

Faculty Senate Minutes

08/25/2021 Regular Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm

UC Multipurpose Room

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

CHEROKEE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Western Carolina University is situated within the ancestral homelands of the Cherokee people, twenty miles from present-day Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian communities of the Qualla Boundary. The campus occupies Two Sparrows Place (Tali Tsisgwayahi), an ancient principal town with a mound and council house where Killian Building now stands. Cullowhee, the university's home, is Tsul'kalawi (or Judaculla's Place). This giant being was the Great Teacher and steward of the natural world, and ancient stories about Judaculla tell of the Creator and creation, the origin of humans, and the proper way to be Cherokee. We at Western Carolina University inherit these stories so that we may better understand the deep significance of this beloved place and our role here.

ROLL CALL

- Present: Kia Asberg, Michael Boatright, Indi Bose, David de Jong, Mariana Fisher, Gael Graham, Heidi Grappendorf, Yancey Gulley, Shelby Hicks, John Hildreth, Scottie Kapel, Will Lehman, Erin McNelis, April Messer (late arrival), Diana Messer, Sean Mulholland, Kadence Otto, Heather Rimes, Carrie Rogers, Katerina Spasovska, Provost Richard Starnes, Vicki Szabo, Drew Virtue, Colin Wasmund, Cheryl Waters-Tormey, Laura Wright
- Members with Proxies: Jeremy Jones, Marco Lam, Leigh Odom, Martin Tanaka, Elizabeth Wark
- Members Absent: Chancellor Kelli Brown

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Regular Business Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2021

- *Verbal vote proceeded and passed unanimously. Minutes approved.*

TRANSITION TO NEW CHAIR (Passing of Gavel)

Kadence Otto (Past Chair) turned over the gavel and hard hat to Laura Wright (chair) with great pleasure. Thanks was given to Kadie for the great work she did last year as Chair of the Faculty Senate.

REPORTS

Chancellor's Report: Kelli Brown

The Chancellor's written report was shared prior to the Senate meeting and reads as follows.

COVID-19

- Catamounts, it is clear that we are not yet out of the woods with respect to COVID-19. It is equally clear that vaccination remains our best path forward in defeating this virus and ensuring a robust campus experience for all.
- I continue to **strongly urge** that all faculty, staff and students who have not yet done so, get vaccinated as quickly as possible. Our WCU Clinic is offering free COVID-19 vaccines.

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- I recently announced that in addition to masks being required in all instructional and some other areas on campus, we must again require them in all indoor public spaces for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals for everyone's safety. My decision was based on updated CDC guidelines and was needed as extra protection for everyone's safety at WCU.
- We are also asking all faculty and staff to attest to their vaccination status when they log in to myWCU and to upload their vaccination information at <https://www.wcu.edu/discover/about/operations-procedures.aspx> under the Vaccine Status Submission links.
- WCU will also be offering \$500 cash awards to 16 lucky, fully vaccinated faculty and staff members who have already taken steps to protect our campus community by getting vaccinated. The first drawings will begin August 30th, so please upload your vaccination today if you've not yet done so.
- We recently communicated new guidance from the UNC System to establish a "get vaccinated or get tested" expectation for all faculty, staff and students at UNC System institutions.
- Students living in campus residence halls were required to submit proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test prior to moving in.
- WCU is giving students not in residence halls, faculty, and staff until October 1 to submit proof of vaccination or be subject to weekly testing protocols.
- October 1 was chosen as it allows those who are unvaccinated time to receive both vaccine shots (if they choose Pfizer or Moderna) in advance of testing protocols beginning.

Parking Update

- I know there are a lot of concerns about parking on campus at the beginning of the year.
- After a delay in receiving the Beneficial Occupancy certificate, which is our last hurdle, our new parking deck is expected to open this week.
- Also, communications recently went out regarding additional parking being made available in the Baptist Tier lot and the Killian East lot.
- I hear your frustrations on the lack of available parking, and we are doing what we can in the midst of on-going construction to make as much parking available as possible.
- We will continue to explore ways to maximize parking for faculty and staff on campus.

Legislative Update

- I understand that the salary equity and compression salary issue we have at Western has been a problem for many years, but let it be known that I'm committed to compensating our faculty and staff appropriately.
- You all may know that recently, the North Carolina House included a 5% across the board raise (2.5% in each year of the biennium) for most of our faculty and staff in the budget. Although that is good news, I am concerned about the differential treatment of our professional staff (EHRA non-faculty) who were initially excluded from the salary increases, but were eventually added to the budget at a lower rate - 3% or 1.5% each year of the biennium for those making under \$95,000.
- The budget now goes to conference where the Senate, House and Governor will attempt to work out their differences.
- We are communicating directly with our legislators and advocates to make a strong case for equitable treatment for **ALL of our** critical staff who were and continue to be essential front-line employees during the pandemic.
- In addition, the UNC System Office is actively working to address the issue with leaders in the Senate, House, and Governor's office.

Apodaca Science Building

- After three years of construction, I am happy to announce that we have opened our Apodaca Science Building!
- A HUGE thank you to the faculty and staff in the College of Arts and Sciences for their patience and enthusiasm in getting moved in this summer.

