**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**08/26/2020 Regular Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm via ZOOM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**ROLL CALL**

* Present: Michael Boatright\*, Indi Bose, Chancellor Kelli Brown, Kristin Calvert, Todd Collins\*, David de Jong, Heidi Dent, Heather Mae Erickson, Garrett Fisher, Mariana Fisher, Enrique Gómez, Yancey Gulley, Ian Jeffress, Bora Karayaka, Marco Lam, Will Lehman, Niall Michelsen, Sean Mulholland, Kadence Otto, Matthew Rave, Carrie Rogers, Roya Scales, Interim Provost Richard Starnes, Vicki Szabo, Elizabeth Tait, Martin Tanaka, Cheryl Waters-Tormey, Drew Virtue, Elizabeth Wark, Laura Wright, Jessica Zellers
* Members with Proxies: Leigh Odom
* Members Absent: none

*\*absent from roll call but present for the meeting*

**SPECIAL REPORT: Enrique Gómez**

Enrique Gómez gave a farewell to the senate as the AY2019-20 chair and officially welcomed the new chair, Kadence Otto.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of Regular Business Meeting Minutes from April 22, 2020

* Voice vote was made. Minutes approved.

Approval of Overflow Business Meeting Minutes from April 29, 2020

* Voice vote was made. Minutes approved.

Approval of Emergency Business Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2020

* Voice vote was made. Minutes approved.

**EXTERNAL REPORTS**

**Chancellor’s Update: Chancellor Kelli Brown**

Over the weekend there were a few disturbing videos released on social media. Chancellor Brown voiced her anger, frustration and disappointment, and is overwhelmed that our students could do this. Our students of color should never feel unsafe here and she is saddened by this. Chancellor Brown met with university and student leaders several times over the weekend and a statement was released last night. WCU acted quickly and decisively, and the students involved are no longer enrolled and will never be enrolled again with WCU. Chancellor Brown was not able to comment anymore on this matter.

Chancellor Brown shared again that she appreciated the conversations from the August 10th meeting and appreciates all of the voices that were heard that day. As we know, the pandemic is new to the us, universities, and the world. This is complex and we are acting and being as nimble as possible. Other universities have curtailed their instruction and so much depends on the practices of our students. We have done excellent work reducing capacity in classrooms and social distancing. Chancellor Brown appreciates all we are doing and have done in preparing and urges us to continue to work together.

We have received good criticism on our Covid dashboard and have worked to update data. Please continue to provide feedback. We continue to evaluate community Covid daily. Melissa Wargo or Chancellor Brown is in direct contact with the system office daily and a larger team meets twice weekly with local health officials in the county as well. We haven’t had any clusters at WCU and we are cautiously optimistic we can continue our face to face instruction. Thank you again for the work you have done.

Chancellor Brown shared that she knows we are tired, and have a lot on our plates, personal lives, professional lives, and we understand. If we unite together we can get through this.

*Question: Michael Boatright asked: Is there a breaking point number of cases where we would start making the call to shift to fully online instruction?   
Response: We have talked with Shelley Carraway about this and she said there is not one metric; there will be a multitude and the context as well. It is not actually numbers. For instance: If the number of hospitalizations at Harris and their beds for COVID and ICU are full, this would require a conversation. It may not have anything to do with WCU, but if something is happening outside that can impact us and one another, we must consider it. We have this conversation twice a week with health officials and others. We are looking at all of the data, all of the time. The other universities saw exponential numbers that kept going up and up, we are not seeing that here.*

*Question: Enrique Gómez: Do we have an update on the number of beds for quarantine at WCU?  
Response: We are looking at potentially another 40 beds that could be added if need be. We have 21 students in quarantine today, with 55 beds available currently. One of the ways we look at this is from an emergency management perspective. The 40 additional beds would be for surge capacity if needed.*

*Question: Vicki Szabo: Are we separating the Biltmore campus from the Cullowhee campus with respect to counting / testing and possible closures if necessary?  
Response: Melissa Wargo: No, not at this time.*

*Question: Vicki Szabo: Does our dashboard include Biltmore campus?  
Response: Richard Starnes: Yes, if the student/faculty/staff member tests at Health Services or self-reports*.

*Question: Elizabeth Wark: Should the university move to online for undergraduates, will WCU consider graduate and professional programs separately?  
Response: Richard Starnes: It depends on the particular situation and how it unfolds. We will do our best to consider everything.*

**Provost’s Report: Interim Provost Richard Starnes**

Interim Provost Richard Starnes echoed the Chancellor's thank-you to all of the faculty and staff for the work that has been accomplished over this summer. We are appreciative of all of the hard work.

