

The Senator

The Newsletter of the Wake Forest University Senate

Volume 7, No. 1

Gloria Muday, President

Winter, 2004/2005

Senate Focuses on Enhanced Communication in 2004-2005

Gloria Muday, President

The theme for the activities of the WFU Senate during the 2004-2005 academic year is fostering communication across campus. This communication has been strengthened in a number of ways through the ongoing activities of the Senate. The Senate has acted as a conduit for questions to flow to the administration and answers on a variety of financial points to flow from the administration back to the faculty and staff of the university. We have helped to clarify the major questions regarding the status of the WFU endowment and facilitated open dialog about the factors that contribute to the changing value of the endowment. The Senate has established an Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Issues to identify the challenges that are unique to staff members of the university community and to effectively communicate these points to the administration to facilitate positive change. Through the involvement of the Senior University Appointments Committee, the faculty and staff perspective on candidates for the University President was effectively communicated to the Presidential Search Committee. Finally, we have worked with members of the administration and the faculty serving as representatives to the committees of the Board of Trustees to make this an even more effective mechanism of communication of the faculty perspective to the Trustees. More details on these particular activities are presented in the following paragraphs or later in this newsletter.

This communication began even before the academic year started in the form of a new dialogue between the faculty and the administration, which was facilitated by the Collegiate Senators. At their May meeting, the College faculty passed a motion requesting that a committee composed of the Senators elected from the College and the AAUP president formally ask financial questions of the administration. The goal of these questions was to help the faculty better understand the financial circumstance of the university and the causes of the current fiscal challenges that the university faces. This committee collected questions from the College faculty and brought these questions to the administration in two phases. Both sets of questions were answered in meaningful detail by the administration, resulting in significantly more financial information being shared than ever in the past. The Collegiate Senators summarized the key findings in this report and proposed a series of recommendations, which were approved by the College faculty. The recommendations range from formal strengthening of existing faculty representation that have not adequately allowed faculty participation in decision making processes to creating new mechanisms for more direct faculty input in financial planning. The Senate also discussed the report of the Collegiate Senators and voted to endorse a process in which faculty and staff input is considered in setting university priorities, including the input from the Collegiate Senators. The recommendations have been shared with the administration and Board of Trustees and we are currently awaiting responses.

To help members of the Senate better understand the current state of the endowment, the Senate invited Vice President for Investments, Lou Morrell, to present an overview of the endowment at a fall Senate meeting. Representatives from the Executive committee met with Vice President Morrell in advance of the Senate meeting to explain the questions that faculty and staff have about the endowment and to request information that could be shared with the Senate in advance of his Senate presentation. The open sharing of this information allowed the Senators to dissect how investment return, expenditure, and gift income impacted on the endowment levels. It is clear that the WFU endowment is not growing at the

optimal rate and that expenditures and limited gift income contribute to this problem, as well as reduced investment return due to the sluggish market of recent years. An important source of comparison information to evaluate endowment performance is the information published by NACUBO (National Association of Colleges and Universities Business Officers). As this comparison becomes available for the 2003-2004 academic year, we will continue to consider the information offered by these comparisons.

Four years ago, the Board of Trustees invited faculty representatives to serve on five of their seven committees. Two sets of individuals have served on these committees, each with two year terms. It is now an appropriate time to assess the effectiveness of this mechanism of communication. Ideally, these representatives both convey the faculty perspective to the Board of Trustees and the Trustee perspective back to the faculty. In recent years, these faculty representatives have been invited to share information from their committees with the Senate. Yet, what has been less consistent are the opportunities for sharing an informed faculty perspective with the committees. The Senate Executive committee has met with the current faculty representatives and members of the administration to understand how to optimize these communications and as a first step in formalizing the mechanisms for more optimal communication between the Trustee committees and the faculty representatives.

In conclusion, the Senate continues to strive to bring understanding of the major administration decisions to all members of the university community. This involves both communication of the perspectives of faculty and staff members to the administration and communication on the information that led to administrative decision making to the faculty and staff. This is an important activity and one that will only grow as the formal mechanisms that facilitate communication are further strengthened.

Committee Reports

The Ad Hoc Committee on Reynolda Campus Staff Issues

Gloria Stickney, SI Co-chair

The Ad hoc Committee on Reynolda Campus Staff Issues was established by the University Senate in Spring 2004 as an advisory body for the purpose of examining relevant issues identified by University staff. The Committee will act as a conduit for communications between the staff and the University's administration regarding general staff issues ranging from benefits to salary concerns, but will not function as a grievance committee. The Committee is composed of staff employees and may include members who are not members of the Senate but who nevertheless can represent staff on these issues.

Since the committee began to meet in May 2004, the following items have been addressed:

1. Identity theft: The committee proposed changes to forms used by human resources and financial services. These two departments have now implemented the use of WFU-assigned identification numbers in places where social security numbers are not required.
2. Performance evaluations: The committee met with human resource representatives regarding the process of performance evaluations, and recommendations were made to promote campus-wide participation.
3. Web discounts page: After suggestions from the committee, Human Resources has developed a discounts page of local organizations/companies that will offer discounts to Wake Forest employees.
4. Employee Suggestion Program: New procedures are being implemented to provide better feedback to employees who have made cost-saving suggestions to the University.
5. Artisan's Fair: A successful Artisan's Fair was held in November to promote community among faculty, staff, students, and retirees. Another fair is being planned for Fall 2005.

6. Presidential Search Faculty Advisory Committee: A meeting was held with the Faculty Advisory Committee to address issues of concern to staff.

This committee meets on a monthly basis. If you have questions or concerns for this Committee or would like to know more about the members, contact Gloria Stickney (x4189 or stickngd@wfu.edu), Julie Groves (x4197 or grovesjl@wfu.edu), or Dana Hutchens (x5246 or hutchens@wfu.edu), the three elected-University staff representatives.

**Senior University Appointments Committee (SUA)
Jeff Smith, SUA Chair**

The SUA has been involved in two major initiatives over the last few months.

First, as is customary each year, the SUA solicited nominations for honorary degrees to be awarded at Commencement. After much deliberation regarding the approximately two dozen nominees, we brought to the floor of the Senate a motion in support of granting degrees to three honorees at the November Senate meeting (approved unanimously by the Senate). These honorees’ names are being presented to the Trustees for their approval.

Second, the SUA was involved in the final stages of the presidential search. After signing confidentiality agreements, we received detailed information about each of the three finalists. We interviewed each of these finalists and provided a detailed summary of our impressions to the search committee. We are grateful to the search committee for allowing us to be involved in this important process.

**Senate Initiative Status
January 2005**

Initiative	Status
Participation in Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA).	Senate voted to join initiative; UOC is bringing a second COIA document on Academic Integrity in Athletics to the Senate for approval in Feb.2005.
Faculty communication with trustees.	Senate representatives meet with some Trustee committees. Ongoing adjustments under discussion.
Develop better means of communicating financial and budget issues.	Addressed by Collegiate Senators’ report. In discussion phase with administrators and Trustees.
Evaluation of Senior Administrators.	Remains on agenda of IOC.
Presidential search with faculty participation.	Faculty appointed to serve on search committee; SUA actively participated in 2004 search.
Salary-dependent Premiums for Health Insurance.	Forwarded to HR; awaiting response.
Ad hoc committee on staff issues.	Approved and organized. Staff committee evaluating its goals and procedures.
Continue to work on the Reynolda Campus parking situation.	Three parking deck projects on hold in Capital Planning Committee
Work with the University administration On the creation of a day-care center.	On hold.

