Faculty Forum

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Open Access, Alternative Scholarship, and Public Engagement

**Nate Kreuter, Assistant Professor
English Department**

The for-profit academic publisher Elsevier recently reported record profits. Elsevier publishes over 2,000 academic journals in a variety of disciplines. Some random examples include *Accounting Forum*, *Mammalian Biology*, and *Robotics and Computer-Integrated Manufacturing*.

Let's consider for a moment the business model that Elsevier is operating under. For-profit journal publishers don't have to generate the content that they publish. Scholars conduct research and subsequently write that content. Similarly, the publisher does not have to vet the content that it publishes. Editors and reviewers, also scholars employed by universities, undertake that work, ensuring that what is published will make a sound, trustworthy contribution to the scholarly record of their respective disciplines.

The work that the publisher actually does is relatively light, and includes copyediting, journal layout, and finally the actual printing and distribution of the journal, as well as some database indexing. Then the publisher turns around and charges our libraries for the very same content that we have generated and vetted. For example, an institutional subscription to the aforementioned *Robotics and Computer-Integrated Manufacturing* annually costs $1,033.60 for digital-only access, and $2,067.00 for a print subscription. For those prices to be justified the journal would pretty much need to be typeset and printed on an original Gutenberg printing press, perhaps by a custom-built robot.

What a rip-off for the university community of students, faculty, and staff, and what a rip-off for the taxpayers of North Carolina. What a rip-off for everyone except the publisher.[1] Universities pay an awful lot of money to access content that our own faculty have generated, and content that, through both our salaries and grants, has already been subsidized by taxpayers. The taxpayer is essentially having to pay twice in order for us to generate and access the research

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[1] For those interested in a more detailed discussion of this business model, *The Guardian* published an excellent

that drives industry, health, business, education, and every conceivable realm of human endeavor that, over time, academic disciplines influence and help to advance. To add insult to the taxpayer's injury, within this model the content that we produce and that is guarded behind paywalls is too expensive for interested individuals in the non-university public to access.

I'm not against profit, not by a long shot, but I question the ethics (and finances) of having to buy back research that we and our colleagues at other public and private institutions have generated, largely with public subsidization. I don't like being the sucker in a private firm's profit plan, and higher education today is exactly one such sucker.

The Open Access publishing movement is one that seeks to break the cycle that Elsevier, and other for-profit academic publishers, perpetuate, by creating scholarly publishing venues that are as credible as our traditional publications, but that are freely available on the internet to scholars and the public alike. In addition to preventing taxpayers from, essentially, paying twice to access publicly funded research, scholars invested (ethically speaking) in the Open Access movement generally believe that there is common good in making scholarship accessible to the general public, even if layperson readers are not formally trained in our own areas of expertise. Open Access is good for scholars too—articles freely available to the public on the internet are generally read and cited more than those that are not. Open Access publications are sustainable, in both a logistical and an economic sense, in ways that traditional publications on dead and bleached trees simply are not. Finally, by taking publishing to the internet (for the most part), Open Access venues allow for many more manifestations of scholarship than just the traditional scholarly article or monograph, but without dismissing either of those traditional genres.

In recent years the Open Access movement has gained traction as Harvard, MIT, and the University of California system have taken concrete, and sometimes sweeping, steps to encourage their own faculty to support and participate in Open Access publishing practices, and many university presses are also getting on board. I bring up Open Access because it is, in my view, an economic and ethical imperative that we make as much future scholarship as possible accessible to the broadest public possible. To do so is in the interests of students, faculty, taxpayers, and the long-term sustainability and accessibility of the work that we labor to produce.

I also bring up Open Access here because it is closely linked with other, emerging issues regarding the changing nature of scholarship and scholarly productivity. The Open Access movement and the growth of alternative forms of scholarship are linked within our current technological, economic, and cultural moment. So-called "alternative" or "non-traditional" scholarship expands the boundaries of the work that we can accomplish with our scholarship. Public engagement is the idea that at least some of our scholarly endeavors need to be addressed not only toward our disciplinary peers, but towards the public more broadly, in order to show how our hard-won insights can improve the economic, cultural, social, and environmental quality of the lives of people in our region, state, nation, and world. Alternative scholarship and the idea of public engagement go hand-in-hand with the Open Access movement. And I'm pretty

confident that Open Access, so-called "alternative" scholarship, and public engagement represent the future of research and pedagogy within higher education.

The insular academic bubble is bursting. The ivory tower of the future will be accessible to all, because large sections of its architecture will live online. And I personally believe that these are very good things.

The obvious force of change here is the internet and the networked nature of information flow within our world today. Only because of the internet can we question the business model of Elsevier and others. Only because of the internet can we imagine alternative forms of scholarship with interactive graphics, hyperlinks to datasets, and digitized versions of original documents. Only because of the internet can we truly hope to engage the public outside of the university on a large scale and in simultaneously economic, socially, and culturally meaningful ways.

Unfortunately, the biggest enemy of Open Access publishing, of new and innovative forms of scholarship, and of the idea of public engagement is us, ourselves, the community of American scholars, writ large. Too many of us remain suspicious or dismissive of work that is born-digital, or that takes forms other than the traditional articles and monographs that most of us were educated with. The only reason that Open Access publications, more innovative forms of scholarship, and broader public engagement have not occurred is because we are a conservative lot, in that academe tends to be resistant to change. Senior and junior faculty alike are wary of banking too much of their productivity in new venues and in new forms for fear of not receiving "credit" for their work from colleagues.

My goal in making these arguments is not to be polemical, but merely to show how, I believe, issues of Open Access, alternative forms of scholarship, and public engagement are intertwined, and that they, I also believe, are integral to the future health and sustainability of research endeavors within higher education. These issues, in terms of how they intertwine, and how they will eventually play out in our universities and in our larger culture, will determine the future relevancy of research and higher education to our region, state, nation, and world. Only by making a significant percentage of our work freely accessible to each other and the public, and finding forms of scholarship that are simultaneously rigorous (in the traditional, scholarly sense) and engaging to the public of interested non-scholars, will the public be willing to keep subsidizing our work. Arguably, many of the current financial assaults on higher education are motivated in part by those who see the world of academe and our research as insulated and irrelevant. In short, we need to stop telling the public about our relevance and instead show it to them, through freely available, intellectually engaging, and publicly meaningful research. Not through traditional articles that cost over two grand a year to access and sit on dusty shelves (if they're lucky) to be consulted by only a few dozen people annually, or perhaps ever. The public never sees such work.

As an example, take my colleague Brent Kinser's work on The Carlyle Letters Online. Through support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Kinser and his colleagues across the world have been able to digitize a breathtaking amount of work, which is accessed by over a million people annually. Compare that to the perhaps a hundred or so subscriptions for closely-related Carlyle journals. Many of our other colleagues here at WCU are engaged in work related to Open Access, alternative scholarship, and public engagement. But, I would argue (based purely on anecdote, I admit), not enough of us, and not enough of our work.

We at Western Carolina University are well positioned as a university to adapt to and thrive within these developing (and perhaps soon to be dominant) research paradigms, largely because of our adoption of the Boyer model of scholarly productivity. As we are all acutely aware though, the Boyer model, and our implementation of it, is not without its problems. I think that if we're being honest with ourselves, we all realize that there is significant bias (conscious or otherwise) against some categories of Boyer scholarship, and particularly against those forms of scholarship that do not constitute scholarship of "discovery." Maybe that bias *should* exist. I think there could be compelling arguments that scholarship of discovery is more important than other Boyer categories of scholarship. If that is our belief though, individual Department Collegial Review Documents, and perhaps the larger institution, need to make that distinction clear, where they don't already (some already do). Junior faculty are regularly advised not to attempt to make their entire tenure case on non-traditional scholarship (that is, not exclusively through scholarship in Boyer categories other than that of "discovery"). And, judging from the anecdotes with which I am familiar, I think that junior faculty (such as myself) would be unwise to ignore such advice.

Perhaps the most effective things we could do as a faculty right now to support Open Access, alternative scholarship, public engagement, *and* to ensure that we and our colleagues are engaging in academically credible, rigorous work are the following: 1) make sure that our departments have within our Collegial Review Documents established, rigorous procedures for evaluating non-traditional work, so that our faculty can be sure that they will be "credited" for work that is innovative and perhaps unusual looking to some of us, but that also meets disciplinary standards for credible scholarship, and also to ensure that sub-par work does not receive recognition, and thereby undermine the credibility of our disciplines and departments (I'm biased, but I think that the English Department has a particularly good example of this in our DCRD); 2) We need to recognize that a piece of scholarship's categorization within the Boyer model (and whether or not we want to privilege the Boyer category of "discovery") is a different issue from whether or not a piece of scholarship is traditional or non-traditional, for non-traditional works might fall into any Boyer category. And we need to recognize that whether or not a piece of scholarship has been adequately reviewed in its publication process or requires an *ex post facto* review set up by the department before being credited to the its faculty author(s) is yet another issue.

Too often I hear these issues confused, hear the assumption expressed that online works are not peer reviewed (some are and some aren't), hear that online work is inferior to printed work (how quaint!), or hear assumptions that forms of scholarship that look unfamiliar are somehow lesser than traditional, staid articles (might be better, might be worse, right?). In my capacity as a teacher of writing, I frequently have to remind students that the fact that something has been published, whether in print or online, does not automatically make a source a credible one. It still has to be evaluated for credibility on its own merits. So too with the scholarship that we ourselves produce, of course.

It is quite astounding to me how frequently I encounter the assumption that online and/or Open Access journals are less rigorous or less prestigious than printed journals. There is no *de facto* rule that makes a traditional, printed journal more credible than a respectable online journal.[2] In my own discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, several of our most respected journals (namely *Kairos* and *Enculturation*, both of which I have served in an editorial capacity) were born digital, and exist in only digital versions. *Enculturation* publishes mostly traditional scholarly essays, double-blind reviewed, but free to access for anyone on the internet. Contrastingly, *Kairos* publishes interactive scholarly works, primarily falling into the Boyer category of "discovery," that were unimaginable prior to the internet, and which are reviewed by no less than the entire editorial board of nationally prominent scholars.

I don't make any of these arguments presuming that I personally have "figured out" all that there is to Open Access, alternative scholarship, and public engagement. Very far from it. Rather, I hope to place issues of Open Access, alternative scholarship, and public engagement at the fore of our consciousness. These are the issues that will dominate the near future of scholarship, and the positions we take, either consciously or through complacency, will determine Western Carolina University's relevance as a site of scholarly productivity.

Personally, I don't intend to stop publishing in traditional scholarly venues. However, I do intend to make an effort to place a hopefully large portion of my future scholarship in Open Access forums. Similarly, within my own discipline of Rhetoric and Composition I have been a vocal advocate for moving my discipline's traditionally published (and very expensive) publications online and into Open Access formats, all of which can be indexed just as traditional publications have been for years and years. One reason I can entertain the possibility of committing myself and my future work to Open Access, alternative scholarship, and public engagement is because I have faith in (and have seen work) the procedures laid out related to these issues in my department's Collegial Review Document. I hope that my colleagues in other departments feel similarly free to pursue non-traditional work, or that they soon do.

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[2] Especially given the proliferation of predatory for-profit journals that charge scholars to publish their work and employ only a pretense of peer review.

