**MINUTES**

***March 20, 2013***

***3:00 -5:00 p.m.***

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ROLL CALL

Present:

David Belcher, Andrew Adams, Lisa Bloom, Shawn Collins, Chris Cooper, Cheryl Daly, Yang Fan, Patricia Foley, Mary Jean Herzog, Christopher Hoyt, David Hudson, George Ford, Leroy Kauffman, , Katie Ginanni, Rebecca Lasher, Erin McNelis, Angi Brenton, Malcom Powell, Steve Miller, Kathy Starr, Wes Stone, Erin Tapley, Ben Tholkes, Cheryl Waters-Tormey, Vicki Szabo

Members with Proxies:

Elizabeth McRae, Justin Menikelli, Leigh Odom

Members Absent:

None

Recorder:

Ann Green

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Approval of the Minutes

Motion:

The minutes of the Faculty Senate meeting of February 20, 2013 were approved as presented.

**EXTERNAL REPORTS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Chancellor’s Update/David Belcher:

Dr. Belcher’s written report to Faculty Senate was distributed to campus via email and the full report is attached as Attachment 1.

SGA/Ryan Hermance & Alicia Page, Student Body President:

Ryan reported that SGA is going through constitutional restructuring and bylaws restructuring. Elections for SGA are coming up. April 8th and 9th are SGA election days. An environmental sub committee is hosting a banner competition for students. Students are asked to submit banners 18 x 7 by April 18th and there is a $100 prize to the winner.

Alicia’s last term. Alicia wanted to thank Faculty Senate for working with students. Alicia is working with the executive staff on the “campaign to give back”. The teachers will be focused on the campaign. She is encouraging students to identify a teacher that has made an impact on their college career and deliver a letter of thanks to that teacher. Second part of “campaign to give back” is service. Students will be asked to volunteer their time for direct service to their teachers like cleaning their yard. Students will be assigned to service projects from other departments to avoid conflict of interest. The campaign is to acknowledge and appreciate what faculty and staff do for the students.

Staff Senate/Robin Hitch:

None

**COUNCIL REPORTS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Academic Policy and Review Council (APRC)/David Hudson, Chair:

Curriculum:

There is a bunch of curriculum changes but no new programs or certificates to vote on. No comments were passed to David from the curriculum sub-committees.

Resolution of Support to SGA on the following:

Support for the Hunter Library to extend its current hours of operation: Discussed it at APRC meeting last week and decided to give support. They did not give statement but added addendum. Discussion in a downward vote for budgetary issues with hours being extended. They do not know what the costs will be for the extension or how many students the extension will serve. Discussion about being a student issue not a faculty senate issue.

Q: As part of the discussion, was there discussion of what they would be willing to trade off?”

A: He thinks the idea of what they wanted was a work around or a place they could have wifi at night and a safe place to study. Is there a place they can go study safely with wifi, air conditioning, maybe coffee & danish? Planning team discussed that they were unsure if the students wanted Starbucks or access to the books at night.

Q: Can’t these questions be answered? In terms of some sort of conversation about the budget and data from students about the library.

A: Not enough information.

A: from Dean Sally- He was not part of the SGA meeting where this issue got brought up.. He can comment on the budget related issues because of its history. Library has traditional hours for a long time. In 2008-2009, the library had a budget cut that affected all of the programs. Solution was to look at the patterns of use in during the library hours of operation. They added hours and rearranged them. Cut midnight to 1AM hour off of weeknights and cut 2 hours off of Saturday morning. Added 24/7 services a for a week at the end of the semester. Ended up adding 50 hours to the hours of operation in the end. Other programs have suffered from the change. The library hours is a budget issue. They created a budget request for $41,000 to support a position of circulation that would allow them to restore those hours.

