**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**11/18/2020 Overflow Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm via ZOOM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**ROLL CALL**

* Present:
  + Michael Boatright- present
  + Indi Bose - present
  + Chancellor Kelli Brown - present
  + Kristin Calvert - present
  + Todd Collins - present, proxy for Carrie Rogers
  + David De Jong - present, proxy for Yancey Gulley
  + Heidi Dent - present
  + Heather Mae Erickson - present
  + Garrett Fisher - present, proxy for Mariana Fisher
  + Enrique Gómez - present
  + Ian Jeffress - present
  + Bora Karayaka - present, proxy for Martin Tanaka
  + Marco Lam - present
  + Will Lehman - present
  + Niall Michelsen - present
  + Sean Mulholland - present
  + Leigh Odom - present
  + Kadence Otto - present
  + Matthew Rave - present
  + Provost Richard Starnes - present
  + Vicki Szabo - present
  + Elizabeth Tait – present, departed early
  + Martin Tanaka - present
  + Drew Virtue - present
  + Elizabeth Wark - present
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - present, late arrival
  + Laura Wright, present, proxy for Roya Scales
  + Jessica Zellers - present
* Members with Proxies:
  + Carrie Rogers
  + Yancey Gulley
  + Mariana Fisher
  + Martin Tanaka
  + Roya Scales
* Members Absent:

**Resolution on Guiding Principles for University Budget Decision Making Recommendations from the WCU Faculty & Staff Senates Discussion**

The previous resolution from the regular business meeting on November 11 was moved to be withdrawn from Kadence Otto with no objection. A new resolution jointly created with the staff senate was brought forward and shared out via email prior to the meeting and reads as follows:

**Joint Resolution Endorsing Guiding Principles for University Budget Decision Making**

WHEREAS, Western Carolina University has asked all Divisions to engage in a 10% Budget Cut Exercise;

WHEREAS, the Western Carolina University Faculty and Staff Senates exist to fulfill responsibilities of shared-governance, mutual collaboration, and open lines of dialogue between WCU Faculty, Staff, and administration; and,

WHEREAS, it is unknown if WCU will be asked by the UNC System Board of Governors or the NC General Assembly to make cuts to previously allocated state budgets or whether future state budget allocations will be reduced.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the “Guiding Principles for University Budget Decision Making Recommendations from the WCU Faculty & Staff Senates” (see Appendix) guide the decisions of University Leadership in the event that WCU has to incur budget cuts.

**Appendix - Guiding Principles for University Budget Decision Making**

Recommendations from WCU Faculty & Staff Senates

1. Protect instructional capacity. Teaching our students in classrooms and through our scholarly activities is the most important thing we do. We must prioritize our teaching and scholarship in any budget discussions.

2. Protect existing institutional capacity. Staff across the University continue to feel the effects of resource allocation which has not kept pace with enrollment growth. The pressure on staff to “do more with less” was enormous prior to the onset of the pandemic.

3. Stay true to our core mission. Do all we can to maintain who we are as an institution and our strategic trajectory. Targeted reductions to specific non-core programs, offices, and services are preferable to across-the-board cuts.

4. Consider processes and expenditures that no longer make sense. Think creatively about what we do and how we do it. Invention, futurism, and strategic thinking can enable us to turn this challenge into an institutional opportunity. Ideas for cost-saving measures should be sought from WCU faculty, staff, and students.

5. Track how reductions shape our future in terms of fewer students taught and served, decreases in engagement activities, research not performed, services not performed, and related implications.

6. Be transparent in all conversations.

7. People make up the institution, and positions are among the most difficult lines to reclaim through the existing state and university budget process. If jobs are impacted, strive for temporary reductions/furloughs for positions paid >$50,000 over reductions-in-force.

8. We endorse, with appropriate consideration of operational, statutory, and legal requirements, the September 22, 2020 Letter from UNC Faculty Assembly, UNC Staff Assembly, and Association of Student Governments to UNC President Peter Hans’ letter “Recommendations on Budget Deliberations” (below).

