response. Time is running out for this academic year, with only two issues remaining.

Lead Commentary. This is an essay written by a faculty member addressing an issue, hot topic, or project of interest to the general faculty. Send me your ideas for the next two issues.

Responses. These are faculty comments about and reactions to the previous months' FF. They are often substantive, even critical responses to the essay of the previous month. The **Responses** section is a great way to engage in discussion around campus.

Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
(mherzog@email.wcu.edu)



WCU's Next Adventure: A River Park on the Tuck

*Maurice Phipps, Professor, Department of Human Services
and
Anna Fariello, Associate Professor, Hunter Library*

Exciting things are happening at WCU. The current issue of *Western Carolina, the Magazine of Western Carolina University* features the article "[Outside Influence](#)" about the many ways in which WCU has gained long-overdue recognition as the premier adventure college in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic region. Recent outdoor developments described in the article include the seven-mile multiuse trail on the West campus that has been praised by mountain bikers and a new Greenway trail along the Tuckasegee River that opened last year. The article highlights several WCU academic programs that capitalize on the natural resources of the region, programs that are bursting with more students than they can accommodate.

At the same time, the [University News](#) reports that "Base Camp Cullowhee has initiated a speaker series ... designed to complement and enhance WCU's [reputation as an epicenter of outdoor adventure](#)." The inaugural speaker in February was Mark Singleton, Executive Director of *American Whitewater*, a national non-profit organization based in Sylva whose mission is "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely."

This is all good stuff for WCU. With recognition of the value of the outdoors to the campus community, the time is right to look at other opportunities to grow WCU's adventure culture. One opportunity is right at WCU's back door on the Tuckasegee River where a local river park committee is planning a family river park. The River Park Committee, affiliated with the community not-for-profit [Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor \(CuRvE\)](#) has been working for several years to investigate the potential to develop a river park below the Cullowhee dam. CuRvE envisions this as a place for fishing, wading, swimming, hiking, and paddling as well as a site for events, like fishing derbies and canoe races.

This area of the Tuck has already been the site of five annual canoe slalom races sponsored by WCU Parks and Recreation students, helped by the women's soccer team, Honors College and Base Camp Cullowhee. These fund-raising efforts enabled CuRvE to bring in an engineer to produce a plan for

the park. The park has the potential to stimulate economic growth – especially when linked to the Jackson County Greenway. CuRvE’s River Park Committee meets every month to push this project along.

However, community volunteers are not the only ones who think such an effort would be good for the growth of the town and university. CuRvE commissioned Syneva Economics of Waynesville to complete an economic impact study of the proposed park, with greenway and blue-way amenities along a 3.5 mile stretch of the river—from the Cullowhee dam down to the new access point at Locust Creek. The study found that these developments in the near term would add \$1.2 million of new annual spending in Jackson County. Other benefits include an increase in property values, increase in retention and attraction for residents, improved health, fitness and wellness and improved community cohesion.

In addition, the University’s Public Policy Institute conducted a survey of Western Carolina University students, faculty, and staff about interests in recreational activity. The survey focused on two major recreational activity groupings, one pertaining to water-based activities, and one to land-based activities. Each activity group is associated with the planned offerings of the Cullowhee River Corridor development; water-based activities to the river park, and land-based to greenways. The results indicated a high demand for activities offered by a river park and demonstrate that participants are willing to alter their behavior with the park’s improvements. In other words, improving recreational amenities would give students more outdoor areas in which to socialize, contributing to Western’s reputation as an outdoor university with a playful “backyard.” And giving students a place to stay and play would likely increase WCU’s student retention rates.

At this point, much of the work has taken the form of planning and conceptual design, but the groundwork has been laid. It would be good for the University to have an appealing “home” in Cullowhee, but think what it would be like for everyone—faculty, staff, students, locals, and “out-of-towners”—to have an inviting river park. It might just be a catalyst for improving downtown Cullowhee. Now, that would be good news for WCU.

Maurice Phipps (phipps@wcu.edu) teaches in the Recreation Management Program. He is a board member of CuRvE and the chair of the River Park Planning Committee. He lives in Webster and enjoys whitewater kayaking and mountain biking.

