**Faculty Senate Minutes**

**1/20/2021 Regular Business Meeting 3:00-5:00 pm via ZOOM**

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**ROLL CALL and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Approval of Regular Business Meeting Minutes from November 11, 2020**

*Vote was taken with roll call. Minutes Approved.*

**Approval of Overflow Business Meeting Minutes from November 18, 2020**

*Vote was taken with roll call. Minutes Approved.*

* Present:
  + Michael Boatright - present, vote - yes
  + Indi Bose - present, vote - yes
  + Chancellor Kelli Brown - present
  + Kristin Calvert - present, vote - yes
  + Todd Collins - present, vote – yes
  + Heidi Dent – present (arrived 3:12) – absent for vote
  + David De Jong - present, vote - yes
  + Heather Mae Erickson - present, vote - yes
  + Garrett Fisher - present, vote yes, proxy for Mariana Fisher, vote - yes
  + Enrique Gómez - present, vote - yes
  + Yancey Gulley - present, vote - yes
  + Jeremy Jones - present, vote - yes
  + Sudhir Kaul - present, vote - yes
  + Marco Lam - present, vote - yes
  + Will Lehman - present, vote - yes
  + Niall Michelsen - present, vote - yes
  + Sean Mulholland - present, vote - yes
  + Leigh Odom - present, vote - yes, proxy for Elizabeth Wark, vote - yes
  + Kadence Otto - present, vote - yes
  + Matthew Rave - present, vote - yes
  + Carrie Rogers - present, vote - yes
  + Roya Scales - present, vote - yes
  + Provost Richard Starnes - present
  + Vicki Szabo - present, vote - yes
  + Elizabeth Tait - present, vote - yes
  + Martin Tanaka - present, vote abstain
  + Drew Virtue - present, vote - yes
  + Laura Wright - present, vote - yes
  + Jessica Zellers - present, vote - yes
* Members with Proxies:
  + Mariana Fisher
  + Elizabeth Wark
* Members Absent:
  + Ashlee Wasmund

**EXTERNAL REPORTS**

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

We are thankful for a successful fall and are looking forward to a successful spring. A thank you was shared to everyone.

**Spring Update**

We will move from in-person instruction to remote instruction for the first three weeks. This was a difficult decision but one we feel is in the best interest of the entire Western community. Chancellor Brown shared that she has every confidence that each faculty will engage with each of their students during these times. WCU is prized for personalized learning experiences and our students’ success is important to us all.

Chancellor Brown is grateful for faculty checking in with their students. Some students are thriving and some students are struggling. We need to continue to support them as best we can.

**COVID Dashboard**

The COVID-19 revised dashboard has resumed its weekly updates on January 11. The dashboard has been revised to include additional information. By default, the dashboard shows spring data (collected starting Jan. 1) but dashboard users also can view fall/winter data. Additionally, users can see information about employee and student populations by using the filters provided. If the user selects the employee view, they will see additional details about positive cases in faculty and staff categories.

A new element of the dashboard shows cumulative cases, and of those, how many are currently active. This addition can be viewed for the entire campus, or for employee or student groups specifically. Finally, the dashboard includes a link to the state’s COVID-19 dashboard, where users can find detailed information for Jackson County and other areas of North Carolina.

**Current COVID activity on-campus**

Infections continue to surge locally, throughout the state and the nation. Over the past week, we had a confirmed 22 cases total. On-campus we had 18 positive cases out of 553 administered tests. Positivity Rate is at 3.3% We have 2 students in isolation on-campus and 24 in self-isolation off-campus.

**Vaccine Information**

While vaccines are beginning to become available, the distribution and administration across the State is an incredibly complex process and supplies remain very low. WCU is working with Jackson County Department of Public Health and Harris Regional Hospital on ways we can partner to ensure that all in our community can be vaccinated.

WCU has applied to become a vaccine provider and we recently learned we are approved and are awaiting activation of our access to the state system. In addition, WCU is working with the UNC System on ways we can provide additional support in our community. With the help of the UNC Collaboratory, WCU will receive 3 ultra-cold freezer storage units, two large units and one portable unit. This will allow us to store over 114,000 vials of vaccine. These freezer units should begin arriving in late January and early/mid-February.

