Richard Beam, Beverly Collins and I represented WCU at the first meeting of the UNC Faculty Assembly for the academic year.

The meeting started with a presentation from President Erskine Bowles who addressed the rough economic times the University has been facing. Anticipating the budget problems, the University took measures to protect the academic core. Across the University of North Carolina system, 23% of the dollars cut were from the administrative side of the budget, 5% from the academic side. At WCU, we were pretty close to the state-wide average with 20.2% of our budget cuts coming from administration and 5.6% coming from academics. Overall, WCU had 10.6% of its dollars cut, compared to 10.8% for the UNC total.

President Bowles is still committed to his UNC Tomorrow plan, and said he will not change his number one priority – **Improve Public K-12 Education**. He intends to develop a method for determining where public school teachers and principals earned their degrees and comparing that to their students’ test results. Other UNC Tomorrow focus areas are: **Increasing Access to Higher Education** (heavier reliance on community colleges and continued expansion of distance education), **Transforming our Institutions to be more Nimble, Efficient, and Responsive** (focus will change from increasing enrollment to retention and graduation, reducing middle management positions, and instituting e-procurement, which should save the University $35 million this year), **Increase Focused Research and Become more Actively Engaged in Economic Transformation** (the University has $1 billion available for research through stimulus funding), and **Enhance Global Competitiveness** (higher admission standards, higher standards for overall performance, upgrade talent of administrators, faculty, employees).

Rob Nelson, vice president for finance, explained last year’s budget cuts explaining that we ended up with a 10% reduction in our budget. He explained the furlough as an action that was taken by the Governor who used the Governor’s Power and Authority to meet the North Carolina Constitution requirement to have a balanced budget.

Laura Luger, vice president of legal issues and general counsel, reported on the legal interpretations of the availability of funds in contracts and tenure letters.

Alan Mabe, senior vice president, discussed faculty work load issues, explaining that the focus is moving away from the number of classes taught to the number of student credit hours (SCH) generated. Research into the SCH generation of 14 of the 16 campuses of the UNC show that we are above the Carnegie average. He also reported that there is a new process for examining new programs and program planning. General Administration has a web site <http://www.northcarolina.edu/aa_planning/index.htm> that shows the programs being planned at the various campuses. He stated that each program may provide a faculty member to be a member of the panel to review new program proposals. Finally, he said that he will examine the problem of the growing number of non tenure-track faculty at campuses across the UNC system.

Representatives were assigned to committees and committees were given their work plans.

Academic Core Committee: Define “academic core”, track and monitor effects related to budget cuts.

Distance Education and Technology Committee: Define the next generation of issues regarding DE; study quality control for DE; Address President Bowles plan for hiring of a full-time lead person for DE at General Administration.

Governance & Faculty Development/Welfare/Benefits Committee: Focus on the recognition of effective shared governance; Work with our Historically Minority Institutions (HMIs) with issues of self governance; Provide training for faculty governance roles.

Communication and Advocacy Committee: Develop a communication plan with Faculty Assembly and key audiences; Initiate a strategic advocacy plan for working with legislature and others; Provide a liaison with and support for the UNC Staff Assembly.

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee: Study faculty mixes on campuses (tenure/tenure track, fixed term, adjuncts, etc.); Examine tenure/promotion policies related to service/outreach and UNC Tomorrow; Monitor post tenure review (PTR).

Research: Develop proposal to create an advisory group regarding institutional research at GA; Become involved in GA research initiative related to technology transfer and economic development; Study the role of institutes and centers in support of UNC Tomorrow; Track implementation of UNC Tomorrow.