For the past 10 years, Anna Fariello (Fariello@wcu.edu) has worked at Hunter Library building digital collections about the region. A board member of CuRvE, she enjoys the outdoors and anything near, on, or in the water.

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**Mary Jean Ronan Herzog,
Faculty Fellow for Publications**

Send your comments to mherzog@wcu.edu

Disclaimer

The opinions printed here belong solely to the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Coulter Faculty Commons.



This issue of the Faculty Forum has four faculty commentaries about shared governance and several responses to last month's issue. Enjoy the conversation.

Shared Governance and a Moral Vision of the University

**David Henderson, Assistant Professor
Philosophy & Religion**

Shared governance requires substantial work. If it is seen as so much drudgery, then resentment and minimal participation by faculty will render it hollow. Meaningful participation requires a vision of what the university is and can be. We have to care about the university as such, not just our field and our students. Like most of you perhaps, I came into academic life for the love of my field and of teaching and learning. It was only through the particular social consciousness of my mentor in graduate school that I began to be enchanted with the university as an institution writ large.

My vision for the university—and I speak not just of our beloved Western, but of the university as one of the defining institutions of western civilization, like the nation state, the church or the market—takes a long view of its history and is centered around ideals of intellectual freedom in the pursuit of truth, cosmopolitanism, egalitarianism and eventually democracy. The University of Paris, one of the oldest universities, is said to have started as a unionizing of teachers and students in order to stop police brutality toward foreign students. Universities have been defined since by a series of fights over these principles, from whether the Church could keep the faculty from teaching Aristotle in the 13th c. to the free-speech riots at Berkeley in the 1960s.

The university has not always been the best version of itself, but for the past thousand years it has been overall a source of intelligence, tolerance and equality. It has given space to many who would speak truth to power. It has preserved and cultivated knowledge, wisdom and creativity. By my reckoning it's the best institution to come out of the western civilization.

Mostly this has been possible because the universities have maintained a measure of independence from other authorities, whose interests may include squashing dissent and criticism. This independence was hard won from the beginning. The *Parens scientiarum*, a 13th c. papal bull granting the University of Paris independence from local governments, took a strike, a shutdown and having an alumnus in the papacy. But the substance of this independence today is faculty governance. Faculty are the heart of the university, and we must be the stewards of its ideals. If faculty shirk the work of governance, then we may become less the mother of the sciences than the handmaiden of the NFL.

Shared governance for me is about standing in solidarity with faculty here, across the state, nation and globe, and across the ages in a fight to preserve and grow the values and ideals that define what it means to be a university.

David Henderson joined Western in 2008. He specializes in environmental philosophy, especially American wilderness thought. He also enjoys hiking, practicing martial arts and training for Ninja Warrior. David is the Secretary of the WCU Faculty Senate.



The Faculty Role in Shared Governance and the Future of the UNC System

**Vicki Szabo, Associate Professor
History**

When John Fennebresque, Chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, announced the forced resignation of President Tom Ross in January, faculty and administrators around the state were shocked to see a highly-regarded and effective president so brusquely cast aside. Faculty response to this travesty was quick and visceral online, partially because many of us trusted and admired President Ross' leadership, but also because this was a unilateral action by the Board, without consideration of input from anyone within our seventeen system institutions. Marching orders from Raleigh - not academic concerns - were the primary factors at play, or so it would seem. Did the Board have the right, the power, to fire President Ross. Yes. Should they have done so in the manner they did? No.

While this was the most shocking of the Board's actions this year, it was one of many that indicate an activist posture on their part. In a recent [editorial](#), Fennebresque rejected criticisms that many of the Board's decisions, including the removal of President Ross and the closing of the Center on Poverty, had "chilled academic freedom." What is chilling is what might come next. We may anticipate that [this Board of Governors](#) will continue to act unilaterally and without explanation in the future, as we see at institutions across the country ([Wisconsin](#) is the poster child, but also [Cornell](#), [George Washington](#), and others). [Shared governance](#), the principle that academic faculty have the right and obligation to participate in the maintenance and operation of our university system, would seem to dictate outreach from the Board to faculty on many issues, seeking our insight on directions and concerns. Our Board of Governors takes a minimalist approach to this principle, which erodes faculty trust and highlights separation between two groups that should be working toward shared goals, namely the education and improvement of our state. Faculty have an obligation to play a role in the governance of our institution and system; to borrow a friend's recent sentiment, we can no longer afford to be silent.