*To: Peter Hans, President, UNC System*

*Randall C. Ramsey, Chair, UNC System Board of Governors*

*From: Timothy J. Ives, Chair, UNC System Faculty Assembly*

*Garrett Killian, Chair, UNC System Staff Assembly*

*Isaiah M. Green, President, Association of Student Governments*

*Re: Recommendations on Budget Deliberations*

*Date: September 22, 2020*

The University of North Carolina has a tremendous impact as a primary economic driver for the people of our state. We are aware of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the vitality of our constituent institutions. Therefore, it would be prudent to address financial challenges through a process that is strategic, deliberate, consultative and transparent. Students, staff, and faculty across the UNC System stand ready to be essential partners in efforts to cope effectively with all budget shortfalls.

By directly acknowledging the value of the human capital of the System, any budget adjustments should be strategic instead of across-the-board elimination of programs and personnel. Any such adjustments should also recognize the potential uneven impacts upon students, staff, and faculty across the System, particularly those who are underserved and who strive to promote the diversity of the System. Many, if not all, campuses have not fully recovered from the 2008 recession, with little flex currently available in their budgets. This is especially true for the smaller campuses that may not have as much non-state funding.

Further, there is a need to retain our valued staff and faculty, especially as the UNC System is considered a target for other major universities across the country, especially public universities. At the very least, all financial decisions should be prioritized to protect the core academic mission of each individual campus, and their corresponding student success. In that spirit, and as requested, the following serve as our initial recommendations.

· On every campus, any committee or task force directed to set priorities or manage a budget reduction process should be represented from the outset by the Faculty Chair or their designee, the Staff Chair or their designee, and the Student Body President or their designee. As of September 10,

58% of campuses have committed to having senate chairs on such a committee but assuring that all three groups will be represented across the System is work that still needs to be done.

Any reduction or potential reduction of student programs and funding to student programs should be discussed with the larger student body through multiple methods, whether that be through the campus Student Government Association or otherwise, similar to how the tuition and fee processes operate on the majority of our campuses.

· Any campus budget reductions should take into consideration their specific Strategic Plan along with the UNC System Strategic Plan, to ensure that each campus can maintain growth and excellence.

· To minimize or significantly reduce furloughs, especially for those who will be disproportionately affected with prolonged furloughs (e.g., 3 months or longer), the use of unpaid days of service (e.g., one to two days per month) may need to be considered for all, similar to what was implemented during the recession period of 2008 to 2010.

· Consider use of untouched sources of potential and temporary sources of funding. As one example, the UNC Investment Fund touts over $6.5 billion in assets as of 3.31.2020. Part of the Fund’s primary objective is Support the current and future needs of the Fund’s Member institutions. These times most certainly meet that objective. Without touching the endowment principal, and with an annual return on investment of approximately 5%, short-term use of the accrued interest for a two-year period, as an example, would yield $650 million that could be apportioned as three-year loans for the campuses.

· If budget shortfalls mandate it, then a System-wide pro-rated plan for salary adjustments, including campus administration, should be considered for a specific time period (e.g., six to twelve months) in order to avoid any terminations, as we are all in this together. This would not apply to any faculty or staff who make less than $50,000 annually.

· Ensure maintenance of adequate health care coverage, including mental health services, for all System employees during this transitional period.

· Encourage the General Assembly to offer retirement and early retirement packages to staff.

· Similarly, ask the Board of Governors to consider offering phased retirement packages to eligible faculty.

· To avoid filling some positions immediately, consider reassigning staff. For example, if an athletics department doesn’t have any fall sports, then some staff could be reassigned temporarily to areas where there may be a need, and where they can be easily trained.

· Maintain all student aid at current levels, whether it is for scholarships, grants, graduate teaching assistants, etc.

· Place a two-year moratorium or strong limitation on new building construction, repair, and renovation expenditures in favor of coverage of salaries and benefits for those staff and faculty who will be the most severely impacted by reduced campus enrollments or early closings.

These are a few of our initial recommendations. We are committed to protect the teaching, research and public service mission of the UNC System. We stand ready to be actively involved with the budget review process on every campus, all in our ongoing work to support the UNC System, and most importantly, to ensure student success.