Until then, I ask for your patience and grace amid the vaccine rollout. Jackson County and Harris Regional Hospital, as well as other regional health departments and hospitals, are prioritizing the vaccination of the elderly and frontline healthcare workers. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is working to clarify the role of higher education faculty and staff in the vaccine prioritization framework. As soon as that clarity is known, we will update the campus.

We will almost certainly see ongoing shortages of vaccine supply, which may mean that even individuals who qualify for vaccination will experience delays on receiving shots. We have added a page on WCU’s website to provide information on vaccines. The site will be updated as information becomes available.

**Legislative Update**

The legislature met briefly last week and will be starting the long session on January 27. We are working to meet face-to-face with as many legislators as we can by inviting them to campus in the coming weeks. We hosted new Representative Karl Gillespie from Macon County on-campus yesterday.

We are communicating our campus and system priorities of recurring funding for NC Promise, enrollment growth, and operations and maintenance for the Connect NC bond buildings, including the Apodaca Science building, as well as continued advocacy for equitable salary increases for university faculty and staff.

We expect the fiscal year to be challenging due to the ongoing pandemic but will not know what the budget outlook is until after tax revenues for the year are finalized in April and the impact of additional federal stimulus dollars are taken into account.

**Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF)**

We anticipate that we will receive $14M in HEERF money. A minimum of $4.4M will be spent on direct aid to students, but we are discussing additional aid to students. We think we may have some additional flexibility on how we use the remainder, but at this time we do not have full instructions on the money’s use, nor have we received the allocation from the federal government.

*Question from Kadie Otto: When we will have an update on the new FAR?  
Response from Chancellor Brown: We met with three candidates last week and are hopeful to be in touch this week with a decision.*

*Question from Niall Michelsen: A three-week start date sounds optimistic in that Covid situation will be better. If we have to push back further, how much warning will we all get?*  
*Response from Chancellor Brown: What we know about the data is that January and February are high flu months. We know now from Thanksgiving information that we anticipate there will be a peak in 4-6 weeks in NC. That’s how we came up with the February 15 date.*   
*Provost Starnes commented: We will continue to look at the modeling data and give as much notice as we can. This is a dynamic environment and we will make the decision as best we can using the data. We are also looking at other system schools as well and monitoring their experiences.*

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

**Spring 2021 Planning**

After careful consideration of (a) the modeled post-holiday peak of COVID-19 infections, (b) availability of quarantine and isolation space on campus, (c) status of vaccine availability, and (d) potential impacts of bringing asymptomatic students back to campus, we have made the decision to delay student move-in to the residence halls and hold the first three weeks of classes via remote instruction. Classes will start as scheduled on Monday, January 25th and be offered primarily through remote instruction through Friday, February 12th, following the previously-revised spring semester [calendar](https://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/registrar/2020-2021-Academic-Calendar-final-fall.pdf). The plan is to move to the originally scheduled modality (face-to-face, hybrid, or online) beginning February 15th. We will continue to monitor the situation in the interim and if there is any need to modify that plan and extend remote instruction beyond February 12th, a decision will be made the week of February 8th. For the most current information, please see the Spring Semester resource [page](https://www-test.wcu.edu/operations-procedures/campus-update.aspx#academic).

**Summer and Fall 2021 Planning**

Discussions have begun within Provost Council regarding planning for summer and fall of 2021. Later this week, the Fall Planning Work Group that assisted in spring 2020 and fall 2020 planning will reconvene to begin discussions regarding summer and fall 2021 planning. A meeting with Department Heads will also convene early next week.

**COVID-19 / Vaccination Update**

A working group, facilitated by Melissa Wargo, Chief of Staff, has been created to address the allocation of vaccinations and WCU’s role in distribution.

**Enrollment Update**

We are continuing to monitor and actively impact our student enrollment for the 2021 spring and fall semesters.

* The fall to spring retention rate for current full-time, first-time freshmen (1,779 students) is 85% (1,515 students) compared to 92% last year at this time.
* Overall enrollment is down over 294 students (-2.56%) point-in-time compared with last Spring 2020, (or 11,190 currently enrolled for the Spring 2021 compared with 11,484 students enrolled point-in-time for Spring 2020).
* Undergraduate distance and graduate resident student enrollment are tracking favorably overall (up 184 students/11% and up 69 students/8%, respectively).
* The Offices of Graduate School, Admission, and Educational Outreach, in concert with faculty, are all actively recruiting students for fall 2021.