Alicia- Students are fully aware of the budget crisis. She believes is not an unreasonable request and she assumes that there is some way to fulfill this request. She believes there is a way to identify somewhere in the budget of the university some money for the extension of the library hours for the purpose of student success. Whenever the students are not succeeding the university is not succeeding. When SGA looked at the timeline of what they wanted, they looked at other UNC schools. Of the 17 schools in the UNC system, 11 of them are over layered with Western. Only 4 of them are open equal or less time than Western and those schools are Elizabeth City State, Fayetteville State, North Carolina School of the Arts and the school of Science and Math. When they were deciding whether to keep it open till 2 AM they compared Western to schools of comparable size. The 24 hour week when the library is open is phenomenal. Students are there learning and passing their exams, but the problem is that a student can’t learn a semester’s worth of work in one night. By extending the hours till 2 AM, we can bring in a new type of student into the library who otherwise does not have the opportunity to go. For example, she worked as a waitress over last 3 years at Western and did not get off work till midnight most nights and the library was already closed by the time she got back to campus. Online resources did help but sometimes the book or a librarian is what the student needs. SGA works with students every day and sees the need. She does understand the reasons why it may not be able to happen.

Support for proposal from Dean Sally- Looked at statistics from last semesters 24 hour exam week period. Took gate counts and found that some of the days during that week were close to 7,000. Gate counts between 12AM and 6AM revealed 1st week average to be 490 and second week 670. Believes that if they offer students more opportunities then they will engage more.

No more questions of comments from Senators and no need to vote.

Creation of an academic, service-based, program to encourage a community of service among WCU students

Taken off the agenda.

Graduate School wants to propose to change the lanuage on some of their admission categorization.

They have 3 different categories for admission: regular, conditional, and provisional admission. They want to consolidate that and drop it down to two categories, keeping regular and conditional.

Q/C: from Graduate School Associate Dean, Brian Kloeppel- Reason for the change is to eliminate the confusion with applications and application processing with coming in. Regular admission is self-explanatory. Conditional and provisional has been confusing for faculty, program directors, and employees of graduate school. To clarify what is going on they want to eliminate provisional category. Conditional admission is some piece or part that a graduate student has like GRE exam or letter of recommendation. It is not a terminal loss or missing piece but the student does need to turn it in. If they have a marginal GPA and they need to prove that they are competitive enough for the program they can get the first semester to show that they are able to handle the quality of the program. Text show to senate: shows the revisions to the original policy. With an overlap or conditional and provisional, problems came up were admitted to programs and were actually official admitted and then wanted to continue when they were not qualified. Problems with following people and admitting them properly.

Q: Why didn’t you put the minimum number of hours posted for each semester? If I take one class versus I take 4 classes each semester and I have to get a minimum 3.0 there is a radical difference. So maybe I get a 3.0 and I’m taking one class and next semester I’m fully admitted and I take 4 then fail out immediately.

A: I think it was a stop gap sort of measure so the students who are admitted would potentially be admitted in a conditional state would have a few applications processors track those people. So at the end of the first term they will be able to say yes they have met the conditions laid out or no they have not. In your example, some of the decisions are program specific. Programs can have more stringent guidelines but they have to follow the basic graduate school guidelines.

Q: With the language, the “may”… conditional “may” include one or more of the following requirements if these are the graduate school requirements and the programs can go above that it seems like it might be clear if you said that this is the university standard and programs may go above not may include because that makes it sound like it may not include. Suggesting that “may” should be changed.

A: These are the conditions programs can set over and above the graduate school standards. Also for students that might not meet the requirement but the program director wants to try them out for a semester.

Q: I move that we table this. She cannot find the document and the issue seems more complicated to just do it on the fly. She does not feel comfortable participating in a conversation without the documents.

Q/C: -wording is awkward because it sounds like you have to do these things to get out of conditional admission. Suggests that there be more work on this before voting on it

Motion to table it. Motion was seconded.