Laura Wright made a motion to consider and discuss the resolution and Ian Jeffress seconded.

Staff Senate Chair Ben Pendry opened the discussion and shared that the goal was to make us more of one voice. We took the guiding principles document from Provost Richard Starnes and revised it. We believe it represents staff fairly and accurately and now includes the letter from staff and faculty assemblies and student government. We tried to be sure in our statement that we endorsed the appropriate legal items as well.

Laura Wright shared her appreciation and thought the spirit of the resolution is good. She made some friendly amendment suggestions.

Vicki Szabo commented: “I support Laura’s amended version. It is more direct and maintains all points raised in the original without some of the elaboration and excess terminology.”

Laura Wright asked what the statement about being “transparent” means.   
Provost Starnes added that this verbiage and the bulk is what he drafted. This had a slightly different purpose - this was to guide the discussions and the budget exercise.

Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that the word “quality” might be a good word to add in there as well to items 1 and 2.

Ben Pendry shared there is value to talking about the mission to the region and maintaining a commitment to the institution even while going through what could be part of a reduction with regard to item 3.

Enrique Gómez wondered if when we talk about core mission and strategic target reductions, are we making reference to the strategic plan? Or, is there a much larger conversation that needs to be had?  
Provost Starnes shared that what is core is an evolving definition. Whenever you engage in a process, the decisions at one level may be different than another level. The discussion of the document today is different from the original. We will look at the mission, and the 2020 strategic directions that will help guide us if it came down to it.

Cheryl Waters-Tormey asked what is the difference between items 3 and 4? It seems like everything should be tied to the mission. Should those two be combined somehow?   
Provost Starnes shared that as the deans and departments worked on the budget exercise, he wanted folks to think about processes and practices that no longer make sense and to think about those first. We may continue to do things we have always done.

Drew Virtue asked that we use “target reductions” on item 4.   
Kristin Calvert suggested using "Target processes and reductions to expenditures that no longer make sense."

Ben Pendry shared that the hopes are for this document to be utilized by administration beyond just the exercise.

Todd Collins shared a friendly amendment as to transparency for item 7: "That budgetary decisions will be made openly and with consultation of faculty and staff leadership, and that those departments or offices that are negatively impacted by significant reductions will be allowed the chance to be heard before final decisions are made."

**All friendly amendments were accepted, and the revised resolution reads as follows:**

*WHEREAS, Western Carolina University has asked all Divisions to engage in a 10% Budget Cut Exercise;*

*WHEREAS, the Western Carolina University Faculty and Staff Senates exist to fulfill responsibilities of shared-governance, mutual collaboration, and open lines of dialogue between WCU Faculty, Staff, and administration; and,*

*WHEREAS, it is unknown if WCU will be asked by the UNC System Board of Governors or the NC General Assembly to make cuts to previously allocated state budgets or whether future state budget allocations will be reduced.*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the “Guiding Principles for University Budget Decision Making Recommendations from the WCU Faculty & Staff Senates” (see Appendix) guide the decisions of University Leadership in the event that WCU has to incur budget cuts in order to minimize loss of faculty and staff positions.*

Enrique Gómez moved to end the debate and Elizabeth Tait seconded.

Call to question was made by Kadence Otto.

Voice vote was made:

* + Michael Boatright- yes
  + Indi Bose - yes
  + Kristin Calvert - yes
  + Todd Collins - yes, proxy for Carrie Rogers- yes
  + David De Jong - yes, proxy for Yancey Gulley- yes
  + Heidi Dent - yes
  + Heather Mae Erickson - yes
  + Garrett Fisher - yes, proxy for Mariana Fisher- yes
  + Enrique Gómez - yes
  + Ian Jeffress - yes
  + Bora Karayaka - yes, proxy for Martin Tanaka- yes
  + Marco Lam - yes
  + Will Lehman - yes
  + Niall Michelsen - yes
  + Sean Mulholland - yes
  + Leigh Odom - yes
  + Matthew Rave - yes
  + Vicki Szabo - yes
  + Elizabeth Tait - yes
  + Drew Virtue - yes
  + Elizabeth Wark - yes
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - yes
  + Laura Wright, yes, proxy for Roya Scales- yes
  + Jessica Zellers - yes