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- There will be an official Grand Opening ribbon cutting event at 2 p.m. next Friday, Sept. 3, but classes there have already begun.
- The Grand Opening is open to the public.
- This new \$110.5 million structure, which is part of the Connect NC bond initiative for education improvements across the state, replaces the 1970s-era Natural Science Building. This space allows our faculty to now teach the next generation of scientists the latest techniques and approaches that can be applied to real-world research.
- I most excited about the shared lab spaces. These large spaces, which are sometimes called research neighborhoods, can hold more than one class and allows them to perform research at the same time and/or collaborate on a larger project.
- The shared labs serve as a combined space with people who have similar equipment and space needs. While in these spaces, students use the same industry-approved lab instruments that instructors will use, which is unique. Some schools provide a different set of instrumentations for students versus faculty.
- The new labs also simulate those found in the workplace today, which draws excitement from both faculty and students.

Construction Updates

- In addition to the Apodaca Building, there is a tremendous amount of activity going on around campus to address new construction as well as renovation and repair.
- This construction and R&R activity is critical to address space and maintenance needs on campus.
- However, some of the construction will create inconveniences.
- We will do our best to minimize disruptions to campus and I have asked our Facilities' staff to communicate disruptions to foot and vehicular traffic, whenever possible.
- Work on the lower campus residence halls to replace Scott and Walker is progressing rapidly and the first of the new halls will be open next August.
- The old Natural Sciences Building is undergoing abatement and demolition of that building will occur later this fall. This project will have significant impact on Stillwell and on Hunter Library.
- As the NSB abatement and demolition is underway, entrance to Hunter Library will be through Stillwell building.
- And, you will continue to see activity in and around the Steam Plant as work progresses on WCU's new energy production facility.
- I know it's a lot and we appreciate your patience as this necessary work unfolds.

University Accolades

There have been so many good things happening on campus, some of which you may have heard about during Fall Opening last week. For the sake of time, I would like to mention just a few that exhibit our goal of becoming the best regional comprehensive university in the Southeast.

- Western Carolina University is a recipient of a recurring grant from the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program that will provide \$4.1 million over the next six years, the University of North Carolina System recently announced. The grant will help WCU's North Carolina School Executive Leadership Program prepare effective principals to meet the demands of public education and administration, and to equip top tier candidates for school leadership who positively affect student learning in North Carolina.
- Kae Livsey, an associate professor in the School of Nursing at Western Carolina University, is the recipient of a \$10,000 prize award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help improve pediatric care in Haywood County.
- And, our Educational Leadership Program was recognized as the 2021 Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED) Program of the Year. Congratulations to Dr. Jess Weiler and all the faculty in that program on this outstanding achievement!

Closing

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- Finally, I remain excited and committed to a robust campus experience this fall.
- We can and will deliver on our promise to deliver the best education to our students both in and out of the classroom. Thanks to each of you for your efforts to get us there.
- Thank you and have a great school year!

Provost's Report: Richard Starnes

The Provost's written report was shared prior to the Senate meeting and reads as follows.

Leadership Transitions

The sudden passing of Dean Jeff Ray earlier this month was a tragedy for our community. We will miss his energy, his dedication to his College, and his commitment to our students. I have asked Dr. Chip Ferguson, who has long served as Associate Dean, to serve as interim Dean for this year. A faculty-led national search will begin soon and a call for nominations and self-nominations for committee meetings was initiated this week.

Dr. Jeff Lawson has served as the Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Success, supervising the WALC, Math Tutoring Center, Retention, MAPS, First Year Experience, and the Office of Accessibility Resources. A search for this position will begin in the coming weeks.

Enrollment

As of the first day of class, total enrollment was down 2.68% (11,967 vs. 12,206 last year). Graduate enrollment was up slightly, as is transfer and distance. Residential undergraduate enrollment is down for both first year and returning students.

Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Ricardo Nazario-Colon (Chief Diversity Officer) and Sky Sampson (Director of the Cherokee Center) are working with Communication to develop a website for the Land Acknowledgement unveiled during the spring commencement. It will include the full text, a shorter version to be used at university meetings' such as Faculty Senate, and guidelines for use.

Budget

The House and the Senate are moving into conference to complete a compromise budget. We hope for a budget in mid-September. We are monitoring the negotiations on all our legislative priorities, including faculty and staff salaries, NC Promise, enrollment growth funds, and capital projects, and are engaging with our legislative delegation.

Office of Student Retention

To better coordinate programming, gain operational efficiencies, and enhance support of our students on the path to success, Mentoring and Persistence of Success and the Office of Student Transitions have become part of an expanded Office of Student Retention. The directorships of these two offices are now, respectively,

