

# **Faculty Senate Resolution Establishing a Makerspace Task Force**

August 27, 2015

WHEREAS the Maker movement is a fairly new phenomenon enhanced by the recent affordability of enabling technologies in which people independently or collaboratively develop unique technology products, and

WHEREAS Makerspaces democratize design, engineering and fabrication by making manufacturing equipment available to members of the local community and providing instruction on the use of the tools, and

WHEREAS most equipment traditionally found in a Makerspace will find dual use in a classroom teaching environment, and

WHEREAS some equipment traditionally found in a Makerspace is already available at WCU, and

WHEREAS the university strives to make best use of available resources, avoiding duplication and maximizing resource usage, and

WHEREAS policies would need to be developed to assure fair, equitable, and constructive use of space and equipment associated with a Makerspace, and

WHEREAS oversight is required to setup, maintain, upgrade, schedule, train and certify users in safety and operations, and coordinate resources of a Makerspace, and

WHEREAS WCU's Core Values and Guiding include the Free and Open Interchange of Ideas and Collaboration with and Respect for our Communities, and

WHEREAS WCU's Strategic Directions include Enhancing the Total Student Experience and Enhancing Our External Partnerships, and

WHEREAS extending these opportunities to local schools will help recruit students to WCU, and

WHEREAS extending these opportunities to WCU students will help with retention and graduation rates, and

WHEREAS extending these opportunities to WCU faculty will help them remain engaged in the process of learning and teaching, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that

- (1) The WCU Faculty Senate hereby establishes a task force that shall have representation from faculty, staff and students, with faculty and staff represented as described below and student representation being determined by the WCU Student Government Association,
- (2) This task force will investigate what resources (space, equipment, release time, funds) will be needed to establish and maintain a Makerspace, and
- (3) This task force shall be charged with developing a set of recommendations to the Chancellor regarding establishment of a Makerspace on the WCU campus,
- (4) The task force shall also develop a recommended set of policies and procedures regarding use of the Makerspace, and
- (5) That this task force will present its recommendations to the Faculty Senate by the last Fall 2015 meeting.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that

Jack Summers (A&S), Hugh Jack (Kimmel School), Burt Ogle (Health and Human Sciences), Mark Stoffen (Hunter Library), Kevin Kirkpatrick (Fine and Performing Arts), William Frady (IT), Ed Wright (Business), Brandon Schwab (Associate Provost for Academic Affairs), Scott Pierce (Kimmel School) and Jonathan Wade (Coulter Faculty Commons) are appointed to serve on the task force. This group represents WCU administration, faculty and staff, many of whom are already engaged in the Maker movement, and who will be key to the success of a WCU Makerspace.

**ATTACHMENT:**

**Background for Faculty Senate Resolution Establishing a Task Force to Recommend Policies, Procedures, and Resources Associated with a Maker Space at WCU**

The Maker movement is a fairly recent phenomenon that has grown as a result of newly affordable enabling technologies. Wikipedia lists the interests of Makers as including “electronics, robotics, 3-D printing, and the use of CNC tools, as well as more traditional activities such as metalworking, woodworking, and traditional arts and crafts.” Makers are generally self-taught and self-motivated. Makerspaces democratize design, engineering and fabrication by making manufacturing equipment available to members of the local community and providing instruction on the use of the tools. Many are hosted within schools, universities or libraries.

WCU currently has several independent, incipient efforts related to the makerspace concept: the Library has obtained two 3D printers and has been allocated space in the ground floor of Hunter currently occupied by IT Support; the Kimmel School has rapid prototyping technology that fits this overall concept; with support from the Provost’s grant program, Vicki Szabo has obtained a 3D camera system for her marine life research; Jack Summers has been engaged in the “maker” movement for some time, and is preparing a grant proposal for an NSF program designed specifically to support university-based makerspace projects.

The current proposal is for the establishment of a Task Force, under the auspices of the Faculty Senate, to study the feasibility and issues involved in establishing a formal campus makerspace, using current resources as a seed project to establish viability. The goal is to have an understanding in place in time to support an NSF proposal with a due date in December, 2015.

This project is central to WCU’s core mission as a “creator and diffuser of knowledge” with a specific regional commitment.

- Current incipient efforts across campus could be united under this rubric, facilitating the sharing of technology, equipment, and space.
- Local high school students in our region could be offered the opportunity to design “things” in their school labs, submit the digital file to the WCU Makerspace, and have their inventions 3D printed.
- The same access could be provided to individual citizens across western North Carolina, to facilitate their own creative efforts with the support of their “university next door.”