**Vote to table the Graduate School proposal**

**Yes: Unanimous**

**No: None**

**Abstained: None**

Collegial Review Council (CRC)/Vicki Szabo, Chair:

Resolution: Senate Endorsement of Best Practices Recommendation to Provost and Council of Deans on Abstention Voting in Collegial Review Actions

Basically this is asking the Deans and Provost to ensure that there is a written charge to the committee, that they talk to the committee members about the nature of the meeting, changing rules on an annual basis if necessary to adapt to new processes in collegial review. This year they want to reissue the best practices guidelines passed in 2010 with 2 additions. 2 paragraphs that discuss the differences between conflict of interest and abstention. What the council feels is appropriate is to explain what abstention means, and when it is appropriate to abstain. Tried to articulate the differences between conflict of interest and abstention. Not clear how much abstention is happening because colleges do not record abstensions the same, so they cannot track that data well. People abstain for a variety of reasons and some make sense and some do not. They want the resolution to encourage deans to discuss about why abstaining can hurt and why it is important not to abstain. Abstention is not clear at higher levels; if you abstain at department or college level, people higher up do not know how to read those abstentions. Abstention often carries a connotation. To clarify they want deans, the provost and department heads to have those conversations and they want to the faculty senate to endorse it. Not changing any rules, they just want to tell people to choose carefully when they abstain.

Q: Is that not implied, that if you abstain it should be a well thought through thing?

A: It is. Anecdotally that’s not what is happening. Anecdotally we hear the big one in cases of anonymity. People will decide to abstain to preserve anonymity.

Q: Should we not say that? We encourage you not to abstain to preserve your…

A: We do in the preface, not in the resolution itself…

Q: question about wording, in the last sentence where it says however their abstention will not be considered when determining a majority vote. Can you explain?

A: If we’ve got a committee of 12 and the committee votes 5 yes and 2 abstain, there’s no majority achieved so that’s a no. If the committee votes, 5, 4, 3 – that is a yes. Those 3 are potentially problematic.

…Discussion continued.

Q: I like the spirit. I wonder if in the first paragraph, the conflict of interest paragraph…it might be smart to have something that says anything that would lead the candidate to have a prejudice view or the member to have a prejudice view or anything that would cause your judgment to not be impartial, you should recuse yourself.

A: Does other relationships that result in a clear conflict of interest adequately cover that though?

Q: I don’t know….I’m just looking for a friendly amendment to make sure it’s clear. Tulane has “any member who has professional and personal affilitations with candidate that could affect his or her impartiality should recuse himself or herself.” The UC system has a lot of statements that anything that might prejudice you against the candidate, you should recuse yourself…I think it would be smart to have something like that.

Q: Sometimes those kinds of statements give people excuses.

Q: In a campus like WCU, who doesn’t have relationships with one another?

Q: That’s the point that I’m trying to make, it’s not about having the relationship; just the one that would affect your impartiality. A reasonable judgment… language that would say something about some kind of conflict of interest that would affect your judgment seems helpful to me.

A: I’m curious whether we’re getting into 4.09 language…which is sort of the illegitimate reasons for non-reappointment type language. When you get into bias and stuff like that. I wonder if we are getting there.

I think what you’re referring to is covered in different sections. We can include a reference to that…I see where you are going, but I prefer to withdraw it and go back to legal on that to make sure that we’re not overlapping in inclinations and intentions.

Q: I hear what X is talking about parenthetically you are giving the definition of what conflict of interest is.

A: We’re trying to give examples of what conflict of interest is.

Q: I’m not sure it helps to do that. The way it is writing it kind of invites it.

A: If you struck it, would it make it clearer, then?

…We would be happen to strike that parenthetical entirely and just leave it conflict of interest.

Q: If it has a definition, then I don’t think you need it. (there was other agreement).

Q: I do think one piece is the prejudicial piece…if I have someone that I authored a paper with…if that person is coming up would you say I have a conflict of interest? If so, we’re going to have a lot of abstentions in our department and a lot of departments, so I wonder if the prejudicial piece is what we want to use to clarify. You could come up with other examples.

Q: Maybe if you put potential conflicts of interest must be discussed and then just like at the state if there is a potential conflict of interest but you can ameliorate by doing such and such.

Q: …conflict of interest that might affect the impartiality? That seems to be the point.

A: We can take that back to council and discuss that. …I would rather legal clarify this for us.