As part of fall preparations, faculty have participated in many activities such as the UNC Summer online workshop and other courses. The Coulter Faculty Commons has been helping faculty reimage courses, and have facilitated 46 workshops, and 28 drop-in sessions with over 135 faculty participants.

We remain grateful to a wide variety of folks as we move forward.

There are no hard and fast answers for spring semester. We will have a process much like we did for the fall plan, and we will have faculty input as well. Before we go into planning, we want to get into fall a little bit, but we do have to get on it rather quickly. We may need a calendar change.

There are several recent college-level leadership changes:   
Lori Anderson, Dean of HHS   
Carolyn Callahan, Executive Director of Educational Outreach  
Wes Milner, Director of International Programs and Services

Carrie Rogers and Associate Provost Brandon Schwab are working together along with the faculty senate CRC to address an electronic Collegial Review Process. We will have guidance out next week.

*Question: Yancey Gulley: Given that spring is unknown now, will there be an extension of when programs need to submit spring schedules?  
Response: We will make the decision based on when we have what looks to be a viable, suitable and acceptable plans for spring. We are concerned about ASAs and departments having limited time, but we need to do the hard thinking up front.*

*Question: Todd Collins: Is there also a potential to start spring online, then start in-person at a later time (Feb 1 or whenever), rather than "miss" the early weeks?  
Response: We may make adjustments on lessons learned.*

*Question: Jessica Zellers: Submitting on behalf of an instructor:*

*"It is my belief that the student's instructor certainly has the right to know whether or not one of his or her students tested positive to Covid-19 and it is the University's responsibility and duty to alert the faculty member of this. Yes I understand the issue falls under FERPA, but what about our rights as instructors?"  
Response: It falls under HIPPA. Right now, health services tests are confidential for faculty, staff and students. We understand the concern. During screening, the health authorities determine contact tracing and the need. Students can request absence notification to instructors.*

**Staff Senate: Chair Ben Pendry**

***The monthly report is available on SharePoint.***

As the third staff senate chair in a row to have been the beneficiary of a WCU education, we understand the role and it is an honor to serve in this capacity.

The 2020-2021 year began like no other. While under Phase I, then to Phase II, and now Phase II ½ with primarily telework, WCU Staff Senate has conducted an election, developed annual initiatives, hosted an annual retreat, launched a blog, hosted three forums, and responded to numerous requests for information from UNC Staff Assembly, WCU Human Resources, and various media sources. We have secured another year of professional development funding to support our constituents, and we have done our best to be partners with our colleagues on the WCU Faculty Senate and WCU SGA.

The 2020-2021 year will not be what anyone had in mind at this time last year. In many ways it's not what we had in mind a month ago, but the Staff Senate is committed to working collaboratively to represent the interest of SHRA and EHRA-non faculty professional staff to the best of our ability.

**Training Survey**

WCU Staff Senate conducted a campus wide survey seeking input from staff members on systems (such as Banner and Talent Management) and skill areas (such as pivot tables and Excel, and engaging with students in crisis), which they believed they needed additional information or training. The results were compiled by Alison Joseph and Brittney Buchanan and were presented to Chancellor Brown and Executive Council. Highlighted in the results were multiple areas where we believe Staff Senate can work together to promote resources and support an enterprise wide approach to training and professional development. Staff Senate is excited to work with Vice Chancellor Mike Byers, CIO Craig Fowler, and AVC Cory Causby on next steps related to the survey.

**WCU Staff Senate Blog**

With changes to the way Inside WCU picks up stories, Staff Senate realized that a blog would be the most effective way of disseminating information. The blog has provided us a way to move information quickly and to provide links on social media and within emails. The blog can be found here - https://affiliate.wcu.edu/staffsenate/blog/

**Virtual Forums**

Since June, Staff Senate has hosted and/or served as co-presenter of three separate virtual forums. These have been well attended and we are grateful for the support and participation of Chancellor Brown, Interim Provost Starnes, members of the executive council, key staff leaders and outstanding faculty who have offered their expertise.

26JUNE2020 – Campus Preparations for August Return to In-Person / Residential Instruction

Recap & Recording here - https://affiliate.wcu.edu/staffsenate/blog/2020/06/29/summer-faculty-and-staff-forum/

29JULY2020 – Equity, Race & Justice in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer and WCU Faculty Senate.

Recap & Recording here - https://affiliate.wcu.edu/staffsenate/blog/2020/07/31/faculty-and-staff-forum-addresses-equity-racism-and-justice/

13AUG2020 – Update on Preparations for Return to In-Person / Residential Instruction

**Faculty Assembly Report: Reporting Delegate Vicki Szabo**

The executive summary will be posted on SharePoint when we receive it. President Hans shared his vision for the UNC System and a working group is responding to the proposed changes. We will provide feedback when we receive it.