As faculty, we are invited to serve on committees, councils, advisory boards, and groups that help shape our institution. Every service opportunity that you find yourself in (even the occasionally mind-numbingly boring one) is an opportunity to learn a discrete part of our university and our role within the UNC system. While often feeling like a burden, service, or shared governance, has long-term rewards. Shared governance allows us to engage with administrators – local and statewide – in productive and professionally meaningful ways, not only to accomplish tasks, but to promote a sense of social cohesion and community. We are fortunate at WCU to have real opportunity to contribute and collaborate, working alongside an open and transparent Chancellor and [Trustees](#). At the state level, though, shared governance means minimal compliance, only necessary for show.

Service is often the unwanted burden that we do out of obligation, the impediment to our true passions as faculty of teaching and scholarship. But we won't get to do either of those if this activist Board of Governors decides to ignore the value of shared governance and the collective



wisdom that we hold as a faculty. Shared governance is a unique right, one that we perhaps take for granted. By engaging more actively in service and governance across our university and our system, maybe we can forestall or prevent further assaults upon higher education in our state. Small acts will show our higher administrators that we take our roles in university governance seriously. We need to inform ourselves on current initiatives taken by our state legislature that affect [our universities](#) (and [public schools](#)). On a local level, we can stay engaged by reading Senate [resolutions](#), attending forums, providing feedback, completing surveys – all small acts, but all important in keeping ourselves at the center of university and system initiatives. Shared governance – active service – helps us to protect what we love most about our roles as educators, scholars and servants of this institution and region.

As the crow flies, Raleigh is about 750 miles from Madison, Wisconsin. Ideologically, Raleigh and Madison – or Pat McCrory and Scott Walker - are much closer. The tyranny that Gov. Walker's administration has imposed upon the Wisconsin university system should terrify us. Assaults on [tenure](#), assaults on [shared governance](#), assertions of [faculty laxity](#) as seen in Wisconsin could be our future (some would argue [our present](#)). Shared governance is essential to a strong university, and a strong university system is essential to a [healthy state](#). Our Board of Governors (and working behind them our state legislators and our Governor) imperils our students and our state through their unwillingness to engage meaningfully with faculty and to seek out the expertise we can provide.

A faculty member at WCU since 2001, Vicki Szabo (szabo@email.wcu.edu) teaches ancient, medieval, and environment history. When not serving on committees, she hikes, builds trebuchets, and scavenges marine mammals.

Shared Governance – Rights and Responsibilities

David McCord, Professor
Psychology

Shared governance refers to the active collaboration among faculty, administrators, and the board of overseers in making decisions about university goals, policies, and operations. Along with tenure and academic freedom, shared governance is one of the foundational elements of the American university system and is credited with being one of the reasons American universities have achieved world prominence in a relatively short period of time.

Here at Western we have a remarkable opportunity to restructure the faculty role in shared governance. Our Chancellor is the most transparent and accessible leader most of us can remember, our current Board of Trustees is similarly open and collaborative, and now is a great time to think about what types of involvement we should have in various institutional processes.

To stimulate thought and debate, let me suggest that based on the core mission of the university, *the creation and dissemination of knowledge*, there is not a single activity that should exclude faculty voice. Every committee, task force, council, initiative, project, program and center should include faculty input. Faculty should be in on every decision, including types of



landscaping, parking facilities, new academic programs, new buildings, all budgets, athletic issues, student affairs, admissions and registration, as well as traditional areas of academic programs and curriculum.

