

Faculty Forum

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Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 1

September 1, 1990

The Faculty Forum is your opportunity to express your considered opinions on issues related to teaching. Our goal is to spark a lively, constructive dialogue on college teaching. All viewpoints are welcome. As we begin our third year of publication, we invite all readers to submit an opinion piece or a teaching tip. We want to share your insights with the entire university community.

Overcoming Library Illiteracy: A Joint Responsibility

From my seat at the reference desk, I see evidence daily that the teaching faculty assume that students understand academic libraries--that they know what is in an academic library and that they can find what is there. Teaching faculty probably assume these things because years in academe have made library terminology and research methods a part of their workaday world.

I ask you to consider just how new this world is to the freshman--and how still unfamiliar it may be to the sophomore or junior. According to David Allen (1982), a librarian at The State University of New York at Stony Brook,

many students are library illiterates. . . .A surprising number do not know how to look up a book in the card catalogue and have no idea what a call number is or how to use it to find a book. It is rare indeed to encounter a student who understands the mysteries of locating an article through a periodicals index and then tracking it down using the library's serials catalogue. Even beginning graduate students are generally unfamiliar with the basic indexes and bibliographies in their fields.*

At the reference desk every day and night during the regular weeks of the semester and during the term paper rush, we field questions the students ask. We see the head scratching, the false starts, the bewilderment, the quiet desperation. Certainly, many students do know how to look up a book in TOP CAT, but there are indeed "a surprising number" who do not. As we consider the more complex skills mentioned by David Allen, the level of difficulty goes up and the percentage of competent students goes down.

STEERING COMMITTEE: FACULTY CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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Faculty may choose to ignore the students' ignorance and "let them figure it out the way we did." Or they may simplify assignments and water courses down so that library use is cursory or even unnecessary. But neither of these choices seems academically healthy. The first merely perpetuates the students' ignorance and, I suspect, results in a lot of student papers based on either too few or inappropriate sources. The second choice is a surrender to mediocrity and undermines the integrity of a university education.

My preference would be for faculty to recognize their students' library illiteracy and keep it in mind when designing courses and assigning coursework. Faculty can help students before assigning a 20-page term paper by spending more time on basic research skills such as differentiating scholarly and popular literature or using (that's using, not making) a bibliography. At a faculty governance level, The Faculty Senate Council responsible for the General Education Program might identify a hierarchy of research skills to be taught in a succession of General Education courses.

Overcoming library illiteracy requires a joint effort of teaching faculty and librarians. WCU librarians are glad to visit classes, upon invitation, and provide instruction related to research assignments. We can work with faculty to compile library resource guides for a particular assignment or subject area. And we are always willing to spotcheck library assignments for obvious troublespots, based on the questions we frequently field at the reference desk.

If we prepare students sufficiently for their work in the library, they are more likely to succeed, more likely to enjoy their work, and more likely to invest those long and tedious hours necessary for quality academic research.

Becky Kornegay, Library

*David Y. Allen, "Students Need Help in Learning How to Use the Library," The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 9, 1982, p. 56.

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

How do you like our new look?

You'll continue to get the Faculty Forum on the first of each month, as usual, but we'll attach responses to an issue of *notes & quotes*, which will appear regularly on the fifteenth. A monthly Teaching Tip, formerly published on the fifteenth, will now be attached to the Forum in place of the blank response form. Let us know what you think about these changes.

Responses to Becky Kornegay

Becky Kornegay's September opinion piece on library literacy elicited the responses below, although it's my guess that many faculty had something to say and just kept it to themselves. Don't be shy. Jot down your responses, no matter what the length, send them to me, and let's make the dialogue public. If you have opinion pieces or teaching tips, even if they are in a rough draft form, send them in and we'll help prepare them for publication.

Terry Nienhuis, Editor

When I came to Western Carolina University as a graduate student in 1986, with good preparation in research methods from my undergraduate school in Georgia, I was astounded, almost overwhelmed, and ultimately delighted by the resources available in Hunter Library. Call me bookish if you will, but learning my way around there was fun. And once I had been taught to make use of Hunter's various indexes and directories, my research was more educating, and the papers I wrote were, I dare say, far more worth my professors' reading time than my efforts could have been otherwise. I agree with Becky that fighting library illiteracy can have pleasing results for everyone involved.

Joey Price, Public Information

I agree with Becky; I feel that we as faculty assume the existence of a higher skill level than is actually present with our students. Rather than directing instruction toward these requisite skills, we tend to let the students figure it out (with limited success).

Professor Anonymous



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Vol. 3, No. 2

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

October 1, 1990

Are We Teaching More Than We Intend?

Imagine that you are a student listening to a spirited lecture. Ten minutes left in the period, and you have a question that seems to demand immediate attention. You raise your hand but your teacher ignores it, intent on finishing the lecture. Your teacher's actions have just taught you that the teacher's lecture is more important than your questions.

Imagine that your teacher speaks passionately about the value of learning but then locks the classroom door promptly at the beginning of the hour to exclude late students, sending the clear message that learning is not nearly as valuable as being on time.

Imagine that your teacher lectures on ethical behavior and the social importance of law but then gives you handouts of copyrighted materials.