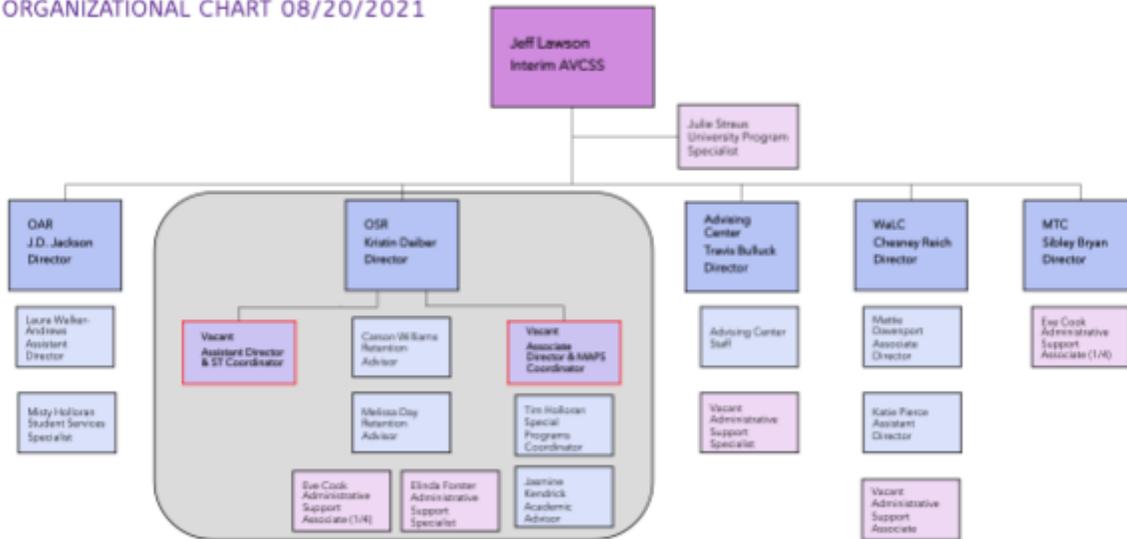
- Associate Director of Retention, Mentoring and Persistence to Success Coordinator
- Assistant Director of Retention, Student Transitions Coordinator

Both positions are vacant, and we are launching national searches for each position. All staff in these offices now report to the Director of Retention. Below is the new organizational chart.

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DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 08/20/2021



The Office of Student Retention implements targeted advising interventions to support at-risk students, guided by evidence-based high-impact practices and driven by institutional data and analytics. The Office collaborates across campus to coordinate and measure initiatives to support student retention and persistence at Western Carolina University. Mentoring and Persistence to Success focuses on retention efforts for students in particular at-risk categories, including academically underprepared students, first-generation students, emancipated minors, and independent students. Student Transitions focuses on students new to WCU, including first-time first-year freshman and new transfer students. These two offices work closely together with heavy overlap of mission and function.

Retention efforts are going to be even more important at WCU in future years, so combining the offices to a larger Office of Student Retention will allow synergies between the different initiatives, greater flexibility to assign work uniformly throughout the academic year and summer, improvements in efficiency of support staff, and enhancements in continuity of operations.

The other offices in the Division, namely, the Office of Accessibility Resources, the Advising Center, the Writing and Learning Center (WaLC), and the Mathematics Tutoring Center (MTC) will continue their central roles in student success. Accessibility, advising, learning communities, tutoring, coaching, supplemental instruction, and the many other functions of these offices feature significantly in student retention.

Tutoring

Both the WaLC and the MTC are fully operational for Fall 2021, offering both face-to-face and virtual tutoring. Supplemental instruction in targeted courses will operate at full capacity. In addition, we are piloting a peer coaching model for targeted sections of various liberal studies courses.

Canvas Update

The Canvas implementation and migration is complete, and we are hearing good things from many instructors. Now that Canvas is fully operational, please contact the IT HelpDesk for Canvas questions and issues.

One of the advantages of the Canvas LMS platform is its extensibility, meaning the ability to integrate 3rd-party apps to extend the basic platform. The LMS Governance Committee was created in 2020 to have a diverse group of faculty, staff, and administrators review and approve requests for these apps. The process for submitting a request for an integration,

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along with the integrations that have been approved or denied, can be found at <https://affiliate.wcu.edu/cfc/integrations-ltis-in-canvas/>. Please subscribe to the Faculty tag in InsideWCU to receive our weekly Canvas tips.

Ouriginal is a similarity detection solution that combines text-matching with writing-style analysis to promote academic integrity and help prevent plagiarism. This tool is being adopted to replace SafeAssign which was an embedded tool within BlackBoard. SafeAssign is not compatible with Canvas, so WCU needed to find an alternative for academic use. Only students are allowed to submit work to Ouriginal so it also serves as an educational tool.

The LMS team has installed Ouriginal in our Canvas Test environment and are close to pushing it to Production. At this point we are waiting on the vendor to provide the last few pieces necessary for rollout. The Canvas team is pushing for Ouriginal to be available for faculty use by the middle of September. Ouriginal will be offering a couple of trainings open to all faculty. Those training dates and times should be set by next week. There will also be an Ouriginal Knowledge Article available through the IT HelpDesk.

TPR update

We will again use the SharePoint site created last year, with some minor updates, to handle electronic TPR/PTR documentation. Faculty candidates now have access to their individual folders. One thing that we heard from candidates last year was that they missed the opportunity to review the library of example dossiers in the CFC. While those still exist, they don't reflect the nuance of the digital format. We reached out to a number of faculty who went through review last year and they have graciously allowed us to make their materials available as examples. Those examples will be available on the TPR SharePoint site this week. Brandon will also be offering a number of drop-in TPR Q&A sessions over the next several weeks.

If you have not already done so, I ask that departments and colleges confirm their collegial review committee membership and ideally CRC secretary names with Suzanne Melton as soon as possible. There is a significant amount of work that has to be done behind the scenes to set permissions to make this process work, so the sooner we have that information, the better. To that point, I urge the CRC to work with Brandon this year to explore what a long-term electronic process should look like for TPR.

As for collegial review committee meetings, I anticipate that those will be held in-person, but electronic voting is allowable. Guides for committees and the use of Poll Everywhere will be updated to incorporate any of the minor updates we made to the SharePoint site this year. Those will be available for reviewers on the TPR SharePoint site.