But increasing our voice necessarily entails increasing our own levels of responsibility and accountability. Future debates are likely to include big issues like teaching load, workload more broadly defined, and tenure. If we insist upon transparency in our governance partners, we need to become more transparent ourselves. This means being comfortable with openly sharing and defending our records, dossiers, grade distributions, teaching evaluations, scholarly productivity records, and so forth. Importantly, if we expect faculty voice in every university activity, we all need to be ready to step up and serve.

Finally, while the shared governance issue entails increased faculty voice at all levels, why not start at the top? I suggest we actively explore the idea of having a faculty member on the Board of Trustees which automatically includes the elected President of the Student Government Association as a full member. It seems it would be appropriate to also include an elected member of the faculty. There are arguments on both sides of this issue, and at present the UNC Code disallows it. But the Code can be changed, and we should certainly give this some serious consideration. And we can work down from there. (Heads up, Executive Council!)

David McCord joined the WCU faculty in 1989. He is a professor of psychology and specializes in personality theory and assessment. He is chair-elect of the WCU Faculty Senate.

Faculty Governance: Why I Care

Leroy Kauffman, Associate Professor
Accounting

I care about faculty governance because I love my university and being involved in governance is one way that I can actively be a part of shaping the future. Faculty governance is one way that we, as faculty, can shape the future of our university. It provides an opportunity to proactively shape the future. Western Carolina University, at the current time, enjoys a great working relationship with administration. Our current administration welcomes and invites faculty involvement in setting policy and shaping our future. It has not always been that way and I suspect will go through times in the future when faculty voice may not be as welcome.

Now is the time to be involved. We dare not wait until times of crisis to assert the faculty voice into shaping our future. I am not so naïve to suggest that our voice as faculty will be accepted without testing, but if we don't speak and be involved, we will forfeit the opportunity to have voice.

At the UNC system level, Faculty Assembly is one of the avenues for faculty voice to be heard. The Faculty Assembly is primarily a body to provide counsel to the university president. We counsel UNC-GA on various topics, some of which they solicit and some of which we



initiate. We do not set policy but we certainly speak to policy setting. The faculty voice to the UNC Board of Governors is primarily through the individual university campuses. Faculty Assembly provides a forum for coordinating that campus voice and providing perspective on happenings. Recent events would confirm this role. I believe that all campuses provided feedback directly to the Board of Governors regarding the way they handled President Tom Ross' employment, as well as the Board actions regarding the closing of some centers and institutes, although some campuses were more directly impacted than others.

I would invite any and all of you to be engaged in faculty governance. Nominate yourself or a colleague for open positions. Proactively engage the debate around policy issues and help shape our future.

N. Leroy Kauffman is an associate professor in accounting. He is currently the Faculty Senate Chair and has served on numerous committees, councils and task forces. He has served in a variety of administrative roles at Western in the last 21 years as well. He loves to garden and spend time with his family.

Responses to the March Faculty Forum about a Proposed River Park in Cullowhee

The March issue by Maurice Phipps and Anna Fariello received several responses from faculty and staff:

Tim Carstens, Hunter Library: I agree that the proposed river park would be a great thing for WCU's students and that it is in the university's interest to promote this endeavor. We need to support everything that gives students more reason to "stay and play." The proposed river park and the new mountain bike trails are just the kinds of things that encourage students to come here in the first place and to stay in Cullowhee on the weekends rather than heading back home. If our "outdoorsy" students stay here to play then other students will stay too because they won't be looking at an empty residence hall on Saturday night. The more Cullowhee becomes a fun place to be, the more our students will want to stay here. And that will help both retention and recruitment.

Josh Whitmore, Outdoor Programs: Speaking from my position as the Associate Director of Outdoor Programs, I would be thrilled to have a river park in Cullowhee. Our program would benefit greatly from having such a resource at our back door. I'd love to be able to rent tubes to students for an afternoon float or to be able to rent a kayak to someone learning how to paddle that they could potentially carry to the river from our office and back. As more and more students are attracted to WCU for the outdoor lifestyle perks, enhancing this resource can only add to richness of their experience here.