When we go into a classroom, all of us intend to teach well, but sometimes we teach more than we intend. Whether we like it or not, we are on stage every minute that we can be seen by students, and our actions influence many of them considerably more than our words. However much we may want them to listen to what we say, they usually pay far more attention to what we do.

This was made most clear to me one day while I was working as the coach of our tennis team. Although I was the WCU tennis coach for several years, I am, at best, a mediocre tennis player. When I play, I routinely violate most tennis fundamentals, such as preparing early to hit the ball and gripping the racquet properly. Yet, for years, when I worked with members of the tennis team, I harped constantly on these very fundamentals which I ignored in my own game.

After one trying practice, I complained to a particular player for what seemed to be the one hundredth time that he had to prepare earlier if he was going to be successful. He snapped back that I seemed to do alright without preparing early, and he was simply doing what I was doing. When I calmed

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down, I realized that the players were paying considerably more attention to what I did than what I said.

We can't preach to students about doing assignments carefully and submitting them on time if we don't come to class prepared. We can't expect students to take class attendance seriously if we cancel classes frequently for our own convenience. We can't teach students to respect the feelings of others and then ridicule a question which we consider inappropriate, silly, or ill-timed. We can't lecture against prejudice and then reveal prejudices of our own.

I don't mean to suggest that any of us is deliberately treating students badly or corrupting their ethics. I daresay that we all have good intentions when we teach. But when we are in the classroom we are on display, and a substantial portion of what we "teach" is gleaned by the students from our actions, attitudes, and expressions.

It is perhaps difficult to perceive oneself as a role model, but if we accept that many students do emulate our behavior, then we become responsible not just to deliver a fine lecture but, in the strictest sense, to practice what we preach. If we wish to be truly effective teachers, particularly in the life skills of fairness, ethical conduct, and critical thinking, we cannot simply tell the students to practice these traits; we have to consistently demonstrate them ourselves.

Bill Hyatt, Criminal Justice

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*The Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence
161 Hunter Library*

We also invite all readers to submit more lengthy opinion pieces or a teaching tip. We want to share your insights with the entire university community.

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Responses to Bill Hyatt

I will confine my remarks to Bill's suggestion that faculty should be good role models for students with respect to moral conduct. Plato considered this idea and even used the same analogy Bill did, comparing a moral teacher to a sports coach in the Meno. In the course of the dialogue between Socrates and Meno, the following sort of problem arises. A student encounters both good role models and bad ones and must be able to distinguish among them in order to be properly influenced. The student must also have the strength of will to emulate the good person once he or she has been identified. But a student who is able to make such distinctions and who has such strength of will is already morally good and has no need for role models. And a student who is unable to make these distinctions and too weak to emulate a good person is unable to benefit from good role models. The dilemma might be dismissed as choplogic were it not for the fact that Socrates was executed for morally corrupting the youth of Athens, for being a bad role model. At his trial (the Apology) Socrates denied being a teacher of morality since he did not know how people became morally good or bad. He said perhaps the Athenians had him confused with the sophists, men who, in return for a fee, promised to make their students both morally better and skillful in acquiring wealth and honor.

Mike Jones, Philosophy

From a reference librarian's point of view, Bill Hyatt is absolutely on target about students taking cues from professors. At Hunter Library we give many tours and instructional sessions, and invariably, students in classes without a professor present are indifferent and passive. By their absence, professors send the message that the information is inconsequential. When professors are present, students are more attentive and especially so when the professors participate by reinforcing and supplementing the information given by librarians. By the act of arranging to take class time for bibliographic instruction, faculty express the importance of library research. But when professors tell their students to "listen to the librarian" and then drop them off, the message intended is not the message received.

Betsy Swarthout, Hunter Library

If you have opinion pieces or teaching tips, even if they are in a rough draft form, send them in and we'll help prepare them for publication.

Terry Nienhuis, Editor



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 3

November 1, 1990

What Does a University Club Have To Do With Excellence?

When it's difficult to get two faculty members to agree on an assessment of the weather, the newly formed University Club at WCU is a tribute to our capacity for collegiality.

Without any prodding from "above," our faculty and staff have initiated, sustained interest in, and implemented an idea that will lead eventually to unimagined excellence at WCU. You are skeptical? I contend that our University Club will serve our pursuit of excellence in many ways:

- (1) when you meet your colleagues at the Townhouse every Friday afternoon between 4 and 7 pm and talk about your daily work, you are more likely to see your work as part of a university-wide set of objectives and values, thus enhancing your sense of community and your sense of how your specific work contributes to a larger purpose
- (2) when you meet with your colleagues and talk about non-work-related matters, you will also be enhancing your sense of community
- (3) when you get to know your colleagues better, you are more likely to be flexible, cooperative, and industrious in your daily work during the next week because you will feel that you are working as part of a team; this is apparently one of the reasons why the Japanese build good cars and television sets, among other things
- (4) when you are part of the **supportive** atmosphere of a healthy community, your friends will listen sympathetically to your complaints and frustrations, which will be cathartic for you
- (5) when you are part of the **positive** atmosphere of a healthy community, you and your friends will tend to look for solutions to problems rather than to just complain
- (6) when you are part of the **supportive and positive** atmosphere of a healthy community, you and your friends will solicit advice with less fear

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- (7) when you and your colleagues talk with each other, you are more likely to like one another, to reconcile your differences, and to tolerate those differences you can't reconcile
- (8) when you and your colleagues feel that you are part of a supportive, positive, and sharing community, you will have **higher morale**

You are still skeptical? You say that no informal gatherings on Friday afternoons can do such wonderful things? Okay. Name something else that can. If everyone's salary doubled in the next year, we might have temporarily happier individuals, but we would not have a stronger sense of community. If everyone got paid the same for teaching less, we might be happier, but our happiness would have nothing to do with our jobs. If you say, "no, I mean that this sense of community is not possible at WCU," then I ask, what have we got to lose trying? If we all can agree that this rich sense of community is idealistic but glorious, then the question is only what is the best way to attempt it? If you think the University Club is not the best way to pursue this ideal, I challenge you to name something else that is.