WCU, like other institutions, is receiving State (Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund-GEERF) and federal (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund-HEERF) allocations to support students to be able to continue their education providing for everything from costs of COVID-19 tests, tuition, technology, books, and transportation, to housing, course materials, and fees, etc.

The units in Student Success are coordinating with other offices more direct outreach to our continuing students to support them in returning to classes, virtually, next week, and hybrid and in-person, on February 15th. There are multiple sources of support, from financial, advising, and tutoring, to medical and housing help.

Continuing to work through data and ideas with a goal of coming up with strategic directions surrounding faculty salaries.

*Question from Laura Wright: Ohio State did a study and 30% of the college athletes with COVID had heart damage. We are concerned about our athletes. If we go back in the fall as regular business, can we require students, faculty, and staff be vaccinated?  
Response from Provost Starnes: Provost Starnes has not seen the specific state study, but has seen others. A lot depends on the severity of the case. While we cannot speak for Alex Gary in athletics, we do know we are doing cardiac screenings and other protocols for those that have tested positive. With regard to requiring the vaccine - we are not sure right now. We have thought and talked about it. When students come to campus, outside of a few exceptions, they are required to have other vaccines. They are enumerated in statute. It’s a policy question every organization in America is struggling with. Right now we don't have a good answer, but we are having discussions.*

**Staff Senate: Chair Ben Pendry**

We were proud to partner with the faculty senate for the campus forum yesterday. Thank you to the faculty senate for your support.

We hosted a mid-year retreat a couple weeks ago, and Kim Gorman and Kathleen Brennan shared data on their research about perceptions of mental health at WCU. Staff Senate will continue to partner with them going further.

Cory Causby shared data from the UNC Employee engagement survey. Everyone is STRONGLY encouraged to participate in the campus-wide engagement survey presentation on 2/11/2021 at 3pm. The folks from ModernThink will be going over the results.

I Love WCU coming up in February. The Shetland Society will be focused on employees celebrating philanthropy. They have again partnered with The Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning.

We will be featuring the staff senate scholarship fund. Thank you to the UClub for hosting a silent auction - more info coming.

We want to recognize Alison Joseph for her work on the COVID dashboard. We encourage staff to do what they can to be in compliance. Since July 1, 2020, there have been 2 cases reported. I believe we are suffering from underreporting. Our dashboard has to be accurate.

Culture in Conversation Series coming up this semester. Please mark your calendars:

Part 4: Feb. 16 – Body Type/Image & Societal Impact

Part 5: Mar. 16 – LGBTQ+

Part 6: Apr. 16 – Allyship & Bystander Intervention

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

Internal Activities

* Executive Branch
  + Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Grading Scale for Fall 2020 ONLY
* New Office hours
* Campus Safety Walk [TBD-month one]
* External Activities
* COVID-19 Updates
  + Entrance Testing
  + Issues w/o symptoms
  + PPE for Students
  + HEERF Money
* Culture in Conversation
  + Being marketed to students
* Spring Semester Overview
  + We can knock this semester out of the water
* UNCASG Activities
  + We spoke to the BOG this morning about the importance of the student activities fee and what it brings to student and campus life
  + We will be meeting this weekend to discuss seven resolutions for first reading
* Platform
  + Raising Awareness of Students Rights and Resources
  + Pragmatic and Consistent Organizational Structure
  + Promoting Transparency to the Student Body, A 20/20 view in 2020
  + Fostering connectivity through community engagement and RSOs
  + Leading the Charge of Campus Safety
  + Mobilizing the Student Body for 2020 Elections
  + Supporting Underrepresented Students
  + The Three Zeros of Sustainability
* Initiatives
  + Academic Integrity
  + WCU Yearbook
  + ROTC Program
  + ASG Engagement
  + Easter Monday
  + Student Honor Memorial at Graduation
  + Grade Distribution

*Comment from Kadie Otto: We have Larry Hammer coming in February to discuss S/U data. We will have a resolution on the table by the March meeting.   
Response from Dawson Spencer: We appreciate the transparency and look forward to the meeting.*

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

No formal report.

