**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**09/24/2020 Regular Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm via ZOOM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**ROLL CALL**

* Present:
  + Indi Bose - not present for roll call, arrived 3:30
  + Chancellor Kelli Brown - present
  + Kristin Calvert - present
  + Todd Collins - present
  + David De Jong - present
  + Heidi Dent - present
  + Heather Mae Erickson - present
  + Cheryl Waters-Tormey - present
  + Mariana Fisher - present
  + Enrique Gómez - not present for roll call, arrived 3:32
  + Yancey Gulley - present, left at 4:30
  + Ian Jeffress - present
  + Bora Karayaka - present
  + Marco Lam - present
  + Will Lehman - present
  + Niall Michelsen - present
  + Sean Mulholland - present
  + Leigh Odom - present
  + Kadence Otto - present
  + Carrie Rogers - present
  + Roya Scales - present
  + Interim Provost Richard Starnes - present
  + Vicki Szabo - present
  + Elizabeth Tait - present
  + Martin Tanaka - present
  + Drew Virtue - present
  + Laura Wright - present
  + Jessica Zellers - present
* Members with Proxies:
  + Michael Boatright
  + Garrett Fisher
  + Elizabeth Wark
* Members Absent:
  + Matthew Rave

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Approval of Regular Business Meeting Minutes from August 26, 2020**

Page 3, paragraph 4, line 1 - add a “d” to the end of Richard Starnes name.

*Motion to approve was made by Elizabeth Tait. Seconded by Roya Scales. Voice vote was made.*

* Michael Boatright - aye
* Kristin Calvert - aye
* Todd Collins - aye
* David De Jong - aye
* Heidi Dent - aye
* Heather Mae Erickson - aye
* Cheryl Waters-Tormey - aye
* Mariana Fisher - aye
* Yancey Gulley - aye
* Ian Jeffress - aye
* Garrett Fisher - aye
* Bora Karayaka - aye
* Marco Lam - aye
* Will Lehman - aye
* Niall Michelsen - aye
* Sean Mulholland - aye
* Leigh Odom - aye
* Kadence Otto - aye
* Carrie Rogers - aye
* Roya Scales - aye
* Vicki Szabo - abstain
* Elizabeth Tait - aye
* Martin Tanaka - aye
* Drew Virtue - aye
* Elizabeth Wark - aye
* Laura Wright - aye
* Jessica Zellers - aye

*Minutes approved.*

**EXTERNAL REPORTS**

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

Chancellor Brown hosted a reception for recently tenured professors and gave congratulations.

* *Erin Adams, Art and Design*
* *Ellie Blair, Teaching and Learning*
* *Patricia Bricker, Teaching and Learning*
* *Mark Budden, Math and Computer Science*
* *Cyndy Caravelis, Criminology and Criminal Justice*
* *Marie-Line Germain, Human Services*
* *Mary Anna LaFratta, Art and Design*
* *Christina Reitz, Music*
* *Lorrie Willey, Business Law*

She also visited Heather Mae Erickson’s pottery wheel class and was able to see firsthand how Heather Mae and students were able to have a hands-on class in the midst of COVID.

Tomorrow is week 6! Chancellor Brown appreciates all of the hard work everyone is doing. Our numbers are holding steady. Last week we had 4 confirmed cases with a 1.2% positivity last week. We have 6 students currently in isolation. 64 students are self-isolating. Please continue to follow the **COVID dashboard** online as it is updated daily.

**Catamounts Care** and student ambassadors are really working hard. We are also staying in contact with the Jackson County Health Department, the local hospital, and school system, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee health system.

At the **September Board of Governors meeting**, a UNC Chapel Hill faculty member presented to the strategic initiatives group, and we are looking into mental health services at each university.

Please participate in **UNC system survey on race**. It will be open until September 30. Our numbers are down, and faculty, staff, and students can all take it.

We have had a **record enrollment** of 12,243 this fall. This in part from our continuing students, new graduate students and distance education students. Our first year retention rate is a little over 81%. Thanks to all. The new masters degree in experiential outdoor boosted our numbers as well.

**Construction projects** - We have used native stone on the front main entrance. New landscaping will come this spring. The new Apodaca science building will be ready to go in fall 2021. The first parking deck is in process. Ramsey will receive a new exterior, and Scott and Walker demolition is underway.

**US News and World report** - WCU has been ranked 10th among public universities in the south, 9th in value, 13th for veterans, and 18th on social mobility.

**Other news** - The National Science Foundation gave a grant of over $5000 for plant and taxidermy selections, and Bardo Arts Center turns 15 this year. Dr. Nicholas Passalacqua received an achievement award from the American Academy of Forensic Science.