The University Club is more than a TGIF party. The \$25 charter membership fee and \$5 per month dues will enable the Club to move toward other ventures that can improve our sense of community. We hope eventually to coordinate trips to "real" cities, provide receptions for university guests and evening speakers, encourage international activities, and even build our own building some day.

The University Club is open to all faculty, administrative and support service staff, and alumni. It will be a democratic organization that becomes what its members want it to be. If you want your voice to be part of this very exciting activity, you need to be a member. Contact Jack McFadden, 108 Killian, 227-7131 for details. We are already over 75 strong and we want you to join us. See you on Friday.

Wilburn Hayden, Social Work

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Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 4

December 1, 1990

Teaching Has Always Been # 1: A Dean's Viewpoint

The growing emphasis on excellence in teaching and scholarship involving teaching methods is a healthy development on our campus and nationally as well. However, in the process of destroying old myths academicians seem to be creating new ones which are unnecessary and, from my point of view, untrue. The most recent publication of the Pew Higher Education Research Program, "Back to Business," states several premises as truth which do not seem to be so, based on my experience. I would really like to know if my experience is strange, my memory poor, or my perception flawed, so I present these statements and ask my colleagues for responses.

1. "There is a sad irony in the fact that many of those who pursue graduate study were first inspired in college by a superior teacher who personified the challenges and rewards of intellectual pursuit. The culture of graduate school transforms that passion for discovery and knowledge into a more practical, even cynical concern to carve a niche in a particular specialty. Research, publication, and professional practice, rather than instruction, become primary objectives from an early point in one's graduate training; the necessity of teaching undergraduates in this pressured environment comes to be regarded as a tedious impediment, a necessary but distracting means to secure financial support while earning a doctorate."

Comment: My experience was that I was inspired to teach by an outstanding college teacher. In graduate school I was further inspired. The most admired faculty members in graduate school were the great lecturers, not the great publishers. I was pleased when one of my professors published as I am now when one of my colleagues publishes, but it was never emphasized as the major activity in our vocation. In fact, we were told repeatedly that our primary professional activity would be teaching. Many of us taught freshmen in an atmosphere in which the faculty were supportive, but not directive.

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2. Tenure is not primarily decided on the basis of good teaching.

Comment: This is not an exact quote, but it describes the attitude expressed in this and numerous other articles and statements on good teaching. I have been at Western for nearly 25 years and have served on numerous committees and seen the actions of numerous administrators, and I cannot remember any tenure decision that was not based primarily on teaching ability. Promotion has been treated differently, but the primary consideration for tenure has always been teaching ability.

3. College teachers would be better if they were taught how to teach.

Comment: Again this is not an exact quote but the burden of this section is that, if Ph D. programs had a system for providing pedagogical training and for practice teaching, college teachers would be better. I have never understood this argument. If graduate students can observe and work with outstanding teachers and not be positively affected, taking an additional course is not likely to benefit them. If the above assumption is true, all professors who have degrees in education would be *ipso facto* better than any others.

Are your experiences significantly different?

Cliff Lovin, History

Copies of "Back to Business" and its forerunner, "The Business of the Business," are available upon request from FCTE, 227-7196.

Responses:

Send your response to

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Faculty Forum enhances WCU's Community of Scholarship even when you read it without responding, but **Faculty Forum** works better when you respond. Make your voice a public voice. Let the reader and your colleagues know that you are listening. Respond today, by name or anonymously, no matter how short or long, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the opinion maker's point of view. Responses of agreement are just as valuable as responses of disagreement because they too exemplify community spirit.

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Responses to Cliff Lovin

When I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan, the first time I was a teaching assistant I felt very much that I had been thrown in at the deep end. The only instructions I received related to the reading list and the location of my classes. Without any forum for discussion of teaching or teaching methods, and with the sense that the faculty was not particularly interested in the problems of teaching anyway, many teaching assistants suffered from poor morale while their classes were not getting the kind of instruction they deserved. From conversations with other friends at similarly huge, research-oriented institutions, this situation seemed rather common. There is nothing wrong with Dean Lovin's memory or perception, but he and all other Western faculty members ought to understand (and appreciate) that Western's emphasis on teaching is indeed unusual.

Gael Graham, History

My experience at other institutions leads me to believe that research, publication, and professional practice, rather than teaching ability, are the primary criteria for hiring and promotion. At other schools, I have not seen teaching ability play much of a role unless the teaching is very poor. Although tenure may be decided at Western on the basis of good teaching, again, my experience is that teaching ability is usually not a major consideration in granting tenure. Finally, I believe the quality of teaching at the college level could be improved through instruction in graduate school. I would, however, suggest a guiding teacher approach--where an effective teacher works with a graduate student on a one-to-one basis--rather than taking courses on teaching.