* We began assembly with a caucus meeting, discussing effective means of engagement between delegation and campuses.
* We heard reports on health initiatives.
* We discussed common course numbering and are looking for faculty volunteers.
* There are the beginnings of a report on distance education and a possible change in fees and pricing.
* The institutional peer list is posted online.
* Sean Mulholland’s report is coming in February.

*Provost Starnes commented: We are currently doing some modeling. This will be required. 12 full time, 9 grad students. There will be changes for cost per credit hour for some students. We are just getting a look at this and the implications. It is a bit more complicated with us being an NC Promise school.*

*Kadie Otto asked Vicki Szabo to post Faculty Assembly announcements on the senate blog.*

**CFC Canvas Update: Eli Collins-Brown**

*A PowerPoint was brought up on screen.*

**Important Dates**

* Blackboard is turned off – June 30, 2021
* When do we have access to Canvas – NOW - canvas.wcu.edu
* Courses in Canvas – starting with all summer 2021 courses
  + Workshops open last week of February for Summer faculty
  + Workshops for all other faculty May, June and August

**Important Canvas Information**

* Canvas.wcu.edu
* Fall, Spring, and Summer 2020 Courses have been/will be migrated but will be limited to 1G
* 13 Faculty piloting during the Spring 2021 semester
* Integrations setup for Zoom, Microsoft 365, Panopto

**Learning Canvas**

* Growing with Canvas training course available NOW in Canvas
* Asynchronous training course available in Canvas on Feb. 22nd
* Open sessions and consultations for Summer faculty March – April
* Additional support and optional consultations offered May, June and August for all faculty
* Students will have access to Passport to Canvas course to learn how to use the system

**Migrated Courses**

* Migration is not “turn key” -- instructors will need to set up their course(s)
* Checklist available to walk you through how to accomplish this
* Open sessions specifically for migration and set up
* Things to know about Canvas Courses:
  + Course size limit of 1G
  + No video STORAGE in Canvas
    - Upload to Panopto, or other storage
  + Large PowerPoints should be optimized or stored in Microsoft 365 and linked into Canvas

**Student Artifacts, Grades, and Incompletes**

* Blackboard Content will NOT be accessible after June 30, 2021
* Accreditation, student and assessment artifacts MUST be moved to departmental storage in a format that will remain readable without access to Blackboard (pdf, doc, etc.).
* Grade records for the semester, if needed, should be backed up as a csv file by faculty members.
* Research, download data in a format that doesn’t require access to Blackboard.
* Incompletes, will be completing the student work outside of Blackboard.

*Suggestion from Heidi Dent: You can always go to file - compress pictures - select on-screen 150 ppi which will reduce your ppt size or save as a pdf and upload*

*Question from Enrique Gómez: Blackboard is integrated into 3rd party, etc. and we talked about integration in Canvas, I’m wondering if you have reached out to other campuses to see if there are any hiccups? Are you confident the migration will come out ok?  
Response from Eli Collins-Brown: We contacted the UNC system schools that did this; we talked to them, received horror stories, lessons learned, etc. we are reaching out to other institutions as well. The basic integrations have been tested and they are working. Other integrations will need to be approved by the committee- they will go after we are up and running.*

*Question from Todd Collins: The first summer session goes to July 2. When will summer school be transferred over?  
Response from Eli Collins-Brown: We will work on summer after spring has started. You should see them around the 3rd or 4th week of February.*

**Campus Mental Health Stigma: Kathleen Brennan & Kim Gorman**

***WCU Faculty Views about Mental Health and Illness* PowerPoint was shared on screen.**

**MENTAL ILLNESS STIGMA**

What is mental illness stigma? Why is it important? What does mental illness stigma look like on our campus?

• Fall 2018 – Student Survey (n = 941)

\* First study to collect data about multiple stigma variants in a college population.

\* Students endorse most types of mental illness public stigma.

\* Increased stigma endorsement is significantly associated with a variety of negative health outcomes.

\* Stigma is associated with decreased odds of on-campus care-seeking.

**FALL 2020 EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

1,603 permanent employees were invited to complete the survey.

\* 55 administrators

\* 565 faculty

\* 983 staff

435 employees completed the survey in its entirety (overall response rate = 27%).

178 of those employees identified as faculty members (faculty response rate = 31.5%).