Speaking as a community member who grew up in Brevard and has lived in Sylva/Cullowhee for the past 10 years, I'm excited to see this kind of development of recreation



resources in our county. As our rural mountain community transitions more firmly to a tourist driven economy, any enhancement of our recreation resources will bring the kind of growth and prosperity that I want to see. As an outdoor, active person myself, I will certainly use the river park, but will also enjoy the infrastructure of businesses that could build around it in old Cullowhee.

Brian Castle, English: I feel fortunate to have landed at a university with the kind and number of recreational, adventure, and outdoor activities offered here at WCU; I wholeheartedly agree with Maurice's and Anna's call for future development, support, and resources in those areas, and for WCU to focus on those aspects in its branding. Unfortunately, I believe WCU's current marketing focus on the "Top Adventure College" award is inappropriate.

When I mentioned the "Top Adventure College" award to a colleague at another institution, she congratulated me and then asked "based on what?" That question made me consider this "award" in the context of what we do here at WCU. Most of my classes include assignments meant to develop skills related to argumentation, logic, and analyses. I tell my students that, no matter what their chosen profession, they will be required to propose answers and solutions based upon criteria appropriate to the audience and context, to bring evidence to bear in support of that proposal, and often to apply appropriate research (that they have evaluated and deemed appropriate to the disciplinary issue at hand). So we discuss things like the fact that the popularity of an online source does not necessarily reflect its accuracy or validity. And that the "best" or "top" *anything* can only be determined by applying criteria appropriate to the context; a Prius might be the "top" pick for someone who wants good gas mileage, but not for someone who needs to haul tons of manure on a weekly basis.

Which is why the University's focus on the "Top Adventure College" award upsets me so much (I see it promoted almost ubiquitously on billboards, web sites, emails, press releases, social media, etc.), not because I don't think we are a great outdoor/adventure school, with authentic, engaged, learning experiences associated with those activities (because I do), but because that particular "award" stands in opposition to what we are trying to teach our students with respect to academic and intellectual work. The "Top Adventure College" award is, in reality, a popularity contest; whoever receives the most votes wins. It isn't even democratic since people can vote multiple times (each virtual "person" once a day). Nor is it "awarded" since no one is really doing the awarding but ourselves. When I discussed the award with one of my classes, one student said "but it must be valid because it was bracket, like the NCAA!" And therein, as they say, lies the rub.

Basically we won an online poll because we (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends we cajoled) voted for ourselves more than other institutions voted for themselves. I don't blame WCU for using that in its marketing, but this accolade seems an inappropriate one on which to place too much emphasis. By all means, highlight the excellent work our programs and people (like Maurice, Anna, and others) are doing; that's what we should be proud of and what we should foreground in our branding. But let's refrain from participating too heavily in the very cult of popularity we work so hard to interrogate in our classes.



Phil Cauley, Admissions: The Office of Admission and the University have been more proactive in recent years in promoting the uniqueness, opportunities and strength of our location, including outdoor recreation activities. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Incorporating in our recruitment literature and Web presence more photos of the mountains and examples of outdoor activities such as Base Camp Cullowhee, the Tuck River Clean-up, the new hiking and mountain biking trail, etc.;
- Incorporating into our recruitment communication the brochures that the Parks and Recreation Management students created that highlight various aspects of outdoor recreation;
- Accentuating the strengths of our location in terms of activities in presentations (i.e., Open House welcome; WCU on Tour keynote presentation; campus tour scripts and presentations; etc.);
- Collaborating with vendors who assist with the identification of potential prospective student populations to publicize the outdoor recreation aspects of the campus and the region;
- Incorporating outdoor experiences into recruitment and transition programming (i.e., tours of the Campus Recreation Center during open houses, pre-orientation session whitewater rafting options, First Ascent climbing option for new students just prior to the beginning of new students' first semester, FYE Bucket List items that promote the outdoors); and
- Showcasing outdoor opportunities during and through transition events such as Valley Ballyhoo, the Week of Welcome, and Winter Welcome.

I do believe the university has been more proactive as a whole as to outdoor programming options and promotion. The addition of the Campus Recreation Center and the hiking/biking trail are examples. The increased emphasis on wellness has enhanced outdoor activities (such as the CRC group hikes that are offered each semester), and additional campus events (the Turkey Trot, Mountain Heritage Day race, and Valley of the Lilies Half Marathon that is co-sponsored annually now in the spring by CRC and Physical Therapy).

