**Spring Faculty Caucus**

**Wednesday, January 4, 2012**

**3 – 5 p.m. in UC Multipurpose Room**

*Themes that developed and comments related to each theme (not necessarily in order of discussion as we circled back to topics at times).*

**Faculty Retention and Morale**

* Faculty retention; people are looking (know at least 4 really good people moving some farther than others; can’t even make another offer until they have a written offer); concern this is a waste of time and energy, and it will cost us a whole lot more to retain someone on the backend rather than the frontend;
	+ Also bad for morale if you are committed to staying here, but only way to be rewarded is to almost leave;
	+ Maybe look at use of indirect funds from grants; nothing has happened with this during the year (those responsible for looking into it have too much on their plate); get this into the hands of people who can do something now/more quickly
	+ How should we proceed with this issue? It would be good to have this more than Erin talking to the Chancellor about this; have something come from the whole Senate
	+ What can Senate do that will make a difference? What about a task force on how to use indirect costs as there are so many models? Maybe going to the former Research Council to work on this;
* Faculty as most protected on campus (tenure, or contracts); EPA non-faculty can be terminated more easily; inequities and job security issues; -- maybe going back to the joint to the shared governance statement; ask this goes back to our agenda

**Expected changes in operations of administration with a new chancellor / faculty involvement**

* Issue of the status quo being maintained (e.g. Bardo administration/system to new chancellor), inefficiencies in our system
	+ Example of trying to replace Gibb’s position; his position number was traded with Wendy’s;
* Examples of key issues for the university where faculty involvement would help provide information, but faculty haven’t been involved in any significant way:
	+ Talk of building a new graduate center, in Buncombe county, but not on the campus of UNCA (but at Biltmore Park); thinks it will have some major ramifications; there’s been a site located and virtually no input on this; some committee hatched this idea and it’s been very secretive; one reason it may not be being made public because it would be pulling out of UNCA and that would cause quite a stir for them; don’t think it was done in a malicious or evil way; think this could be partly a political battle; this makes us look more like the University of Phoenix than the University of North Carolina; this could have an impact of accreditation (library, space, student informational needs) – these are things that need to be discussed; is this only for select programs? It could have an effect on plans for some of our current programs and what they would envision for the future
	+ Athletics Director search needed more faculty than one dean; unhappy that there were no faculty known to be involved with the football coach search
	+ Going back to reorganization stuff – giving people a little heads up rather than doing things secretly
	+ [*Later comments submitted by email*] It appears as if a committee has been formed to talk about possibilities with the Millennial campus and no faculty are involved; we can’t continue to have important topics, like this, being discussed without input from faculty and others in the community
* Back to discussion about not being satisfied that administration and processes are still the same as under previous administration; we need to ask the Chancellor more questions when he’s given us opportunities to ask questions, such as when he asks for questions from us in our Faculty Senate meetings and no one says anything;
* Suggestion that we give the Chancellor topics we want him to address at Faculty Senate meetings rather than just getting updates that are very similar meeting to meeting:
	+ First topic should be faculty morale (and retention);
	+ Shared governance discussion is also something that needs to be discussed first (also having member on executive council – not for veto purposes but to help raise issues, think of things they may not be thinking of such as accreditation, not for the purpose of sniping);
* Still not clear from the Chancellor’s point of view where decisions are made; a lot of things that you would think would remain at the academic/provost level that still have to go through Executive Council; what form of government is Chancellor Belcher going to institute?
* Going back to evidence of faculty morale; when we first started faculty caucuses we had 50 – 75 people in the room all screaming out crazy ideas (not all gripes and complaints) and the Faculty Senate made sense of it and what they could do; does the chancellor share this view of democracy? It was very early in the Bardo years;

**Open processes, including open searches for all positions**

* Think it’s despicable that we have any closed searches on this campus; every search on this campus should be open on the final stage; it says that you can do something on campus without faculty input; time to pass it because there are these searches going on; comment that it’s unethical; get a better vetting of people; is Chris willing to write this up as a resolution

**Transparency in Senate voting, giving up the “clickers”**

* Why to do we have to use clickers? What if we as a senate decided that we vote transparently? Right now we’re picking and choosing whether to use clickers. We’re asking searches to be transparent, so we should be transparent. Senators should consider this when running for Faculty Senate, and decide to run only if they’re willing to let people know how they are voting; at times we will have no voiced objections but with clickers we still get negative votes. (For same reason, proxy votes shouldn’t be used; otherwise you’re saying discussion doesn’t matter)
* Comment about representing our faculty, not just voting for ourselves; importance of getting that feedback from faculty; know that sometimes they choose to not to respond to our calls for input
* Discussion about having voting open and recorded. We need to encourage and create a spirit of respect for speaking; responsibility of tenured faculty to make sure they feel comfortable

**Tenure votes and abstentions**

* Article on tenure votes and abstentions in the Chronicle; that seems to be an increasing issue at WCU on TPR when they’re trying to be nice and not take a stand; some universities say you can abstain but you have to write out why you are abstaining (e.g. conflict of interest); it’s getting out of hand and muddying the waters (the article is on the H: drive for CRC’s upcoming meeting); danger that abstentions can, up the line, appear as a “no” when it’s really not a no.; shouldn’t abdicate your responsibility
* Ability for DH to also be on college and university committee; they get to vote multiple times (but as a faculty member); it’s actually addressed by the Provost in the rules (Provost guidelines for the university committee); very important that the person chairing the committee should keep it in control; opinion that you shouldn’t be able to vote on people from your department; some colleges are so small that could be a real hindrance (disallowing voting twice);

**Suggestions for future caucuses**

* Maybe move the caucus to the second week of classes (maybe with alcohol too)

**Suggestions for improvements to Faculty Senate, Councils, and Faculty Senate meetings**

* [*Also given in “Expected changes … faculty involvement” bullet above*] Suggestion that we give the Chancellor topics we want him to address at Faculty Senate meetings rather than just getting updates that are very similar meeting to meeting:
	+ First topic should be faculty morale (and retention);
	+ Shared governance discussion is also something that needs to be discussed first (also having member on executive council – not for veto purposes but to help raise issues, think of things they may not be thinking of such as accreditation, not for the purpose of sniping);
* Rather than keeping our scheduled meeting each semester with the Council of Deans, What about a meeting with executive council; Heidi said have them and Council of Deans (who said they had no power)
* Going back to asking the Chancellor to speak to specific topics; we need more information to go with this than just a topic (such as specific details or incidents or problems); We should discuss these options with the chancellor at Planning Team before each meeting; also come up with ideas for issues earlier
* In Faculty Senate meetings, we need to cut down on the amount of time spent on announcements; too much of our meeting time goes to these; have people submit their reports in writing and have them sent with other Senate business in emails; we can use time in Senate to ask any questions
* We need to spend some time in the near future assessing the current council structure and the purposes of each council … are these meeting our needs? Would there be better configurations? This could come from a discussion of expectations of Senate, purpose of shared governance, common issues and focuses, etc.