**Legislative Priorities** - Long session begins in January. The president mentioned 4 legislative priorities for the year:

* NC Promise
* Enrollment growth recurring
* Funding for building reserves
* Faculty and Staff Salaries

Lastly, the Honors College has been renamed as the Brinson Honors College to honor Jack and Judy Brinson and their financial commitment to the institution’s mission of academic excellence.

The Grace Allen Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund has been established to honor long-time Western Carolina University College of Business professor Grace Allen.

*Question: Can you clarify President Hahn’s priorities? Are they in rank order?  
Response: I do not think they are in rank order.*

*Question: For the freshman class, everyone was expecting it to drop. How do we rank in the UNC system/ national picture?  
Response: We haven't seen system-level numbers yet. The data is not compiled because not everyone has started yet. At the national level, they are talking about 25%. We are 1 of 6 institutions with enrollment growth at the system level. Interim Provost Richard Starnes added that some schools saw reductions like we did. There are various census days right now. We will share more information when final data comes out.*

*Question: We received a report that some students are being denied COVID testing? This is hearsay, but is this the case?  
Response: We follow all contact tracing protocols. A contact tracer asks folks to go in and be tested. We are testing symptomatic students on campus. The Jackson County health department would contact them. Chief of Staff Melissa Wargo shared that there is very detailed and specific screening protocol the health department uses to determine whether or not someone receives a test. No one that is symptomatic has been turned away.   
Follow up Question: If students show up and say they have been exposed to someone but are asymptomatic, are we testing them?  
Response: If they meet the screening requirements, they are then tested. It is case dependent. We are also doing some limited surveillance testing in athletics.*

*Question: Any updates on the Provost search?  
Response: We would like to make an offer in early October. The first candidate withdrew herself.*

*Enrique Gómez came into the meeting at 3:32pm.*

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

We sent out some guidance around **course modality** last week, and we expect department heads will have discussions with faculty members. We encourage department heads and deans to look at section sizes as well.

We drafted potential courses of action for the **spring calendar**. We have received feedback from several groups and we are looking the information over. We hope to finalize it early next week.

We have rolled out a new **electronic workflow process for TPR** on a Sharepoint site. Candidates have access until 5pm on October 1. We are providing support for this with drop-in sessions, and have created guidance.

We have had many students that have not logged in or taken action and we are reaching out to them. We are doing outreach to those folks with satisfactory grades as well. We do not have a desire to move to an S/U model.

**Searches** - The committee met on 21st for the dean for the **College of Business** and we will provide guidance on that soon.

*Question: If faculty have received a Covid exception for fall, there is nothing more to do for spring?  
Response: Correct*

*Question: There is a petition on change.org that has 1000+ signatures asking that we give students S/U grades for the semester. How will faculty be evaluated this semester?  
Response: We will need to talk with CRC or FAC to think about this. Last spring we provided SAIs to faculty for formative feedback only. We would almost be allowing for a full year that could impact dossiers...we would have to come up with a substitution to allow an evaluative process.*

**Staff Senate: Chair Ben Pendry**

*The monthly report is available on SharePoint.*

**2020 Years of Service Celebration**

Due to COVID restrictions, our celebration will look a little different this year. Last year we had a few guest speakers who shared their thoughts and appreciation for those who were receiving an award. This year we will be producing a video series to say thank you to those who are achieving milestones. Awardees will receive a plaque and a meal card from Aramark. We have nearly 200 staff members who are celebrating milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service. We have 7 staff members who are celebrating milestones of 30 years or more. Chancellor Brown will be meeting with these staff members for a socially distanced lunch which we’re looking forward to. August Question of the Month

August’s **Question of the Month** revolved around the use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams, as well as the comfort level for using these platforms. It is overwhelmingly evident that we have a great opportunity across our campus to utilize additional training opportunities in both Zoom and Microsoft Teams! It looks like there is plenty of room for growth and understanding concerning the features of both platforms. Although many of you know how to host a meeting in Zoom, the confidence with Microsoft Teams is a little lower.

It is also apparent that emails with attached links to training opportunities or use of MyWCU for housing training workshops will be the most convenient outlet for you to improve your virtual meeting skills.

For training in other areas, Staff Senate was awarded $10,000 in **Professional Development** funds for permanent staff members! More information will be forthcoming on how to apply for this funding.

**WCU Staff Senate Ornament Sales Start Friday, 9/25/2020**

Entering its 14th year, the Western Carolina University Staff Senate Scholarship supports currently enrolled or accepted, incoming students who are children and relatives of SHRA and EHRA non-faculty employees. Staff Senate was able to award five $1,000 scholarships for the 2020-2021 academic year. One major goal of the Staff Senate is to continue to fund-raise so the scholarship endowment can grow and support dependents of WCU Staff for years to come. The Senate’s Scholarship Committee leads the Senate’s fundraising efforts by soliciting donations and selling ornaments. This year Staff Senate is proud to continue their partnership with Dr. Patrick Gardner and the Rapid Center to produce a limited-edition ornament.