Increased community development of outdoor recreation has aided campus outdoor interest. The positive influence of a mountain biking shop in Sylva and the attraction to the sport among faculty and students have led to increased mountain biking interest and opportunities (CRC hosting a large mountain bike race last spring). The addition of the first portion of a new Greenway near campus has garnered attention. I have already been on the greenway dozens of times and have seen numerous WCU faculty, staff and students using this new resource. I can only imagine interest growing even more when the bridge is added to connect the greenway to the new river access. The addition of the new river access points along the Tuck has increased river access and usage by kayakers, fishermen, tubers, etc. Our family has our own kayaks, and we've already used several of the new river access points and witnessed firsthand the popularity of those additions. The promotion of the Fly Fishing trail and the hosting of a national fly fishing tournament brought greater attention to the Tuck.



Having been here now for over three decades, I believe the emphasis of the importance of health and wellness, the recent enhanced access and opportunities for diverse outdoor activities, the growing notoriety of the travel and tourism industry in this region, and the emergence and growth of additional outdoor programmatic offerings at WCU have attracted more students with an affinity for outdoor activities, have introduced more outdoor novices to these activities, and have fostered greater participation among students and faculty than what I observed as a student and staff member in the 80s and 90s.

My wife is from Brevard and my folks lived in Brevard during my college years. We have often heard and made comparisons to the Sylva and Brevard areas, but through the years, my wife and I had commented numerous times that while both are mountain valley communities, we didn't have to travel as far in Brevard to have access to outdoor activities—be it hiking, biking, etc. Opportunities seemed to abound just outside of your front door. While the Sylva/Cullowhee area is in the heart of the mountains, for years it still seemed as though you had to travel further to enjoy the outdoor possibilities. While the mountains haven't moved any closer to Cullowhee, in recent years it sure feels as if access to the mountains has moved much closer to campus. From the on-campus trail system to the greenway to the new river access points to the removal of the dam and the rafting options in Dillsboro to added outdoor health and wellness facilities and programming, WCU and Cullowhee seem even more like an outdoor enthusiast's destination.

Editor's Note: This is the last Faculty Forum of the 2014-15 academic year. Send your ideas for topics to cover next year, and plan to write a lead commentary or a response. Your comments and suggestions are welcome. Many thanks to all the contributors this year.

Lead Commentary. This is an essay written by a faculty member addressing an issue, hot topic, or project of interest to the general faculty. Let me know if you have a topic you'd like to write about in the fall.

Responses. These are faculty comments about and reactions to the previous months' FF. They are often substantive, even critical responses. If you thought about writing a response but didn't get to it, you have one more chance. Take a look at the 2014-15 issues, send a response, and we will publish them in May before the end of the semester. Here are the topics we have covered:

August. [Welcome to Greater Cullowhee!](#) [36 Hours in Greater Cullowhee](#) with articles on hiking, biking, children's activities, whitewater recreation, fishing, and non-commuting. Contributors include *Maurice Phipps*, *Chris Cooper*, *Libby McRae*, *Hal Herzog*, *David Claxton* and *Brian Gastle*.

September. [Where We Live and What We Do](#) by *Catherine Carter*

October. [The Challenges - and Rewards - of Teaching WCU Students with Disabilities](#) by *Vicki Faircloth* and [FYI: Laws, Rights and Opportunities](#) by *Lisa Bloom*



Faculty Forum

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November. [Who has an ACE at this Place?](#) By *Benjamin Tanner*

January. [Gender \(In\)Equity](#) by *Laura Wright* and [“In Compliance” Is an Unreasonably Low Bar](#) by *Hal Herzog*

February. [The Academic Game of Thrones: Scholarship as Bloodsport](#) by *Roya Scales*

March. [WCU’s Next Adventure: A River Park on the Tuck](#) *Maurice Phipps and Anna Fariello*

April. [Essays on Shared Governance](#) by *David Henderson, Vicki Szabo, David McCord and Leroy Kauffman.*

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