

# the Reporter



News for the Faculty and Staff of Western Carolina University

## Welcome to the 2002-2003 Academic Year

Remarks from the August 15 General Faculty Meeting\*

**Dr. John W. Bardo, Chancellor**

Welcome back. This was a fast summer, and it is hard to believe that the school year has actually started again—especially since my school year hasn't ended yet. The legislature is still in session and I have the feeling that because there is an election September 10, they probably will finish before September 10, because I doubt they want to be in session while people are actually at the polls. The year I turned fifty, they ended on my birthday, which is October 28, so we do have the good fortune to know that they will probably be done before my fifty-fourth birthday.

Now, because they are still in session there are a number of things that are not settled yet. But before I get into that, I do want to welcome all of you back—especially our new faculty. You've made a commitment to come to Western at a really great time in our history. This institution is on the rise—there are a lot of fine people sitting next to you who have done a lot of really good work to move us forward.

Now, I want to talk a little bit this morning about direction—about what I've been hearing and about some core issues in the institution. But before I do, I need to update you a little bit on enrollment and a little bit on what has been going on in the Legislature.

Generally, our freshman class is going to be up. We expect a freshman class of between 1220 and 1240. As you know, the enrollment of the university doesn't actually shake out for another couple of weeks. We'll get those numbers, and they will get more and more accurate as we go

through the first four or five class days.

What we do know is that this class is going to be at least as good as last year's and could be slightly better. The average SAT right now is going to be 1012, and then that can change a little bit. The average high school GPA is up a bit as well—it's at 3.25 as of right now. Again, remember this all shakes out. Our Honors College is going to have about 125 new freshmen—over ten percent of our class. The average SAT in the Honors College should be about 1235 to 1240. That's a good group of people—very confident and a goodly number of them.

We are growing as a university and that's necessary. Almost all of our growth is coming from our off-campus programs in Asheville and our extension distance education program. In fact, our undergraduate program enrollment is going to be roughly flat. Lack of growth in our undergraduate program has significant implications for us as a university, and we really need to be very cognizant that not growing at the undergraduate level needs to cause trepidation. The state wants us to grow in our undergraduate program, and there are significant expectations that we will. At the same time, our off-campus programs are important and it shows that we are truly trying to pay attention to the needs of the working people of Western North Carolina.




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\*Please note: This issue includes written texts excerpted from addresses given at the August 15 General Faculty Meeting; they will vary slightly from the versions as delivered. The texts of speeches by Drs. Bardo and Smith, as well as comments by UNC Faculty Assembly Delegate Dr. Mary Adams, appear in full on Western's Web site.

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That's really important and I will return to that issue later.

Now, going to the budget, both houses have treated us reasonably well given the state of the state's budget. I think that you know that this state is facing roughly a two billion dollar deficit this year and, unfortunately, projections are that this is not going to go away for the next few years. Things could, in fact, stay about as they are or maybe get a little worse or maybe get a little better, but we're not going to see a major economic change in North Carolina for as many as three or four years. That has implications for us as we go forward.

Let me talk to you a little bit about the good news and the bad news. I always hate when somebody does the good news/bad news stories. The bad news is that the House budget has funded all salaries at ninety-eight percent of authorized expenditures. What that means is that the state expects turnover to cover the difference between what we're supposed to pay you and what they're giving us. So they are anticipating a significant amount of turnover.

That creates a special problem for us because those funds that result from turnover are what we use at the end of the year to buy academic equipment. So by them taking those funds up front, that means we won't have money for academic equipment. Now we are working closely with President Broad and the Board of Governors to try and get that fixed. The Senate did not include that provision, so we believe that's at least an opportunity to talk about this and to hopefully have it go back to the normal funding process. But you do need to be aware that is the bad news.

Despite the bad news, there is also a lot of good news on this budget. Western, as you may recall, is a focused growth institution. What that means is that we are expected to take all actions necessary for us to grow, and grow substantially, over the next seven to eight years. The current budget proposals in both the House and the Senate call for cuts of between 2.4 and 3 percent in university funding. But both houses also recognize that focused growth institutions can't take budget cuts and grow. That doesn't make sense.

What they've done in both houses is to take money out of our top line and return it to us under the focused growth line so that the seven focused growth institutions should experience smaller budget cuts than the system as a whole, assuming that this stays in through conference. That's very important for us. Because what it means is that we should be able to handle any cuts in personnel out of existing vacant positions, and I understand what that means when you're short staffed in faculty. I do understand that. But it is better for us to deal with some shortages than it is for us to take away people's livelihoods.