The 2020 Staff Senate ornament was designed and made in house by extremely talented WCU engineering students. Ornaments will be made available to purchase beginning Friday, September 25. This year, all sales will be conducted online through the Western Carolina University Marketplace. All proceeds of the $10 ornament will benefit the Staff Senate Scholarship. In keeping with the 2020-2021 Campus Theme: Water, this year’s ornament design is the shape of a drop of water and features The Catafount on WCU’s campus. The Senate appreciates the support the scholarship has received from the campus community over the years and looks forward to working together to continue to support our students.

**Culture in Conversation Series**

Staff Senate is proud to be a partner with Faculty Senate, SGA, and the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer in the 2020-2021 Culture in Conversation Series. The below information has been shared on the Staff Senate Blog.

We are so pleased to announce the commencement of our “Culture in Conversation Series.” This is a collaborative initiative between The Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association. The aim of this Series is to inspire campus dialogue, community engagement, and civic education about the national narrative on diversity and inclusion. Speakers include thought leaders from WCU, national subject matter experts, and diversity professionals whose research, leadership, and scholarship will further WCU’s efforts to present diverse ideas, perspectives, and viewpoints. It is our hope that this Series will challenge your perspectives, engage you in critical thinking, and bring better understanding and appreciation for inclusive excellence.

For the Fall 2020 semester we will host three sessions. Each session is on a Tuesday from noon-1pm EST. To get these on your calendars, fall dates and topics are as follows: Session 1 – Sept. 22 – Athlete Activism & Social Justice; Session 2 – Oct. 20 – Women, Equity & Social Justice; and, Session 3 – Nov. 10 – The Cherokee: On Sacred Ground. Each session will be a webinar and will be recorded for further viewing/use. A link to register for each webinar will be sent as the date approaches. The recording of the first session is at <https://youtu.be/zC2gf3oAGBE>.

**UNC System Staff Engagement Survey**

The UNC Staff Assembly is working on aggregating and pulling together high-level results, campus by campus, for presentation to the System office and the Board of Governors. Staff Senate looks forward to working with Faculty Senate and WCU administration on reviewing the results and identifying ways that we can work together to continue to improve our engagement of staff and faculty.

**Community Service Engagement** – Our liaison is Suzanne Melton

We continue to encourage and track community engagement efforts on the part of our Senators. Our hope this year is to work with other stakeholders around campus to track and celebrate the service of all members of the WCU community – faculty, students, and staff.

**Mental Health Initiative**

This has been an initiative of the WCU Staff Senate for some time. We look forward to continuing to work with Faculty Senate and Chancellor Brown on how to move this initiative forward.

**UNC System Equity Task Force**

The UNC System Equity Task Force is seeking input from staff throughout the system. We acknowledge that some staff may want to anonymously share concerns and suggestions, so we developed an anonymous web form. Please don’t be hesitant to share your ideas or concerns, as the task force wants to hear them. We can’t address racial equity issues unless we hear the problems you are seeing and experiencing.

The web form is available at <https://northcarolina.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aYq7fqn7FZeJNiZ>

We are also working on a Qualtrics survey where we’ll ask specific questions relating to racial equity on your campus. Be watching for more information about the survey, which we hope to be launched around September 14.

Lastly, we’re working on some virtual town hall meetings in October (think Zoom/WebEx) that you’ll have an opportunity to attend and also provide feedback. More information on those will be coming from as we get closer.

More information about the Racial Equity Task Force is available at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/unc-system-racial-equity-task-force>

**Student Government Association Report: President Dawson Spencer**

Not present

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

The Executive Summary and a Day in the Life reports are forthcoming.

NC Policy Watch link for the UNC BOG Chancellor search process vote and discussion: <http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2020/09/17/after-intense-debate-unc-board-of-governors-approve-changes-to-chancellor-search-process/>

**COUNCIL and COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

**Update on Streamlining the Curriculum Review Process**

We are working through Curriculog proposals. We also want to work through the April 2019 resolution and have all of the working parts in place so this starts Fall 2021.

**Collegial Review Council: Chair Carrie Rogers**

**Resolution Regarding Faculty Senate CRC Endorsement of Virtual Meeting & Electronic Document Guidelines 2020-2021**

***Resolution reads as follows:***

Whereas, The Provost’s office, after consulting with the Faculty Senate Collegial Review Council (FS CRC) and responding to feedback, presented the Virtual Meeting & Electronic Document Guidelines to this body on September 8th.