Q: When you go back to legal, if you would also make a note of X’s contact to say that potential conflict of interest must be discussed with the CRC committee chair prior to this meeting and then the committee member with a valid conflict of interest; that’s what is going to ironed out in this discussion, the issues that X was raising. Is that going to be a real conflict of interest or it’s just there and an acknowledgement that it exists?

A: We discussed including some clear indication of agency and who should initiate and we decided to leave that out. We didn’t want to make this that a department head or dean would be deciding if there was a conflict of interest so we left this purposefully ambiguous so I’ve noted the language, I’ve noted the intent.

Discussion with the chair and committee members in attendance and decision to take it back to legal for clarification.

It was asked to add one element to that discussion which is that members will have some element of conflict of interest with candidates and that to clarify that would be educational.

Discussion continued.

The resolution was withdrawn for further discussion with legal.

Faculty Affairs Council (FAC)/Christopher Cooper, Chair

No report.

Rules Committee/Erin McNelis, Chair

The committee met recently to make sure they read and understand as best possible, the Faculty Handbook on faculty grievance committee, faculty hearing committee, post tenure appeals committee and processes associated with those and the UNC Code required processes. The next move is that members will draw up flow charts for processes currently in the Handbook. They will meet the week after Spring Break with Legal included in the meeting. Mary Ann Lochner indicated the grievance process has not been mandated and so they will be looking at possibly cleaning that up and there is a place where we are in violation with the code. The grievance policy states that we have tenured associate and full, but the code says you must have every level which would include the assistant professor level (non-tenured level). They will also be looking at trying to get rid of the Post Tenure Review Appeals committee because it is not mandated in the Code and the Code states that PTR issues should be handled by Grievance. The goal is to be to have the flow charts soon and to try to have something in place by the start of Senate next year and ready for first reading, second reading.

**OTHER REPORTS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Old Business:

Second reading of updates to faculty constitution, bylaws, and Senate bylaws (new leadership structure and duties). Erin passed around copies of the changes. This is what was also seen at the last meeting, but Erin removed everything except the changes.

One vote was recommended for the entire set unless the Senate wanted to break it down. This motion was seconded.

**Vote on changes to Faculty Constitution, By-laws and Senate By-laws:**

**Yes: Unanimous**

**No: 0**

**Abstain: 0**

**The vote passes.**

New Business:

None.

Other:

Provost Report/Angi Brenton, Provost:

Dr. Brenton apologized for not getting a report out in writing. A couple of highlights, we are forming a search committee for the dean of the Graduate School and Research and Richard Starnes has agreed to chair the committee. This will be an internal search. There were a couple of questions that came from the Senate Planning Team Meeting. There were discussions last year and a consultant’s report about whether Graduate School and Research would be kept together or separate. These did not give clear consensus one way or the other. After talking to other schools of comparable size, Dr. Brenton felt that having a separate chief research officer with our current stage of development would not be the most efficient. She feels that there is a real interrelationship between graduate programs and research and there are a lot of good things served by the combination; about reminding PIs to write graduate assistants into their grants for example and looking at ways to do not just research grants, but programmatic grants. It was Dr. Brenton’s conclusion that right now it serves a function to keep the two together.

Another question raised was about why the search is internal rather than an external search. Dr. Brenton explained her reasoning for this. One is that there are a lot of good candidates on campus and she is confident they will find really good candidates for this position on campus. Secondly, from her personal experience in chairing searches in this area she has found that the pools you get are very narrow and that finding an outside person in to lead in this area has not been very successful. The third reason is due to the number of positions posted in the Chronicle of Higher Ed and the possibility that the high number due to current searches may raise questions about the credibility of the institution. The last reason for keeping the search internal is the expense of an external national search between advertising, travel and moving costs. We’ve already had six such searches this year and this would be the seventh. Dr. Brenton said if the internal search is not productive, it may be followed up by an external search.

Q: Our department doesn’t have a graduate program, but we do research and we do get quite a bit of grants for our size and for the fact that we don’t have graduate students. If we are not going to split, it makes sense to make sure that there are faculty voices and inputs from those that aren’t in the graduate school. Some of these advisory committees that would have faculty that would not just be the graduate program.