As of right now, as of this morning, neither house has decided to attach local tuition. Both legislative staff and

some members of the legislature made runs at local tuition. What does that mean? It means that if they had been successful, we would have collected the local tuition, but it would have been used not on the campus. It would have been used to fill the budget gap at the state level. Neither house has accepted that position; therefore, we still have control of our local tuition. If that situation remains stable through conference, and I don't have any reason to believe it will not, then we can spend our local tuition according to the plan we submitted to the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors. It is my intent that we do so. Over the last year, we've been working to eliminate the positions that are euphemistically called on campus the "seventy percenters." These are part-time continuing faculty members who teach many of our freshmen classes. We want to eliminate those positions and Rick Collings is creating a position called "visiting lecturer," which will have a higher salary and will receive fringe benefits. Despite what those benefits are—they will be fringe benefits. Now that is what we intended to do—that's what we set out to do in March.

There are no state funds for raises. I can't affect SPA employees. I don't have that authority—that is done by the Legislature for all SPA employees across the state. Because of the local tuition, I do have a source of revenue that we can use to affect current full-time faculty salaries locally. So what we are intending to do, assuming that the Legislature comes forward as expected, is to reallocate some of our existing faculty salaries to create raises for continuing faculty.

The way we are going to do this is to create what would normally be called a base adjustment-funding model. Since all faculty areas and all programs are paid, on average, less than our target pay based on our peer group as defined by the UNC system, we will make a base salary adjustment across all eligible positions. I can't give you a number yet because I don't know what the Legislature is going to do, but as soon as I know I will give you that number. I don't intend for this to be an inconsequential token, so please bear with me for a week or two while we get the Legislature out of town. However, assuming that they don't do anything that they haven't already done, there will be raises. You must be performing on at least an adequate level—you have to be at least satisfactory performers—to get a raise. There are some limitations on when you were hired and what kind of contract you have. For the vast majority of faculty, there will be a base salary adjustment that will come forward this semester. Understand it's going to be some months before you see this money. The Legislature is still in town, they haven't gone anywhere, and until they actually leave, we have no authority to expand local tuition at all. That authority to expand is in that bill. If the budget cuts become much larger than anticipated, then that's obviously

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another issue that we're going to have to deal with.

Because of issues at another university, the Board of Governors will no longer allow salary adjustments to be done locally. All salary adjustments have to be approved by the Board of Governors. So we are going to have to have a plan for adjusting salaries and we are going to have to forward that through the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors. Once they approve it, then we can allocate the funds for raises. I do not anticipate that you will see a raise in your paycheck until, at the earliest, the end of November, though it could be the end of December. However, I am recommending to the Board of Governors that we make it retroactive to the beginning of the year. So the first paycheck could be a bit larger than the others will be.

I also mentioned in the spring that we will suspend the speaker series to allow us to move the money we would have used for the speakers to a faculty travel fund, given the circumstances of the state and given the low salaries, and we will do that. I'll allocate to Rick Collings \$25,000 to be used by faculty for travel and paper presentations. He will work with the deans and departments on how it will be allocated. At the same time, I hate to lose the momentum of the speaker series. Every great university has a speaker series. Therefore, we will try to figure out how to have at least one speaker this year. We need to keep that momentum. We need to do the things that great universities do.

Now, why are we able to do this? We are able to make these kinds of movements because Western has begun to grow. We grew last year significantly, and this year all indications are we are going to grow significantly again. Growth brings flexibility. Growth brings the ability to affect the conditions of employment. No growth brings stagnation, it hurts your academic programs and, just as importantly, it hurts your salaries and your support funds.

We can talk about the value of growth, we can talk about the value of being small, but in North Carolina no growth brings stagnation and decline. Enrollment growth brings resources and the ability to make adjustments. Let me give you an example: A number of you feel that your salaries are inequitable, and they may be. I'm not commenting on the validity of your case, but the question becomes one of where did we get the adjustment dollars. Assuming that the salary is inequitable, where do we get those dollars so that we can make those equity adjustments? The way you make those adjustments is you get new faculty positions that are funded at an average salary. On average, you hire beginning faculty members so they are not paid at the average. They're paid a lower rate, and the difference between what those faculty members are paid and what the average funding is from the state is where you make your salary adjustments. It's where you make counter offers to faculty who receive offers—those you don't want to lose.

So the absence of growth means the absence of equity adjustments and it means the absence of ability to keep

the stars. You and I both know that last year we lost some stars to institutions that were paying a great deal more money than we were able to pay. In fact, we lost a star dean to double the salary we were paying here.

So, enrollment growth has to be the key to our future. Quite honestly, it is the reason that you're dealing with a lot of the issues today that you have been dealing with for the last twenty or twenty-five years. We are mandated to grow. A mandate doesn't cause growth—it simply says you must. So for us now, we are in a situation where it is to our advantage individually, to our benefit as programs and our method as an institution, to grow. We are mandated to do so and we need to take all actions necessary for us to achieve the growth. What is the growth expectation—9,500 students by 2010. This year we will be between 7,000 and 7,100. We've got a long way to go.

Now, to the root of the presentation. As I mentioned in the spring, I plan on meeting this fall with small groups of faculty members over the course of the semester to hear from you about what you see as the most critical issues that we face and to try to get a sense of where you think we ought to go in setting a direction for the next cycle of development for this institution.