Editor's Note: The Faculty Forum is published monthly by the Coulter Faculty Commons to provide opportunity for faculty to converse about issues of the day ranging from academic matters to policy questions and community concerns. Each issue has two parts. The first part is a commentary from one or more faculty members, and the second section contains responses to the previous month's issue.

The Faculty Forum is in its 28th year of publication. While its original purpose was to "spark a lively dialogue about college teaching," even in its earliest days, the subjects went far beyond teaching tips and techniques. It has often been a catalyst for revealing and resolving campus problems such as salary inequities and the status of fixed-term faculty. See the CFC publications website to read past issues.

Thanks to Nate Kreuter for starting the year with a provocative piece about new approaches to scholarship. I hope you will consider writing for the Faculty Forum. Send me your ideas for a lead commentary as well as your responses to each issue.

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Publications, Pretensions and Profits: The Open Access Conversation Continues

At its best, the WCU Faculty Forum gets people on campus talking. The August issue was a provocative piece by Nate Kreuter of the English Department, and it got people talking. (Click here if you missed it.)

Nate argued that for-profit journal publishers such as Elsevier "are ripping off the university community and the taxpayers of North Carolina." He claimed that the open access publishing movement can break the cycle perpetuated by for-profit academic publishers, with freely available publications.

This month's issue is a continuation of the conversation he started with three related essays, all supporting the movement to open access publishing.

- Bruce Henderson of the Psychology Department argues that we will have to get out of the prestige game if we are serious about embracing alternative forms of scholarship.

- The Hunter Library Open Access Committee collaborated on a commentary illustrating the ways Hunter Library supports the open access movement. They hope to further the discussion on campus, increase awareness of the issues, and clarify some common misunderstandings about open access. This effort was led by Sarah Steiner, with co-authors, Kristin Calvert, Farzaneh Razzaghi, Liz Skene and Mark Stoffa.

- Finally, Nicholas Passalacqua, from Forensic Anthropology weighs in with questions about the legitimate costs for publications, and he suggests Academia.edu as a great resource for free access to scholarly work. He and his colleagues are in the process of exploring different options for establishing a new forensic anthropology journal, focusing on online-only options with the lowest subscription rate available.

Abandoning our Pretentions

Bruce Henderson, Psychology

In his August Faculty Forum, Nate Kreuter addressed two complex issues. The first issue is that journal publishers use free faculty labor to make unconscionable profits. Universities cover the overhead for the production and evaluation of knowledge and publishers provide status and prestige to researchers and their universities in return. Dr. Kreuter's analysis itself contains evidence of the power of prestige in his references to MIT, Harvard, and the University of California, in his reference to the high status of online journals in his own field of rhetoric and composition, and in his need to assert that he would continue to publish in traditional outlets. His call for support of open access does provide cheaper paths to prestige, and we should heed his call to encourage open access alternatives. I personally commit not to review for or publish in Elsevier journals unless they agree to profit sharing with Hunter Library (I simply do not know if any of the scores of journals I have published in or reviewed for were Elsevier journals, but I wouldn't be surprised if I had been guilty of participating in the scam in the past).

The other complex issue Dr. Kreuter raises is related to how we evaluate our colleagues' work (I assume in the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process since the regular recognition of reward through merit increases apparently has been abandoned by our state legislature). Dr. Kreuter calls for consideration of a broader set of scholarly products, including the aforementioned open access publishing, alternative forms of scholarship and public engagement. I fully support this call. Yet I am concerned that there is a real danger of reproducing the negative qualities inherent in the evaluation of traditional scholarship in the assessment of these new forms. Dr. Kreuter argues that at WCU we are well positioned to take advantage of the changes brought about by open access and alternative categories of scholarship because of our commitment to the Boyer Model. However, my observations on the implementation of the Boyer Model across universities and the published research of KerryAnn O'Meara both suggest that work in the nontraditional Boyer categories tends to quickly morph into some sort of publishing activity. Indeed, just a few years after the public presentation of the model Boyer and Rice developed, Boyer himself responded to critics of the vagueness of his scheme by admitting that peer reviewed publications would remain the coin of the realm in all categories of scholarship. Over the past 25 years there has been a proliferation of teaching and public service journals.

I am convinced that if we are going to truly embrace alternative forms of scholarship we have to get out of the prestige game. That may be very hard to do because, as Dolores Burke wrote long ago, prestige is "the oxygen of higher education." At comprehensive universities like Western it should not be too hard. The truth is that, with notable exceptions, we have never been effective in the quest for status except in our own pretensions. In an analysis I did with Heidi Buchanan some years ago we showed that while faculty members at comprehensive universities were nearly invisible in the prestigious journals of four disciplines, they had a major role in the pedagogical journals of those same disciplines (and we all know that there is no prestige attached to pedagogy). In a more recent analysis I found that faculty members at comprehensive universities were publishing (in any type of journal) at a rate of 1 to 13 compared to those at

research universities and 1 to 4 compared to those at major liberal arts colleges. Over time these gaps have been increasing. That is pretty good evidence that the prestige game is not for faculty members at comprehensive universities.

If we as a faculty can abandon our pretentions perhaps we can get serious about Dr. Kreuter's suggestions on evaluating nontraditional forms of scholarship. For many years I have argued that the best thing we can do at Western is to get past the evaluation of scholarship with all its historical baggage by shifting to an evaluation of interesting scholarly things. That will take some hard work. It is easier to count publications and assess impact factors. Perhaps the English Department and others have some models that could be used in such a shift. I hope so.

(I have made this argument more fully in an article in *Teacher Scholar*, a journal that comes in print but is available free online at http://www.fhsu.edu/teacher-scholar/previous/volume1/volume1.html)

Hunter Library's Role in Supporting Open Access

Sarah Steiner, Kristin Calvert, Farzaneh Razzaghi, Liz Skene, Mark Stoffan

Hunter Library

As librarians at Western Carolina University we are pleased to see Nate Kreuter open a much-needed dialogue on open access publishing and its impact on the academy. We would like to respond to his excellent summary by expanding on certain concepts and illustrating ways Hunter Library is embracing and supporting the open access movement on campus. Our goal is to further the discussion on campus, increase awareness of the issues, and clarify some common misunderstandings about open access.

Hunter Library has already begun to embrace open access, though a lot more can still be done. We partner with the Coulter Faculty Commons and the library at UNC-Greensboro in publishing using the Open Journal System and we currently host four peer-reviewed journals. In addition, most theses and dissertations produced at WCU have been open access since 2006 and are available online through NC-DOCKS, a repository of scholarship produced at several UNC institutions. Hunter Library also encourages faculty to self-archive their scholarly works in NC-DOCKS. By submitting your CV to the library, we will help make your eligible works available anywhere, to anyone, at any time.

As Dr. Kreuter mentions, not only is open access good for authors and the public, it's required in some cases. Federal agencies now require recipients of their grant programs to host their research data online, preserve it over time, and make the datasets readily available to other researchers. Librarians at Hunter Library offer assistance to faculty in preparing data management plans and hosting datasets online with appropriate open access and long-term curation.

The early days of the open access movement have been fraught with misunderstanding in academia, largely due to the simultaneous rise of aggressive predatory publishers. Predatory publishers, who often claim to be open access, prey on faculty and researchers by requesting money in exchange for publication in their journals. In most cases, the quality of the included works is not vetted, so the final products are questionable. The issue of open access versus predatory is further muddled by the fact that some open access journals do employ a funding model which requires authors to pay the fees associated with reviewing and hosting their works. This model is most common in STEM fields. Librarians and scholars have done a lot of work to identify and separate the predators from credible, high quality open access journals via tools such as *Beall's List* and the *Directory of Open Access Publications*. The SHERPA/RoMEO database can be used to determine journal copyright policies. Using these freely available databases, scholars may quickly determine whether a journal is predatory or truly open access.

Many institutions are showing increased support for open access publishing in other ways which we would like to see emulated at WCU. A growing percentage is allocating funds to support scholars who publish in reputable open access journals which charge author fees. In most cases, these funds are managed by a committee which thoroughly checks the intended publication venue in order to eliminate predatory publishers. Within North Carolina, Duke University, Eastern Carolina University, UNC Charlotte, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Greensboro, and Wake Forest University all have open access funds to support authors.

For researchers who support the open access movement but want to publish in commercial journals, one option is to negotiate copyright with the journal to allow the author to deposit a version of the article in NC DOCKS. Librarians can help with this process and we encourage you to browse the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition's resources on author rights.

We would like to elaborate on one point made by Dr. Kreuter in his definitions of "born digital" (i.e., materials which originated in a digital form) and paper journals. Most academic journals today, whether published by commercial publishers or through open access, and peer-reviewed or not, are published electronically. As libraries transitioned to electronic access in recent years, some publishers ceased production of paper versions. It is also conceivable for an open access journal to be produced in a print version. To reduce confusion we suggest using the terms "open access" and "commercial" in place of "online" and "paper" when making this distinction.

Many universities, as Dr. Kreuter points out, have adopted open access resolutions and policies. Colleges and departments may do so as well. Doing so can set an example and help overcome some of the resistance to publishing in OA outlets. We are happy to participate in these discussions and welcome an opportunity to support the open access movement at WCU.

Options and Issues with Open Access Publishing

Nicholas V. Passalacqua, Anthropology & Sociology

I completely agree with Dr. Kreuter in the August Faculty Forum, that the for-profit model of scholarship is problematic. I would love to see the digital "pay-walls" that restrict access to scholarly work torn down. Here, I would like to comment further on some of the topics he raised.

While open access is free to the consumer, the publishing costs typically fall on the authors and this can create ethical issues. Some journals can waive their fees, but that's pretty discipline specific. For forensic anthropology, we strongly encourage student scholarship, but you can't expect students to be able to pay $300-500 to publish an article, and honestly, I don't think most professionals would either.

Dr. Kreuter mentions the constant annoyance of predatory online journals, those that will publish any article for a fee (http://scholarlyoa.com/). Maintaining an online-only journal has associated costs that can be significant. For instance, webhosting and copy editing have associated dollar values which need to be covered for a professional publication to survive, even if editors and reviewers donate their time. To use Elsevier as an example, for an online only, open access journal, authors need to pay between $300.00 and $500.00 per article to publish. Once the article is reviewed and published, accessing it is free to everyone. While this figure may be inflated to fit Elsevier's business model, unlike most predatory open access journals, Elsevier is a well-known publisher and their online, open access journals are peer reviewed and reputable. While we at WCU have adopted the Boyer model of scholarship, journal impact factor (which exists for reputable online open access journals) still plays a significant role in publishing practices for certain disciplines.

Like Dr. Kreuter, I have not figured out a solution to these issues. My colleagues and I have been exploring options for establishing a new journal for forensic anthropology, focusing on online-only options with the lowest subscription rate possible. Prior to starting this process, we surveyed professionals and most said their biggest concerns were related to subscription fees, journal impact factor, and time from submission to actual publication.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to note that while not a true alternative to traditional publishing, Academia.edu is a great resource for free access to scholarly work. While the vast majority of the available content has been published elsewhere and is simply hosted through this website by the author, it also encourages posting draft documents for comment, as well as other material the author wants to make available. Nevertheless, I find it to be an underutilized resource which may be a great alternative for public engagement and alternative scholarship.

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Thanks to this month's writers for continuing the conversation about alternative approaches to scholarship. I hope you will consider writing for the Faculty Forum. Send me your ideas for a lead commentary as well as your responses to the issue of the month.

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Are WCU Faculty Ready for Self-Governance in Peer Review?