Non-tenure track (NTT) faculty promotion

DCRD revisions incorporating new titles/pathways for promotion have been approved and are being posted to the Provost Office SharePoint site as final signatures are collected from the colleges. Recall that the Senate approved the additional title of Associate Instructor late in the spring semester as an intermediate step between Instructor and Senior Instructor. In some departments, additional updates will be needed in the coming year to incorporate those changes. We are verifying the list of NTT faculty with HR to identify faculty eligible for promotion in the first round of implementation and will share that list with the deans. A guidance document for implementation will be provided to the deans and department heads next month to help guide college-specific processes. We are also analyzing what the budget implications will be for this first round of promotions.

Academic Leadership Program

The Academic and Administrative Leadership Program will commence in January 2022 with two cohorts of eight each—faculty and administrators—for a total of 16 participants. The academic track of the program will provide opportunities for faculty professional development, increase WCU's investment in a "grow our own" experience, and broaden our perspectives as a campus community by having more faculty participation in senior level discussions. The program has tapped faculty who are interested in higher education leadership and advancement.

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The program is designed to provide practical and applicable content in becoming an academic leader and will be run concurrently with a similarly structured leadership program for current or aspiring administrative leaders who are not in faculty positions; sessions will be tailored to meet the needs of each group, although some overlap of sessions will occur. Tentative topics for the Academic Leadership track include:

- budget/funding and resources;
- executive leadership perspectives;
- institutional and State/System level governance and structure;
- equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice;
- crisis leadership and conflict management; and
- communication.

Haywood County Flood Assistance

The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning quickly mobilized to collect and deliver donations for residents of Haywood County who were badly impacted by tropical storm Fred. The second of two deliveries will take place on Monday, August 30th at 4:00.

For a list of primary items needed: [CLICK HERE](#)

Drop off donations at the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning Lobby area - Belk 273 between 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday. The drop off point will be clearly marked by large YELLOW barrels. Contact Dr. Lane Perry at laneperry@wcu.edu if you have questions.

Funding Available for Experiential Learning

Undergraduate Studies currently has funding available to support Intentional and Engaged Learning opportunities for the 2021-2022 academic year. Allocations will primarily support faculty and student activities directly related to intentional, integrative, engaged teaching/learning. The Intentional Learning Plan Grant Applications can be found on the Office of the Provost SharePoint page as well as the Academic Enrichment website. The three primary applications are:

- Intentional Learning Plan Grant Application
- Intentional Learning - Conference Presentation/Student Travel Application
- Intentional Learning - Non-Conference Student Travel Application

Undergraduate Studies also has funding available for programs and events related to this year's campus theme: Water. Water seeks to engage the campus community in immersive and intellectual experiences to explore the topic of water through myriad lenses (economic, political, educational, cultural, geographic, environmental, and others) and to heighten our understanding of how it impacts us, our region, our nation, and our world. For more information about the campus theme, or to submit a request for support please visit go.wcu.edu/campustheme.

Question from Vicki Szabo: Any chance we are moving the testing date forward?

Response: It is currently October 1st and we are looking at moving that forward.

Question from Vicki Szabo: The ECU report caused a lot of worry; is WCU conducting an environmental survey on our own areas regarding air quality?

Response: We have done some of this in the past. We surveyed Coulter in the past and distributed the results to the faculty in that building. No issues were found and therefore, nothing actionable. We do have money in the capital budget to allow us to move forward in HVAC renovations for Killian. Mike Byers can speak more on this.

Mike Byers: There are several buildings that we have conducted tests on, and since March 2020, we have made a number of adjustments. Hopefully we can revisit; at this time, we do not believe any buildings are a hazard. We can look at any buildings you are concerned about.

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Vicki Szabo: There is mold in some buildings – books getting moldy. Is it perception or risk?

Provost Richard Starnes: Air from outside will lead to an increase in humidity. Send us any concerns and we will take a look.

Question from Michael Boatright on behalf of Jeremy Jones: Are there any plans for more tents for outside instruction?

Response: We are looking at tents right now. The tents are \$10,000 a month. We are looking at different options. Some vendors we work with are supporting festivals – looking at sourcing and will likely have them on campus soon.

Question from Michael Boatright on behalf of Jeremy Jones: Are we looking to mandate the vaccine? What are the increased efforts to encourage students to be vaccinated?

Response: We will continue to message students, and are currently doing targeting messaging now and incentives. There is a lag in the data because humans have to verify the information. We will continue to advertise the WCU Clinic and encourage vaccines. We have seen a jump in the number of students getting first time vaccines.

Question from Drew Virtue: Do we have any updated guidelines on what faculty and staff are supposed to do if we are exposed?

Response: That information came out in communication today, and it can also be found on the FAQ page for COVID. Return to work coordinators can help with questions as well.

Follow-up question: Will there be an effort on campus for booster vaccines?

Response: Yes, we are working on that now.

Follow-up question: Is the expectation that masks will be continued to be required in public spaces throughout the semester?

Response: Yes, until such time we see transmission rates and positivity rates indicated differently. We will use masks for the unforeseeable future.

Question from Erin McNelis: Are there any changes to the mask requirements in the cafeteria?

Response: Masks are required unless you are actively eating.