We need to remember that last cycle lasted about seven years. It involved an emphasis in technology and small classes and trying to raise quality, trying to continue to give good value for money and trying to begin working with the people of the mountain region. It is time to reexamine those things and see whether they are still what we want to do or whether there are other themes and ideas that we want to be picking up that may be more germane or more appropriate to us. This summer, a number of you have stopped me on campus or sent e-mails or just generally chatted about what you think we ought to be doing. I want to share some of those ideas with you, not because I believe that they are the answer, but just to give you a sense of what your colleagues are talking about. It may stir some interest on your part or you may, in fact, suggest some other things. Please feel free to bring forward these ideas and please feel free to talk about them with your colleagues.

Several people have talked with me about the possibility of some version of an emphasis in mountain cultures. This is kind of an interesting idea and it would tie our curricula closely to mountain history, the various cultures of mountain people, music, arts and crafts. We know that there is a tremendous craft tradition in the mountains and we know there is a tremendous music tradition in the mountains, as well as other forms of culture. If this theme were adopted, it would obviously have very significant implications for most of our humanities, some of our social sciences, and arts departments.

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The second theme that I've heard a great deal of this summer is mountain environment. This theme seems to focus more on environmental science and the integration of environmental issues and themes across the curricula. It seems to also have underlying it a notion of sustainable development. This theme is particularly interesting because we did get approval this summer for our undergraduate program in environmental science, and our department of chemistry is taking such strong steps in bioinformatics. I know there is also interest in the English department in including an environmental theme in some areas of literature, so this has some resonance and could work.

A third theme that I'm hearing has to do with teacher education. It's where this institution started and, of course, it's among our deepest traditions. But it's also absolutely critical to the state. The universities, public and private, in North Carolina are producing less than half of the number of teachers that are required in the classroom today. That number is expected to go up.

A fourth theme is helping mountain people increase their income through sustainable economic diversification. Our work in technology and some of the key developments of such programs as engineering tech will support this theme, as will some other programs such as tourism management, hospitality management, recreation, and construction. Those are valuable programs and they do have implications. That's a theme that may be of value and it's also a theme that really resonates with what we're hearing when we get around the community. The people of the west want their children to have the opportunity to live in the communities in which they are growing up—to rear their families there and to have a quality of life and an income that can sustain those families. That's something we heard mentioned this spring. Tom McClure and I heard from every community in which we visited when we were doing the work on the bond issue.

There is a fifth theme that I picked up through the course of the summer and it is health and gerontology. Given the aging of the population in the west and given the very strong programs that we have in health-related professions that we have on this campus, this theme makes sense. It's something that we might be able to build around. Now again, all of these are hypotheses. You may have others. There may be things that strike you there that work and others that don't, and that's okay. These are themes that were brought to me through the course of the summer.

As you're thinking about next steps for this institution, I ask you to consider just a couple of things that may help inform what you recommend. First, if we adopt a theme, it's really important that you understand that it becomes part of the institutional strategic positioning. As a result of that, Rick Collings

is required to actually allocate resources according to that theme. Simply because someone retires doesn't mean that a department will necessarily get to replace that person with exactly the same kind of person that retired. If that person wasn't involved in the theme that is adopted, then it is more likely that you will get a position to address the theme if it affects your department.

Second, we need to be careful that the theme not be too narrow or too broad. If it's too narrow, we won't be able to find faculty to fill the position and there will be no students taking the courses—no one will care. We might feel good, but no one will be in the classes. If it's too broad, it's meaningless. I'm a sociologist and, of course, I would love to have a theme like culture. That's easy—I can do anything I want because anything that we do in a university is culture. It can justify anything. Culture is learned behavior that is passed on to another generation—what else do we do?

So, we need to be careful that the theme is not so broad that it doesn't tell anybody anything. It will differentiate us, but not in a way we really like. Rick and I talked about this notion of themes through the course of the summer. I think that we are in pretty good agreement that we really do need to get themes around which people can resonate and which we can work. I look forward to hearing your suggestions as we go through these meetings this fall.

Now, I want to conclude this talk by turning to a theme that I think there is still strong consensus around. It's the theme of academic excellence. Last year as we tried to delve in to some to the details of what it means to have excellence, I think we kind of lost track of why we were talking about these issues. But I don't hear anyone saying that we shouldn't engage in and enhance academic excellence. A number of you, were at my winter address in 1996, on a cold, nasty afternoon with snow outside. All of us went over to the business building and we talked about raising expectations and raising standards. That seemed to resonate with the vast majority of faculty. There was a feeling that we needed to make that happen. We've done a lot to raise those standards. This university is not the institution that it was in 1996. We are no longer admitting students with projected GPAs that would cause them to fail out.

We are no longer among the lowest institutions in the system in the average credentials of our entering students. Our SATs have gone up about fifty points. Our high school GPAs have gone up from about a 2.8 to a 3.5—that's a giant change. It's not where we want it to be, but it is a giant change. Think about the honor students. When Dave Dorondo and I first talked about honors, I think we had about seventy-seven honor students. This fall we'll have well over 600.

