



Faculty Forum

From The Faculty Commons for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

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Seeking Peaceful Co-Existence? Campus Mediation Can Help!

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Are you involved in an on-going feud with colleagues? Are your students battling with their roommates, fighting with their lab partners, or bickering with their teammates? Do you need a guest speaker to talk to your student organization about ways to manage conflict? The Campus Mediation Program can help!

Mediation is an informal process in which neutral mediators help structure a conversation between two or more people so that they can be heard. Using active listening skills and facilitative techniques, the mediators help the parties to work toward resolution. The mediators don't dwell on the current dispute, but seek to resolve the underlying issues that led to the dispute.

The mediator is not a judge and cannot give advice or suggestions. Instead the mediator creates a safe and confidential environment in which the parties can discuss the issues involved and generate solutions that will prevent the situation from recurring. If agreement is reached, the mediators help the parties draft an agreement to prevent future disputes.

The program has mediated a wide range of cases involving disputes between staff, faculty and administration, students, and teammates. Faculty disputes are co-mediated by two faculty members. Student disputes are co-mediated by a faculty and student mediator. Mediations are free and completely confidential.

Campus mediators have completed the 21-hour North Carolina Community Mediation Training. This training is offered two times a year: once in the Fall, as Law 285, and once in March as an intensive course held over two consecutive weekends. Training is free.

Faculty and students are also available to present workshops on active listening skills, de-escalating anger, dealing with discrimination and stereotypes, conflict management styles, problem-solving, mediation, and negotiation. Workshops are interactive and typically involve role plays.

For more information, contact Jayne Zanglein at x7191 or student case coordinator Matthew Core at x7234.

Campus Mediation Program—QEP in Action

In 2006, Courtney Howard, a senior Business Law major founded the WCU Campus Mediation Program. The program is a successful example of students who are so engaged in their learning that they are looking for ways to move beyond the classroom and apply these skills in their community.

After taking a mediation class at the College of Business, Courtney was so enthusiastic about the benefits of mediation that she vowed to start a peer mediation program on campus before she graduated. To learn how to establish and manage a successful mediation practice, Courtney interned with Mountain Mediation Services, the community mediation program that mediates district court cases in seven counties in Western North Carolina. With this knowledge in hand, she worked for over a year with faculty and staff in the Business Law Department and the Department of Student and Community Ethics to design a program that would meet the needs of the campus community. Courtney was the impetus behind the program and without her dedication and constant nudging, the program would have faltered. Before she graduated, Courtney established the Campus Mediation Program, set up a student case coordinator office, trained a dozen mediators, and held several mediations.

After Courtney graduated, Eric Brailsford-Cato assumed the role of case coordinator for the program. He saw a need to provide continuing mediation education to student mediators. In the Fall of 2007, Eric established the Campus Mediation Society as a student organization whose mission is to “to help facilitate and support conversation while promoting conflict resolution and cross-cultural communication around Western Carolina University and the surrounding community.” The Society meets twice a month to provide educational opportunities to student mediators and to plan outreach events.

In 2009, Student Case Coordinator, Christopher Salerno met with managers of Cullowhee apartment complexes to promote the use of mediation to resolve disputes between residents. As a result, Laurel Oaks agreed to provide the Society with a satellite office where student mediators bake cookies and offer them to tenants while giving them a brief overview of the power of communication in resolving disputes.

Also in 2009, the Campus Mediation Society and the College of Business sponsored a five-person mediation team that placed third in a national mediation tournament held at John Marshall School of Law in Chicago. The team practiced mediation techniques two to three times a week for about six weeks in preparation for the event. Eric Brailsford-Cato was one of the team members and was named All American Mediator.

The Campus Mediation Society also sponsors an event on the third Thursday in October, which is International Conflict Resolution Day. Last year, the Society hosted a viewing of *Gran Torino*, followed by a panel discussion on cross-cultural issues.

The Campus Mediation Program has received the Integration of Student Learning Award. Last year the Society received the student organization award for Cross Cultural Program of the Year.

The Campus Mediation Program meets the University’s goal to “create connections between what they learn inside and outside of the classroom and to afford faculty, staff and students more opportunities to collaborate.” Students prepare budgets and write grant applications to fund the program. They strategize about marketing plans and advertising. They engage in

succession planning to ensure that the program continues after key participants graduate. And, they learn how to effectively communicate, negotiate and resolve disputes. The Campus Mediation Program is one example of what students can do when they are given the opportunity to make a difference in their world, a prime example, we think, of the mission of QEP.

Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching and Learning



Responses to the September *Faculty Forum* feature article by Erin McNelis entitled *Community Service – An Alternate Interpretation*

Erin,
Really nice article in the Forum on university service. Thank you for sharing your thoughts.
Carol Burton
Assistant Vice Chancellor
for Undergraduate Studies

And an echo from Glenn Bowen. In a word, DITTO!
Glenn Bowen
Center for Service Learning

Erin,
Just wanted to thank you for your article on university service in the Faculty Forum! Superb job! I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to write this piece. I hope it makes a difference in attitudes here on campus.

Always a pleasure to see and work with you!

Best wishes for a pleasant and productive fall semester!
Don Livingston
Professor
Department of Political Science & Public Affairs

Announcing a New Monthly Addition to the *Faculty Forum*

This month we are adding a new and exciting component to the *Faculty Forum*, a short monthly column from the Faculty Senate. This will place Faculty Senate deliberations and decisions into the *Faculty Forum* archives, leaving behind us a *bread crumb trail in the forest* –23 years and counting, for those who follow us in the great WCU Faculty Alumni Family, to consider and reflect on the issues and decisions of our time and place. Special thanks to Erin McNelis, Faculty Senate Chair, for helping to make this addition happen!

News and Notes from the WCU Faculty Senate

In order to keep Western Carolina University faculty informed and to promote open discussion of issues facing the faculty and the university community, each month the Faculty Senate will highlight a topic from an upcoming Senate agenda in the *Faculty Forum* as well as identify additional key issues Senate Councils are investigating. The Faculty Senate serves as the voice of the faculty in university governance; let's make it a strong one!

CoursEval and Mobile Devices

The October 27th meeting of the Faculty Senate anticipates discussion and debate on several personal and emotionally charged subjects, two are highlighted below.

In April 2010, the Faculty Senate approved organization of a pilot study on the effects of current student assessment of instruction (SAI) restrictions, (such as the limited release time and embargos against incentives) on response rate. The Faculty Affairs Council will hear a proposal from the SAI Task Force in their October meeting, asking their consideration of three changes for a pilot study this fall: 1) Early grade notification via email for each course for which a student has completed the evaluation; 2) Countdown notification emails reminding students of the deadline; and 3) Allowing evaluations to be available to students until midnight prior to the start of exam week. The SAI Task Force is basing its recommendations upon student feedback, conversations with the Registrar, and results from last spring's unplanned extension of the evaluation deadlines for CoursEval.

Several members of our faculty have indicated great concern to their Senators over the new mobile devices policy, which will restrict or charge university users for access to email (via tools such as Outlook). The Chair of the Faculty Senate plans to meet with Craig Fowler and Anna McFadden to discuss possible alternatives, but if no satisfactory solution can be identified, the Faculty Senate intends to make clear the voice and will of the Faculty (and staff and administration). Please contact your Senators and Senate Leadership to let them know where you stand on this issue---and all Senate issues for that matter.

Additional issues in Senate Councils include: Post Tenure Review discrepancies between the Faculty Handbook and AA-12 form; Child Care Options – a collaborative effort with the Faculty Affairs Council, Staff Senate, AAUW, and The Reporter; Discussion of Honors College Liberal Studies Proposals in individual college curriculum committees; and non-tenure track faculty's role in the Faculty Senate.

For more details on Faculty Senate activities and business, visit the Faculty Senate website: <http://www.wcu.edu/25121.asp>.

A Note From The Editor:

We urge you to add your comments to Faculty Forum articles. It enriches the faculty dialogue about these many issues that concern us all. Comment to this article by clicking on this link then select the article under What's Hot on the top right:

<https://media.wcu.edu/groups/facultyforum/>. The command requires you to use your email username and password to access the article. The Faculty Forum is a publication by and for WCU faculty, so this is our method of limiting access.

To access the article as a PDF, please select the article link at the following URL:

<http://www.wcu.edu/24987.asp>.

The direct link to the main Faculty Forum Webpage is: <http://www.wcu.edu/7480.asp>.

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