David McCord, Psychology Department
Chair of the Faculty Senate

Shared governance is traditionally described as a multiplayer game, including the faculty, the university administration, and the governing board, each with its own primary domain (but with voice in the domains of the other two partners). The history of the faculty role in university governance is long and convoluted, as described recently by William G. Bowen and Eugene M. Tobin (former presidents of Princeton University and Hamilton College, respectively) in their excellent 2015 book, *Locus of Authority: The Evolution of Faculty Roles in the Governance of Higher Education*. Historically, and looking forward, one theme is very clear: faculty members themselves are primarily responsible for the <u>selection, advancement, and termination of their peers</u>.

Here at Western, somewhat weirdly, we have chosen to abdicate a portion of this responsibility from the outset. Briefly, considering tenure candidates for example, we have collegial review at the department, college, and university levels. At the department level all committee members are elected, and their vote advises the Department Head (*Faculty Handbook* 4.07.D.1.a). At the college level, however, we elect only half of the committee members, with the other half being appointed by the Dean (4.07.D.2.b). The vote of the college-level CRC is advisory to the Dean, who appointed half of the membership. The same holds true at the university level, with members elected from each college and an equal number appointed by the Provost (4.07.D.3.a). In summary, we democratically elect from our own ranks 100% of the voting members at the department level, 50% of the voting members at the college/school level, and somewhat less than 50% of voting members at the university level (because the Dean of the Graduate School is automatically appointed to this committee, as a voting member).

Why do we choose to do this? It seems clear that, as rank-and-file faculty members, we are not confident that we could manage this critically important task responsibly, so we turn to our administrators to protect the institution and protect us from ourselves. Really?

One pseudo-rationale for this procedure is that having a substantial counterbalance of administratively appointed members is a way of assuring fair representation of women and minorities who, for various reasons, may not be adequately represented in an open election process. This is a noble sentiment that is not supported by the empirical data. A review of the

recent several years of data available regarding members of the university-level CRC indicates no differences in gender and minority composition of elected versus appointed groups.

The truth lies at a deeper level, and it is not a comfortable truth. One way to think about this issue is the realization that some very conscientious, serious faculty members who have the welfare of the institution in mind and thus provide rigorous peer review and "no" votes when warranted develop a reputation for doing so and then don't get elected for CRC duty. I can name one or two in my own college who would likely never get elected by the faculty at large but are always appointed by the Dean (across several Deans in my history here) because of the rigorous review they characteristically bring to the table. Another way to think about this is that in our daily lives we are encouraged to be supportive of each other and formative in our evaluations of peers; "collegiality" is even written into our *Faculty Handbook* now. Thus, many people find it very hard to vote "no" on reappointment or tenure, relying on the Dean and their crotchety appointees to make the hard calls so we don't have to.

To be sustainable, self-governance requires a level of responsibility and accountability that strains us. In the case of peer review, this means a willingness to carefully and objectively review the performance data on our colleagues, to consider the long-term welfare of WCU, and to honestly ask ourselves if reappointment or tenure for the faculty member under review is a responsible action in light of the enormous commitment of public resources entailed. If we decide to pursue fully-elected collegial review committees at all levels, we must simultaneously commit to accepting the responsibility and accountability required.

The Faculty Senate currently has a resolution on the table that proposes fully elected committees at all levels. The Collegial Review Council of the Senate is discussing and debating this issue at this time and will report to the Senate late fall semester or early spring semester regarding their deliberations and recommendations. This is a critically important issue, in itself and as an exemplar of the faculty role in shared governance generally. Are we up to it? We will hold an open forum within a future Senate meeting to encourage all interested faculty to weigh in on the issue before we vote. In parallel, comments in response to this *Faculty Forum* article would be a great way to share thoughts and move the conversation forward in a transparent, engaged manner. Please contribute to the conversation by responding to this article (mherzog@wcu.edu). You can also do so by contacting your own Faculty Senate representative(s), by emailing the Chair of the Collegial Review Council Mary Kay Waters (mkbauer@wcu.edu), or by emailing me directly (mccord@wcu.edu).

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Thanks to David McCord, Chair of the Faculty Senate, for this month's provocative commentary, a challenge to the faculty to have a stronger voice in peer review. Send me your responses for publication in the November issue.

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Disclaimer

A Walkabout

I'm sitting in my office, racking my brain, trying to figure out what to say in my last Faculty Forum. I am moving on in December after 25 years of teaching at WCU.

Should I write about the value of the Faculty Forum? (No. Done that here.) Reminisce about my work and life at WCU? (Nah. Too sentimental.) Consider the balancing act in teaching, research, service, and personal life? (Nada. Not again.) Gripe about the new president, the BOG, and salaries? (Nope. Plenty of others grumbling.)

Still racking my brain, I watch the activity on the quad and the UC lawn. Too bad I can't sell my office like a piece of high end real estate. I have a great view of the water fountain, and I imagine there will be a long list of faculty hoping to snag it when I leave. I watch two students doing wheelies on their bikes. Uh, oh. One crashes, and a few guys gather around him. He takes a hand, jumps up and joins his helpers throwing a football. The leader of the group looks like a WCU ad in gold shorts and a purple shirt.

I try to count all the purple t-shirts walking across the UC lawn and quad. Too many. Have our students always had such purple pride? Or do we give the shirts out for free?

Off to the left on the UC lawn, a young man – barefooted and bare-chested - balances on a slack line. I press my timer. Holy crow, he's been up there for 96 seconds. The next two guys only last 3 and 5 seconds. I counted. There's a woman on it now, and she has better balance, making it for 26 seconds.

Another student swings in a black and red hammock. I'm glad we have trees.

I'm not making much progress writing, so I might as well give it up and take a walk. Today is one of those sparkling, bright blue Cullowhee days that make this campus stunning. For a November day, it's warm and sunny, and the rocking chairs on the UC balcony are all occupied with students appreciating the mountain view.

Walking across the UC lawn, I stop and talk to the men at the bible table. They are friendly and let me take a picture: WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY TEACH? TAKE A FREE COPY. And they don't try to sell me their religion. Hmm. All these years I've avoided their table. Maybe I've misjudged them.

The bell tower lot is almost empty now that it's a pay lot. I stop and watch the students balancing on the slack line. They are friendly and talkative, and ask me if I want to try. No way! I'll look for other ways to balance, thank you.

Continuing on my campus walk, I stop in front of Forsythe to take pictures of the construction across the street. I wonder how stable that wall is. Last week, there were big, gaping holes in it. Looks like they're patched now, but damn, it's steep. There's a banner in front, "COMING FALL 2016: NEW DINING, RETAIL AND STUDENT HOUSING."   I miss the Mad Batter's cappuccino and scones and the chicken tacos at Rolling Stone Burrito, but what I really miss is the camaraderie.   I even miss Bob's landmark beer store being there. I'll be surprised if the local shopkeepers can afford the rent. But fires burn and times change.

Walking on, I notice another banner, this one on Hoey, advertising the year's shows. From *Andy Warhol* to *Gypsy*, looks like some good ones.

I take a picture of Breese across the street where my kids used to swim and practice kayak rolling. Breese is one of the prettiest buildings on campus, built in the 1930s. I guess the pool was beyond repair, and it was filled in a couple of years ago. I'm really glad the building was saved.

Enough wandering around, I realize I've lost an hour when I should have been writing. Maybe I'll reward myself with another walk when I get this thing done. I could check out the Lewis Hine exhibit on the library's second floor and see what's on at the Fine Art Museum. I haven't been on the mountain bike trail leading to HHS in a while. Or I could procrastinate a little longer, go get a good cup of coffee at the Hillside Grind and see if the Mad Batter Food Truck is there.

Maybe I'll just say this: I hope you find your work and life at WCU as good and satisfactory as I have. Chris Cooper is going to take over as Faculty Forum editor. I'm sure he will take it to the next level, so stay tuned.

<div align="right">

Mary Jean Ronan Herzog,
Faculty Fellow for Publications
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Note From the Editor
Chris Cooper, Political Science and Public Affairs

Welcome to the February 2016 Faculty Forum. I am pleased to take over the editorship of the Faculty Forum and I want to thank Mary Jean Herzog and all of the previous editors for their work to make the Faculty Forum the resource for faculty that it has become. Mary Jean had an uncanny ability to facilitate a meaningful and respectful conversation about the most important issues facing the university and I hope to continue that tradition.

The heart of the Faculty Forum will remain unchanged. The Faculty Forum has always, and will continue to publish unsolicited, important articles from faculty perspective. These unsolicited articles will comprise the bulk of the "new" faculty forum. These can be about virtually any topic related to the university as long as they are respectful, and likely to be of interest to faculty across campus. David Dorondo's piece on the university creed in this issue is a good example of these kinds of articles. I am particularly interested in pieces that make specific suggestions for how to improve the work we do here. Maybe there's a policy that could help us do what we do better, or a way to approach a problem that could improve how we teach our students or do our research. If you have those kinds of brainstorms, don't let them sit idle, but instead drop me a note and perhaps you can develop them into a piece for the FF.

I will also continue Mary Jean's practice of publishing responses to Faculty Forum in the following issue. These responses were often as insightful as the original pieces and I want to make sure the Faculty Forum remains a place for facilitating dialogue among our faculty.

In addition to the traditional Faculty Forum pieces and response to them, I am adding an additional, and I hope helpful, feature—the book symposium. In these symposia, I am asking three faculty with slightly different perspectives to weigh in on a book of interest to folks in higher education. The key difference between these symposia and what you might find in a traditional journal is that all three authors will focus on what this book means for faculty at WCU. Most of the issues we are facing as WCU faculty are reflective of broader trends in higher education and I hope these book symposia will highlight our connections with faculty across the country.

This issue's symposium on the book *Cheated* is an excellent example of what I hope to accomplish. As many of you know, *Cheated* examines the UNC athletic scandal. In this issue of the Faculty Forum, Faculty Athletics Representative and Director of the School of Accounting, Finance, Information Systems and Business Law (AJ Grube), former college athlete and Associate Professor of Health and Physical Education (Justin Menickelli) and officer of the Drake Group, and Professor of Sport Management (Kadie Otto) all analyze *Cheated* and its implications for WCU faculty. Their views are all distinct, but well-informed and well-worth

considering. I hope you will enjoy reading the book forum and that you consider participating in similar forums in the future.

Lastly, please remember that the views expressed here are not necessarily ones that the Faculty Commons, the Provost's Office, the Chancellor's Office, the head of the UNC System (past or future), our students, the faculty senate, me, or anyone else other than the author agrees with.

-Chris

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Of Creeds
D.R. Dorondo, Department of History

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Did you know that we – Western Carolina University – have a creed? For a long time, I didn't. About a year ago, perhaps two (I don't precisely remember), posters began appearing in several of the classrooms where I regularly teach. On them is the University's *Community Creed*. The posters read as follows:

- *I will live by high standards of personal integrity.*
- *I will embrace my responsibilities as a member of this community.*
- *I will respect the rights and the well-being of others.*
- *I will engage myself in the artistic, cultural and academic life of my University.*
- *I will celebrate and express pride in Western Carolina University.*

Though creeds do not form the subject of my research, I have always been seriously interested in creedal statements, or what pass for them, so I could not help noticing the colorful, large-format flyers.