So there have been major changes, but when you get around the community, the people out there don't

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yet recognize what's happening at Western. I still hear this. Clifton Metcalf is new to the university, but not new to the region, and as he got around to his old compatriots he heard the same things. I suspect you hear the same things when you get around the communities. The perception is that we have not made the difference yet.

We're moving in the right direction but the difference hasn't been made yet. Now what happened? Somewhere along the line, Western lost track of what it was doing. It let its standards drop, it stopped attending to regional meaning, and as a result, we were admitting students we shouldn't have admitted. Our reputation was not good and our enrollment stagnant and, in fact, we kept our enrollment by lowering standards every year.

Almost of us drive automobiles. Think about the number of automobile companies that have stayed in business by lowering the quality of their cars. The Yugo comes to mind immediately. It is so critical for this university that we continue raising academic standards. When you look at the rating books—we can all argue that the ratings don't mean a thing—but you know people look at those rating books and they make judgments on whether they will consider you as a university by how you are rated. Those ratings are rarely around the number of bars you have, though there are some men's magazines that do that. They're almost always around your academic credibility. So raising academic expectations, raising our level of excellence regardless of what else we do, has to remain the hallmark of the work in which we engage over the next five to ten years. It has to.

I've had people saying you've been working so hard, but it just isn't working. It is working—but it takes a long time to change it and it takes consistent action. Our alumni I meet with regularly, and I can tell you that I've not heard one of them who isn't proud of what we're doing to raise standards. The standing joke around the alumni is, "Gosh—I couldn't get into Western anymore. Man, that's really good!" So we've got to keep raising excellence and we've got to keep raising standards.

What does it mean for us to raise excellence and standards and what does it mean to do that while we're in a state that we must grow? At least some of our sister schools have decided to just open the flood gates—let people in. We're growing and that's what the state wants us to do. We have never taken that position at Western—never. Our position is the best thing that we can do for the long-range health of this university is to continue to press on standards and to continue to press on those dimensions of standards that cause us to, in the end, get better and grow. If we're willing to raise standards and grow, we have to take account of long-term societal trends. There is no other option. It has become axiomatic to say that society is just a state of change—all of this is a tremendous state of change. It's a terrible transition—the whole world is shifting. Look at all of the things that are going different than they were.

None of us that are here today were alive the last time such a transition occurred. That was the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. Being a good sociologist with an adviser who thought that we needed to understand the nineteenth century, I got to read a lot about that. What's interesting as you talk about the nineteenth century is that higher education also was in a tremendous state of change—an unbelievable time of change. One of the huge debates at Yale and Bowden and a number of other elite northern schools had to do with "was it really appropriate to change the curriculum to stop the decline in Greek and Latin and to have these very strange kind of courses like French, German, and Spanish? Why would you do that? Good people need to know Greek and Latin. It doesn't matter if no Greeks speak that language any longer. No one, admittedly, will be able to understand you, but we need to know this."

That was a time when that many of the disciplines that we take as received wisdom, that we believe are part of the university, and have been forever, were handed down from the mount. That's the time when most of the disciplines actually matured and came into their own. English, sociology, economics, and many of the sciences—most of the programs that we consider at the heart and soul of the institution—are the product of an industrial disruption of the nineteenth century.

What we're experiencing today is really akin to that. We're seeing the emergence of whole new disciplines. We're seeing an emergence of a whole new way of thinking about education. We're seeing shifts in communication availability that will affect what universities are like. I firmly believe that if I'm still here and can come out of the home in twenty years, that if I could walk around on the university campus, we would have disciplines and departments on almost every university in the United States that reflect the cataclysmic changes we are seeing today.

If we are going to be successful, much less survive, we are going to have to deal with those changes. The only thing that concerns me about the kinds of themes I'm hearing is I'm not quite sure how we've tied those themes to these broad-based actions that are affecting all of society. Think about the things that are going on internationally—internationalization of the economy, multiculturalism, high tech, and biotech. There are patterns that are affecting the whole world that will affect us. How we relate those to the themes that we care about, I think, is going to be a real key to our future. I hope that you'll think about those things as we go forward.

I want to turn now to the core of what we do and talk about excellence in teaching and learning. There is nothing more important to this university than teaching and learning. We seem to have some differences of opinions on what constitutes quality teaching and what does it mean to set high standards. I do think there is a general consensus on the campus about it, but it seems sometimes to get a little bit lost.

Perhaps the clearest statements regarding the meaning of excellence in teaching come from the dossiers from the

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faculty members that are nominated for prestigious teaching awards. You know what's interesting? Those messages are consistent. Last year's outstanding teacher was Terry Nienhuis. When reviewing his classes, the selection committee saw a community in which the members were deeply engaged in learning, all with great enthusiasm. Terry writes that each of his courses is about writing, reading, thinking, and life skills. His teaching extends beyond the delivery of content. He knows his students personally, to the point that he serves as a mentor for many of them.