*Roy Sumpter
Human Environmental Sciences*

I'm not sure that teaching ability has always been the primary consideration for tenure at WCU. In my own particular case, it must have been, because I had only two publications! However, I have heard that there are some tenured professors whose teaching ability is "suspect," to put it mildly. How did they get tenure if teaching ability has always been the primary consideration?

Ralph Triplette, Geosciences

A recently published colleague would not mind me using the following to get my point across: "those who seek to separate teaching from scholarship do not understand their intricate interdependence (research, teaching, service). How does one transmit the knowledge if one doesn't know it? How does one decipher what is important if one has not developed an understanding of disciplined inquiry and a critical stance towards assertions and claims? Scholarship is as important to quality teaching as teaching is to the development of excellent practicing professionals. One cannot be achieved without the other A profession cannot achieve greatness without a continuing commitment to an increased quality and quantity of scholarly endeavors. And the professor is at the forefront of those individuals best prepared to do research."

The December 5th Chronicle of Higher Education states that scholarship has four components--the discovery of new knowledge, the integration of knowledge, the application of knowledge, and teaching. And if these are not enough to convince you I offer a quote from Saltman in Distinguished Teachers on Effective Teaching (Jossey-Bass): "how can I teach if I do not learn? How can I learn if I do not teach? Scholarship and pedagogy are the yin and

Responses to Cliff Lovin

(continued)

yang of my life. For me, they are one and the same." Faculty, especially those who are nontenured, are given mixed signals. They are told that teaching, service, AND RESEARCH are all required for tenure. Yet the faculty who wish to do research are chastised by those who don't. We are accused of not carrying the load if we aren't teaching at least 12 hours. Yet, these heavy teaching and advising loads don't allow us to get any research done. It would be nice if those who choose not to participate in all facets of scholarship would allow those of us who wish to fully accept all parts of the tripartite responsibility to do so. I myself would like to be a specialist in one or two courses than a master of none.

I did not take the time to look up where Dr. Lovin did his graduate work. I received a Ph.D. (not an Ed.D.) from a research institution. I was told very pointedly that if I did not plan on doing research that I was wasting my time. "The Ph.D. is a research degree."

Oh, by the way. The colleague who wrote the first paragraph is known for his outstanding teaching. *Anonymous*

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Perhaps Dean Lovin's opinion piece was meant to be tongue-in-cheek. Perhaps not. Whatever, my experience indeed has been different from his and much closer to the description from the Pew report that he finds inaccurate. My graduate program in child psychology did have a supervised teaching internship, ineffective at it might have been, but there was absolutely no question about what was really valued: research, and most especially publishable research. Those offering jobs agreed. For me and my fellow graduate students, the correlation between the number of publications during graduate

school and job offers must have been at least +.80 (for those not statistically inclined, very high).

More to the point is my experience at WCU. In the last 12 years, I have read close to 1,000 letters of recommendation from graduate school advisors. I estimate that the proportion of words in those letters concerning research, teaching, and collegiality would be 80%, 2%, and 18% respectively. And I think I can pretty accurately paraphrase the 2% that focuses on teaching: "although I have never actually seen Candidate X teach, I am sure that s(he) will do an excellent job."

Furthermore, our Faculty Handbook says that our teaching load is 12-15 hours per semester, but the actual average teaching load in most departments is considerably lower than 12 hours and in some departments it is as low as 5-6 hours (not counting independent study courses and the ubiquitous "phantom" sections for which there is no enrollment). Increasingly, new and some not so new faculty members expect lighter teaching loads and more "release" time for research (don't you get "released" from jail?). And there is lots of other evidence of a "flight from teaching." Teaching is #1 in the hearts of many, even most, college professors, but it is not #1 in the status-oriented system of American higher education.

My personal experience at WCU is that being a good teacher is neither necessary nor sufficient to achieve tenure. Fortunately, most of us who have been tenured are adequate teachers, but I am considerably less sanguine than the Dean about our record. More importantly, Cliff admits that promotion is measured by different criteria. I feel that this is very significant. Although promotion is less important to the individual's future than tenure, I think that the criteria for promotion are more important to the values of the institution. When a respected, scholarly teacher cannot be

Responses to Cliff Lovin

(continued)

promoted to full professor because of the absence of publications, teaching cannot be considered to be #1.

Finally, just a few thoughts about Cliff's non sequitur on the skills of education professors. Most education professors received their graduate training from the same cadre of research institutions as did the rest of us. They, too, learned what really "counts." Education professors also are not any better than the rest of us at practicing what we preach. Even in schools of education, teaching is not always #1.

Bruce Henderson, Psychology



I must support the statement, "college teachers would be better if they were taught how to teach." Well, make that qualified support: being taught and being able to apply are two different things. But I agree that graduate students in any discipline could benefit from a methods course and certainly a testing and measurement course if they are planning (or needing) to teach.