Question from Laura Wright: With the approval of Pfizer, will the UNC system pivot on requiring the vaccine?

Response: It is not up to the CAO's. It would be the Commission on Public Health that has the authority to make that change.

Question from Laura Wright: The Chancellor repeatedly commits to equitable and fair salaries; what are you going to do?

Response: We should get a budget mid-late September and we will make a decision on the funds we have available, and see how we will work through the faculty and staff salary plans. As soon as we have the budget we can move forward. We won't know real numbers until then. We need more clarity.

Question from Vicki Szabo: Regarding the Office of Student Retention, are those new positions?

Response: We are using current funds that have been reinvested in different ways.

Question from Laura Wright: Parking issues – will you cut us a break on parking?

Mike Byers: We had a major problem on Monday with the parking garage. We were able to get that in check yesterday. Once the parking deck is completely opened we will see this get better. WCU administration's policy is not to raise parking rates for faculty and staff. This puts more pressure on student parking rates. We cannot give a break on rates because the money borrowed for the garage is guaranteed by the revenue stream from permits. The parking budget will not allow us a month off. The only way to do this would be to take monies from another area to supplement the parking deck payment. It is possible – the Chancellor would have to look into this. It is not as simple as most would assume.

Follow-up question: We received an email about students who will get a boot if they are parked illegally. When that happens, the spot becomes immobile... this is something to consider as far as holding them accountable but not taking away a parking spot we need.

Mike Byers: We will look into this and explore alternatives.

Question from Indi Bose: If we park in a service spot, will we be forgiven?

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Mike Byers: No. You may get away with it, but I cannot say it is okay to park there.

Question from Vicki Szabo: Is the percentage of enrollment down less than we expected it to be?

Response: Yes, the numbers quoted at Planning Team were a percentage greater – results of drop for nonpayment; since then, the folks have paid and that has increased the percentage. We will have a final drop on Friday, so there will still be some variation in this. The number that works for the budget is the 10th class day – census day. Enrollment numbers as an SCH number will determine the budget. The SCH number is much more important than headcount. We are up about 13% in distance UG – those tend to be part time so they are not generating the same hours as a full time student would.

Question from Vicki Szabo: Will we be using a search committee firm for the CET Dean search?

Response: No

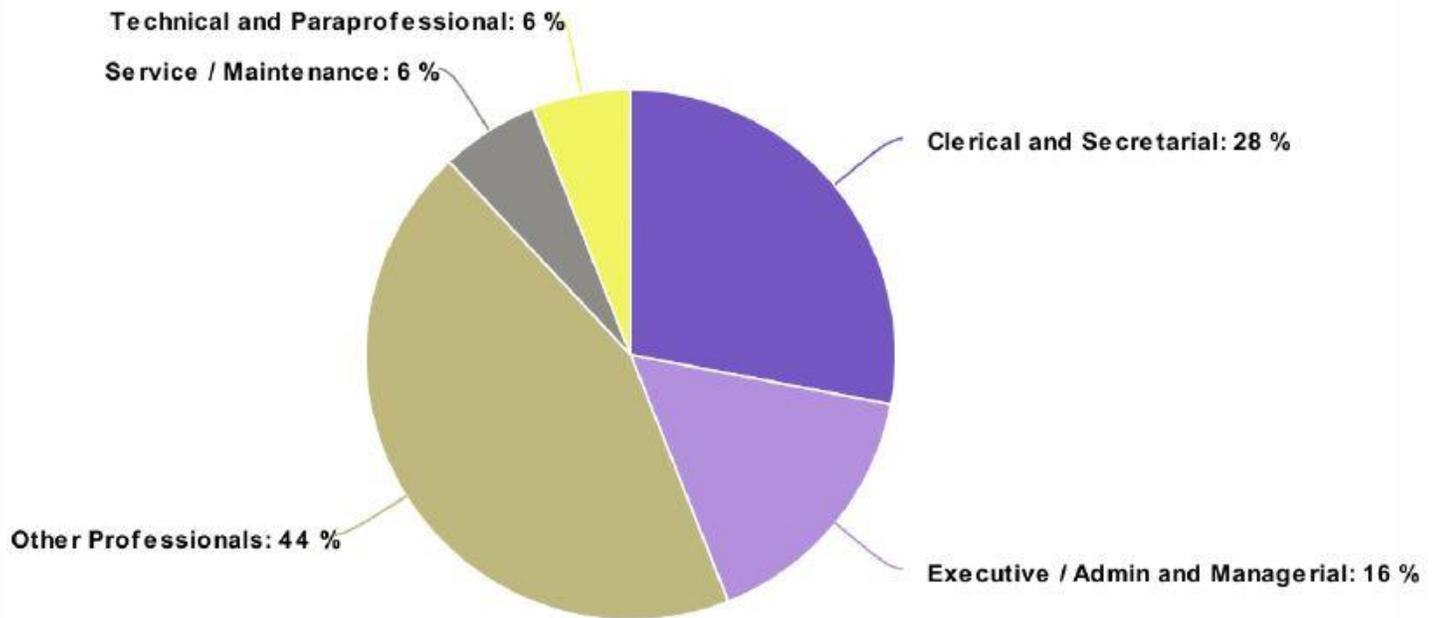
Staff Senate Chair: Deidre Hopkins

The Chair's written report was shared prior to the Senate meeting and reads as follows.

