

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Responses to "Let's Break the Communication Bottleneck: Go Right to the Top," by Hal Herzog, 9/1/95

"The time has come," the Walrus said, "to talk of many things." Kudos to Hal! Yes, change is in the air and it is time to have our voices heard! I wholeheartedly agree: Speak up--up to the top. I know first hand that the new Chancellor reads his e-mail and snail-mail (if you don't have access to WPOffice). And Hal's list of ways to improve Western Living was superb. Though Hal referred to it, he didn't include in his "ten ways" what I consider to be the most important issue: communication. Our current revolution in technology claims to be about information and we at WCU need to be actively involved in communication with each other--with students, staff, faculty, administrators, community members, neighbors, as well as county, state, national, and global communities. We need to communicate about what we know, think, like, and hope for. We need to communicate not only to make concrete changes in our environment but also to be connected with one another, to hear and be heard, to understand and be understood, to value and be valued. Only through communication can our fears of the unknown and the different be significantly reduced. So, yes, speak up and speak out! (Listening is helpful, too.)

Chris Gunn, Counseling & Psychological Services

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I was particularly pleased with Hal's suggestion that we better emphasize our outdoor opportunities. I would like to see extensive bike trails that lead to and along the river and other sites out from campus (get the bikers off the four-lane). I think it would be a springboard for further regional economic development.

Bob Houghton, Elementary Ed and Reading

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Thanks to Hal Herzog for starting a badly needed dialogue. Here are a few ideas I've been kicking around with students over the years:

1. WCU students, faculty, and staff should have a club--on campus--where they can listen to music, dance, and drink alcoholic beverages (if of age). They should also be able to buy their beer and wine on campus, at facilities operated by WCU, with profits going to WCU. To do so, it may be necessary for Western to initiate and lead efforts to make Cullowhee a unit of local government with its own officials and home-rule powers.
2. The creative works displayed on the campus should be those of students (first priority), faculty/staff (second priority), or alumni. Western should encourage, recognize, and reward members of its own family whenever possible.
3. Native plants should be used for landscaping as much as possible, especially those species in need of preservation and propagation.
4. Western should consult with students and staff BEFORE bringing in new technology or equipment (or replacing or altering existing resources). For example, before "fixing" the existing telephone system (PLEASE), it would be a good idea to find out what the system's users want and need. Such consultation is absolutely mandatory for computer and telecommunications technology if our money is to be well spent. Why not start all future deliberations over capital improvements or equipment acquisition with needs assessments?

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5. Western student organizations and media should be allowed to compete in the marketplace, to the extent they are able, without the constraints of "sweetheart" arrangements between the school and area businesses.
6. Western contracts should be awarded on the basis of competitive bidding, and on-going contracts should be re-bid periodically (rather than automatically renewing them) to keep vendors honest (even those important to WCU) and give others the chance to compete.
7. All campus departments and allied organizations (CIML, NCCAT, etc.) should be encouraged or required to create and publicize internship positions with at least modest compensation for WCU students.
8. Students should be asked how they want their student fees used and if they are willing to have those fees increased and for what purposes.
9. Faculty and staff should not have to pay for parking on campus. Or, if they must, they should get assigned, reserved spaces that allow them to come and go without the hassle of finding a parking spot.
10. Someone should turn off the irritating Bell Tower music during normal class hours. Why not use music written by our students and staff or create a playlist of student/staff requests. Anything but the "same old-same old."

John Moore, Communications and Theatre Arts

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Right on, Hal! I would make these suggestions: **campus maps** should either use larger print or provide magnifying glasses so students and visitors can tell what is where. We need safe **pedestrian passages** between HFR and the Ramsey Center and up the Hill from Moore to the commuter parking by the water tower. Off campus we need a sidewalk from the pedestrian bridge to the Post Office. The **Summer School Calendar** inconveniences students needing courses at regional community colleges, who find that their summer quarters aren't over until the end of the week that our fall semester starts. And look what happens to our summer school scheduling when first session starts before the public schools let out. To solve **the parking problem**, we should invest in some Denver Boots and attach them to illegally parked cars after the second ticket. Some people on this campus don't seem to be able to learn under our present system. **What's good at WCU?**

The new signs,
traffic police at critical corners at rush hours,
the flowers (especially the day lily garden across from Dodson),
most of the public sculpture,
the hard workers from Housekeeping who got us moved to and from Camp Lab in jig time,
air-conditioning in Belk and Moore at last,
and the sense of excitement that having a new Chancellor generates.

Sharon Jacques, Nursing

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KUDOS to Hal! Congratulations on a great Top Ten! Unfortunately, I do not feel as free as Hal to respond with my name. I am tenured, but I have learned over the years that administrators hold grudges even though we are supposed to work in an environment of academic freedom. However, freedom of speech seems to mean that one can state only what the powers to be wish to hear. If you

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do not agree with them or perhaps step on their territory, it is very much remembered. This situation is even worse if you are a female, as the good old boy network is alive and well in Cullowhee. No, colleagues, I am not a female, but I have even seen sexism at work and that's sad!!

I would like to add my own top ten:

- 10 Towel service at the new Wellness Center.
- 9 An invitation to faculty to offer their expertise when administrative decisions are being made about certain things; we just might save the university some money and prevent costly mistakes. Perhaps the administration doesn't know what our areas of expertise are!
- 8 This is a public institution. Put the budgets on the table for all to see in every department! ! !
- 7 Get rid of the fee charged to departments if a faculty member needs a VCR or TV delivered to teach a class in a building in which their office is not housed.
- 6 More money for resources for teaching at the departmental level.
- 5 More travel money! Are administrators limited to \$200 per year? \$500 per year? Does the limitation of travel placed on faculty mean that the knowledge garnered at professional conferences and brought back to students is less important than the meetings and conferences administrators attend to run the university? Aren't we here for the students and not the administration? For one year, limit all administrators, except for those in admissions and development, to \$200 travel money and distribute the rest to the faculty. Perhaps the meaning of \$200 will be understood. Maybe the administrators should write grants to get travel money!!
- 4 A university account which pays for everyone to have a computer and be hooked up to Word Perfect Office, the Internet, and to the fiber optic cable. We will save money by being more productive, using less paper, and making fewer long distance calls.
- 3 Reduce teaching loads so those who wish to conduct meaningful research can do so within a 40 hour work week; please, no chastisement from faculty who do not care about research as we all have something valuable to contribute to the learning environment.
- 2 Help make faculty productive; spread the secretarial and part-time help around! It's ludicrous to have individuals with doctorates running errands, making secretarial phone calls, Xeroxing, picking up and delivering TV's and VCR's from the media center, and answering the phone. Maybe we could get research done in a 40 hour work week. This is not an egotistical statement! It's a fact of life. We are in the business of educating students and businesses would not operate in this manner.
- 1 Empowerment, not hierarchy, is the management style of the future! An empowered manager is made to look better by empowered employees because often more gets accomplished. But it means letting go of one's own power.

Anonymous