We have all experienced terms of torture with faculty who

- had no syllabus or
- had a syllabus but added course requirements at a moment's notice;
- read their lectures from the text or
- never referred to the text;
- put the entire class to sleep--consistently;
- wrote test questions that were unclear or
- derived from obscure sources or
- refused to review test questions or
- refused to give rationales for "right" answers, or
- put grades on papers without any other feedback as to how the grade was achieved;
- et cetera.

Some of these people were brilliant researchers or practitioners in their fields. They just didn't know (or care to know?) how to teach.

How many teaching assistants sit down with their supervising professors and receive regular guidance about the mechanics of "outstanding teaching"? Even if this happens more often than I think it does, would it not be a better use of those outstanding teachers' time to have at least a required interdisciplinary graduate seminar on the process of teaching before TA's are turned loose to practice on innocent undergraduates? Do graduate faculty expect their research assistants to function without any prior knowledge of the research process?

Maybe it doesn't matter how "outstanding teaching" is learned. Maybe a mentorship model does work, if the mentor takes the time for it. Maybe I'm just suspicious, coming as I do from a discipline that has historically suffered from an apprenticeship model where students were exploited for their service. But I submit that any job, and especially teaching, needs a formal introduction to its processes as well as its content.

And once the new graduate is out there looking for a teaching job at the college level, does anyone assess her or his ability to teach? If "good teaching" is the basis for tenure at a university, should it not also be a requirement for being hired in the first place? Shouldn't an applicant's live demonstration of teaching ability carry at least as much weight as a curriculum vitae loaded with publications and grants? Who do we expect will carry the burden of the inexperienced teacher? Should universities require a teaching process seminar of all new faculty who cannot demonstrate at least the basic elements of pedagogy? And how did some of the duds (see paragraph 2, above) get tenure in the first place?

Sharon Jacques, Nursing



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 5

February 1, 1991

Teaching is Dead Last, or Worse: A Faculty Viewpoint

I can agree, in part, with Cliff Lovin's **Faculty Forum** opinion piece, "Teaching Has Always Been #1." Those of you who know me understand that I am very reluctant to disagree with a dean, but there are some points I must take issue with.

I can wholeheartedly agree with Dean Lovin's assertion that faculty are primarily interested in teaching. This assertion is strongly supported by research data. In Ernest L. Boyer's 1989 "The Condition of the Professoriate," 77% of his respondents from comprehensive universities report that their primary interests lean toward or are primarily in teaching. Furthermore, similar results are reported by the "Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey" (HERI), which WCU faculty participated in during the 1989-1990 academic year. Seventy-nine percent of responding WCU faculty report that their primary interest is in teaching. Eighty-one percent report that student intellectual development is of high or of the highest priority. Eighty percent respond that creating a positive undergraduate experience is a high or of the highest priority. Ninety-eight percent think that being a good teacher is very important or essential.

However, I must disagree with Dean Lovin when he claims that teaching is valued or rewarded on an institutional level. According to Boyer's "Condition of the Professoriate," 65% of faculty at comprehensive universities agree that it is difficult to achieve tenure if one does not publish, even though 68% of those same faculty also agree that teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for promotion of faculty (note the mixing of promotion and tenure issues). Additionally, 71% comment that the number of publications is very or fairly important in granting tenure. At the same time, 41% of comprehensive university faculty agree that the pressure to publish reduces the quality of teaching at their universities and 79% agree that at their institutions they need better ways, besides publication, to evaluate the scholarly performance of faculty. In the HERI survey 32.1% of the responding WCU faculty agree strongly or somewhat strongly that research interferes with teaching.

The most definitive evidence that we do not value teaching institutionally is that we do a very poor job of assessing it. With very few exceptions we do not use the best available scholarship to assess teaching. The scholarship is available but it is time consuming, and apparently threatening, to attempt to measure what most of us say is the purpose of our lives, teaching. In fact, much of what passes for teaching evaluation violates the basic tenets of the methodology and statistics we teach in our classrooms. Think about the vast system that is in place to review and publish journal articles. Now compare that to the system we use to evaluate teaching. Which is demonstrably the most important?

Dean Lovin comments that in tenure decisions at WCU teaching is always important. I have only been here for fifteen years but I have served on numerous TPR Committees,

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including a three year term on the University Tenure and Promotion Committee, and my experience is different from Dean Lovin's. In my view, teaching was almost never a major consideration in tenure decisions. The only issue was whether or not a person was a bad teacher, not whether or not he or she was a good teacher. In many instances teaching was not even considered. It is difficult for some of us to believe that teaching is important in tenure decisions, and other personnel decisions, when we see people tenured who miss up to 20% of their scheduled classes. Faculty who miss a substantial number of their scheduled classes are promoted, reappointed, and awarded merit raises.

Dean Lovin's observation that graduate students observe and work with outstanding teachers is interesting. I remember three outstanding teachers in my varied educational experience. One was a chemistry teacher, one an English teacher, and one a history teacher, all at the undergraduate level. While my graduate school faculty were subject-matter experts they were not outstanding teachers. (The two exceptions I was aware of taught in other schools.) The reward system did not reward people for teaching at that graduate institution; rather it punished faculty who "wasted their time" at such efforts. A graduate student observing her professor was likely to learn a disregard for undergraduate students and a disdain for any serious efforts at teaching.