Staff Senate Roster and Representation 2021-2022

Anne Aldrich	Brittany Duell	Jenn Lohse	Adam Ray
Lisa Allen	Alex Fields*	Will Love*	Trisha Ray*
Betsy Aspinwall, Chair Elect*	Carrie Hachadurian*	Catherine MacCallum	Chelsea Reavis
Lauren Bishop	Carol Hicks	Deborah Millican	Zara Shick*
Kathy Boland	Deidre Hopkins, Chair*	Chris Moore	Sarah Speed
Dana Boyer	Donnie Johnson	April Newland	Brian Thomas
Brittney Buchanan*	Alison Joseph*	Dana Patterson	Robert Walker*
Melissa Day	Coleman Leopard	Ben Pendry, Past Chair*	Zachary Williams*

**Executive Team Members*



2020-2021 Recap

The past year has been quite a wild and unexpected ride, and while it continues to have twists and turns, there is a hint of normalcy in the air. While on this ride, Staff Senate never ceased to show up, be present, and active. We had a busy and productive year, for example: we hosted four virtual forums, participated in the Culture in Conversation Series, contributed over 300 hours of community service, gave 30 professional development awards (exhausting \$10K in funding), raised over \$13,000 in scholarship funds (\$6,500 from the U Club Silent Auction), sold 300 Ornaments, awarded nine scholarships to incoming and returning students, created three onboarding checklists, penned a Joint Resolution alongside Faculty Senate, and administered a training survey...just to name a few.

As we move into a new fiscal year, Staff Senate is committed to working collaboratively to represent the interest of SHRA and EHRA non-faculty professional staff to the best of our ability.

Staff Senate Initiatives 2021-2022

The 2021-2022 Staff Senate is grateful for the opportunity to work with Chancellor Brown, WCU Executive Council, the WCU Faculty Senate, WCU Student Government Association, and the incredible group of SHRA and EHRA-Non-Faculty staff members. Staff Senate has identified four initiatives we plan to accomplish this year.

These initiatives are:

Leadership Development

Staff Senate has identified a need for leadership development among its senators and - more likely than not - among other WCU staff members. Staff Senate wants to empower staff members to take charge of their leadership development and growth as an employee. This will create a stronger pool of staff ready to take on new internal positions. Staff Senate believes we can serve a role in growing our staff, in partnership with Human Resources, University Communications, and other WCU departments. Staff Senate strives to be a "go-to" resource for WCU staff members. Examples of activities related to this are:

- 10 Minute Professional Advice Videos (using internal staff leaders)
- Soft Skills Development
- Panels/Forums with Internal Staff Leaders

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- Leadership Book club and/or other shared reading or professional development experiences
- Senator Mentorship Program
- Engagement with former Staff Senate Chairs

Expand Staff Senate Connection and Visibility

To maintain transparency, open lines of communication and respect between WCU leaders and employees, Staff Senate would like to further increase their connection and visibility. We want to utilize available platforms to positively elevate the voice of staff across campus, utilizing the conduit of the Staff Senate. A draft of ideas follows:

- Coffee Break with Staff Senate
- Staff Senate visibility at departmental committee meetings
- Increase collaborative efforts between Staff Senate, Faculty Senate and SGA
 - Culture in Conversation Series
- Senate representation on university committees
 - Strategic Plan Committee
 - Seek to increase input into the executive hiring processes
- Senate and Executive Council Social
 - Invite all EC members to meet members of the Senate (invites to past senators)
- Increase influence **in** University-wide strategic and master planning efforts

Staff Senate Organizational Structure

Continue building upon the Senate's work this past year to create a thorough database/documentation of the innerworkings of the Senate's committees, events, and month-to-month happenings. Craft a framework of operations that better reflects the university's current composition and incorporates Staff Senate best practices. This will improve the transparency of Staff Senate and its organizational structure include, but not limited to:

- Create SOPs for each committee (including ad hoc)
- Organize, restructure and utilize the Staff Senate Teams/SharePoint sites for document sharing
- Review by-laws to identify operational gaps and opportunities to expand senate representation
 - Draft amendments to the by-laws, if necessary

Staff Emeritus Recognition

Staff Senate will work with WCU HR and senior leadership to explore the viability and establishment of a staff emeritus award. This would recognize retired permanent staff members who have had a distinguished professional career and has made significant contributions to Western Carolina University through service, dedication, leadership and innovation. It is recognized that the bearer of the emeritus title has knowledge and experience from which others in the university may benefit. Benefits may include:

- Staff rates/discounts on university events, including Catamount athletic events (when available)
- Full library borrowing privileges
- University email account (if requested)
- Documents and communications that are normally received by the full-time staff including communications from the department, division, and university at large
- Listing in the University catalog and on appropriate university web pages
- Staff rates and access to university recreational facilities
- A mailbox in the department office (if requested and space permits).
- Free parking permits.
- A university ID card with 92 number.
- Office space
- Eligibility to submit for grants and university funding

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In addition to these primary initiatives, the Senate will continue to focus on:

- Employee Health & Wellness
- Local and Regional Impact
- Staff Senate Scholarship fundraising
- Community service engagement for employees
- Diversity, Equity, and inclusion
- Professional Development for Staff

Read the 2020-2021 Staff Senate Annual Report [here](#).

Find the 2021-2022 Staff Senator Bios [here](#).