A previous award winner was Kathy Ivey. With Kathy, the comments focused on her ability to convert "math phobes" into students with confidence and competence in their mathematical understandings and abilities. Drawing from her own classroom experience, she shares ways to incorporate enjoyable, hands-on activities that are designed to demonstrate real-world applications of abstract mathematical concepts.

There is no secret to excellence in teaching. It involves reaching out to the students, pushing them to achieve, and helping them achieve their full potentials. I've seen over one hundred faculty from across the system receive the Board of Governors Outstanding Teaching Award. In all cases, the message was consistent. Excellence in teaching never involves student failure, but emphasizes learning and motivation. As demonstrated with Terry and Kathy, excellence in teaching means setting high, but appropriate, standards and working closely with students to help them achieve.

In fact, teaching and learning must be considered two sides of the same concept. That is, there can be no good teaching where there is no learning. Western must strive toward excellence in teaching and learning. We must also have excellence within the major. The strongest academic degrees are composed almost equally of liberal education, the major, and student electives. While we understand that there are some professional programs in which that's simply not possible, most programs can achieve this standard. Reducing the ability for the student to choose and explore denigrates the value of the degree.

A well-articulated major based in the best current understanding of what students need is paramount and it doesn't simply mean adding more and more and more courses. It means rethinking what's important as information changes. It means helping the student complete the degree in a timely manner. It means helping the student become excited about the subject matter so that high percentages of them want to go

on to graduate education in your field. It doesn't mean piling requirement upon requirement.

A vibrant, meaningful curriculum is at the core of excellence. Almost every program on this campus that is having enrollment difficulty can find exemplars elsewhere that are burgeoning. An excellent program can't exist without students and excellent programs are the dominant means by which we can recruit more and better students. Our academic reputation is the single most important issue when it comes to recruiting students. Everything else is interesting. It is the single biggest issue. We must strive for excellence in every academic program.

At the same time, excellent universities don't stagnate. One of my favorite movies is Bill Murray's "Groundhog Day." Have you all seen that? Great film! Bill Murray's character wakes up every morning, the alarm goes off—and it's Groundhog's Day again. Every day he has to go through exactly the same set of actions and then he goes to bed and wakes up the next morning and it's Groundhog's Day again until he decides to change and become more humane. I can't imagine many things worse in life than having to live every day the same as yesterday. Talk about boredom!

Excellent universities have curricula to reflect long-term societal trends, not fads. Good, comprehensive universities, like ours, also reflect regional needs. They must assure that their curricula evolve and focus and they have to assure that excellence is the hallmark of every program. Excellence must involve human experience. To not have majors is to not contribute to the long-term excellence of the institution. So we have to grow our curriculums and we have to encourage our students to take those programs because if not, we're assuring lack of excellence. If we don't change the curriculum, if we don't move forward with the curriculum, we're creating a university that is a museum and a curriculum that is an icon of a bygone era. And you know when times get tough, museums close and icons get put in the closet. An excellent university is vibrant, it's alive, it's ever-changing. It sets high standards, it sets appropriate standards, it cares about its students, it tries to motivate them and it reflects the dominant trends of the society of which it is a part.

Now, I want to talk for just a moment about research and service and then I will close.

What we know about regions that are economically viable today and that can be part of what's called the post-new economy, but what's really the old economy in new clothes, is that

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they have universities with strong research agendas—especially in fields that affect regional development. If we're going to be the kind of excellent university that we can be, we have to examine our research agendas, our scholarly agendas. We have to look at how we can build those agendas.

At the same time, we have to recognize that if we put more time into research and cut down on the number of classes that we teach, our class sizes have to go up. The state of North Carolina now funds us on a credit-hour base. It is kind of like a balloon with air in it—you squeeze one end and the air goes to the other. You need to spread the air out across the whole balloon or you can squeeze it and make the other end bigger, but you can't just say, "Well, I'm going to have a really small class and I'm willing to teach a couple of classes." That doesn't work. Somehow when we address this scholarly agenda, we're going to have to figure out how to balance the need to teach the students with personal care, motivation, and attention with our need to increase our scholarly abilities.

Finally, the whole issue around service. No term is more misunderstood in higher education than the term service. On most campuses around the country, somehow we get into a model that when I serve on a committee, that's service. That's probably because we talk about it as serving on a committee. It isn't service. That is citizenship. That's the price of shared governance.

Service means taking your skills and going out to the broader community to help those broader communities achieve their goals. It has nothing to do with serving on a committee on campus. It has to do with reaching out and fulfilling the needs of the community. What Gordon Mercer is doing in school safety, that's service. What Bernie Dougherty is doing with emergency preparedness, that's service. Service is reaching out. What Bob Houghton is doing with trying to help teachers integrate technology, that too, is service. Anne Rogers' great work with the Cherokee people, now that is service. It's reaching out. It's bringing our skills to others.