Finally, however, I agree with Cliff's skepticism about courses in pedagogy solving the teaching problem. Unfortunately, I think, he misses the point. We are not going to teach faculty to be good teachers by having them attend a course in how to teach because the issue is far more complex; the solution lies in a long-term faculty development process. Teaching/learning is a two-way street and faculty need to learn from students how students learn. Faculty need to be able to "see" and "make sense out of" what is going on in their classrooms so they can adapt what they do to fulfill content objectives, student needs, and faculty responsibilities. And faculty need to learn as much about themselves as they need to learn about students. They need to develop the skill to respond and adapt to the dynamics of the teaching/learning relationship. This necessitates that faculty become aware that such a process is going on around them, and this understanding will not come from a course in pedagogy.

Cliff, thank you for the conversation.

Bill Kane, Management & Marketing

Send your **Responses** to

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Faculty Forum enhances WCU's Community of Scholarship even when you read it without responding, but **Faculty Forum** works better when you respond. Make your voice a public voice. Let the reader and your colleagues know that you are listening. Respond today, by name or anonymously, no matter how short or long, whether agreeing or disagreeing with the opinion maker's point of view. Responses of agreement are just as valuable as responses of disagreement because they too exemplify community spirit.

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Response to Bill Kane

In Defense of Pedagogy: A Response to Kane

In his article, "Teaching is Dead Last, or Worse," Bill Kane made the important point that "outstanding teachers" are not necessarily good role models for teaching and gave several personal examples to support his view. His article carries forward a notion from an earlier **Faculty Forum** piece, shifting from the emphasis on teachers to the process of teaching. Yet, one might be concerned that Kane's article also carries forward another tendency in discussions about teaching: the tendency to shift from an overemphasis on one dimension of the process to an overemphasis on another dimension of the process rather than to seek out the manner in which the dimensions of the teaching process compliment each other in the the teaching/learning situation.

Kane was certainly correct in ascribing an important role to the process of teaching, and most certainly to the teacher's "need to develop the skill to respond and adapt to the dynamics of the teaching/learning relationship." Yet there seems to be an important issue in the complex teaching/learning process that he did not address, probably because it is an issue about which an approach that emphasizes teaching/learning relationships in the absence of pedagogy has little to say.

Take the question of what goes on in the mind of the student during the teaching/learning situation. From this perspective, special emphasis would be given to the student's mental representation of knowledge or material to be learned. In this process, unlike Kane's emphasis on the process of interpersonal relationships, specific variables of the student's mental processes--such as acquisition, retention, and retrieval--would be addressed. As a consequence, there would be more attention paid to a systematic teaching strategy for facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and, thus, more emphasis on clarifying and explicating pedagogy that would facilitate the learning process.

If there is a generalization to be made about the importance of pedagogy or the teaching process it would be this: the teaching process has various dimensions that are critical to learning just as understanding the student's mental process is critical to teaching. Pedagogy can compliment learning and the acquisition of knowledge.

William Chovan, Psychology



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 6

March 1, 1991

Is Intellectual Challenge the Norm at WCU?

What do the following situations imply about faculty expectations for students?

- (a) a course with no exams in which almost everyone receives a grade of 'A'
- (b) students who successfully complete 21 credit hours during a semester while holding jobs on the side
- (c) a student with a 3.95 average and a full-time job who is well-versed on all the new television programs
- (d) students who spend an average of one hour per week outside of class on each general education course
- (e) a graduate class that has not met for a month because the instructor is out on what one of the students calls "junkets."

No, these are not the latest accusations from Bill Bennett, Charles Sykes, or Alan Bloom. Unfortunately, they are **observations that could be made by anyone right here in Cullowhee, USA.** The instances described above indicate a failure to sufficiently challenge our students, don't they?

Let's consider why we should want to challenge students. First, challenge is the major impetus for intellectual growth. Students and faculty members change their thinking as an adaptation to events that call into question their normal modes of thinking. Second, it is challenge that motivates us, that keeps us intellectually interested and involved. Finally, challenge is necessary to create a climate where ideas are considered valuable or considered at all. In short, challenge is one of the distinctive features of education and development.

Assuming that we all agree that we should be challenging our students, what then are the circumstances that could lead to the deplorable outcomes with which I began? Here are some possible obstacles to challenging our students. (If you don't find yourself in the first paragraph, maybe one or more of these will fit--I'm not going to tell you which ones apply to me):

1. **Lack of knowledge:** It is difficult to challenge your students when you are only a chapter or two ahead of them in their textbook or in the better one you use for your lectures. The ability to challenge requires knowledge that is broad and deep. That doesn't mean you will know it all, but you have to know enough to ask good questions. Lack of confidence caused by a lack of knowledge may be a big part of the problem. Challenging students also poses some risk for the teacher. If you get them thinking critically, they may ask you some unexpected questions and you may no longer be on the firm ground of simple truths. However, lack of knowledge can be overcome through extensive reading or research. A lack

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of nerve can be overcome through trying, accepting risk, and being well-prepared. Of course, supportive colleague or colleagues can also be a big help.