At Western our professional existence is awash in "vision statements," "mission statements," assertions of "core values," and the like. We regularly spend hours, days, even weeks grappling in committee with these pronouncements. Every time our Departments, Colleges, or the University attempt to define what it is that we do, what it is to which we genuinely aspire, we undergo this often grinding process. That's good. We *should* grapple regularly, and thoroughly, with our innermost corporate selves. We *should* try to make sure that we do what we say we do – and then spend ourselves in the doing of it.

But do such statements rise to the level of a creed? Certainly not. And is every statement purporting to be a creed really one? Certainly not always. As so many readers of this newsletter readily know, "creed" derives from the Latin "credo," which is to say "I believe." With due apologies to my good colleagues in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, a creed might usefully be said to constitute a normative standard by which one ascertains what doctrines (usually theological in nature) are to be believed. That is to say, a creed has historically expressed, in very precise language, the irreducible substance of what must be believed in order for two or more persons to be acceptable to one another as fellow-believers.

Assuming this definition to be correct for the sake of the argument, I return to the University's *Community Creed*. Nowhere in any of the five statements is there any pronouncement of what one must actually believe. All of the statements, particularly the last four, are merely vague, anodyne, but admittedly harmless, affirmations of a pledge of good behavior. Obviously, good behavior is better than bad behavior, but does our University, in fact does any university, actually need a document ennobled by the title of *Creed* in order to express the perfectly ordinary expectation that faculty, staff, and students behave themselves? In other words this is a creed that does not ask, much less demand, that one actually believe anything. It is a creed without "credo."

Rather more seriously, this creed wastes not a syllable on the search for truth. To be sure, acting with personal integrity is laudable, as is shouldering one's responsibilities in all spheres of life and not merely in academe. Respecting others can certainly ease, though alone it can by no means erase, ill-will. Then too, actively participating in the variegated life of the University and

taking pride in it can help us rightly express our solidarity with one another. Above all else, however, should we not – both as individuals and as a University – seek the truth? Should this obligation not override all others? Should we not demand it – everywhere, always – of our students and, more importantly, of ourselves? If so, should that search not also be included in what we purport to believe?

If, as I strongly suspect, many of our colleagues would reply by saying that there exists no objective reality called truth but only each individual's conception of it as mediated through a completely autonomous will (note the recurrence of "I will" in the *Community Creed*), then our University has a creed to which anyone, anytime, anywhere might safely subscribe with no fear of actually having to believe in anything at all.

Much more ominous, however, is the following consideration: if nothing is objectively true and therefore morally right, then nothing is objectively false and therefore morally wrong. And if *that's* the case, then I could, for example, stand before my modern German history class this very semester and say, without fear of contradiction, that what Hitler and his henchmen did to the Jews was perfectly acceptable. After all, his completely autonomous will told him that what he and his minions were doing was unobjectionable, indeed was required, precisely because that action rested upon an intellectual foundation constructed solely by that same will and having no point of reference beyond itself.

We abandon the search for objective truth, as well as its possession, at our own – and others' – peril. The search is difficult. But avoiding the difficulty and its attendant cost is a dangerous game of "mental Miranda rights." If we cannot afford the truth, one will be provided for us. But it may not be a truth we like very much.

Book Symposium on Jay M. Smith and Mary Willingham's Cheated: The UNC Scandal, the Education of Athletes, and the Future of Big-Time College Sports. Potomac Books

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AJ Grube, Director, School of Accounting, Finance, Information Systems and Business Law, Associate Professor of Sport Management and Faculty Athletics Representative

In my classes, Jan Kemp (University of Georgia) is often credited with putting a national spotlight on fraudulent academic practices related to college athletics. Most of the time, my students don't know who she was, but they are always fascinated by the whole story. While many other institutions have been faced with such egregious academic and athletic misconduct, the Jan Kemp case has always been "the big one" in my mind. After all, could it possibly get worse than administrators firing an English professor who refused to change the grades of football players to allow them to play in bowl games? Yep. It can get worse. A lot worse.

You'll need to read *Cheated* to get an idea of the breadth, width, and dimensions of fraud at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill over the past two decades. "The big one" pales in comparison. Any one of the myriad incidents discussed in the book would warrant a major scandal. When one considers that they happened at a single institution for such a prolonged period of time, it's genuinely mindboggling.

➢ In one academic year, over 300 (not a typo) independent study students were assigned to Dr. Nyang'oro (Head of the African Studies / African American Studies Department) in one academic year. He was on sabbatical for one of the two semesters. Debby Crowder, the department administrative assistant assigned most of the grades.

➢ There were processes in place to allow students and student-athletes to retroactively withdraw from courses and replace them with "paper classes" midway through a semester.

➢ An entire parallel curriculum, complete with its own grading system meant to benefit the enrolled students, was built and administered largely by Debby Crowder. This system was not implemented in secret. The dean of advising, the chair of the faculty, and the athletic student support services staff were quite aware of and often used the curriculum. The parallel curriculum was built and administered (including the assignment of grades) largely by an administrative assistant.

➢ Mary Willingham (an employee in the Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling at UNC-Chapel Hill) made a plea to the Faculty Athletics Committee to stop the use of fake classes. Nothing happened.

➢ The directors of the athletics academic support program went to the Faculty Athletics Committee to inquire about the teaching of independent studies. They were told it wasn't their responsibility to worry about what faculty cover in courses.

After reading about these and dozens more incidents in the book, I honestly cannot get my head around the vast lack of integrity on so many levels. The cover-up that has ensued involves another inconceivable set of far-reaching tentacles. The authors (p. 58) summed it up by stating that "disclosing the truth, revealing the full extent of all problems, responding to faculty critics, and answering to the citizens of North Carolina would always take a back seat to the overriding imperative to protect the Athletic Department from the NCAA." Perhaps we should be asking

who's protecting the students, student-athletes, faculty, staff, and citizens of North Carolina from UNC-Chapel Hill.

My initial horror as WCU's Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) was for the student-athletes who were robbed of the opportunity to earn an education that would serve them for the rest of their lives. They were put in phony classes and told to focus on their respective sports. In one instance, a men's basketball player was enrolled in no "real" classes (only paper ones). His GPA actually increased that semester. It's truly criminal.

However, in my role as FAR, I've observed several positive changes on our campus resulting from all of this. While I may not appreciate the dictation of instruments used, I do appreciate having many sets of eyes on the data and processes affecting our student-athletes. For example, General Administration implemented a new policy requiring increased scrutiny of independent study courses. This is not a bad thing.

An annual report on athletics is now required of each institution in our system. The UNC Report is sent to General Administration after approval from WCU's Board of Trustees. For most institutions, this is a time-consuming endeavor which requires a minimum of 80 hours to complete and involves the offices of legal counsel, provost, institutional planning and effectiveness, and the registrar. A review of our processes is healthy. Often, however, it seems like institutions are being asked to prove their innocence.

Annual review of processes and data surrounding student-athlete eligibility, clustering, and choice of majors. This such a beneficial, informative exercise. Summaries are included in my annual FAR report to the Faculty Senate. The full reports mentioned here are provided to the Faculty Senate Chair.

If we asked our entire faculty to invent ways to commit academic fraud, I don't think we'd imagine all the events described in this book. If you haven't read *Cheated*, please do. I'd love to have a cup of coffee with anyone interested in talking about *Cheated*, WCU athletics, WCU's processes involving academics and athletics, or any other related topic.

Kadie Otto, Ph.D., Professor, Sport Management

I never thought it was a good idea to rest the reputation of a university on the back of athletics, but, then again, I've been researching college sports corruption for two decades. Given this, I wasn't surprised to learn of UNC-CH's academic fraud. What did surprise me, however, was the sheer duration of the fraud (nearly 20-years…now that's quite a feat)! (For anyone interested in hearing my more detailed thoughts on the scandal click on the podcast link below).[1] So, not only has UNC destroyed its once sparkling reputation, but, to make matters worse, they are also being sued for "…failure to safeguard and provide meaningful education to scholarship athletes".[2] And yet, there are still university presidents who think it's a good idea to make athletics "the front porch" of the university. Hmmm…

But what does UNC's fraud have to do with WCU? We begin with the inherent dangers of attempting to 'run with the big dogs'.

The Athletics Arms Race

In the dog-eat-dog world of college sports, there is a trickle-down effect wherein the "mid-majors" (the "have-nots") attempt to 'keep up with the Joneses' (the "haves"). This of course is not possible if you consider **reality**—nearly 20 of the big-time universities spend over $100 million/yr. on athletics (the University of Oregon spends nearly $200 million/yr.). WCU, a "have-not", spends $11,436,428 million/yr. on athletics.[3] "The haves" (which consist of the 64 schools in the power-5 conferences [ACC, Big 12, Big Ten, PAC 12, and SEC] plus Notre Dame [an independent]) fund their programs by way of multi-**billion** dollar T.V. contracts, ticket and merchandise sales, and to a lesser degree, general university funds and student fees (the general student body at these schools contribute 0.0 to 7.6% of the annual athletics department budget), and most, if not all, of their athletic scholarships are fully endowed. On the flip side, WCU requires the student body to foot the bill to the tune of $7,581,603 annually (or 66.3% of the total athletic department budget). Indeed, every WCU student contributes $826/year ($730 athletic fee + $96 athletic facility fee) to subsidize athletics.[4] If this sounds troubling, perhaps what's worse is that each WCU student also contributes, a whopping, .50/semester to the N.C. Association of Student Governments whose purpose is to ensure "…that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as

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[1] *See* Suzanne Pekow & Stephen Smith, *Academic Fraud and College Athletics*, AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA, AMERICAN RADIOWORKS, Nov. 24, 2014, available at http://www.americanradioworks.org/academic-fraud-and-college-athletics/

[2] *See* McCants & Ramsey et al., v. NCAA & the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Class Action Complaint, 15 CVS 1782 (Jan. 22, 2015). ("UNC's bogus classes once again reveal the great hypocrisy of college athletics in America. The[y]…insist that their mission and purpose is to educate and to prevent the exploitation of college athletes. Yet…[they]…engag[e] in exploitation, subverting the educational mission in the service of the big business of college athletics…" at 3-4).

[3] *See* Brad Wolverton, Ben Hallman, Shane Shifflett, & Sandhya Kambhampati, *The $10 billion sports tab: How college students are funding the athletics arms race*, THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, Nov. 15, 2015, available at http://chronicle.com/interactives/ncaa-subsidies-main?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en&elq=351190943de54e84a9844755e5b126af&elqCampaignId=1841&elqaid=6894&elqat=1&elqTrackId=37ea3dec289e45aaa8f12757d89e52c2#id=table_2014

[4] *See* WCU, *More about 2015-16 required fees*, 2015, available at http://www.wcu.edu/current-students/student-accounts-office/tuition-and-fees/more-about-required-fees.asp

practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense".[5] Of course, every university is free to make its own decisions. In the case of the big-time schools, they could feed a small country *or* run a multi-million dollar sports entertainment business. In WCU's case, we could use the money for our *primary* mission by funding *academic* scholarships *or* we could continue to require our students to subsidize athletics at an unconscionable rate, arguably in violation of the N.C. Constitution. Choices, choices.

Now, is it possible that the athletics arms race (i.e., the unquenchable desire for money, prestige, and exposure) could lead to academic improprieties? Surely not. Well, maybe. Okay, yes.

So, what can WCU learn from the UNC academic fraud scandal?