*Resolution passed unanimously.*

**Discussion on Whether to Consider a Resolution Supporting S/U grading for Fall 2020**

Kadence Otto shared the following timeline of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory events:

August 17  
First day of classes

September 14  
Provost Starnes and I met and discussed S/U. I conveyed that I was not in favor of an S/U option because students were aware of the modalities, and I was receiving reports from faculty that students were not showing up for the face-to-face part of their hybrid courses. Around this time, students began a petition for S/U grading.

September 23  
Provost Starnes emailed Student Government Association (SGA) SGA President Dawson Spencer letting him know of our conversation pertaining to S/U.

September 29  
Richard emailed the student body reminding them that our grading policy is in effect for Fall 2020.

October 5  
Richard and I met and he shared that NC State and UNC Chapel Hill moved to S/U because they moved their courses 100% online. I told Richard I would bring the issue to Faculty Senate Planning Team (FSPT) for their input and recommendation.

October 7  
I brought the S/U issue to FSPT meeting. The consensus of the FSPT was not to entertain an S/U grading option for Fall 2020.

November 3  
I received an email from SGA Vice President Aaron Speyer inviting me to present at their upcoming meeting.

November 4  
I received an email from SGA VP Aaron Speyer asking SGA leadership could speak to me about S/U. I replied that our FSPT met and discussed S/U and that there was not support for S/U.

November 5  
Aaron Speyer emailed and asked if I would listen to the SGA position; this, due to the student petition. In good faith, I told him I would attend their meeting and listen.

November 9  
I attended the SGA meeting and listened. In good faith, I told SGA that if we had time I would bring the S/U discussion before the Full Senate.

November 11  
We did not have time to discuss S/U during our FS Business Meeting.

November 18  
Overflow meeting

Kadence Otto shared the following information via email prior to the meeting:

Also, pertaining to whether to consider an S/U Resolution, UNC Regulations (already in place) may provide the necessary relief for students:

*UNC Regulation 400.1.5 [R] has directed institutions not to count retakes attempted during the 2020 Spring semester, the Fall 2020 semester, or 2021 Spring semester against any grade replacement caps. WCU does not limit the number of times a student can repeat a course but does cap the number of grades that can be replaced. Grade replacements & grade exclusions are processed manually at the end of each term. Retakes for grade improvement attempted during the 2020 Spring semester, the 2020 Summer semester, the Fall 2020 Semester, or 2021 Spring semester will not count toward the sixteen-hour cap.*

*UNC Regulation 400.1.5 [R] has directed institutions not to count was earned during the 2020 Spring semester, the Fall 2020 semester, or 2021 Spring semester toward any course withdrawal limits. Ws earned during the 2020 Spring semester, the 2020 Summer semester, the Fall 2020 semester, or 2021 Spring semester will not count toward the course withdrawal limit.*

*Discussion proceeded.*

Vicki Szabo asked colleagues in her department and the response was that they would be in support of this. If we have suspended application of SAIs, it seems a double standard to not allow students to choose S/U. She also supports it.

Sean Mulholland shared that his colleagues in the College of Business support continuing letter grades and none surveyed supported S/U since their modality did not change.

Michael Boatright shared that we saw a massive spike on campus. Students were sick, quarantined, and isolated, and he feels we should keep this as an option for Spring 2021.

Laura Wright said the freshman thought they were getting one thing, but they experienced something radically different. Her initial thinking was that we don’t need this and now she wants to do everything she can to help these students in these times. She is in support of it.

Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that there are other factors like jobs, housing, moving situations, etc. and it is more heterogeneous on their end. Some folks have had to totally switch gears. Having this option is favorable.

David de Jong supports S/U grading as optional and agrees that there may be a double-standard saying faculty aren’t subject to SAIs while students are subject to grades - they may not be particularly valid measures of student learning at this time. He supports this.

Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that SAIs are happening and doesn’t want the audience to get the wrong idea that they don’t count. They are just not being used for peer evaluation. We are collecting, reading SAI results, and reflecting on that for the peer review process.

Dawson Spencer shared that he is available to answer any questions from the faculty.

Trina Orr shared that there can be impacts to students’ financial aid eligibility. Federal regulations allow for us to use Pass/Fail grading. A couple points of note that could be areas of concern is the Department of Education does limit the amount of time a student can take to earn their undergraduate degree and the amount of time to receive funding. Depending on how long this continues, it could impact those students and their progress to the degree. It could also have negative impacts to scholarship eligibility - those with a qualitative component - it could distort the progress. We would basically apply the same mechanisms as we did for spring. Most concerned about first term students.

Enrique Gómez asked about 1-2 courses and selecting those as S/U rather than the full load.  
Dawson Spencer shared that the students want 2-3 courses as available to select S/U on.

Larry Hammer shared that the easiest option is to move forward with the same process as spring. One complication would be the timeline on this. We would need to get academic standing calculated and awarded, transcripts, etc. There isn’t any easy way to choose which 3 to allow - maybe we should not go with a limit.

Indi Bose posed a question, that If we are ready to change grade options so late in the semester, what is to keep students from thinking that this may be done next semester as well?

Dawson Spencer shared that students don’t have the assumption they are getting pass/fail options; they didn’t gamble on this. Students are stressed to the max. SGA can make a statement. Students that aren’t attending classes or taking exams, this resolution is not for them. This resolution is meant to help the students that are trying their best and are making Cs. This is written to advocate for the students doing their best.

Heather Mae Erickson asked about the need of directors’ approval for classes that have a C+ or higher for their major.

Provost Richard Starnes shared that students would go through the petition process as before. The programs manage inquiries in classes where S/U is not a possibility either governed by accreditation or statute, which are most often found in teacher ed. Those students will still get a grade. Action on this item must be taken today if the senate decides to move forward, or the senate could endorse the process used in spring.

The spring resolution was shared for reference:

<https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/FS_3_25_20_S-UGrading_Spring_2020.pdf>

*Discussion was closed with no objections.*

A voice vote was made as to whether or not to consider a resolution on S/U grading:

* + Michael Boatright- yes
  + Indi Bose - abstain
  + Kristin Calvert - yes
  + Todd Collins - yes, proxy for Carrie Rogers- no
  + David De Jong - yes, proxy for Yancey Gulley- yes
  + Heidi Dent - no
  + Heather Mae Erickson - no
  + Mariana Fisher – abstain (due to absent proxy)
  + Enrique Gómez - yes
  + Ian Jeffress - yes
  + Bora Karayaka - yes, proxy for Martin Tanaka- abstain
  + Marco Lam - no
  + Will Lehman – yes, proxy for Garrett Fisher - yes
  + Niall Michelsen - yes
  + Sean Mulholland - no
  + Leigh Odom - no
  + Matthew Rave - yes
  + Vicki Szabo - yes
  + Elizabeth Tait - no
  + Drew Virtue - yes
  + Elizabeth Wark - no
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - yes
  + Laura Wright, yes, proxy for Roya Scales- no
  + Jessica Zellers - yes

*Vote passed to consider a resolution: 17 yes, 9 no, 3 abstain*

Kadence Otto asked folks to draft a resolution.

Vicki Szabo asked, “can we not re-endorse the extant resolution from Spring 2020 and update the date?”

Cheryl Waters-Tormey shared that she supports extending the provisions since the students are already familiar with this and may already have the expectation that it might work like that if we approve it.

Larry Hammer shared that as long as the resolution that comes forward is not radically different than the action that was taken in the spring, this can be done fairly quickly. Communication to the students is important.

Marco Lam asked about the dean's list for those with a 4.0.

Provost Richard Starnes shared that there wouldn’t be a way to accurately capture this. There was a recognition but it did not include transcript recognition.

Dawson Spencer shared that the students are willing to set aside the dean’s list and chancellor's list for the long haul.

