



# Faculty Forum

from the Coulter Faculty Commons  
for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

**Volume 25, Number 6**  
**April 2013**

**Editor's Note**  
**Mark Mattheis**

The Faculty Forum gives a voice to all members of the WCU community. I welcome any articles or comments you wish to present. May I suggest a few topics you might want to write about.

*One Year Contracts* - Decades of service one year at a time

*Roll-Up* – Spend it or loose it forcing your financial hand

*Program Prioritization* – Where are the numbers and how do we fit in

**Thank you** for your continued support.

**Faculty Senate Chair Report**  
**Mary Jean Ronan Herzog**

UNC Strategic Directions. The big news this month was about the UNC Strategic Directions plan. As you know from the minutes of the January meeting, the WCU Senate unanimously endorsed the resolutions of the UNC Faculty Assembly related to the “UNC Compact.” President Ross wrote a letter to the WCU community thanking the Faculty Senate for the support (documents posted). In the end, the plan was influenced by the strong, articulate, consistent faculty voices. The final plan was approved by the Board of Governors, and it is posted on the UNC Faculty Assembly website (<http://www.northcarolina.edu/facultyassembly/index.htm>). Erin McNelis’ sent it to WCU Academic Affairs on February 11. The faculty are expected to play a vital role during its implementation.

Spring Caucus. The spring caucus was held on February 8 from 3:00 to 5:00 in Illusions at the University Center. About 30 people came for part or all of it; refreshments were provided by the Senate. I had received a large number of responses to my queries leading up to the caucus, which I compiled and sent to the faculty prior to the caucus. The issues that were the main focus of the discussion had to do with collegial review, hearing and grievance (issues, policies, procedures and practices). (See Erin McNelis’ notes summarizing the caucus. I’ll also post the compilation that I sent to all the faculty.) Other caucus issues included the following:

Senate Communications. A few faculty suggested that communications between the Senate and the general faculty need to be improved, while others did not have a problem with it. I was asked to encourage Senators to communicate with their colleagues about Senate issues, actions, etc. Examples of things that work are: Some senators make reports to their departments; others send an email report to their entire college with highlights of the Senate meeting; some faculty read the agendas and minutes on the Senate website to keep themselves informed. Some Senate chairs

in the UNC system hold one or two open hours during the week for anyone to drop in and chat. I'll set that up and see if anyone is interested.

Ombuds Office. There was a recurring request in caucus to find out what had happened to the ombuds office. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution in support of an ombudsman (sic) on January 23, 2008, but nothing has materialized. The UNC Faculty & Staff Assemblies have been studying the issue this year, and there seems to be a growing consensus that faculty and staff need an independent ombuds office to help with grievances, complaints, etc. Our Staff Senate is very interested as well. I will follow up with Chancellor Belcher and Provost Brenton about action on this long-standing desire and old resolution. Plenty of other interesting topics came up through caucus. See the posted documents for more detail.

Sharepoint. We had a brief discussion of the pros and cons of Sharepoint at the January Senate meeting, and I was asked to get more specific feedback from the Senators. I created a survey, posted it on Sharepoint, and asked the Senators to complete it. There were 14 responses, but since there are 26 senators, the results are not complete. Anna McFadden stressed that if you have trouble using the VPN or Sharepoint, please call the help line (227 -7487). Sharepoint is supposed to be coming out with a new, better version. Erin McNelis is modifying the way we use Sharepoint for the rest of this semester.

COACHE Survey. Associate Provost Mark Lord gave a brief report about the COACHE Survey at the CLC (Chancellor's Leadership Council) in January, and I thought it might be a good topic for Senate discussion, but it has not risen to the top. Mark said he would be glad to talk about it with Senate. Also, Laura Cruz, Director of the Faculty Commons, has been working with the data and she said, "...we have a small research group together and have obtained permission from COACHE to gain access to their full database for a comparative research study." If you want to know more about what this group is doing and what questions they're working on, get in touch with Laura ([lcruz@email.wcu.edu](mailto:lcruz@email.wcu.edu)). The COACHE survey is posted on Sharepoint.

News Item. Faculty Assembly received word that President Ross plans to visit the Faculty Senates on each campus. I'll keep you posted.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Jean Ronan Herzog

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