Student Government Association President: Rebecca Hart

Read the [SGA written report](#) that was shared prior to the Senate meeting.

Question from Vicki Szabo: How are the students doing using the Canvas LMS?

Response: Some say they prefer Blackboard, but we haven't had any come to complain at SGA. Most people used it in high school and are used to it.

Question from Katerina Spasovska: Are you hearing any complaints that meal plans are not usable because places are not open?

Response: Parking and Aramark have been expressed as concerns. We talked to Aramark and they don't have enough student workers. Until more students can get hired and trained, places like Brown are closed. We are competing with off campus employers. Other places are giving more money. There is an hour cap here as well. SGA will continue to push and encourage student workers, but we need more ideas.

Provost Richard Starnes: There is a student hiring issue with Aramark. They have a regular staff shortage they are trying to deal with as well.

Question from Laura Wright: IS SGA pushing for election day off?

Response: We were told that the academic calendar is made a few years in advance, but considering how active we are, we could be one of the first in the state to push more people to be politically involved.

COUNCIL and COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Policy and Review Council (APRC) Report: Will Lehman

APRC will host its first meeting next week. We have a few proposals for a new BS in Economic Analysis, and a Minor in Social Justice to review.

Collegial Review Council (CRC) Report: Drew Virtue

CRC is meeting next week. We do have some carryover items- looking at the electronic TPR process. We are using SharePoint again this year, but will explore other options for the future. We will also do an exploratory look at the TPR process at peer universities.

We are looking into COVID statements for candidates again this year.

We have great movement on NTTF and will be pushing for more clarity on this as well.

Faculty Affairs Council (FAC) Report: Cheryl Waters-Tormey

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FAC is meeting on Friday. We continue to address ongoing items related to salaries, and based on feedback we collected, from the standing faculty committee is the quality of life – looking into child care, commute, parking spaces – we have a list to work through.

Student feedback system – people focus on SAI, but there is a packing of things from SGA, DH council, all of the hard work CFC is doing – we will continue to work on this. Most of the effort has been during a pandemic and this is a tough thing to tackle. We are moving in a good direction.

Rules Committee: Indi Bose

Usually the Rules Committee is formed in this first meeting. There are some years we do not have a lot to look at and others we have more.

In Planning Team, we talked about policy on electronic communication. We think we should look at that for our campus.

Please let Indi Bose know if you want to serve on the committee or have ideas.

Laura Wright shared that council structures were an item last year and still needs some work – need a system. The email Policy 93, may be a bit too vague with the administration's access to our email.

We need to educate faculty to see if we should really keep personal and professional emails separate. We should rethink how we do these things.

Faculty Senate Chair's Report: Laura Wright

September Board of Trustees Visit

Thanks to everyone attending; if anyone else wants to attend, just reach out to Laura Wright. Look over the Guide to Governance that was sent out as it is a useful tool. It is important to interact with the BOT when they are on campus. We need to be present with them.

Laura is working with administration to revise travel policies, including third-party lodging, credit cards, etc. we want to bring this all in line with what is up to date in other system schools.

We are working on the need for better communication. Administration has been receptive. They have asked for specific questions from faculty and the Chancellor and Provost will answer on a weekly basis.

Question to Provost Starnes: Is the shuttle a possibility?

Response: When we taught grad courses at UNCA, there was a motor pool. By the time Biltmore Park opened, the demand dissipated. It could be possible to do it but we wouldn't want to for one person. We can look at this further.

Comment from Indi Bose: If the shuttle stopped somewhere on the way more people might ride.

Laura Wright shared that Marlon Morgan will send out a comprehensive list of news about the university, system, region, and higher education.

Faculty Priorities – Conversation Topics

The Faculty Conversations event was successful, and many thoughts were shared. Read the [full list](#) on SharePoint.

Question from Indi Bose: Can we ask about vaccination status of students?

Response from Provost Starnes: No

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Question from Shelby Hicks: What is the course for students not wearing masks?

Response from Provost Starnes: Ask them to please put on their mask. Have masks available. If the student becomes confrontational, get their name and turn it into the dean for student conduct. Start with kindness.

Additional question: What is the recommendation for our encouragement of vaccinations? Is it okay to recommend it?

Response from Provost Starnes: Yes

Vicki Szabo thanked Laura Wright for developing a Facebook page.

Question from Michael Boatright: One student teacher is refusing to disclose vaccination status at the high school. I worry about this person going back and forth, etc. Are there repercussions?

Additional question from Laura Wright: What are the consequences if they don't disclose?

Response from Provost Starnes: In this specific example, if a student is required by their placement to have a vaccination and they refuse to get it or disclose it, they will lose that placement. There can be a wide variety of impacts from that decision. It is the policy of those entities. As the landscape changes, it may be nearly impossible for us to place them anywhere else. This is the reality we are facing. We are seeing it in health sciences as well. The broader question is about students refusing to disclose – it goes to Student Code of Conduct. If an employee refuses, they are subject to employee disciplinary actions. We are setting up policy structures to deal with these as they incur.

Comment from Laura Wright: We need a lot of communication on this. More about COVID – less about CANVAS.

Comment from Shelby Hicks: We are planning a trip abroad. The people organizing sent us an announcement asking students to show documentation of vaccines. There is a disconnect, and the students think we are the bad guys but this is the new world.

Question from Vicki Szabo: What happened to the mask signs across campus?