Faculty Governance

The overarching lesson is that the faculty are charged with the duty to oversee athletics. The *AAUP Policy Documents & Reports* outlines faculty obligations pertaining to the role of the faculty in oversight of athletics.[6] Of course, from a national perspective, this is hardly the reality. Reasons for this generally include: faculty abdication;[7] administration takeover; faculty apathy toward athletics; and/or, faculty viewing athletics as a nuisance or an unnecessary appendage. The bottom line is that our University Athletics Committee should be more than advisory—it should have primary jurisdiction to formulate athletics policy.

Now, moving on to a few specific areas here at WCU which, I believe, can be rectified without too much trouble.

1) Conflicts of Interest

(a) The NCAA requires that all member schools have a Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) whose job, broadly, is to oversee the goings-on in athletics in relation to the academic mission of the university.[8] At WCU, there are two concerns however. The first is that there exists no term limit. The second is that the FAR is chosen and serves at the discretion of the Chancellor. While problematic for any number of reasons (i.e., actual or perceived conflicts of interest), a simple correction will rectify both concerns.

Recommendation # 1(a): The Faculty Senate, by vote of the General Faculty, should determine who will serve as FAR (i.e., one term not to exceed four years; second term permitted after two consecutive terms elapse).

(b) In the fall of 2008 I received a call from a reporter in Michigan asking me to comment on the "special treatment" their athletics committee members were receiving from the

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[5] *See* N.C. State Constitution, Article IX Education, Section 9 Benefits of Public Institutions of Higher Education, 1971 at 31 available at http://www.ncleg.net/legislation/constitution/ncconstitution.pdf ("The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense").

[6] *See* Statement on Intercollegiate Athletics and *The Role of the Faculty in the Governance of College Athletics: A Report of the Special Committee on Athletics*, AAUP POLICY DOCUMENTS & REPORTS, 9TH ED. 2001.

[7] *See* Jon Ericson, WHILE FACULTY SLEEP: A LITTLE BOOK ON BIG CORRUPTION, 2015.

[8] *NCAA Manual, 2014-15, Bylaw* 6.1.3 - Faculty Athletics Representative. ("A member institution shall designate an individual to serve as faculty athletics representative. An individual so designated after January 12, 1989, shall be a member of the institution's faculty or an administrator who holds faculty rank and shall not hold an administrative or coaching position in the athletics department. Duties of the faculty athletics representative shall be determined by the member institution. *(Adopted: 1/11/89)").*

University of Michigan athletics department.[9] While serving as an elected member of our University Athletics Committee in 2011, I recalled the Michigan situation and proposed that we do away with allowing the athletics department to give Athletics Committee members two free season tickets to the men's and women's basketball games. As an overt display of my commitment to removing even a *perceived* conflict of interest in our charge as *independent overseer* of athletics, I turned in all of my free tickets. What followed was something strikingly similar to kids swarming a downed piñata full of candy. Clearly, some of the committee members treasured *their* free tickets.

Recommendation # 1(b): The University Athletics Committee should add a clause to its charge stipulating that no entity shall be permitted to offer any inducement to Committee members.[10]

 2) <u>"Talent Waivers"</u>

It is the case that some of the most talented athletes sometimes happen to be the least talented academically (as was the case in the Florida State University academic fraud scandal).[11] This reality led universities to compromise their academic standards in exchange for athletic talent (hence the creation of the term "talent waiver", the creation of the "talent waiver admissions exception", and the creation of an entirely new line of employment—"athletic-academic support advisors"). Currently, WCU has a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the Admissions Office and the Athletics Department titled, "Policies and Procedures for the Collaboration between the Admission Office and Athletics". This document effectively serves as the modus operandi for admitting academically *under*qualified athletes into our institution. The process calls for the Athletic Director to submit the name of the student to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs who then makes the decision concerning admission. Three red flags exist here. The first is that "[i]nstitutions should not use admissions standards for athletes that are not comparable to those for other students".[12] The second is that the decision to submit and admit rests with just two people—one whose position, Athletics Director, is a clear conflict of interest. The third concern is that, if WCU persists in permitting "talent waivers", then there must be a committee comprised solely of elected faculty who make these decisions.

Recommendation # 2: The Faculty Senate should create a new committee, the "Talent Waiver Admissions Committee", comprised solely of faculty who will review and make decisions on all "talent waiver" requests (i.e., the Athletics Director and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs should serve in advisory roles and be non-voting members).

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[9] *See* Andy Kroll, *Perks for Profs on Athletic Department Oversight Board raises concerns*, THE MICHIGAN DAILY, November 9, 2008, available at http://www.michigandaily.com/content/na/athl-dept-perks-practice-raises-conflict-interest-questions (".....[T]he Athletic Department...offer[ed] free airfare, hotel accommodations, tickets and meals to the faculty members charged with overseeing the eligibility of the University's student-athletes" at para. 4).

[10] *See Statement on Intercollegiate Athletics*, AAUP POLICY DOCUMENTS & REPORTS, 9TH ED. 2001. ("Conflicts of Interest – Paid-for-trips to games, and other special benefits for faculty, administrators, or members of governing boards involved in the oversight of athletics, whether offered by the university or by outside groups, create conflicts of interest and should be eliminated" at 241).

[11] *See* Tom Farrey, *FSU Seminole Academic Fraud Scandal*, ESPN OUTSIDE THE LINES, December 13, 2009, available at http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=4738805&categoryid=2564308

[12] *See Statement on Intercollegiate Athletics*, AAUP POLICY DOCUMENTS & REPORTS, 9TH ED. 2001. ("Admissions and Academic Progress" at 240).

This committee should be separate and distinct from the University Athletics Committee. The Talent Waiver Admissions Committee should review the existing "Memorandum of Understanding", make any changes necessary for alignment with WCU's academic standards, and craft the official policy on "talent waiver" admissions.

3) Athletics-Academic Support Personnel

As you can see, one exception (the "talent waiver") has the potential to beget, yet, another problem. As "talent waiver" admissions were bent and stretched there came a point when athletes were, quite simply, incapable of achieving academically (noting that some college athletes are, in fact, illiterate).[13] Indeed, an entirely new line of employment opened up in the athletics department—"athletics-academic support personnel". At UNC, Jan Boxill was not only a member of the faculty *and*, in an ironic twist, the Director of the Parr Center for **Ethics**, *but also* the athletic-academic support liaison for the women's basketball team (serving in dual roles can be precarious, e.g., conflicts of interest). It was her dual role as athletic-academic support advisor *and* faculty member that created the *avenue through which* she was able to manipulate grades for players such that they would remain eligible. The lesson here is that the athletics-academic support personnel must remain completely separate in job description, role, and function from university academic support personnel. Since their job description requires them to monitor and ensure the academic eligibility of the athletes, and their pay depends on performing the functions of their job, it is likely that their allegiance lies with athletics. Still, the bottom line is that if there were no talent waivers, then there wouldn't be much of a need for the army of athletic-academic support personnel that exists at many of our universities today.

Recommendation # 3: The Athletics Committee should review the job description, role, and functions of athletic-academic support advisors and seek ways to ensure that persons serving in this capacity are aware of what they are charged to do and not do. The Committee should also review the employment contracts of athletic-academic support personnel to ensure that there exists a clause addressing ramifications for violations of their job description (i.e., engaging in, or enabling, any act of academic fraud or any other academic impropriety, etc.).

In sum, if athletics are to be an integral part of education, and the athlete an integral part of the institution, then the faculty must have primary oversight of athletics. Primary oversight begins, and ends, with faculty governance.

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[13] *See* Sara Ganim, *Some college athletes play like adults, read like 5th-graders.* CNN.COM., January 7, 2014, available at http://www.cnn.com/2014/01/07/us/ncaa-athletes-reading-scores/index.html

Cheated by Jay M. Smith and Mary Willingham is an in-depth, thought provoking and convincing book about the well-publicized UNC academic scandal. The book goes into an astonishing detail on how faculty, staff and administrators pulled-off and attempted to cover-up a fraud so intricate that it even surprised a cynic like me. It is a must-read for any UNC fan or foe, or anyone within earshot of an ivory tower. In the end, I sympathized with Willingham and a few others. I got the feeling they meant to do the right thing for the athlete-students, but before long they found themselves in the center of a tornado where the air feels eerily calm.
It is easy to dismiss what some people call the "shameless exploitation" and "covert racism" that occurred at UNC for two decades as big-time athletic program problems but some of the issues seem unnervingly familiar. I am hesitant to call the following "lessons learned" but I took a stab at offering some, but not all, of my take-always from the book.

There is a clear-cut difference between an "easy" course and a "paper" course and everyone involved knows where the line is drawn. Some courses are fundamentally challenging, some are objectively easy and most fall somewhere in the middle. There is nothing inherently wrong with courses at the less difficult end of the continuum. One of the most shocking statistics from *Cheated* is that from 1999 to 2001, hundreds of lecture classes and bogus independent study classes at UNC never met. Independent studies or "paper" courses are often a total sham. A course that requires a single paper with no scheduled class time is making a lot of assumptions or rather, it is open to a lot of questions: Is the professor meeting with the student to ask and answer good questions-- in a word, *teaching*? Who actually wrote the paper? Is the paper being objectively evaluated? Most of us have taught an independent study and required that the main product of the course was a research paper. Teaching these courses the right way takes a great deal of time and energy, which is why most of us choose to do very few of them. If a professor is teaching hundreds of them, something is dead wrong.

Summer school policies at UNC and WCU are eerily familiar. At both universities, summer school is a stand-alone entity with its own budget and nuances. Faculty run the risk of their course being cancelled due to under enrollment and the pathetically low pay scale is ever-changing. Student evaluations of summer school classes are not scrutinized as heavily by the department heads. The dynamic that drives course offerings during summer terms begs for cutting corners and favoritism. At UNC, about 33-50% of all credits earned by athlete-students were earned in the summer. This is not the case at WCU but our summer school is wrought with duplicitous practices. At one time, you could make more money by offering multiple sections of the same on-line course rather than teaching one large section. In essence, summer school at WCU has been a problem for decades and steps to fix it have clearly not worked.

If there is a central theme in *Cheated* it is that fame and money fueled the fire that burnt down the metaphorical walls of the university. College sports is a 16 billion dollar a year industry. WCU contributes very little to this giant money machine because we lack any real fame (we actually *spend* about 11.5 million a year on athletics). People are not buying WCU tee shirts at the Walmart in Chapel Hill but people are buying UNC shirts at the Walmart in Sylva. The only time we acquire any real amount of money from athletics is when the football team competes against a much bigger cog in the machine. We are part of the machine, but a very small part.

The most famous people on big-time college campuses are the football and men's basketball players. After all, they are the stars responsible for bringing in multi-billion dollar

television contracts. This fame can lead to hero worshipping by employees, and ultimately to academic fraud. If you want to ride the team bus with Julius Peppers then you have to give him a passing grade in your composition course. This may sound crazy but that is exactly what happened at UNC. It is unlikely that a faculty member at WCU is going to risk his/her career to ride the team bus with Troy Mitchell. Ron Rash is probably the most famous person on our campus. His book royalties might also make him the highest paid person at WCU but nobody really cares. At UNC and other big-time universities, the football and men's basketball coaches are often the highest paid employees. In fact, the highest paid employee in 40 or so *states* is either a football or men's basketball coach. Since more money often equates to more power, athletic coaches at places like UNC have more unadulterated power than the chancellors. It is a messed-up system that does not appear to be going away anytime soon.

