

The Senator

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David Levy, President

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President Hearn's "State of the University" Address Announces Search for Provost

by David Levy

On September 18, the Wake Forest University Senate sponsored the "State of the University" address in Brendle Recital Hall in the Scales Fine Arts Center on the Reynolda Campus. This is the second year in which the address has been given under Senate auspices. As was the case last year, Senior Vice-President Edwin G. Wilson and Vice-President for Medical Affairs, Richard Dean, gave brief speeches prior to President Hearn's address. The event was well attended by faculty and staff from both the Reynolda and Bowman Gray campuses. Following a format used at the Chautauqua Institution in Western New York, Senate President David Levy read written questions directed at all three administrators. President Hearn used the occasion to announce the formation of a search committee for a new Provost. The committee, already selected by the administration, will begin work under the chairship of Senior Vice-President Wilson.

Many of the questions submitted from the floor centered on the search for a Provost. Wilson assured the audience that the Provost search committee will consult with the Senate's Senior University Appointments Committee, as mandated by the University Senate By-Laws (more on the status of the By-Law revisions elsewhere in this issue of the "Senator").

Among the other topics touched upon by President Hearn were:

- WFU's resistance to a "consumerist" mentality in higher education and the grounding of a WFU education in the development of strong personal and mentoring relationships between students and faculty
- Continued consideration of establishing a Day Care facility on the Reynolda campus
- The ever-growing problem with parking on the Reynolda campus
- Ongoing discussion within the Board of Trustees on how to strengthen communications and relations with faculty
- The "zero tolerance" attitude of the administration toward harassment in any form
- The administration's desire to be sensitive to all religious holidays of all faiths
- Financial choices between salaries and fringe benefits
- The Year of Honors and Ethics
- The next phase of program planning (Sr. V-P Wilson is chairing a committee) and its focus on campus culture
- The upcoming Presidential Debate on October 11
- The status of the Capital Campaign
- The achievements of the Graduate and Professional Schools.
- Gratitude that Director of Athletics Ron Wellman has chosen to remain at WFU

President Hearn concluded with several personal reflections and a warm tribute to Senior Vice-President Wilson.

Call for Honorary Degree Nominations

The Senior University Appointments Committee invites nominations of persons to be considered for honorary degrees.

1. Nominees are persons who will bring honor to the University because of their outstanding scholarship, their creative achievements and professional distinctions, or their leadership in community affairs and public service.
2. Nominees should also be persons whose contributions to the University, the region, the state, or the nation have been especially significant. Candidates should be persons for whom an honor from Wake Forest is particularly appropriate.
3. Members of the University faculty and staff, whether in active service or officially assigned "emeritus" status, are not eligible for consideration. Members of the Board of Trustees are not eligible during the period of their tenure on the Board.

Since the committee does not carry over nominations from one year to the next, it is necessary to re-nominate any past nominee that you want considered for an honorary degree. To ensure timely and thorough consideration, nominations should be sent by Friday Nov. 10, 2000 accompanied by appropriate biographical information and supporting materials to Bernadine Barnes, SUA Comm. Chair, Dept. of Art, P.O. Box 7232, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109.

Fringe Benefits: Active and Rolling

The Fringe Benefits committee under chairman Tim Smunt first agreed upon the following “committee philosophy” to be used as their guideline for analyzing issues:

- Fringe benefits should be designed to maintain a competitive compensation package in order to retain and attract high-quality faculty and they should be at the same or better levels than our peer institutions
- A finite level of funds from the University is available; however, the addition of fringe benefits does not necessarily need to be a tradeoff with the salary pool of funds. The use of alternate resource allocation schemes should be considered by the University, if necessary, to ensure a competitive compensation package.
- Fringe benefits should also provide an employee with long-term stability against hardships and should take advantage of tax reductions where possible.

The committee will start its deliberations by undertaking benchmark studies to determine the level of fringe benefits offered at academic institutions and corporations/organizations that compete for our faculty and staff. In the case of faculty, benchmarks will be made against peer academic institutions (the same set as used for salary comparisons). In the case of staff, benchmarks will be made against large employers in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro area.

The committee also unanimously agreed that the initiation of a “faculty club” on the Reynolda campus would be beneficial in providing institution-building relations among the various schools of faculty. As a first step, it was suggested and agreed to that the use of a room in Reynolda Hall, such as the “Green Room,” might be well-suited for use as a lunch time restaurant. The committee requested that Ralph Pedersen investigate this possibility.

Other issues that the committee wants to examine during the upcoming year are:

- Reopen the tuition remission plan design to determine if alternatives are feasible that would provide higher levels of reimbursement for employees’ children to attend institutions other than WFU
- The elimination of the waiting period for retirement contributions by the University and a possible change in the contribution percentages by both the University and employees
- Strengthening the long-term disability plan to include “partial disability” and to increase or eliminate the monthly limit (currently \$5000) on disability payments
- Strengthen the group life insurance benefit
- Examine alternate health insurance plans, including QualChoice and other providers
- Follow up on the Day Care center and its implementation
- Investigate a parental leave policy for faculty and staff, including possibly adoptions
- Look into the possibility of short-term disability coverage for staff
- Consider increasing the amount of the flexible spending account limit from \$2000 to \$4000.

Other items may be added to the above list as the committee found necessary. Due to the likely addition of staff members to the University Senate, it was noted that fringe benefit issues of particular interest to staff will probably be added to the committee’s agenda.

Senate Bylaws Revision

The proposed Senate Bylaws Revisions are making their way across the various constituencies on campus for approval. Major changes include adding staff representation on the senate and altering the senate committee structure.

Senate-Board of Trustees

Leon Corbett updated the Senate on Board activities. The Board is receptive to more interaction with the senate. It is currently in the process of changing its committee structure and this may facilitate better communication in the future.

Cross-Campus Shuttle

The cross-campus shuttle has begun service, leaving from the Bowman Gray campus at Eden Terrace on the hour from 7 am to 4 pm and returning from Benson University Center on the Reynolda campus on the half-hour. Since many committee meetings are set for the hour or half-hour, the schedule may need slight shifting. The shuttle is only being currently funded on a trial basis for the fall semester and the results will be evaluated for reconsideration in the future.