

## **WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MARCH 2015 SENATE MEETING**

### ***Item A: Faculty Senate Endorsement of the report on Vision 20/20 from the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility***

To: Senate Executive Committee

From: Paul Escott, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility

In response to your request, the Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility met today to discuss the Vision 2020 report. Ten members of the committee successfully arranged their schedules to attend a meeting in this period between semesters; two additional members of the committee sent comments that were shared with those present; a third additional member sent comments which were largely consistent with today's discussion but arrived late.

The Committee recognized that the Vision 2020 report aimed to generate enthusiasm and encourage progress and synergies on campus. As a starting point, its intent may be to spur useful discussion of issues relating to information technology and teaching. But the report has a specific viewpoint and lacks breadth. The Committee saw a number of problems or reasons to be concerned:

- The Committee supports encouragement of the use of technology in teaching. But it believes that Wake Forest's goal should be good teaching, however a faculty member achieves that result. The Committee was in favor of rewarding those who use new technology successfully, but not in favor of requiring, forcing, or penalizing those who do not.
- The tone of the document is overly enthusiastic and generally uncritical in regard to the use of technology. Phrases such as "remarkable potential" and "transformative" effects are common, but the report does not cite convincing research to support such claims. Where empirical research is needed, the report often substitutes the claims of individuals who have a commercial interest in promoting their product. Members of the Committee have not seen in their students the large benefits that are supposedly accruing in secondary education due to the use of new technology.
- The Committee felt that before plunging ahead, research is needed on the positive and possibly negative educational impacts of today's modern information technology. Committee members felt that it would be good for the faculty to have access to sound research and expertise bearing on both desirable and undesirable impacts of the new technology. Collection and dissemination of this research are appropriate before

adoption. A committee or several existing groups on campus could provide this service to the faculty. Wake Forest also should ask, how are we going to measure the benefits of new learning methods or technologies?

- The Committee was troubled by a tone that seemed designed to herd faculty members in one direction; some feared what was called “coercion creep.” As specific examples, the Committee saw reasons to be concerned with Recommendation 11 on page 19, which concerned tenure and promotion, and also criticized the last sentence of Recommendation 10. In the view of several members of the committee, these potentially raise issues of academic freedom. Members of the Committee also disagreed with the idea (page 18) that the faculty should be a “cohesive whole” and suggested that the strength of a university derives from its individual, diverse faculty members.
- The Vision 2020 report failed to take into account important differences among disciplines. This is especially notable in regard to open access, which seems desirable in theory but for various disciplines is currently impractical as a way to publish one’s research and gain professional acceptance for one’s work. The Committee also noted, as does the Vision 2020 report, that funds for open access publishing are not adequate for potential future needs at this point. If open access is to become common, faculty and administrators will have to move carefully through a transition period, and open-access publishing cannot be required or demanded of all faculty during such a transition. There was general agreement that, if peer-reviewed, open-access publications are legitimate and deserving of respect.
- The Teaching and Learning Center was established in 1995 by the undergraduate faculty as a resource for the faculty, run by the faculty. At that time it was made very clear to the administration that its role was merely to provide funding; the programs and direction of the TLC were to be left in the hands of the faculty. The recommendations of the Vision 2020 report continue a movement toward control by the administration of the TLC.

***Item B: Resolution regarding the Wake Forest School of Medicine***

The Wake Forest University Faculty Senate condemns the continuing proliferation and implementation of policies and practices regarding tenure, terms of employment and tenured faculty compensation adopted by the Wake Forest School of Medicine since March 2007.

- 1) Significant and systematic reduction of the salaries of tenured faculty members constitutes de facto tenure revocation. Consequently, the implementation of such policies effectively bypasses long-established existing university and medical school policies regarding tenure revocation.

- 2) Policy changes introduced by the “Tenure Policy Revisions” (2007) and the “Policy on Faculty Compensation” (2012) constitute wholesale revisions of the terms and conditions of employment for tenure-track and tenured employees hired before 2007 as well as those hired between 2007 and 2011, thus breaching the contracts of the respective employees.

***Item C: Resolution proposed by the Fringe Benefits Committee of the University Senate Resolved:***

In light of the reality that Wake Forest University faculty and staff have been subject to four consecutive years of benefit cuts and/or price increases in their benefits packages, and that additional increases are slated for FY 2016, the Wake Forest University Senate formally expresses its profound concerns regarding the impacts that these continuing cuts and increases will have on faculty and staff morale, employee health and wellness, the ability to recruit and retain high quality faculty and staff, and in the end, the potentially negative effect on the quality of the student experience that can result from the deteriorating benefits package offered to university to faculty and staff.

**Item D: Resolution regarding the Faculty Athletic Representative to the NCAA**

Based on the COIA framing the future report, the Faculty Senate resolves that the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) to the NCAA should be appointed by the University President based on recommendation by the campus faculty governance body (i.e., the University Faculty Senate). The FAR appointment should be made for a term of four years and a review of the performance of the FAR should take place prior to reappointment. Such a review should include meaningful participation by the University Faculty Senate. (COIA 2004 Campus Athletics Governance – the Faculty Role section 1B; local and national [NCAA certification]).