



Faculty Forum

*from the Coulter Faculty Commons
for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*

**Volume 25, Number 3
December 2012**

WCU History and Future Anna McFadden

I watched with great interest the recording on UNC-TV of the memorial service of William Friday, President Emeritus of the UNC system. When I came to WCU 16 years ago as an assistant professor, I heard his name and learned somewhat of his legacy. However, until hearing the remarks at his memorial service, I had no idea of his impact and what it means. This is what I heard:

1. The UNC System is about democracy for our citizens. Our state constitution insists on an affordable education whenever possible for our citizens.
2. North Carolina is recognized nationwide for its university system
3. Leaders such as Bill Friday were influential with the legislature. They pushed, but in respectful ways, their influence with the Governors and the North Carolina General Assembly.
4. The influence of such leaders as Bill Friday was about their integrity, their respect for diversity, their strong sense of service to the state, and their perseverance.

What does this mean for WCU?

1. We must recognize our important role in a larger whole, but also, in our unique service to our region.
2. We must understand that we serve others, not ourselves in our jobs and the work we do. As society changes and the needs of the university change, so must we.
3. We must be strong and loyal advocates for WCU, the UNC System, and higher education.
4. When we disagree with directions, we must do so as family- meaning we can disagree and question among ourselves but come to a supported decision in the best interest of the students we serve.

Bill Friday was hailed as the greatest educator in the state of North Carolina in recent history. Can we follow his legacy and commitment to the students in our care now and in the future?

[The Life and Legacy of Bill Friday at UNC-TV](#)

Anna T. McFadden, PhD
Director of Academic Engagement and IT Governance
Professor, Department of Human Services

Horse and Cart Mark Mattheis

I've been thinking about horses lately, so here is something for you to ponder. If you could be a horse, what kind of horse would you be? Now that might sound like an odd question. But, recently I haven't been getting very good traction under my hooves. After all *a good horse is hard to come by*, so if I were a horse I would be a standard bred trotter. Since you asked, the difference between a trotter and a pacer is the gate. A pacer brings both legs on the same side forward together. A trotter brings the front left and rear right forward together and alternates. Both pull a lightweight cart and are built for speed. I like that.

So why do I feel like a horse? There are many great horse analogies. *Don't look a gift horse in the mouth* might describe our recent raise. Maybe that should be more like *giving a leg up*. *Don't beat a dead horse* and *get off your high horse* might refer to past administrations. Right now I am *chomping at the bit* to see some good old fashion *horse sense*. Think about the one *don't put the cart in front of the horse*. In higher education I see the institution as the cart and the process of education as the horse. The two must be compatible. Without the students, faculty/staff, and degree programs there is no power to move the cart. We might have a pretty nice cart like a *sulky with fringe on top*, our maybe big old beer wagon. But the horse and cart have to match in order to function properly. Could you imagine an Arabian horse with it's high-strung temper and long flowing mains hooked up to slay in the snow? A new form of racing could be Clydesdales pulling sulkies around a mile track. Not a very effective use of the size, strength, and temperament of the *horsepower*. Carts can be viewed the same way. Do they need a team or just one horse? Does the cart need to move fast, slow, carry weight, be comfortable, or maybe go over rough ground? So while keeping the arrangement of the horse in front of the cart, we must also look at what horses we have and what carts need to be pulled. This is how I have made sense of what is going on lately.

In October we put in our TPR documents. This document explains what type of horse we are as individual faculty and why we should not be *sent to the glue factory*. We were then asked to complete information about our engagement activities. I suspect this explains how well we are *teaming up* with the other horses in the stable. We move on to the 2020 initiatives. Now here we are figuring out which team of horses are going to pull what load for our campus cart. But, we don't know what loads need to be pulled by our campus until the UNC System Strategic Plan describes the big one party in power cart. If they only describe the cart and not the power in front of it, we might hear *my kingdom for a horse*. Don't forget about our own campus master plan. This is the long-range view of how our cart functions in the barnyard. Finally, coming around the last turn is Program Prioritization. Here we might *throw a shoe*. A few may be *put out to pasture* while others could have their *feedbags* put on. We will certainly be *a horse of a different color* when this process is over.

So ask yourself, if I were a horse what type of horse would I be? No matter what, naying *hold your horse's* is not going to slow the pace of change. It would be nice to know what cart I am being asked to pull. I keep glancing behind me to see what's back there. Most of the time I just see my own *horse's rear end*. Some days it is easier to *keep the blinders on* and just keep pulling. I don't want to end up being one of those *horses changed midstream*, but I guess I won't know until I *hear it from the horse's mouth*.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed here belong solely to the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Faculty Commons. If you would like to respond, you may input your comments directly through the wiki on the Faculty Forum webpage, or e-mail your comments to [FacultyFellow](#) and they will be posted.

For additional information about the Faculty Forum or to submit an article please contact:
Mark Mattheis - Faculty Fellow for Publications memattheis@wcu.edu