

# *The Senator*

The Newsletter of the Wake Forest University Senate

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Neal Walls, President

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## Transitions Continue

The second year of the Hatch administration continues to be a time of transition at Wake Forest with changes in senior administrative personnel and new academic initiatives. Two new University vice presidents took office over the summer: Nancy Suttentfield, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and Matthew Cullinan, Vice President of Administration. Both Suttentfield and Cullinan addressed Senate meetings this fall to describe their new roles and visions for the University. By the end of the semester, additional searches were in progress for a University provost, a dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and a dean of the School of Law. The Senior University Appointments Committee (SUA), led by Joe Tobin, will play an important advisory role as these searches reach their conclusions in the spring. The University's Strategic Planning process, inaugurated last spring, also continues to consume much staff and faculty energy across the academic units of Wake Forest University.

Two especially successful initiatives have emerged from Senate committees this fall. First, the Fringe Benefits Committee (FRB), led by co-chair Anne Boyle in this matter, has effectively organized new child care arrangements for employees on the Reynolda campus. While much work remains to be done for a permanent child care program for University employees, we are pleased to see progress on this important issue. Second, the University Oversight Committee (UOC) and its chair, Michele Gillespie, deserve our thanks for working with Nancy Suttentfield to form a new University Finance Advisory Committee. As the November UOC report explains, "The creation of the new University Finance Advisory Committee marks an exceedingly important development in the history of governance at this institution. It signifies the mutual trust and respect we hope will always characterize the relationship between Senior University Officers and the wider university under this new administration. The Senate is especially grateful to Nancy Suttentfield for her leadership in helping us turn this long-pursued idea of a university finance advisory committee into a reality."

We look forward to further developments in these areas, as well as to new initiatives from the University's Strategic Planning process, over the academic year. Details from all standing committee reports may be found in the minutes of the Senate meetings on the Senate website.

## New University Finance Advisory Committee

At the November meeting of the Senate, the Senate's University Oversight Committee (UOC) reported on the design of a new University Finance Advisory Committee. This committee will consist of representatives from the University Senate, the Staff Advisory Council, and the Student Government Association. It will be co-chaired by the Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer and the Provost.

The University Finance Advisory Committee will hold two meetings annually, one at the outset of the budget process, when committee members will be informed about the University's financial picture and asked to provide advice on a preliminary assessment of priorities. The second meeting will occur towards the end of the process, at which time committee members will review and comment on the draft of the budget. The committee will also co-sponsor university-wide information sessions on university financial issues. (Topics could include but need not be limited to university investments, salaries, athletics, etc.) The Advisory Committee will provide an annual report of its work to the Senate, and the appropriate representative on the committee will make an equivalent report to the Faculty, the Staff Advisory Council, and the Student Government.

Through discussion with their constituencies, members of the Advisory Committee will facilitate a two-way exchange of information and understanding between the administration and the university as a whole.

### Progress in Child Care

Fringe Benefits committee co-chairperson Anne Boyle reported on the progress of the committee's child care initiative. The university will partner with Smart Start to provide child care options. Slots in various existing locations will be reserved for Wake Forest employees. The target is to identify 125 slots by January 1, 2007. The FRB committee continues to investigate on-site or near-site locations for future child care arrangements.

### Health Benefits Discussed

WFU undergraduate student Kaj Nielsen presented a 2005 student-produced power point report on WFU health benefits in the November meeting. The report compared WFU health care costs and university contributions to health care coverage with similar data from other selected universities. The report showed that WFU contributions were consistently at the low end of the group, and that cost to employees was consistently on the high end of the group. The report also compared Reynolda campus coverage with Hawthorne campus coverage, showing that the Hawthorne campus enjoys superior health benefits. The report can be obtained from Mr. Nielsen at [nielkp4@wfu.edu](mailto:nielkp4@wfu.edu).

The Senate has reiterated its deep concerns over the costs of health insurance and related matters of health benefits. We look forward to hearing from Matthew Cullinan about changes in next year's employee benefits package at our April 2007 meeting.