Both UNC and WCU admit athletically talented but academically underqualified students then take advantage of every NCAA loophole to keep them eligible for participation in athletics. I am not convinced, as some have suggested, that admitting academically weak students amounts to exploitation or covert racism (more on that another day) but it certainly undermines the academic integrity of the university. In many ways, we are nothing like our big brother dressed in Carolina blue but we do face some of the same challenges. I was reminded of this when I went to the cafeteria and ran into a student-athlete and his assistant coach. "Is he in your class this semester?" "Yup," I replied. "Are you gonna' take care of him?" he asked. I shook my head and let out an audible sigh.

Note From the Editor
Chris Cooper, Political Science and Public Affairs

I am pleased to introduce the next issue of the Faculty Forum. The last issue sparked significant conversations on campus—both surrounding David Dorondo's persuasive piece on creeds, as well as AJ Grube, Kadie Otto and Justin Menickelli's book forum on *Cheated*. I am hoping this issue will be as well received.

The first piece in this issue of the FF is a triple-authored article by Alvin Malesky, Kim Winter, and Alyssia Raggio, all of the College of Education. Their article uses original data from WCU faculty to bring faculty back into the conversations around academic honestly. If you have ever had a student cheat in your class, have ever struggled with changing academic honesty policies, or have talked with students about cheating, there will be something useful to you in this article.

This issue also marks the second book forum. In this forum, Scott Rader, and Bruce Henderson discuss the importance of Kevin Carey's *The End of College* for university faculty at a regional university such as ours. Given the speed of change in higher education, this is a book that all of us need to wrestle with—and thanks to Scott and Bruce, we will have some guidance along the way.

I hope that you will read this issue of the FF and I hope it will inspire some thoughts, conversations, and disagreements around campus. And I hope that at least a few of you will write down the content of those thoughts and submit them for publication in our next issue.

Lastly, although I probably don't need to remind you, I will anyway: the views expressed here are those of the authors not necessarily consistent with the opinions of the Faculty Commons, the Provost's Office, the Chancellor's Office, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, the Mayor of Cullowhee, Margaret Spellings, the faculty senate, me, or anyone else.

-Chris

Faculty Upset: Is it the Cheating or the Policies…or Both?
Alvin Malesky, Kim Winter, & Alyssa Raggio

The literature indicates that violations of academic integrity (i.e., cheating) are pervasive among university students, occur across disciplines, and have been prevalent in higher education for decades (Bowers, 1964; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001). Alvin Malesky's eyes were opened to this reality when students in his capstone course informed him that "just about everyone on campus cheats" and then proceeded to educate him on the best ways to cheat. *Incidentally, students are using websites containing virtually every single test bank question imaginable for a little extra "help" during online exams!*

More recently Alvin dealt with a situation as department head in which students were alleged to have cheated in a faculty member's online course. He was somewhat confused (as were the students and faculty member) when trying to interpret our relatively new policy regarding suspected violations of academic integrity. Alvin and colleagues Kim Winter and Alyssa Raggio wondered how others on campus were handling situations when they suspected that students had cheated. They also were curious if faculty truly understood the new academic integrity violation policy.

The following details the experiences, views, and knowledge expressed by 154 WCU faculty members (representing all colleges):

Nine hundred and seventy three students were suspected of cheating by the 154 respondents during the previous year (Mean=7; SD=26). Of these 973 students only 89 were reported for violating academic integrity per the university's academic integrity policy and reporting process. The discrepancy in these numbers is likely due to multiple factors including faculty not believing that they had sufficient evidence to prove their case and not wanting to deal with the university bureaucracy resulting from making a report.

The majority of respondents (63%, N=92) reported that their preferred method of handling a student violating academic integrity was to follow the university's formal academic integrity and reporting process. Twenty percent (N=30) reported a preference for dealing with the situation at their own discretion, while the remaining seventeen percent (N=26) selected "other," with a common explanation being that a response depends on the specific situation.

Respondents were asked to rate their awareness of WCU's current academic integrity policy on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being completely unaware and 10 being very aware. The average reported score was 6.2 (SD=2.08). This ranking was followed by four questions assessing knowledge of WCU's policy. The average score on this questionnaire was roughly two out of four questions correct. The questions (and answers) to the "quiz" are included at the end of this article.

After completing the survey, 61 of the 154 respondents provided open-ended feedback. A qualitative analysis of the faculty comments by three independent reviewers revealed four common themes: dissatisfaction with the current policy (twenty responses), previous experiences with reporting violations (fourteen), concerns with technology (eight), and belief that the resulting consequences of cheating are not adequate (seven). Regarding the most common theme

- dissatisfaction with the policy - specific complaints included the view that the process is too bureaucratic and time consuming, and that reporting a student causes distress to the student/professor relationship. One professor summed up these concerns by stating:

The policy does not punish students adequately and places an undo [sic] burden on faculty and administrators. This extra work encourages individuals to NOT report violations. Also, following through with reporting and ultimately seeing students found "responsible" but not adequately "punished" makes faculty feel jaded and lacking in confidence in the system.

Wordle containing every word from faculty comments:

Considering the high rates of academic dishonesty, it is important for universities to consider the perspective of faculty members as well as students. This study found intense negative feelings about university policy and procedures regarding academic integrity as well as a concern that reporting does not yield adequate and necessary results.

Nevertheless, there are quite a few on campus who would say that the policy was recently revised and updated in order to place faculty and students at the center of each case; that the purpose of revising the policy was so that faculty would have voice and input in the process. The current policy requires that communication between and among faculty, students, department heads, and deans all take place prior to a final decision. The dean has the final say after reviewing paperwork, holding a hearing, and, possibly, reviewing an appeal.

Although the collective experience of the authors (department head, associate dean, and graduate student) indicates that while most understand that academic dishonesty is prevalent, it is clear that what we do about the various forms of cheating is not so well-defined. When given the opportunity to anonymously voice an opinion, faculty clearly felt a need to express their apprehension with the current policy.

As an associate dean, Kim Winter believes that part of her role is to educate individuals about our current policy. Her experience has been that most do not understand the required steps as they move through the process and she has found students especially uninformed about their personal rights and responsibilities. In her view, some of the factors that make the reporting process unbearable (or, just plain "not worth it") for faculty include the required comprehensive documentation, the awkward/uncomfortable/confrontational meeting and communication with student(s), the direct involvement of a department head and dean (who evaluate said faculty), and as mentioned before, the belief that not much really happens by way of consequences passed down on the student.

Our results indicate that education and awareness about the policy and procedure, for both faculty and students, is necessary. However, knowledge alone will not deter cheating or increase reporting. Ensuring the use of these procedures by faculty members is necessary. But… How best to do so still remains a question!

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Academic Integrity "Quiz" Question & Answers

*http://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/AcademicIntegrity/academicintegrity.asp

1. Within how many days is the instructor required to report an alleged violation of Academic Integrity?
   a. 2 days; **b. 5 days (correct);** c. 10 days; d. one month

2. Who does the instructor directly report the alleged violation to?
   a. The Department Head (correct); b. The Academic Integrity Board; c. The appropriate Academic Dean; d. The Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

3. What is the most intense sanction that the academic integrity board is allowed to issue to the offending student?
   a. Requiring them to drop the class.; **b. An "F" in the course in which they cheated. (correct);** c. Making up the assignments in which they cheated.; d. Suspending them from the university.; e. An "F" on the assignment in which they cheated.

4. After how many offenses is a student considered a "habitual offender"?
   a. 2; **b. 3 (correct);** c. 4; d.

Book Symposium on Kevin Carey's The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere. Riverhead Books

Scott Rader, Assistant Professor, Marketing

Student learning modes, pedagogical processes, and the university itself are all going through, or at least facing, a revolution akin to what Kevin Carey articulates in his book The End of College (2015; Riverhead Books). For evidence, Carey explicates the explosion of interest and outlets for private- and public-sector online education solutions, increased scrutiny of the university's role in an increasingly competitive global society, and the starkly changing face of modern learners' and employers' mobile-centered, highly collaborative, experientially-inclined lives. As Carey asserts, recognizing the gap (and corresponding opportunity) between the 21st century student's *modus operandi* and the current college learning experience leaves universities at a cross-roads.

Whether one envisions the same path Carey argues taking, or agrees with his version of history and condemnation of the academy, of importance is his interrogation of the university's *raison d' etre*. To be sure, Carey's call for "The End of [Traditional] College" is not without problems. For starters, the window of time (2011-2012) used to evaluate the onset of his panacea -- an online-based educational revolution -- is fairly acute and, accordingly, myopic. Five years later, some of the technological and policy forces that were at play then are now seemingly anachronistic. Another problem is what *hasn't* changed, at least substantially. Despite advances in both the private sector (e.g., Kahn Academy) and university (Harvardx and MITx Coursera MOOCs), the staid but solid persistence of the "best interests" of the academy prevails. In his optimism for a student-centered entrepreneurial solution, Carey underestimates the inertia of this institutional juggernaut, and the power granted to it by the State and society.

Despite these potential challenges, the disruptive forces that inspired Carey's argument have precipitated changes that resonate today and likely into the future. At the core of this change is demand from the market itself: a fluid, global constituency of students, parents, and potential employers who constantly shift, whether academic institutions do or not. As professors at WCU should know well, the cohort in the modern classroom is remarkably different from their own generations (i.e., "Generation X" or "Baby Boomers"). Fundamentally, modes of information processing and knowledge acquisition are different. Contemporary learners, steeped in multi-media and multi-tasking their entire lives, absorb and understand differently from those teaching them. Take as example the traditional tool of learning -- a textbook -- which is nearly anathema to familiar, faster, disaggregated resources such as searchable multimedia (e.g., YouTube), crowd-sourced knowledge (e.g., Wikipedia) and collaborative forums for real-time engagement (i.e., social media).

In the face of this new student psyche, which Carey articulates well, educators and academics must separate the anxiety of the "loss" of traditional infrastructure from the opportunity latent in meeting the demands of an ever-volatile and variegated fabric of students and society. An innovative upheaval is largely inevitable if universities want to

stay not only abreast, but relevant in an interconnected, globally localized world. Embedded in the very etymology of the word "university" is an exhortation to constantly monitor, consider, and react to a broad base of possibilities, not only in curricular and program development, but in its delivery mechanisms as aligned with a changing world and target audience.

Adopting such a version of Carey's "hybrid" future university (parts online, parts in classrooms) is beset with challenges at universities like WCU. Professors here, like elsewhere, might be averse to significant change of their comfortable curricula, especially after tenure which, while purporting to ensure academic freedom, could also stifle the "creative destruction" in pedagogical, curricular, and program development that would be necessary to ensure a different future. Mandates from administration (and ultimately from the State) can actually promote the opposite of the hybrid university. For example, "asset utilization" targets at WCU place primacy (and economic incentive) on leveraging *physical* resources, in effect penalizing programs that move classes online. Finally, in the extant and growing competitive space for global online education, universities like WCU are at a disadvantage largely due to two forces: 1) tuition constraints and differentials (not being able to set market-reflective prices; unfavorable variations in in- versus out-of-state tuition, and 2) a lack of marketing prowess, given that marketing their services, especially to a broader audience, has not historically been an imperative, and therefore not a forte.

The end of college is not inevitable. But its change is. The future of the university might be found in Bloom's taxonomy. In the face of an electronic accumulation and dissemination of "all there is to know", application, analysis, and synthesis become key. The value of the professor might become one of curation and coaching: culling the information, separating the wheat from the chaff as it were, and integrating/re-integrating this knowledge into a contextually relevant, hopefully engaging, and critically infused platform for analysis, evaluation and creativity.