2. Beliefs about students: Certain beliefs about students and their ability to learn are the most pervasive and destructive obstacles to challenging students in the classroom. If you consistently attribute your students' failures to their inherent deficiencies rather than critically evaluating your own methods, your beliefs about those deficiencies will be maintained. If you believe that students can't learn because of low SAT scores, poor genes, poor high school preparation or whatever, you are unlikely to pose challenging material for their consumption. Or if you believe that your students are slow and thus must be taught with a slow pace and easy material, you will not challenge your students. I may be incredibly naive, and perhaps just wrong, but I think that the most ethical stance for me as a teacher is to assume that all my students can - (though they may not or may not be ready to) learn.

3. Time hoarding: It takes time to challenge students. You have to prepare and grade more assignments and exams, read more books and articles, and hold more hands. Spending 60 hours or more a week gathering research data, writing articles or books for publication, consulting or presenting workshops off-campus, or engaging in other high status activities will likely challenge you. But it will not lead your students to work even one more hour on the substance of the courses you teach. If you want to get serious about challenging your students, you better budget your time to provide both the challenge and the support required to balance it.

4. Concerns about student evaluations: Some challenging teachers may worry about poor student evaluations. This fear results from a lack of confidence (or tenure) and a poor evaluation system. We need to find a way to evaluate faculty members without punishing them for being challenging. The dean or department head who uncritically tallies complaints from students is a real threat to the challenging teacher's welfare. A second kind of concern about student response involves less evaluation anxiety but more guilt. It is a misplaced empathy with students over their plight. This usually appears in some kind of humanistic philosophical guise that seems to assume that student psyches are very fragile. Pervasive pockets of grade inflation may be a result of such thinking. I would be less concerned about grade inflation if I could be convinced that it was not correlated with the absence of significant challenge.

We would have to worry less about student response if we could manage to change the climate of our institution so that intellectual challenge became the norm. Faculty members have to find ways to model responses to intellectual challenges. We need to convince students that intellectual challenge is essential to the college classroom and to what goes on outside the classroom. We have to convince ourselves that the challenges we provide to our students are as important as those we provide to ourselves in the higher-status worlds of research and off-campus service. The outcome should be that our students read more, write more, and think more and leave Cullowhee smarter, not just older, than when they came.

Bruce Henderson, Psychology

Our goal is to spark a lively, constructive dialogue, and all viewpoints are welcome. If you would like to respond to this opinion, indicate whether you want to be quoted by name or anonymously and send your response, whatever its length, to

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Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Responses to Bruce Henderson

Once again, Bruce Henderson has hit the nail on the head. Every time he writes for the **Faculty Forum** we can count on clear thinking, precise prose, and solutions to some of our most pressing problems. I recall that Bruce also wrote an opinion piece last year that counseled faculty to give students lots of support ("Encouraging Student Risk-Taking By Balancing Challenge and Support," **Faculty Forum**, February 1, 1990). In that piece, Bruce begins with a crucial sentence: "One of the trickiest aspects of teaching is finding that precarious balance between adequately challenging students and providing sufficient support so that students will take exploratory risks." Obviously, Bruce's March **Faculty Forum** opinion is a companion to the earlier piece, but I think that Bruce's concept of "balance" must be reemphasized. I worry about faculty taking Bruce's exhortations out of context and confusing intellectual challenge with destructive kinds of confrontational pedagogy.

There are probably some faculty at WCU who teach badly when they think they are "challenging" students--faculty who pitch their presentations far above the students' heads, faculty who are proud because so many students flunk their tests, and faculty who abuse students verbally, sometimes even to their faces. This is obviously not the kind of challenge Bruce has in mind. The challenge he has in mind obviously works hand in glove with support. Let no one misunderstand what Bruce means by "challenge" and feel justified in bad teaching. I agree that we should make more demands of our students, but when we challenge them, we must do it with a smile and be patient with their fumbling, showing them at the same time how to succeed. Challenge is always balanced with support--that's the delicate "balance" that constitutes excellent teaching.

anonymous

The answer to Bruce Henderson's question, "Is Intellectual Challenge the Norm at WCU?," is, in my opinion, a resounding "NO." Fortunately, the accompanying Teaching Tip by Stephen Ayers suggests the only realistic way out of this mess: "If all faculty in this university would rally round . . . , we could banish mediocrity and begin to celebrate superiority in student performance."

Lee Minor, Mathematics

I would like to thank Bruce for his "challenging" comments. There is truth in what he is saying, that challenge takes time and perhaps some individuals do not adequately challenge their students. This is most obvious when I get advisee's grades and all students in a particular class received "A's."

However, I would also like to "challenge" some of Bruce's comments. First of all, he contradicts himself in paragraphs 1 and 3. In paragraph 1 he states that a lack of knowledge can be overcome by "extensive research." In paragraph 3 he states that "gathering research data" may challenge the professor but not the student. But one cannot truly separate research and teaching. If one is committed to lifelong learning as a profession, then conducting research to quench the thirst for knowledge is part of the process. Dr. Henderson admits that reading what our colleagues have written is the other important way to overcome our lack of knowledge. If no professors did research, there would be little new knowledge to read.

Second, I have yet to conduct any research study in which I did not either use the research results

in providing new knowledge for my students or involve students in some part of the research study. Third, by keeping research skills "tuned," one is more capable of guiding students in independent studies. Fourth, writing and presenting forces one to learn. Attending professional conferences or "engaging in other high status activities" allows one to gather teaching ideas from presentations and discussions. Thus, one is learning in order to better "challenge" one's students.

