

Report to the Senate of the January, 2015 Academic Committee Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Submitted by Jay Ford and Cathy Seta, Faculty Representatives to the Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees

March, 2015

The BOT met on the Reynolda campus, January 29, 2015. The Committee then considered the following agenda items:

1. *University Mission Statement*: Provost Kersh reminded the Committee that review of the university's mission statement was required for SACSCOC accreditation. The goal is to approve a revised mission statement at the April meeting of Trustees. Provost Kersh presented a revised draft. A discussion was held on the term "distinctly North Carolinian." – a phrase contained in the statement. There was agreement that the mission statement should make clear that we are deep in both heritage and commitment to North Carolina. Provost Kersh will revisit the language and share a revised draft with the Deans before bringing it back to the Committee in April.
2. *Pro Humanitate Institute Update*: Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry, recently named Executive Director of the Pro Humanitate Institute (PHI), shared her vision for PHI, beginning with our motto *of Pro Humanitate*. The Institute seeks to transform the ethos of Wake Forest University into an explicit mission, connected to clear practices, with meaningful outcomes. PHI sustains authentic partnerships with local and global partners as it works with WFU students, faculty and staff to encourage deep academic learning, foster transformative civic engagements, and address community-identified needs in order to create a more meaningful world. This work is accomplished through:
 - Curriculum and co-curriculum
 - Engaged scholarship
 - Civic engagements and social justice
 - Global engagement
 - Wake Legacy
 - Professional and career development
3. *Retention/Rankings Update*: Provost Kersh explained that WFU's actual vs expected retention rate was primarily what caused our latest U.S. News and World Report rankings to fall. We don't have a "retention problem" since we retain about 90% of our students, but we don't really know why they leave. Trying to analyze the data, Phil Handwerk, Director of Institutional Research, is building a massive database, looking at the class that came in 2010 using 600-1000 data points. We are especially worried about high academic performers, so the Catalyst scholars program was created to keep them as sophomores. The Committee discussed possible reasons for student attrition, which Handwerk's analysis will examine.
4. *WGS Department Proposal*: Provost Kersh introduced the proposal, passed unanimously by the College Faculty, to grant Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department status. He summarized the steady growth of this program from a minor, to a program, to a major. Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies would be an interdisciplinary department, drawing on faculty resources from other departments. After discussion, the motion passed with one dissenting vote.

5. *Department of Mathematics Name Change*: Provost Kersh introduced the proposal to change the name of the Department of Mathematics to the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. The Committee viewed this proposal as straightforward. The motion carried unanimously.

The Committee went into executive session at 11:45 am to review the Deans' Academic Plans.