A: I think it makes a lot of sense. I actually held this position in another university and what we did there was set up a separate graduate council and a separate research council and I found it very helpful having that input from the research council from faculty and programs that were doing research and I would hope that we would move that direction.

Q: I would look forward to your leadership on that especially if we are pulling in someone who is already involved and it’s on that track where it’s really (unclear).

Q: About other searches that are ongoing?

A: For Health and Human Sciences, unfortunately the last candidate couldn’t be scheduled to visit until after spring break. We have interviewed 3 finalists and will be interviewing the last one early in the week after spring break. For the Associate/Assistant VC for Student Success, the search committee has done the initial screening of the pool. They thought they had a very good pool and they’ve identified candidates to do Skype interviews.

For the Associate/Assistant VC for the International and Extended Programs, they have also had their first screening of the pool.

They are still meeting with the millennial transition committee to look for an executive director (exact title unknown). They have decided it will be more of a networking search than it will be typical advertising. Conversations are continuing and they have talked with the president of the Research Triangle Foundation and there is a national organization of college research park administrators and with that network there may be some targeted advertising and a lot of networking to try to identify candidates. It is a unique niche and this avenue is believed to be more effective than advertising in the Chronicle of Higher Ed for this position.

There was an announcement that went out on the Chief of Staff search with information on receptions occurring in late March / early April. It was questionable as to whether or not this was a campus email. Dr. Brenton will ask the chair, Sam Miller, to make sure this information is announced to campus.

Q: Is there going to be an Associate Provost search this year?

A: We’re talking…there will need to be movement soon.

Q: With the division for extended and international programs, is the idea that once that position is filled that the structure underneath will be developed?

A: Yes, I had meetings with both staff in last couple of weeks. I really see the Assistant/Associate VC person as an umbrella. That’s it’s not going to completely blend the two areas together. There will be still be international programs and services, there will still be extended programs but with an umbrella director there will be more chances for interactions and efficiencies. Dr. Brenton shared some examples of how this situation would be beneficial. She also believes the position will be filled by someone who has greater experience in one area than the other (i.e. more international programs than online) and therefore when the position is filled, they will know what other leadership substructure they need to bring in.

Discussion continued.

Dr. Brenton commented on the Program Prioritization and in the past month since she received her diagnosis that Vicki Szabo has done a great job providing leadership for the Program Prioritization group. They have met and gone through all the program discussion. Letters will be sent out by next week to each program and department head notifying them which category their program was selected for and then those that are in category 3 will have the opportunity to meet with the committee and provide further information. Dr. Brenton shared that there are 8 programs tentatively designated as category 1, and 24 programs designated as category 3 that need follow up discussion. The others are in category 2. The majority are in the middle group.

Further discussion ensued. Vicki added that the committee will be asking for meetings with the category 3 group on the 18th and 19th of April and any additional material will be asked for by April 15th.

Dr. Brenton said this has been a superb committee that has taken their work seriously. She wasn’t able to attend the program prioritization retreat but understands that the discussions were creative and thoughtful and we owe a huge debt to this committee. Dr. Brenton also discussed in looking at academic efficiency of programs and overlap and low performing programs, that what we have completed in this process will put us in a good position to do so and to be seen as proactive and to have the information to defend programs. In addition, deans have started using these metrics in budget hearings and she thinks these will become part of our ongoing review process.

**SENATE REPORTS\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Faculty Senate Chair Report/Mary Jean Herzog, Chair:

The written chair report was submitted prior to the meeting. Mary Jean asked if there were any questions or discussion.

Q: Have you had volunteers for the 5 committees formed as a result of the UNC strategic plan?

A: I don’t know if they have – they wouldn’t come to me, but would go straight to (unclear)

Erin added that there were WCU faculty for almost every category. President Ross asked for 3 task forces to start up right away; on 1) general education 2) on elearning and 3) on classroom size. They asked the provost for recommendations names and Katherine Rigsby asked for nominations.

The meeting was adjourned.