**University Athletics Committee Annual Report (carryover from Spring 2020 due to COVID): Chair Denise Wilfong**

***The full report is available on SharePoint.***

Highlights Include:

**Athletics Budget -** The UAC discussed the NCAA Value Based Distribution program.

**New Director of Athletics -** The University hired Alex Gary as the new Director of Athletics.

**Title IX -** A specialized review of Title IX within Athletics was performed during fall 2019. A survey will be created for incoming students this year.

**Concussion Protocols -** There has been ongoing discussion regarding the efforts taken to educate and protect student-athletes from concussion-related injury.

The UAC invited Steven Honbarger, Director of Sports Medicine, to discuss education, prevention, and treatment of concussions and related brain trauma.

**Student-athlete Advising Form -** WCU Athletics developed an advising form and mandates that each student-athlete complete the form in advance of meeting with their academic advisor.

**Future Items**

1. Director of Student-athlete Development and Alumni Engagement

2. Social Justice Initiatives

**LMS Recommendation: Director of the Coulter Faculty Commons Eli Collins-Brown & Senior Educational Technologist Jonathan Wade**

* **Resolution to Endorse the Recommendations of the WCU Learning Management System Steering Committee for the Adoption of the Canvas Platform**

A short PowerPoint presentation was given on the background, process, and recommendations for the news Learning Management System.

A motion to vote on the following resolution was made.

Resolution reads as follows:

**Resolution to Endorse the Recommendations of the WCU Learning Management System Steering Committee for the Adoption of the Canvas Platform**

WHEREAS learning management system (LMS) tools have become central to the delivery of content, assessment, and organization of the teaching and learning experience at WCU.

WHEREAS there is a need for a LMS to be adaptable to various display formats and interactions modes such as smart phones and tablets as these technologies emerge and become prevalent.

WHEREAS the contract for our current learning management system (LMS), Blackboard Learn, concludes in May 2021 and has been in use for more than ten years.

WHEREAS the WCU LMS Steering Committee has been charged to investigate market options for LMSs and spent the 2019-2020 academic year actively soliciting input from faculty, staff and students for three major LMS products in the market including vendor presentations, testing groups, and surveys.

WHEREAS the WCU LMS Steering Committee has compiled a report titled Next Generation Learning Environment and presented a unanimous recommendation to the Faculty, Staff and Administration after a meeting on July 14th, 2020.

THEREFORE be it Resolved that the Faculty Senate endorses the recommendation of the LMS Steering Committee to adopt the Learning Management System Canvas by Instructure AND to urge the Administration to begin contract negotiations with Instructure alongside the recommendations to retain third party add-ons that supply plagiarism detection, remote testing/proctoring, and accessibility features for this platform.

***Voice vote was made and approved unanimously.***

**COUNCIL and COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Academic Policy and Review Council: Chair Roya Scales**

The first meeting of the AY will be September 2nd.

**Collegial Review Council: Chair Carrie Rogers**

The first agenda item is to look at some short-term accommodations for the collegial review process. We will look at what this looks like during and post pandemic. We meet next week.

**Faculty Affairs Council: Chair Sean Mulholland**

We are in the process of finalizing the meeting date for next week and intend on discussing topics and items to achieve this year. We would like to find some sort of resolution on student assessment. Faculty compensation is high on the list as well.

**Rules Committee: Chair-Elect Laura Wright**

We are sending out meeting requests tomorrow and will have a report at the next meeting.

**Senate Report: Chair Kadie Otto**

* **Committee Appointments Needed**

University Research Council: David De Jong volunteered for the 2020-23 term.

Paul A. Reid Awards Committee: Drew Virtue, Heidi Dent, and Mariana Fisher will serve the 2020-21 term**.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Laura Wright brought forward a resolution on supporting Black students, employees, and community members that reads as follows:***

BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate reasserts our unequivocal support for our Black students, colleagues, and community members. With regard to its adjudication of student sanctions, the Faculty Senate supports and commends WCU’s administration taking “necessary and appropriate action to protect the safety and interests of the University community” (3.03) to enforce its Code of Student Conduct (2.02; 5.07) to the full extent of its authority and asks that it do so in all equivalent future incidents. Alongside the WCU administration, the Board of Trustees, the staff and students, the faculty honor and share the core values of diversity, inclusivity, equality, and social justice, and strive to create a safe learning environment for all students at WCU.

***Discussion proceeded.***

A consensus was made that there needs to be a statement released from the faculty senate that is timely.

The statement is simple and clean and lets everyone on campus know that we have thought about this and feel that actions were warranted. The statement is calm. We may want to look at specific action items in the future. Commending the administration for acting quickly is something we should do.

***A voice vote proceeded and the resolution was approved unanimously.***

**MEETING ADJOURNED**