



## **A Walkabout**

I'm sitting in my office, racking my brain, trying to figure out what to say in my last Faculty Forum. I am moving on in December after 25 years of teaching at WCU.

Should I write about the value of the Faculty Forum? (No. Done that [here](#).) Reminisce about my work and life at WCU? (Nah. Too sentimental.) Consider the balancing act in teaching, research, service, and personal life? (Nada. Not again.) Gripe about the new president, the BOG, and salaries? (Nope. Plenty of others grumbling.)

Still racking my brain, I watch the activity on the quad and the UC lawn. Too bad I can't sell my office like a piece of high end real estate. I have a great view of the water fountain, and I imagine there will be a long list of faculty hoping to snag it when I leave. I watch two students doing wheelies on their bikes. Uh, oh. One crashes, and a few guys gather around him. He takes a hand, jumps up and joins his helpers throwing a football. The leader of the group looks like a WCU ad in gold shorts and a purple shirt.

I try to count all the purple t-shirts walking across the UC lawn and quad. Too many. Have our students always had such purple pride? Or do we give the shirts out for free?

Off to the left on the UC lawn, a young man – barefooted and bare-chested - balances on a slack line. I press my timer. Holy crow, he's been up there for 96 seconds. The next two guys only last 3 and 5 seconds. I counted. There's a woman on it now, and she has better balance, making it for 26 seconds.

Another student swings in a black and red hammock. I'm glad we have trees.

I'm not making much progress writing, so I might as well give it up and take a walk. Today is one of those sparkling, bright blue Cullowhee days that make this campus stunning. For a November day, it's warm and sunny, and the rocking chairs on the UC balcony are all occupied with students appreciating the mountain view.

Walking across the UC lawn, I stop and talk to the men at the bible table. They are friendly and let me take a picture: **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY TEACH? TAKE A FREE COPY.** And they don't try to sell me their religion. Hmm. All these years I've avoided their table. Maybe I've misjudged them.

The bell tower lot is almost empty now that it's a pay lot. I stop and watch the students balancing on the slack line. They are friendly and talkative, and ask me if I want to try. No way! I'll look for other ways to balance, thank you.

Continuing on my campus walk, I stop in front of Forsythe to take pictures of the construction across the street. I wonder how stable that wall is. Last week, there were big, gaping holes in it. Looks like they're patched now, but damn, it's steep. There's a banner in front, "COMING FALL 2016: NEW DINING, RETAIL AND STUDENT HOUSING." I miss the Mad Batter's cappuccino and scones and the chicken tacos at Rolling Stone Burrito, but what I really miss is the camaraderie. I even miss Bob's landmark beer store being there. I'll be surprised if the local shopkeepers can afford the rent. But fires burn and times change.

Walking on, I notice another banner, this one on Hoey, advertising the year's shows. From *Andy Warhol* to *Gypsy*, looks like some good ones.

I take a picture of Breese across the street where my kids used to swim and practice kayak rolling. Breese is one of the prettiest buildings on campus, built in the 1930s. I guess the pool was beyond repair, and it was filled in a couple of years ago. I'm really glad the building was saved.

Enough wandering around, I realize I've lost an hour when I should have been writing. Maybe I'll reward myself with another walk when I get this thing done. I could check out the Lewis Hine exhibit on the library's second floor and see what's on at the Fine Art Museum. I haven't been on the mountain bike trail leading to HHS in a while. Or I could procrastinate a little longer, go get a good cup of coffee at the [Hillside Grind](#) and see if the [Mad Batter Food Truck](#) is there.

Maybe I'll just say this: I hope you find your work and life at WCU as good and satisfactory as I have. Chris Cooper is going to take over as Faculty Forum editor. I'm sure he will take it to the next level, so stay tuned.

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