

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Responses to Lee Minor

Bravo! **Anne Rogers, Geosciences & Anthropology**

I would be receptive to "Thoreauing away" a number of concepts and policies on our campus (including some mentioned by Lee Minor) with the EXCEPTION of **Faculty Forum**. In two decades of residence here, there have been few WCU publications so anticipated by and professionally rewarding to me, due in large part to the thoughtful comments of colleagues such as Dr. Minor. Thanks to all the participants in the FCTE who work to make Cullowhee a better place to be.
Joyce Baldwin, Human Environmental Sciences

Dr. Minor's "kinder, gentler campus" sounds nice, but what price do we pay for glossing over the conflicts between faculty and administration, teaching and research, education and training, academics and athletics, and cosmopolitans and locals? By soft-pedaling these crucial issues in our academic life we only abrogate our responsibility for making difficult value judgments. We can ease tensions and create a jollier group of academics, but if we do it by agreeing to ignore such issues we purchase this kinder, gentler campus at the price of a less enlightened and value-conscious one. For example, can we ever ignore the conflict between athletics and academics? Anyone who really believes that athletics do more academic good than harm must also believe in the tooth faery! University athletics are a cancer that can't be surgically removed, but if we face the problem squarely, we might find ways to minimize the destruction of the body academic.

If we "grow weary" of such conflicts and think that we do something noble by ignoring them under the guise of "greater mutual respect and support" and "simplification" we might as well erect a statue to Mediocrity next to the Alumni Tower. We can't ignore such difficult issues because they are the very issues that, once resolved, might lead us to true excellence. Granted, these issues may be impossible to resolve, but if we ignore them through some misguided attack on smaller problems, we might as well admit that education is impossible and rubber-stamp the students on their way to yuppie success. Dr. Minor's suggestions about eliminating faculty ranks, open-ended administrative appointments, etc. are provocative and excellent, but they are small potatoes compared to the real issues he has "grown weary of."
Dr. A. Nonymous

I enjoyed Lee Minor's "Kinder, Gentler Campus." There is a good deal of sound wisdom there, April 1st notwithstanding, which most people will probably ignore. **Dan Fredricks, NCCAT**

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Since the January 15 issue of **notes & quotes**, I've gone to the "extreme" of keeping a teaching journal. The process is simple; I do that writing-to-discover freewriting that I constantly encourage my students to do. In the beginning, my objective was simply to find out why some of my classes were exciting and fun, while others were mediocre at best. I discovered many things. Most important was seeing the role my attitude plays in classroom dynamics, but the uses of the journal have gone far beyond the issue I started with. This chronicle of successes and failures has been a source of raw material for testing pedagogical theories. I've found some direction not only in presenting material, but in testing, paper topics, grading, and dealing with different student learning and personality types. Many thanks for including this suggestion in **notes & quotes**, which I, as someone new to teaching, find extremely helpful.
Gerri Dobbins, English