Attachment 1:

Faculty Senate Meeting

March 20, 2013

Chancellor’s Report

Budget Update #1

We completed the internal budget hearing cycle in the last 10 days with two important meetings of the Chancellor’s Leadership Council (CLC) and the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC).  On Monday, March 11, WCU’s division heads presented their division’s budget priorities at the Chancellor’s Budget Hearings.  These priorities emerged from budget hearings at unit, department, and college levels.

Then, this past Monday, March 18, the CLC and BAC reconvened to discuss, debate, and brainstorm.    We discussed three topics:

1. Mandatory increases that the university must accommodate.  Those we identified were:  utility increases, Affordable Care Act-mandated benefits for part-time employees who work 30 or more hours per week, the structural deficit, the Biltmore Park lease increase, assumption of a greater part of the funding for the Cherokee Language Program (funded by start-up funding from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation), potential grants matches, and raises for faculty promotions.
2. The primary issues facing the university.  Those identified by the group were**:  academic quality/ student success/academic integrity**; business processes; clarity of identity and brand; **enrollment growth**; external communications; external partnerships**; faculty and staff recruitment and retention/quality of employment/quality of life; funding (entrepreneurial, managerial, enhancement); instructional capacity; I.T.**; maintaining the character of WCU in the face of change; **physical plant/infrastructure/space**; responding to federal and state policy; and student housing.
3. Identification of budgetary priorities in light of the primary issues facing WCU.  Most of the identified priorities (to be posted on the budget website:  (<http://www.wcu.edu/31807.asp>) fell under 7 headings – those in **bold** above.  Support for liberal studies instructional needs received, in particular, a tremendous amount of support from the group.

Once the state’s budget process comes to a conclusion this summer, we will revisit the priority lists to guide us in strategic fiscal allocation for the 2013-2014 year.

Budget Update #2

The Governor released his budget today, and, while it will take some time to digest the budget and understand its implications at the campus level, I can provide some basic information.  The Governor’s 2013-2014 budget calls for:

* A reduction in the recurring UNC System budget of nearly $67M.
* A non-recurring reduction in the UNC System budget of nearly $44M.
* A reduction as a result of administrative efficiencies of $10M.
* A reduction as a result of instructional efficiencies of nearly $16M.
* An increase in non-resident tuition of 6% (for WCU) over and above the tuition increase approved by the Board of Governors earlier this year.
* An increase of $19.6M (a mix of recurring and non-recurring) related to the UNC strategic plan.
* A 1% salary increase for which the state will appropriate funding.

I believe, though I do not yet have final word, that the budget does grant the universities enrollment growth funding, funding which WCU would get because we have met our enrollment projections.

The state budget process next moves to the Senate which will draft its own budget, which it will then submit to the House for its review and response.  Discussions between the two houses of the General Assembly will result in a budget which will be sent to the Governor for his signature.

There is much work yet to do in Raleigh before the state budget for next year is approved.  We will keep you apprised of developments and of our analyses of various proposals’ implications for WCU.

Western Legislative Delegation Reception in Raleigh

Dianne Lynch, Zeta Smith, Alecia Page, and I hosted a reception in Raleigh last evening (March 19) for members of the western delegation in the General Assembly.  We had a fine turnout for this event which provided us with a great forum in which to talk about Western Carolina University and the impact it is having on our state and region.  As the spokesperson for Western Carolina in such sessions, I can tell you that ours is an impressive story to share, and these state leaders are impressed by the work you are doing.  It will be important for us to consistently build relationships with our elected officials, and last evening’s gathering marked a good step in that agenda.  I was pleased that President Ross and Supreme Court Justice/WCU alumnus Mark Martin were also in attendance.

Endnote

Let me add a final word of encouragement:  keep the faith!  We are doing great work at our university and we will continue to do so, working within whatever parameters we encounter to ensure that our students are robust thinkers and productive citizens, that we improve the lives of the people of Western North Carolina, and that we demonstrably value you, the faculty and staff who do what I refer to as the *real* work of Western Carolina University.  Thank you for all you do on behalf of these commitments.

Sincerely yours,

David Belcher