Response from Provost Starnes: When we were taking them down we were at a different place in NC. We need to put them back out and are working on this.

Melissa Wargo shared that Chris Ray is working his way through this.

NEW BUSINESS

Forming the Rules Committee

This is voluntary, and we need 4 senators. The frequency depends on business.

Kadence Otto, Erin McNelis, and Vicki Szabo all volunteered.

Finalizing Representation for Faculty Senate Planning Team

- HHS- Mariana Fisher
- FPA- Colin Wasmund

Discussion of continued meetings

We are in a different reality and Laura Wright does not want to put people in harm's way. We don't want to do these meetings hybrid. What are your thoughts?

Comment: Considering what is happening, there is a possibility some of us will be exposed, have to quarantine, etc. In the spirit of having the most attendance it is helpful to go back to remote.

Comment: You may feel safe, but you don't know who people are in contact with in their personal life.

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Question: What is the problem with a hybrid model?

Response: It is the least effective thing you can do trying to serve two populations at once. People zooming in will not have the same voice.

Comment: We are teaching hybrid already and it is the third day of the semester. If we can leverage some folks we could do the hybrid really well. It is a lot of work to do that. Maybe we can get students to help leverage our resources? Hybrid could work. But, we do have the resources. Yancey Gulley would like virtual options for engagement. There are many other reasons to move in that direction.

Comment: We should do all or nothing. We don't have the physical spaces conducive to facilitate that type of hybrid thing. Is the point of discussing hybrid to try to include people that want to be in person?

Laura Wright commented that she appreciates Yancey's idea as well, but does not want Erin McNelis and herself to try to figure out where to look and who to call on, etc. We want to make this easier.

Comment: Should we also consider the current numbers compared to where we were last year. It is not unreasonable to assume there is a case in this room. I wonder whether COVID fatigue is kicking in? Maybe the majority of us are vaccinated, but the variation of delta is very different.

Comment: I appreciate the idea of hybrid and I don't want to take it off the table. It is challenging. We need to be careful in comparing now to a calendar year ago. The COVID world is not the same. Compare us more to January – the most important thing to me personally is we are here to lead and mentor a bunch of young people- for us to step back and say this is too hard is not the message I want to send. They have to learn to navigate it. For us to not model it feels like I am not taking on the responsibility

Comment: We are trying. This is why we are here today. Looking at the numbers.... we can decide that our next meeting be virtual and revisit it each meeting.

Comment: We need to put all this in consideration. We are doing a service thing. In terms of ease of raises, workload, stress, etc. If we can take pointy spots off, it is worth it. Right now, I am spending more time with people in the same space than what I do in my life.

Comment: Under different circumstances, it is important to explore different options. As a healthcare worker, we shouldn't take the risk right now.

Mariana Fisher made a motion to move meetings online for the next meeting and at the discretion of the Planning Team from here on out. Cheryl Waters-Tormey seconded.

Vote proceeded and passed.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

MEETING ADJOURNED

Record:

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Faculty Senate Business Meeting, Wednesday 08-25-2021

First Name	Last Name	College	Roll	Approval of Minutes	Zoom FS Meetings for Semester
Kia	Asberg	EAP	Present	Yea	Yea
Michael	Boatright	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Indi	Bose	Chair-Elect	Present	Yea	Yea
Kelli	Brown	Chancellor	Absent	absent	absent
David	de Jong	EAP	Present	Yea	Yea
Mariana	Fisher	HHS	Present	Yea	Yea
Gael	Graham	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Heidi	Grappendorf	BUS	Present	Yea	Yea
Yancey	Gulley	EAP	Present	Yea	Yea
Shelby	Hicks	FPA	Present	Yea	Yea
John	Hildreth	ET	Present	Yea	Yea
Jeremy	Jones	AS	Proxy by Michael Boatright	Yea via proxy, Michael Boatright	Yea via proxy, Michael Boatright
Scottie	Kapel	HL	Present	Yea	Yea
Marco	Lam	BUS	Proxy by Sean Mulholland	Yea via proxy, Sean Mulholland	Yea via proxy, Sean Mulholland
Will	Lehman	AS	Present	Yea	yea
Erin	McNelis	Secretary	Present	Yea	Yea
April	Messer	HHS	Arrived around 4 p.m. from BF	Late	Yea
Diana	Messer	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Sean	Mulholland	BUS	Present	Yea	Yea
Leigh	Odom	HHS	Proxy by Erin McNelis	Yea, via proxy, Erin McNelis	Yea, via proxy, Erin McNelis
Kadence	Otto	Past-Chair	Present	Yea	Yea
Heather	Rimes	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Carrie	Rogers	EAP	Present	Yea	Yea
Katerina	Spasovska	AS	Present	Yea	absent
Richard	Starnes	Provost	Present	present	present
Vicki	Szabo	Sr. FA Delegate	Present	Yea	Yea
Martin	Tanaka	ET	Proxy by John Hildreth	Yea, via proxy, John Hildreth	Yea, via proxy, John Hildreth
Drew	Virtue	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Elizabeth	Wark	HHS	Proxy by Mariana Fisher	Yea, via proxy, Mariana Fisher	Yea, via proxy, Mariana Fisher
Colin	Wasmund	FPA	Present	Yea	Yea
Cheryl	Waters-Tormey	AS	Present	Yea	Yea
Laura	Wright	Chair	Present	Yea	Yea

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