Excellent universities don't lose this change and they don't resist new disciplines because they understand that a rising tide lifts all boats, unless of course, those boats are holed below the water line, in which case, a rising tide sinks them more deeply. So, we will need to add courses and programs. We will need to pare back on some of our programs and we need to focus on them. What we understand that excellence requires us to have a well-integrated program that is student-centered, outcome-based, and that reflects the best trends of our disciplines with the context of the institution that we have.

One more word about excellence. Being average

is easy, it doesn't take much. Almost everybody is average. Excellence—now that's the challenge. That's hard. That takes effort. But you know what? I've now worked with this faculty for almost eight years and I'm absolutely convinced that you can rise to any level of excellence you choose to rise to. I look forward to working with you this year. I look forward to hearing your ideas. Have a great year! We're off to a tremendous start.

Thank you.



**Dr. Newton Smith**  
**Chair**  
**Faculty Senate**

Today, I want to focus my remarks on what I see as the key issues of the coming year. In particular, I want to talk about our role as faculty at this university given the changes in enrollment and policy that the chancellor spoke about and our place in the university system statewide and locally. And I want to put these remarks in the context of a much longer history.

Of all the institutions begun in medieval times or earlier, only a few survive. Out of all these, the university has perhaps the proudest history and greatest mission. The university has taken on itself the task of preserving and passing wisdom on to the next generation, and of challenging both those who learn and those who teach to expand that wisdom and put it into action in the world.

The university has survived over the centuries because it has changed as the times have changed, and yet it has preserved its essential structure based on its fundamental vision. At its core, a university is a gathering of teachers and learners dedicated to preparing an educated society where actions are governed by reason, compassion, imagination, and knowledge. That vision, kept at the heart of the university, has been its salvation against the ravages of change, the vicissitudes of political influence, and the tyrannies of dogma.

But a university is a messy place. It is a cauldron of discourse where the ideas of an age, even those most hallowed by those who govern, are tested. Academic freedom of discussion must tolerate all these ideas even if they are a threat to those who would preserve orthodoxy or the status quo. And they are a threat. The church or the state over history has caned, expelled, excommunicated, and even beheaded teachers to stop the spread of radical ideas that threatened those who held the purse strings or wielded the rod of power. Some of you are old enough to remember the Speaker Ban Law in North Carolina or Kent State in Ohio. This very month we have seen our legislators and our own Board of Governors threatened by a book our

colleagues at Chapel Hill proposed for freshman study.

Yet it is only because of the free exchange of ideas that scholars can question the *old* theories and propose *new* theories of cosmology, economics, social structure, and evolutionary biology. Because of this discourse, we can compose the texts that contain or shape the thoughts of the next generation and train the teachers who will mold the ideas, the understanding, and the sense of social responsibility and justice for generations to come. Indeed, when you step on a university campus, you have entered sacred ground.

But we are at a crisis point in the country and this state, financially and ethically and perhaps intellectually. The budget crisis has provoked in the Legislature a mean spiritedness, a fear of any departure from the status quo, and the willingness to intercede into the university's mission as never before. I fear that the Legislature will soon be making decisions about what courses we can teach, how we teach, and the books we can assign.

Closer to home, morale is at a low point. Our salaries are far below the national average, our benefits miserable, the budget is still in debate, and many have a sense of general powerlessness.

When people lose control of what happens to them in their daily lives, when they feel they have no say or that their opinions are disregarded in what happens to them, and when they are not told about what is going on, they become demoralized. Kenneth Blanchard, a management guru, has criticized this traditional hierarchical style of management because it inhibits innovation, lowers productivity, and creates a workforce prone to depression, illness, absenteeism, and accidents. Compare that style to the *ideal* of the university where the faculty and students are key influences in determining curricula, where the faculty's voices are valued and heeded, and where the dispersal of information is a defining mission.

Where do we go from here? Let's start with salaries, benefits, program support, endowments, and research grants. Chancellor, don't take this wrong, but we don't want to see you on campus as much this year. We want you to spend more time out of town where you can twist the arms of the Legislature, the Board of Governors, congressmen, foundations, and corporate

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**At its core, a university is a gathering of teachers and learners dedicated to preparing an educated society where actions are governed by reason, compassion, imagination, and knowledge.**

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and private donors. You are good at that, and we want you to use your talents. Bring us money and programs to fit our talents and unique setting.

If you are out of town a lot, Deborah will expect—and we will expect—you to call home. We need to know what you are hearing about the university, what you are thinking, what you are saying to others, and what is on the horizon.

But when you are on campus, spend part of your time listening. You have set up focus groups for this year to sound out the direction of the university's vision. That is a commendable undertaking, but it will be difficult to take in the various voices. May I suggest that you have a skilled facilitator at these meetings so that you can listen without the burden of having to manage the stage and the discussions? We have a lot to say, and, though some of it is contradictory or unrealistic for the moment, hearing us in these forums will lift our morale and shift our perspective to the future of the university.