**FACULTY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS (N = 178)**

Age: 46.6 years (mean), 9.87 years (s)

Race Identity: 96.6% white, 3.0% Asian, 2.4% Latinx, 1.2% POC, 0.6% Black

Gender Identity: 65.7% cis-female,32.5% cis-male, 0.6% agender

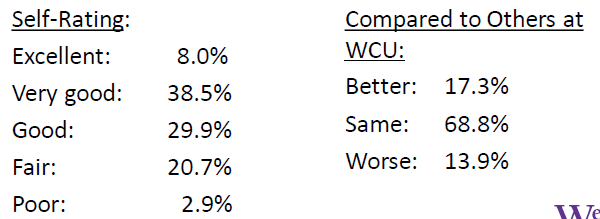
LGBTQIA+ Identity: 85.8% no, 14.2% yes

**FACULTY MENTAL HEALTH**

Self-Rating:

* Excellent: 8.0%
* Very good: 38.5%
* Good: 29.9%
* Fair: 20.7%
* Poor: 2.9%

**FACULTY MENTAL HEALTH**

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**HELP SEEKING: WHO FIRST TURN FOR HELP?**

If you were diagnosed with a mental illness, to whom would you first turn for help?

* Family 62.4%
* Significant Other 11.8%
* Mental Health Provider (Off-Campus) 10.7%
* Friend 7.9 %
* Primary Care Physician 4.5%
* WCU’s Employment Assistance Program 1.7%
* No One 1.1%
* Coworkers 0.0%

**HELP SEEKING: SERVICE USE**

88.1% said they were very likely (55.9%) or somewhat likely (32.2%) to take a physician prescribed medication for mental illness.

96.6% said they were very likely (72.3%) or somewhat likely (24.3%) to go for professional help if they were to have a mental illness.

**HELP SEEKING: DISCLOSURE**

52.8% of faculty said they would be embarrassed to some degree if FRIENDS knew they were seeking professional help.

\* Very embarrassed (3.4%), embarrassed (12.4%), somewhat embarrassed (37.1%).

66.3% of faculty said they would be embarrassed to some degree if COWORKERS knew they were seeking professional help.

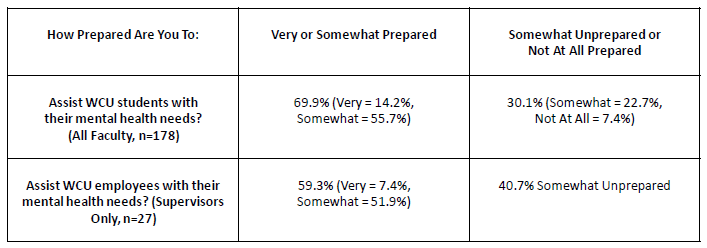
\* Very embarrassed (7.9%), embarrassed (19.1%), somewhat embarrassed (39.9%).

**CAMPUS RESOURCES**

48% of faculty state that they are very knowledgeable (6.3%) or moderately knowledgeable (41.7%) about STUDENT mental health resources at WCU.

52.9% of faculty strongly agree (3.5%) or agree (49.4%) that WCU offers adequate resources for EMPLOYEE mental health.

**ASSISTING OTHERS**

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**INTEREST IN MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING**

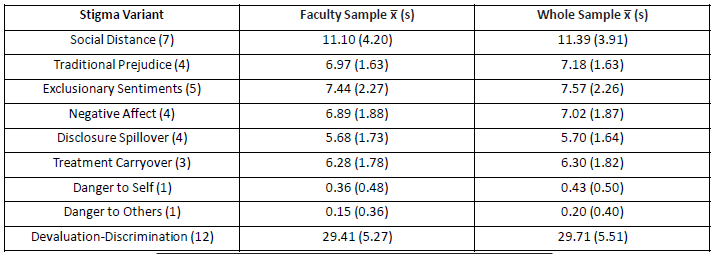
73.7% of faculty are interested in attending WCU employee workshops about recognizing and assisting students with mental health needs.

61.7% of faculty are interested in attending WCU employee workshops about how to discuss mental health with colleagues, supervisors, or direct reports.

**CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH CULTURE**

81.1% of faculty strongly agree (8.6%) or agree (72.6%) that WCU has an inclusive campus culture regarding mental health.