Bruce Henderson, Professor of Psychology

It would be easy to dismiss Kevin Carey's book. His contentions are frequently pretentious, unremittingly arrogant, and sometimes just silly. If you believe modern universities serve a public service and you have high blood pressure, do not read this book. However, after telling you why I think this book is seriously flawed, I will outline some issues raised by Carey that we would be shortsighted to ignore.

Carey gives a brief history of higher education to illustrate how the modern *hybrid university* came into being. The hybrid university combines two functions that should have been kept separate: research and teaching. Professors teach, poorly for the most part because they were never trained to teach, in order to make a living while they pursue what they really want to do—their research. The evidence that professors teach poorly can be found in Arum and Roska's *Academically adrift*, a 2011 report showing that most college students do not learn much of anything in the first two years of college. The self-interested faculty and administrators at the hybrid universities maintain a monopoly on the dissemination of knowledge through an accreditation process they control that requires institutions to have all kinds of expensive features they do not really need. The cost of a higher education has gone out of control as the hybrid university has convinced the general public that they need a Rolex when then could manage perfectly well with a Timex.

Happily, in Carey's view, the days of the hybrid university are numbered. At this very moment, the hybrid universities are losing their stranglehold on knowledge and its dissemination. It is about to be replaced by the *University of Everywhere*. Instead of having to deal with hacks like those of us at WCU, students can have access to the greatest teachers at great speed and low cost without getting out of their pajamas. MIT and Harvard are giving it away. Once Silicon Valley breaks the monopoly of accreditation by doling out credible "badges" instead of credits, there will be need for only a handful of high-quality universities that will generate and disseminate knowledge to the rich and poor around the world. These universities will use the massive amounts of learning data they accumulate to build robot tutors who will personalize the learning process and obviate the need for teachers. College diplomas, uninformative about what was actually learned, will be replaced by extensive files from the University of Everywhere that will include course syllabi, class notes, problem sets, and meta-analytics describing their offerings.

Wow. Things have changed faster than I thought in the last few years. But there are some flaws in Carey's presentation. First, one of Carey's fundamental assumptions is that teaching and research are negatively related. Students are not taught well because professors are busy with their research. In fact, every review of the relevant literature has concluded that the quality of teaching and quality research are not related (except in their competition for the faculty member's time). The positive relationship many administrators and professors like to tout is not there, but knowing if someone is a good researcher or not tells you nothing about their teaching, and vice versa. Moreover, even in the major research universities, professors pretty consistently report as much interest and involvement in their teaching as in their research.

Second, Carey over relies on a single source for evidence that the hybrid university has utterly failed to educate its students. *Academically Adrift* is a work seriously, if not fatally, flawed in it methodology and interpretations. It simply tells us little or nothing about whether students are learning. Third, Carey, in his haste to unbundle the functions of the hybrid university, has failed to recognize their common base in scholarship. Not just the body of scholarship, nor research and publishing, but each faculty member's individual developing expertise in a discipline. Good teaching, good research, and good community service (which is ignored entirely by Carey) have to be based in the continuing scholarship of the faculty member. Finally, Carey conveys a rather simplistic, passive view of learning. He appears to believe that there is a well-defined body of knowledge and skill sets that can be acquired by just about anyone from watching, listening and interacting with tutors designed by artificial intelligence (using magical metadata that emerges from huge datasets). A view that learning is a constructive process depending on a dynamic interplay among teachers, learners and material to be learned seems foreign to Carey, despite his gratuitous references to Vygotsky and Piaget.

There have been some excellent critical reviews of this book elsewhere, I particularly recommend one by Frank Pasquales. (There are also some incisive critiques of the technology Carey has so much faith in, including Zemsky's on MOOCs (pages 237-243 in the 2014 volume of the *Journal of General Education*) and a funny piece by Michael Shea in *The Skinny* in which he describes taking a 5-week course on astrobiology and the search for extraterrestrial life from the University of Edinburgh that he successfully completed ("Impressive work!") one day (with breaks for doing laundry and playing football).

So why not just dismiss this book? Because those of us who work in the traditional universities are at risk for losing out to the University of Everywhere if we do not attend to our business. Why do I think we are at risk? Her are a few reasons:

1. Sometimes the MOOCs, the edXs, and the Minervas <u>do</u> do a better job than we do. In too many cases they are more present in their students' lives than we are. Walk through WCU's halls most any afternoon and see who is there. The staff is there, the faculty not so much. Do we really need all the expensive infrastructure for solitary scholars pursuing individual goals? Is it possible that the residential college is passé? Just how different is what we have to offer from what the students can get from Silicon Valley? In terms of curriculum, how is WCU's set of indefensibly long menus of shamefully disconnected courses that constitutes what we call "liberal studies," really all that different from the University of Everywhere (and Everything)?

2. When all we do in our courses is transfer information, we begin to look like Carey's parody of us. When we fail to adequately challenge our students, don't make them read, write, and think enough, we are as useless as Carey says. When we cancel class, let students out early, don't use the final exam period that is a week of our instructional responsibility, when we give A's and B's for middling work, we set ourselves up to be replaced by the University of Everywhere.

3. We cost too much. While the cost of attendance at the UNC system schools is lower than it is at most places, it is still more expensive than it need be (adjusted for inflation, the annual cost of attendance has approximately tripled since I came to Western). A minority of students avoid significant debt. The arms race for fancy dorms, rec centers, intercollegiate athletics, and convenient parking makes us uncompetitive with the University of Everywhere. We build architecturally impressive structures with huge atria rather than utilitarian structures that fit basic learning needs. At least at U of E you don't pay for hundreds of dollars for facilities you don't use and games you don't attend. While increases in direct faculty compensation have had little role in the skyrocketing costs of higher education over the past 30 years, faculty members are not blameless. Teaching loads have shrunk to make way for research and a myriad of student service ("administrative") positions that did not exist a generation ago do so because faculty have passed on responsibilities for advising, tutoring, sponsoring and supervising. If we are not conscious of how we add to the expenses, we become ripe for the unbundling bargain basement services of Silicon Valley.

Is the end of college in sight? Not if we make sure the college of Cullowhee is a significantly better experience than what students can get at the University of Everywhere.

FACULTY FORUM

Note From the Editor
Chris Cooper, Political Science and Public Affairs

I am pleased to introduce the next issue of the Faculty Forum. Our first piece in this issue is a terrific overview of faculty governance issues from our outgoing Faculty Senate Chair, David McCord. In this contribution, David doesn't shy away from the difficult issues facing our campus, while simultaneously striking an optimistic note for the future of faculty governance at Western. If you care at all about faculty/administration relations, curriculum, tenure and promotion, or faculty governance more generally, David's piece is worth your time.

In this second article, I am taking advantage of final exams to offer a few of my own thoughts about grading at Western—with a macro-look at grade distributions at WCU from Fall, 2015. I am hoping that this piece will help us put some data to what a lot of folks have wondered about and will help guide a larger conversation about how we assess student learning and student achievement.

My intention was to close this issue with the third installment of the book forum—this time featuring *Aspiring Adults Adrift* (the follow-up to *Academically Adrift*). I am pleased that Niall Michelsen agreed to participate in the book forum and his insightful piece appears here. Unfortunately, in a turn of events that reminded me of high school prom, I was turned down a number of times when seeking out a second participant—understandable given all that's going on at the end of the semester. While Niall's piece stands alone in this issue, I plan to move back to the 2-3 person book forums in the future. With that in mind, if you'd like to participate next year, please let me know.

And speaking of next year, we've got a number of interesting issues planned for next year, and I am particularly pleased that the first issue will feature Mimi Fenton, Leroy Kauffman, and Brian Railsback all reflecting on what their experiences as Dean can teach us about being more effective faculty. If you've got other ideas, please send them to me—these can be original thoughts or reflections on any of the ideas expressed in previous issues, including this one.

Lastly, although I probably don't need to remind you, I will anyway: the views expressed here are those of the authors not necessarily consistent with the opinions of the Faculty Commons, Click and/or Clack, the Chancellor's Office, the Board of Trustees, any of the folks making that movie in downtown Sylva, Prince, Merle Haggard, the faculty senate, me (except for the one I wrote), or anyone else.

Have a great summer,

-Chris

Shared Governance Revisited

David M. McCord, Faculty Senate Chair, and Professor of Psychology

This has been a significant year in the Faculty Senate, particularly with regard to the role of the faculty in shared governance of the university. As a reminder, shared governance formally refers to the active collaboration among faculty, administrators, and the board of overseers in making decisions about university goals, policies, and operations. The concept of shared governance (along with tenure and academic freedom) is central to the success of American colleges and universities. At WCU we have modified this traditional model by incorporating a strong presence and voice of staff as well. On most issues the perspective of the faculty aligns reasonably well with that of our staff colleagues and the administration; collaboration and cooperation are by far the most common, and most effective, strategies used in governing. However, it is essential for the faculty to work internally to articulate an *independent faculty voice* on important issues. As we consider the various complex issues and challenges facing the university, we as faculty have some unique perspectives and responsibilities with regard to its primary mission and long-term identity.

My own view is that faculty members should be alert and attentive to everything going on in the university, with a willingness to get involved and help out. However, we should focus specifically on two key aspects of university life on which our voice is the most relevant: (1) *peer review*, including the selection, advancement, and termination of faculty members; and (2) the *curriculum* of the university. It is not my purpose here to summarize all of the work of the Faculty Senate this year, but I would like to highlight a couple of key achievements in the context of these two areas of key responsibility.

First, we were able to substantially modify our tenure and promotion process by eliminating the administratively appointed committee members, resulting in fully-elected collegial review committees at the department/school, college, and university levels. This historic change requires modifications to the Faculty Handbook, to university voting procedures, and to departmental collegial review documents. Symbolically, this represents our stepping up to fully take responsibility for the tenure and promotion of our peers, rather than relying on our administrators to protect us from ourselves. The Collegial Review Council of the Faculty Senate deserves our thanks for successfully working through this complex and impactful process.

Second, we have had a very engaging year together in our efforts to evaluate the impact on the university of a potential external gift of about 2 million dollars funding a new center for free enterprise. Using a narrow definition of academic freedom, our current gift policies may not have even required any faculty review of this gift. However, it is essential to understand that the faculty are primarily responsible for the *curriculum* of the university, though the definition of curriculum is not entirely clear. Certainly it is more than a list of courses and descriptions and program requirements. A broad view is that the curriculum is the entirety of the student's learning experiences associated with the university. Thus, the establishment of a new center has curricular impact, and hiring of new faculty has major, long-term impact on the curriculum. This was a very difficult issue for the Senate and for the faculty in general, as this presented us with a rare case in which a significant majority of the faculty were directly opposed to the position

taken by our administration. Although this specific issue remains unresolved, I want to note here that much has been achieved with regard to shared governance as a result of this debate and discussion. We are almost finished with a substantial revision of Policy 104, describing faculty involvement in assessing potential gifts to the university. We are well into the revision of Policy 105, describing the process to be followed when a new center or institute is established. With regard to the new Center for Study of Free enterprise itself, we have established an Advisory Board that has substantial, ongoing representation by elected faculty from across all colleges. These are policy changes that will redefine faculty involvement in these processes well into the future.