The real change we need to make at WCU, however, is with us, the faculty. If we want the chancellor to be our voice outside the university and a sounding board on campus, then we have to truly assume more responsibility for the functioning of the university. We have to put our own house in order. I am talking about faculty governance, particularly our role in managing curricula, course loads, teaching, teaching evaluation, faculty affairs, collegial review, and developing a clear faculty voice.

Since the spring of 1999, we have been studying the restructuring of the Faculty Senate. The task force on restructuring has recommended that the Senate become primarily a faculty organ, eliminating all administrative representatives except the chancellor so that the advice it gives the chancellor is a clear faculty voice. By the end of the year, I am expecting a new faculty governance structure.

If we do not take on the task of governing ourselves, particularly those areas within our domain, you can be sure that the Legislature or the Board of Governors will. Already, we are under the microscope. I just learned from a UNC report that it takes an average of 10.8 semesters for our students to graduate. That is 5.5 years, and if you are a parent looking at WCU for your child, you might have second thoughts. We are third from the bottom in

percentage graduation rates; thank goodness for Fayetteville State and Pembroke. Only 22.1 percent of our students graduate in four years, in five years it is 39.5 percent and 44.6 percent in six years. Overall, the average student accumulates more than 140 hours of credits before graduating. We must start looking at our curricula, our majors, and the hours it takes to graduate. Those numbers will bring down the wrath of the Legislature if we do not do something ourselves. This is a faculty responsibility, but if we shirk it someone will do it for us.

Dr. Bardo has told us that the Board of Governors has targeted WCU to grow to a student body of 9,500 by the year 2010. It won't happen if we are not a part of that process.

Western has grown very little since the mid seventies in its residential undergraduate program. Why? We are in the midst of a mountain paradise with incredible outdoor activities. Sounds good. We have small classes with individual attention from faculty. Very good. We have an excellent faculty committed to good teaching. Better yet. We have more student activities on campus than almost any campus in the system. Wow. So what's wrong?

We don't have a unique selling point. In marketing terms, we haven't positioned ourselves. We have defined ourselves as a regional comprehensive university, which doesn't mean a thing to a high school kid who has grown up on the concrete streets of Charlotte.

We need a vision, a focus that distinguishes us from other universities yet which allows us to utilize all our strengths. Dr. Bardo has spoken about some ideas that have come to him from various members of the faculty. But that is not enough. We need to hear more. We need your perspective. In fact, we need to have a dialogue and debates about our vision for ourselves as a university. If we are truly committed to the free exchange of ideas, then we should be willing to speak what we think and hear what others say.

Have a good year.

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***If we do not take on the task of governing ourselves, particularly those areas within our domain, you can be sure that the Legislature or the Board of Governors will. Already, we are under the microscope.***

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## Mark Your Calendars

Western will honor the heroes of September 11, 2001, during a special tribute marking the first anniversary of the national tragedy.

The observance will be composed of three events culminating in a concert of "Music for Heroes." The activities are sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs and the department of music.

For information on how to get involved in the observance, contact Mary Kay Bauer, associate professor of music and one of the organizers of the campus tributes, at 227-3275.

Watch for details in the September 9 issue of the *Reporter*.

## August

### Slideshow Spotlight

"Islands in the Clouds" tells the story of the Blue Ridge Parkway from its Depression-era origin to its current popularity as a tourist highway. MHC.

### Tuesday, August 27

Training Tuesday—"Facilities Use Policy" provides important information about the rules and regulations of the new Facilities Use Policy. The CatLinks group is strongly encouraged to attend; all interested persons welcome. Registration required, 10–11 a.m., Room 404, Belk Building. (227-2388 or [www.wcu.edu/hr/training](http://www.wcu.edu/hr/training))

Safety course—van safety course (required of all drivers of 15-passenger vans), 2:30–4:30 p.m., Hospitality Room, RRAC. (227-7443 or [flury@wcu.edu](mailto:flury@wcu.edu))

### Saturday, August 31

Cross Country—Western Carolina Invitational, 9:30 a.m. (227-7338)

## September

### Slideshow Spotlight

"Working the Land" explores the role of farming in the past, present, and future of Western North Carolina. MHC.

### Monday, September 2

Labor Day holiday.

### Tuesday, September 3

Classes resume.

**NOTE:** All Monday **DAY** classes meet on this Tuesday. Monday **NIGHT** classes **DO NOT** meet.

### Wednesday, September 4

Speaker—Robert M. Sapolsky, author of *A Primate's Memoir: A Neuroscientist's Life Among the Baboons*, this year's freshman summer reading

selection. Public program, 8 p.m., RH. (227-7234)

### Thursday, September 5

Lady Catamount soccer—vs. Troy State, 4 p.m., SSF. (227-7338)

### Friday, September 6

Orientation—for new faculty, 3:15–5 p.m., Room 104, Killian Building. (227-7495)

### Friday, September 6–Saturday, September 7

Lady Catamount volleyball—Catamount Clash III (Georgia State, Tennessee, Villanova). Times to be announced. RRAC. (227-7338)

### Saturday, September 7

Cross Country—WCU Catamount Classic, 9 a.m. (227-7338)

### Sunday, September 8

*Spring into Summer* program—A natural history series for children and adults. Topic to be announced. No charge, but reservations required, 2:30 p.m., MHC. (227-7129)

### Submissions:

Send news items and calendar notices to *WCU Calendar*, 1601 Ramsey Center, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina 28723 or e-mail to [reporter@email.wcu.edu](mailto:reporter@email.wcu.edu).