Enrique Gómez shared the following draft language:

*(A) WHEREAS The Covid-19 has prolonged the strain on Faculty, Staff and Student performance.*

*(B) WHEREAS the SGA has presented a resolution requesting that the Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Grading options for Fall 2020.*

*(C ) THEREFORE be it resolved that the Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Grading Guidelines for Spring 2020 adopted by the Faculty Senate be extended and available to Fall 2020 Semester.*

Vicki Szabo seconded the motion.

Todd Collins shared that “we won't know what the Senate wants until you call the question (Enrique's proposal) as to what the group wants. We went through all this in the spring, there is an existing resolution that is not perfect, maybe, but it worked. It is not a lack of effort to consider other options, it is a lack of time to implement something else.”

Kadence Otto shared that nothing has changed from fall 2020 to spring 2021 and nothing is working. The point is that we have the same modalities and hybrid is not working well for student learning. We will be in this same situation in spring.

Aimee Rockhill from Geosciences and Natural Resources suggested that a lot of the hesitation is surrounding expectations for the spring. Maybe there could be some language in the resolution related to class attendance, jobs, etc. that can be included?

David de Jong asked for someone to summarize why we should vote against it.

Sean Mulholland shared that every faculty member in the College of Business shared that the modality is the one chosen and the students knew they would be meeting. Everything is in the syllabus. It is frustrating to have students saying they aren't doing well - and the average attendance is 6 in person. We are doing live video feeds, meeting individually outside of class, etc. Multiple colleagues have had exams in real time and within 24 hours can find copies. The point is that he cannot support it because there has to be a standard at some point.

Indi Bose shared that life sucks sometimes and you have to deal with it. Asking to be coddled every time is not good. All of us deal with failures. This is a hard time for everyone.

Heid Dent shared that like Sean, everyone was polled and the respondents were adamantly against this. There is a policy in place for course replacement. Students need to show up, face to face classes, hybrid classes, record videos, lectures, meet one on one. I understand a lot is new. Generations before us had many issues to overcome. This helps build resilience. A lot of faculty have tried to make accommodations. The students that have worked hard and persevered are being hindered.

Dawson Spencer asked for someone to summarize why we should vote for it.

David de Jong shared that the comments made about us having it tough when we were kids is a fair justification for not having this option made available to the students. That argument can be made to justify all sorts of things.

Vicki Szabo shared that students who are doing well do not have to take the S/U option.

Enrique Gómez called to question and Todd Collins seconded.

*Vote proceeded.*

A voice vote was made on the resolution as put forth by Enrique Gómez:

*(A) WHEREAS The Covid-19 has prolonged the strain on Faculty, Staff and Student performance.*

*(B) WHEREAS the SGA has presented a resolution requesting that the Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Grading options for Fall 2020.*

*(C ) THEREFORE be it resolved that the Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Grading Guidelines for Spring 2020 adopted by the Faculty Senate be extended and available to Fall 2020 Semester.*

* + Michael Boatright - yes
  + Indi Bose - no
  + Kristin Calvert - yes
  + Todd Collins - yes, proxy for Carrie Rogers- no
  + David De Jong – yes, proxy for Yancey Gulley – abstain
  + Heidi Dent - no
  + Heather Mae Erickson – no
  + Mariana Fisher – abstain (due to absent proxy)
  + Enrique Gómez - yes
  + Ian Jeffress - yes
  + Bora Karayaka – yes, proxy for Martin Tanaka - abstain
  + Marco Lam - no
  + Will Lehman – yes, proxy for Garrett Fisher - yes
  + Niall Michelsen - yes
  + Sean Mulholland - no
  + Leigh Odom - no
  + Matthew Rave - yes
  + Vicki Szabo – yes
  + Elizabeth Tait – abstain (not present)
  + Drew Virtue - yes
  + Elizabeth Wark - no
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - yes
  + Laura Wright, yes, proxy for Roya Scales- no
  + Jessica Zellers - yes

*Resolution was approved. 16 yes, 9 no, 4 abstain.*

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting Adjourned.