Let me close on a positive note. While this year has included some uncomfortable debate and conflict, sometimes that is necessary. And as we end the year, I want to emphasize the high level of cooperation and collaboration that has also occurred. Though we protested the process by which the free enterprise center was so rapidly established, the uniquely strong advisory board structure was developed and proposed by the Provost herself and was implemented in a very smooth, collaborative process by the Faculty Senate and Provost's Office together. The major revisions of Policy 104 and Policy 105 require extensive, sometimes groundbreaking work by our Office of Legal Affairs, and we are working in a very positive, collegial manner with the attorneys in this process. The role of the faculty in all of these important matters is now seen in an entirely new light, which will benefit the university substantially in future years.

These achievements highlight the fact that there are three parts to our job: teaching, productive scholarship, AND service, with the last category including service to the institution itself. Please consider contributing to the faculty voice, by running for Senate yourself, by taking on service roles in other university-level endeavors, and, importantly, by taking your voting privilege seriously as you select colleagues who are most likely to contribute in a meaningful, responsible way to the independent voice of the faculty in shared governance.

<h1 style="text-align:center">A Macro Look at Grading at Western</h1>

Chris Cooper, Professor and Department Head, Political Science and Public Affairs

If you're like me, grading has dominated the majority of conversations with colleagues over the past few weeks—well, that and plagiarism. This time of year we are obsessed with assigning one grade to one student at a time. Each individual grade is supposed to reflect learning, or at least mastery of the material. While the majority of us are currently thinking about grading at the micro level, I thought it might be instructive to reflect on grading at the macro level to see what sorts of patterns emerge when we examine all WCU course grades together.

To conduct this analysis, I downloaded all section grades from the Banner report portal for Fall, 2015. I then excluded all graduate courses and all courses with fewer than 5 students. It's important to note that what I'm reporting here is the average by class. In other words, a class with 100 students is weighted the same as one with 20 students. And, to make these data easier to interpret, I combined pluses and minuses with the base grade (in other words, when I reference an "A" below, I mean an A+, A, or A-, and when I reference a "B", I mean B+, B, or B-, and so on). With those caveats out of the way, here is some quick analysis with six quick takeaways.

1. **The most commonly assigned grade at WCU is an A**. In the average undergraduate course at WCU, 46 percent of the students earn As and 28 percent earn Bs.[1] According to the WCU undergraduate catalog, that means that 46 percent of our students complete work that can be described as "excellent" and almost three in every four students are assessed as above satisfactory. See below for average course grades for more than 1500 courses.

Grade Assignment in Average WCU Course

N=1563
Note: Unit of Analysis is the Course

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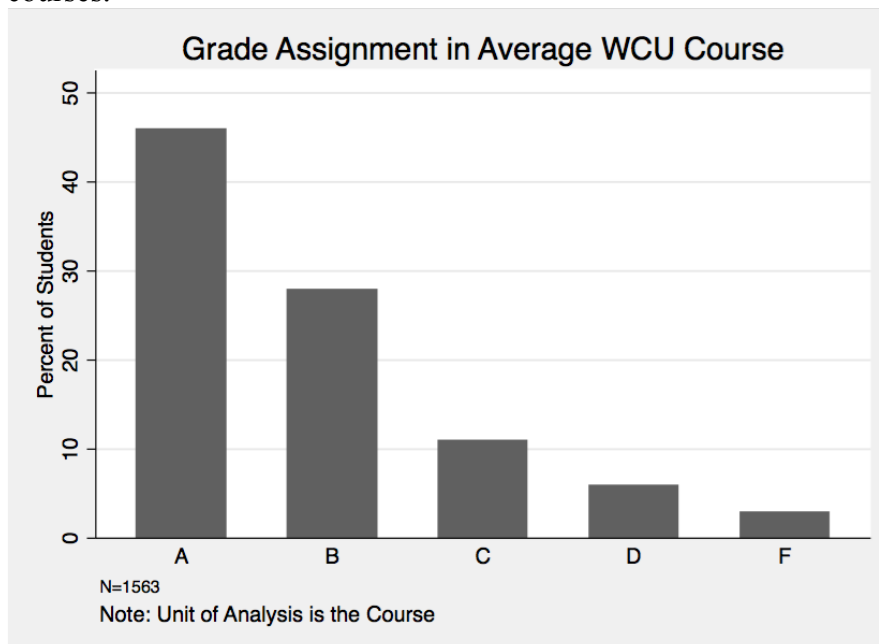
[1] In 4 percent of our courses every student earns an A.

2. **There are large differences between colleges**. In one college, 38 percent of the students in an average section are assigned a final grade of an A. In another college, this number exceeds 60 percent. These are, of course, the extreme examples, but point is that grade assignment displays very different patterns across colleges.

3. **There are large differences within colleges**. Average grade assignment varies tremendously not just between, but also within colleges. Within a single college, the average course in department X assigns As to 46 percent of its students, while in department Y, just over 25 percent of students in the average class are assigned an A.

4. **There are large differences within departments**. In department X above, there are course sections where 7 percent of its students received As and other courses where 100 percent or the students received As. Differences of approximately the same magnitude are present in Department Y. In fact, across the university, the within department variation is greater than the between department variation.

5. **There are large differences within liberal studies categories**. Students who sign up for a class in the same liberal studies category can expect a grade distribution that varies from no students earning As to one where 80 percent of the students earn an A.

6. **There are large differences between course sections within the same course**. There are numerous examples of this, but one popular liberal studies course has sections where 4 percent of the students receive As and sections where over 90 percent of the students receive As.

So, what does this all mean? It may not mean much. After all, our university-level grade distributions mirror national data.[2] Faced with questions about grade distributions that skewed far higher than ours, Harvard faculty responded with a shrug.[3] We also know that different classes have different personalities and different aptitudes. Some variation is to be expected—both within and between departments. Further, if grades are a reflection of learning, then perhaps some faculty are simply better teachers than others (thus, their students achieve more and are assessed more positively).

Nonetheless, I believe that this quick analysis suggests that a broader conversation about grades may be beneficial. I'm not suggesting a task force (please, no more task forces), nor a forum (please, no more forums), but perhaps just a series of informal conversations between faculty and within departments. These conversations could wrestle with questions like: what does it mean that the choice of courses, sections, and professors within a given liberal studies category may influence a student's overall GPA? What does it mean that some departments tend to give higher grades than others? What do we/should we tell new faculty about grades and grade distributions? What kinds of conversations are departments having about grade assignments? We may ultimately conclude that business as usual is just fine, but I still think that

spending some time discussing the macro-level trends in grading will ultimately help us be more intentional in how we assess student work.

Book Symposium Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

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If you have turned to this issue of the *Faculty Forum* to find a recommendation for fun summer reading, you will likely be disappointed. Despite its title *Aspiring Adults Adrift* is not a gripping account of human perseverance in the face of indomitable natural forces. Rather it is a data driven evaluation of how well college graduates of the 2009 class are making the transition to adulthood. Lest you turn away too quickly, the final chapter does (with supporting data) discuss the mating habits of these youngsters.

If the book is not for everyone, it might be recommended reading for every academic department on our campus. Our new QEP Courses to Careers will necessitate that we think carefully and thoroughly about what the keys to success are for our graduates, and how we might measure how well we are doing in preparing them for success. *Aspiring Adults Adrift* provides useful questions and approaches for us as we embark upon this enterprise.

Aspiring Adults Adrift is a follow up to the widely discussed and controversial *Academically Adrift* 2011 book of sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa. The first book famously claimed that college students were not learning much. This book reports that the 2009 graduates experienced a mixed bag as they attempted to begin their careers. This is not surprising since that class had the misfortune to graduate into the worst economic recession in living memory. To their advantage they had the academic credential that placed them in better position than their non-college cohort.

Data for the first book was drawn primarily from the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) administered to college students by the Social Science Research Council from a national sample of representative institutions conducted between 2005 and 2009. This newer book takes the same cohort of students (918 in total) from the graduating class of 2009 and surveys them in 2010 and 2011. They conducted additional interviews with 80 graduates to supplement the surveys. For those who are interested, the narrative text of the book is roughly 140 pages with an additional 70 pages covering the methodology, statistical results and survey instruments.

The central data used by the authors, drawn from the CLA is not universally accepted. The authors claim that the CLA is the best, even if imperfect, instrument to accurately measure learning in generic categories such as critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills. Others are skeptical of whether the CLA delivers results sufficient to justify those claims. Those who wish to pursue this particular debate can begin with the Pascarella etal article cited below. WCU has administered the CLA three times and those results can be accessed at:

. The CLA is a product of the Council for Aid to Education and can be accessed at: http://cae.org/about/mission/.

Along with CLA scores, the authors use College Selectivity and Major as critical independent variables. The most interesting chapter for WCU faculty addresses the graduates' success in the job market. They examine quantitative (are the jobs full-time or part-time) and qualitative (are the jobs ones that typically require a college education) measures of employment success. It is important to note that the authors exclude those who are back in school full-time from their analyses. This represents 30% of the total survey who were in graduate school full-time in 2011. This impacts their results when evaluating the role of collegiate major on the success of graduates since there is variance in this across major fields (e.g., high grad school for Science/Math, low for Business).

In short, they find that College Selectivity is positively correlated with employment success, as is high scores on the CLA. They found variation among the different categories of collegiate majors, with Business having the best chance to find full-time employment and Communications/Others having the worst. When looking at employment in skilled occupations, Engineering/Computer Science graduates did best and Science/Math graduates fared worst. These results have to be seen in light of the strong impact the authors find on the importance of high CLA scores on employment success. This, along with the exclusion of students continuing on to graduate and professional school from the analysis, leads the authors to conclude "While those committed to traditional models of liberal arts education have long argued that the develop of generic competencies is useful for citizenship and for graduates' capacity to live full and meaningful individual lives, we have shown that these skills also have labor market payoffs over and above the specific fields of study chosen." (134)

The congruence of our new QEP and this book lie in their shared concern that college students are not being well prepared for life after college. Our adoption of Courses to Careers demonstrates our commitment to the well-being of our students beyond their time with us. While we hope that future graduates will not be as unlucky as the class of 2009, they will predictably be facing rising tuition costs and student loan burdens while entering an economy that has is increasingly competitive. The survey and interview results presented in the book indicate that a large percentage (23%) of college graduates are either unemployed or underemployed two years out from college. Still these numbers are better than for similarly-aged people without college degrees. But, clearly there is work to be done. And we can expect parents and legislatures to exert more pressure on us to demonstrate the value added of our undergraduate education.

On some matters the authors part company with our QEP. For instance the QEP Whitepaper says it "will focus on four life-skills: social responsibility; financial literacy; building positive interpersonal relationships, and improving self-awareness (2)." Meanwhile Arum and Roksa worry about "the extent to which social, not academic, engagement dominates campus life for most students (14)." Rather they encourage us to focus on: Critical Thinking; Complex Reasoning; and Writing Skills (134). The differences are not so great as to render the book useless to our endeavors. For instance, the authors accept "social responsibility" as a legitimate

goal of college education. They discuss it in the context of civic engagement and report their mixed findings on this count as well.

This is a valuable book that we can utilize as a jumping off point as we try to fashion our undergraduate education so that our students are well prepared to navigate a competitive and global marketplace. Reading *Aspiring Adults Adrift* with Courses to Careers in mind reminds us that we need a balance between traditional academic rigor and skills and the life skills at the center of our new QEP.

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