Submit items for the university's calendar on the Internet at least one week prior to the event.

### Exhibitions:

**Monoprints from Asheville's Semi-public Print Workshop.** Through September 27.

Opening reception August 26, 5–7 p.m., BB. (227-3591)

**Language of the Mask: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches from Cherokee.**

Through September 19. Opening reception August 28, 4–6 p.m., Chelsea Gallery, UC. (227-7206)

**North Carolina Women Making History**, the trials, triumphs, and changing roles of women during the past 400 years. Through May 2003. MHC. (227-7129)

**Let's Play**, a look back at the ways Americans enjoyed leisure time at the turn of the twentieth century. Through September 6. MHC. (227-7129)

**Migration of the Scotch-Irish People.** (Permanent exhibition). Information, illustrations, artifacts, and murals. MHC. (227-7129)

**Key:** \$ - Admission fee; HA - Hoey Auditorium; HFR - H.F. Robinson Administration Building; HS/CF - Hennon Stadium/Childress Field; MHC - Mountain Heritage Center; NSA - Natural Sciences Auditorium; RRAC - Ramsey Regional Activity Center; RH - Recital Hall, Coulter Building; BB - Belk Building; UC - A.K. Hinds University Center; UOC - University Outreach Center; WS/BW - Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field; SSF - Shrader Soccer Field.

# WCU Calendar

August 26–September 9, 2002

Look for regular updates on the university's web site at [www.wcu.edu/cal.html](http://www.wcu.edu/cal.html)

# Music, Dance, Lectures Highlight Season

The 2002-2003 season of the Lectures, Concerts and Exhibition Series at Western will feature a renowned instrumental guitarist, an eclectic dance troupe, a West African percussion ensemble, and a reading by a celebrated Native-American author.

The series begins Tuesday, September 17, with a performance by guitarist and composer Dominic Gaudious of Atlanta in the Coulter Building recital hall.

Gaudious performs primarily with six- and twelve-string guitars, as well as other exotic stringed instruments. His playing style blends classical, jazz, Flamenco, folk, and world beat music.

The Koresh Dance Company will take the stage in Hoey Auditorium on Thursday, October 10. Under the direction of Ronen Koresh, the Philadelphia-based troupe is known for its

intense stage presence and high-energy style.

Charles and Christopher Rex and Lillian Buss Pearson will give a performance of classical music on the violin, cello, and piano Thursday, November 21, in the recital hall of the Coulter Building. Violinist Charles Rex is a former member of the Philadelphia Orchestra and former associate concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Christopher Rex joined the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as principal cello in 1979 and has made numerous national appearances as recitalist and chamber musician. Lillian Pearson, WCU associate professor of music who has performed across the United States and Europe, will accompany on piano.

Les Percussions de Guinee will bring music, dance, and drumming from the Republic of Guinea to the Ramsey

Regional Activity Center on Thursday, January 23.

Featuring seven master drummers and balafon, kora, and flute players, along with a troupe of spirited dancers, the company creates an uplifting performance designed to transcend language and culture.

Jane Elliott will present the lecture "The Anatomy of Prejudice" on Tuesday, February 18, in the recital hall of the Coulter Building. Elliott is best known for her controversial "Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes" exercise in which participants are labeled inferior or superior based on the colors of their eyes.

Native-American author, poet, and screenwriter Sherman Alexie will present the lecture "Killing Indians: Myths, Lies and Exaggerations" on Wednesday, April 2, in Hoey Auditorium.

An exhibition of photo-

graphs and paintings of African-American domestic workers in the South will be on display April 15 through May 10 in the Chelsea Gallery of the A.K. Hinds University Center. The exhibit, *Mammy . . . How I Love You*, will feature the paintings of Beverly McIver and the photographs of Ernie Button.

Tickets for the Gaudious concert and the Elliot lecture are \$5 for the general public and \$3 for senior citizens, WCU faculty and staff, and non-WCU students. Tickets for all other LCE programs are \$10 for the general public and \$8 for senior citizens, WCU faculty and staff, and non-WCU students.

All programs begin at 7:30 p.m. and are free to WCU students with valid identification. For more information about the LCE Series, call 227-7206.

*The Reporter* is published by the Office of Public Information. Debie Connelly, editor. Mail faculty/staff notes, events, notices, and changes of address to *The Reporter*, 1601 Ramsey Center, or send them via e-mail to [REPORTER@EMAIL.WCU.EDU](mailto:REPORTER@EMAIL.WCU.EDU)

***the* Reporter**

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