**STIGMA VARIANTS**

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**STIGMA ITEMS**

(Social Distance) Definitely or probably unwilling to have a person with mental illness take care of your child. 38.3%

(Traditional Prejudice) Strongly agree or agree that people with mental illness are more creative than most other people. 31.3%

(Negative Affect) Strongly agree or agree that people with mental illness are unpredictable. 21%

(Treatment Carryover)

1. Strongly agree or agree that if other people knew one was getting mental illness treatment, they would lose some of their friends. 37.1%

2. Strongly agree or agree that no matter how much one achieves, their opportunities would still be limited if people knew they had received mental illness treatment. 39.5%

(12 Devaluation-Discrimination Items) High stigma represented, with 9 of 12 items having at least 30% of the sample endorsing stigma. 6 of 12 items have at least half of the sample endorsing stigma.

**DISCUSSION**

• A culture of stigma exists on our campus.

• Faculty are more likely to endorse stigma around self-harm and treatment.

• Faculty are split regarding whether the university offers adequate employee mental

health resources.

• Next steps for campus dissemination: What does Faculty Senate want to do with this information and how may we help?

*Kadie Otto shared that the Faculty Senate discussed these very issues back in the fall - do we need to establish a task force on mental health? What is your recommendation based on your work?  
Response from Kim Gorman: There are task forces going on at the system-level. In terms of stigma, that is trickling in. No one has really looked at faculty stigma.*

*Question from Enrique Gómez: What does the literature say about long term trends on campus about mental health stigma? Anecdotally, students' perceptions are that they fear the judgement of their peers more than in previous generations.  
Response from Kathleen Brennan: There has been a lot more research about student stigma, but not much for employees. Part of the reason to look at students is that the popular conception stigma has decreased, but this is not accurate. People can identify mental health, but it did not decrease stigma. With students, things like sentiments have higher endorsement. They may worry about their professors knowing they are seeking treatment. The data is new for us and preliminary.*

**COUNCIL and COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

* Working through Curricular items
* Non-curricular task force reports- looking at UCC membership plan. Troubleshooting approval processes.
* Jan 27 3-5 next meeting

**Collegial Review Council: Chair Carrie Rogers**

* Collegial review conversations
* Meeting Feb 1 - additional reps from the college
* Sending out a survey soon on SharePoint process from Brandon Schwab
* Resolution on Feb 24 to endorse using SharePoint for next year

**Faculty Affairs Council: Chair Sean Mulholland**

With the support of the Chancellor, Provost, and Cory Causby, there were funds to reduce some issues around compression and conversion. Over the break, Sean decided to investigate another avenue.

It’s not all about salary.

In terms of salary, WCU looked comparable to other institutions in the system. With further review into a comparison, we looked at things like retention rate, graduation rate, etc. WCU has the highest graduation rate in terms of the things we all value. We are outperforming our peers. We are ranked 2nd on the list for our retention rate.

The two biggest components we wanted to look at further were retirement and healthcare. In terms of retirement, WCU contributes 6.84% to our retirement. In this area we rank 10 of the 12 institutions. In terms of healthcare premiums paid for out of our salary, the premium paid out of pocket at WCU relative to others, we pay the most, at $720 a month.

Sean shared an example of a generic faculty salary and did a comparison.

Ex. $50,000 a year salary, after retirement and healthcare, WCU is at the bottom with a net earning of $44,780. This is concerning since we are at the top in terms of performance. WCU salaries are not competitive. WCU benefits are not competitive.

This means this is a bigger, larger issue. We lack competitiveness. This is true for faculty and staff.

More to come on this topic.

***SAI report: Martin Tanaka***

We are currently working on updating the SAIs to a new model. SPL, *Student Perception of Learning,* focuses more on how the student perceives the learning they have received. We are also currently looking at mid-term evaluations and talking about separating those out.

We continue to look at new sets of questions and department-level questions as well. Those would go to DCRD and be approved by the department and provost before ending up in any evaluation form. These would be separated from the quantitative questions.

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

* Meeting on Jan 29

**Senate Report: Chair Kadie Otto**

* Tighten up next meeting
* Resolution from CRC is coming next meeting
* Open discussions on SAI and S/U grading coming
* Faculty Compensation information sent to general faculty
* Encourage faculty to come and contribute to the spring faculty open conversation

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Jessica Zellers motioned to adjourn. Carrie Rogers seconded.

No objections.

Meeting Adjourned.