Resolved, the FS CRC hereby endorses said document for the collegial review processes at the Department, College and University levels for the Academic Year 2020-2021. The FS CRC encourages all administrators and faculty involved with the Collegial Review process for the year 2020-2021 to acknowledge the impact that COVID-19 has had on the TPR/PTR process and embrace the spirit of collegiality and grace this year.

Signed by the FS CRC for 2020-2021 this day of September 9th, 2020:  
Carrie Rogers, Chair FS CRC  
Drew Virtue  
Todd Collins  
Kristin Calvert  
Ian Jeffress  
Leigh Odom  
Absent: Marco Lam

*Voice vote was made.*

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

*Approved.*

**Faculty Affairs Council: Chair Sean Mulholland**

**Update on SAI Shift to SPL Instrument, Faculty Salaries, Subcommittees**

The council has met once with Amy Murphy-Nugen and discussed the instruments. We are currently putting together a Teams group to compile a narrative of the work until now.

We also discussed faculty compensation, levels and by rank, etc.

Laura Wright has sent another document on child care that we will get to as soon as possible.

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

We discussed the imbalance in council structure and want to work to identify the duties. We may want to look at a council devoted to special projects.

We also talked about a change to the election cycle.

**Senate Report: Chair Kadie Otto**

**Report & Speech to the BOT**

*The report was made available on SharePoint and emailed to the full senate.*

**Mental Health Resources**

*Information was made available on SharePoint and emailed to the full senate.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Resolution on Covid-19 Prevalence Testing Now and For Reopening in January 2021 (Past-Chair Enrique Gómez )**

***Resolution reads as follows:***

**Whereas** UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina State, East Carolina, UNC Wilmington and Appalachian State Universities have reported surges of Covid-19 cases during the Fall 2020 semester accounting for more than forty-five hundred cases as of September twenty first of this year; and

**Whereas** the New York Times “Tracking Covid at U.S. Colleges and Universities” ranks East Carolina, UNC Chapel Hill and North Carolina State Universities among those universities with the highest Covid-19 infections nationwide; and

**Whereas** community spread of the Covid-19 virus is active in the counties where WCU has teaching facilities with Jackson County having over five hundred confirmed cases and seven Covid-19 related death and Buncombe County having over twenty-eight hundred confirmed cases with seventy Covid-19 related deaths as of September twenty first of this year per the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; and

**Whereas** prevalence testing is an epidemiologic tool to assess the number of people in a group with a condition at a specific point in time, and that such a tool using the serologic testing recommended by the Center for Disease Control to establish the positivity rate of SARS-CoV-2 infection has been used to successfully reduce the reproductive number of infections in communities and countries that guide their public policy using these statistics; and

**Whereas** recent studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals (listed as references) have concluded that prevalence testing, when used in conjunction with other behavioral modifications, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing, mask wearing, isolation, quarantine and contact tracing can keep students and employees safe; and

**Whereas** continuing failure to reopen campuses in the UNC System undermines the trust of the public in the enterprise of higher education given that these are the institutions that prepare medical and public policy professionals and hence themselves should be models for best community practices and policies to protect public health; now, and heretofore be it

**Resolved**, that the Western Carolina University Faculty strongly urge that the UNC System Administration adopt a Covid-19 Prevention, Detection and Response Plan that implements an aggressive prevalence testing policy on each campus that uses random testing of asymptomatic employees and students so that each University Community member is tested multiple times per semester, coordinates with the local county health departments respective to each campus to conduct contact tracing, and publishes daily dashboard updates that include prevalence and positivity rates and explicitly states the metrics University officials will use to make a determination to move residential classes online.

**References**:

Elizabeth H. Bradley, PhD, Ming-Wen An, PhD, Ellen Fox, MD, “Reopening Colleges During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic—One Size Does Not Fit All,” JAMA 3 (2020) 7: Accessed on September 12, 2020.

A. David Paltiel, PhD, Amy Zheng, BA, Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, “Assessment of SARS-CoV-2 Screening Strategies to Permit the Safe Reopening of College Campuses in the United States,” JAMA 3 (2020) 7: Accessed on September 12, 2020.

*Discussion proceeded.*

*Carrie Rogers made a motion to move the resolution to the planning team for further discussion.*

*After more senate discussion, Carrie Rogers withdrew her motion to move the resolution to the planning team.*

*Enrique Gómez withdrew the motion to vote on the resolution, and it will be presented at a later date if decided.*

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion to Dismiss was made by Jessica Zellers, and seconded.*

*No objections.*

**Meeting Adjourned.**