Bruce's comments are well-taken and I concur with his basic premise--that we all need to be conscientious in challenging our students. But please remember that there is more than one means to an end.

Susan Brown, Sport Management

The premise of Bruce Henderson's March 1, 1991 **Faculty Forum** piece is that intellectual challenge is not the norm at WCU. On balance, my observations and experiences support that premise. Working from the assumption that a college education is about intellectual challenge, some disturbing questions come to mind. If intellectual challenge is not the norm, what is? If intellectual challenge should be the norm and is not, what happened? Was it ever the norm? If so, how did we get from that norm to whatever norm that now prevails? If not, how did a norm antithetical to intellectual challenge develop? Last, but not least, how or why did a faculty, which has as its responsibility the quality of our students' education, permit such a state of affairs to come to pass?

Bill Kane, Management/Marketing



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 7

April 1, 1991

Toward a Kinder, Gentler Campus ?

Examples of the "us vs. them" mentality can be found easily enough on any university campus: faculty vs. administration, teaching vs. research, education vs. training, academics vs. athletics, cosmopolitans vs. locals. Such tensions will always be with us to some degree. Nevertheless, after nearly a quarter of a century at WCU, I have grown weary of them.

The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly. Thoreau, *Walden*

Too often we seem to enjoy reveling in our differences rather than trying to transcend them. Wouldn't it really be more satisfying to be seeking a climate of greater mutual respect and support? I would like to see a kinder, gentler campus, and having recently perused a copy of *Walden*, I have a slogan to accompany this worthy objective: *Simplify! Simplify! Thoreau It Away!*

Our life is like a German Confederacy made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating. . . . The nation . . . is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment.

Thoreau's view of the nation in his time seems equally appropriate for our universities today. Too often we are our own worst enemies, clinging to mindless traditions and making things more complicated than they need be. But there are many steps we could take to simplify our circumstances. Here are some suggestions.

1. Thoreau away faculty ranks!

Traditions die hard, but the idea of faculty ranks is surely one whose time has *gone*. Just consider the amount of time invested in the promotion process each year. Campus-wide, if measured from preparation of individual files to final decisions in Chapel Hill, it runs into the hundreds if not thousands of hours. Surely the individual candidates, departmental faculty and heads, school committee members and deans, higher administrators, as well as Boards of Trustees and Governors, could devote their time to more productive matters.

Most men, . . . through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them.

Even without the traditional ranks, faculty are still subject to at least two other ranking systems: tenure/nontenure and salary. These are sufficient because every factor relevant to a promotion decision should also be considered in the tenure process or in an annual review (= salary). Perhaps even more important than the time saved, eliminating professorial ranks would eliminate a major source of disappointment, bitterness, frustration, jealousy, and ill will.

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2. Thoreau away open-ended administrative appointments!

This might be a problem at the upper levels, but the idea of fixed terms for heads and deans (four and six years, respectively) has much to commend it. Even those with higher level appointments should periodically have a "year of renewal" devoted exclusively to full-time teaching or research.

Such a system, where all academic administrative appointments eventually lead back to a classroom or research setting, would contribute greatly to the concept of a "community of scholarship." In particular, those responsible for evaluating teaching and research could demonstrate their own abilities in these areas, thus enhancing their credibility by serving as role models. Moreover, they would become better informed and hopefully more sensitive to the problems full-time faculty face every day. Our sense of community could only grow stronger.

A continuing record of exemplary teaching and scholarship should be the personal desire and goal of anyone who aspires to any position that requires evaluation of faculty. Anything less is merely capitulation to a system of deans and other petty states, as well as big buck "perquisites" for those whose first love is neither teaching nor research!

3. Thoreau away *Faculty Forum*!

Really! Replace it with a live forum that receives the highest priority in campus life. At the designated time each month let all other university activities cease so that everyone in the university community can trek over to Ramsey (or wherever). Besides establishing a live campus dialogue, there would surely be less shadow-boxing than with the current essays and responses. The live forum would be more spontaneous and almost certainly involve more people. After all, it takes less time to talk than to write well (or think). Just ask any mathematician!

4. Thoreau away . . .

Limited space precludes details of some of my other ideas, such as staffing the Admissions Office primarily with faculty, establishing direct dialogue between faculty and members of the Board of Trustees, and eliminating the most mindless tradition of all -- GPA's. However, two additional thoughts from Thoreau beg for attention:

There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. . . .
To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, . . . but to so love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust.

Simplicity, magnanimity, trust -- three interrelated keys to a kinder, gentler campus. A concerted effort by each of us for more of all three would enrich us beyond our fondest dreams.

It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion. . . .

*Lee Minor, Faculty Fellow
Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence*

Editor's Note. Has our resident Thoreauvian made any worthwhile suggestions, or should we Thoreau him into a pond? What about WCU would you like to Thoreau away? Please respond now to *Faculty Forum*, FCTE, 161 Hunter Library.

Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

Responses to Lee Minor

Bravo! **Anne Rogers, Geosciences & Anthropology**

I would be receptive to "Thoreauing away" a number of concepts and policies on our campus (including some mentioned by Lee Minor) with the EXCEPTION of **Faculty Forum**. In two decades of residence here, there have been few WCU publications so anticipated by and professionally rewarding to me, due in large part to the thoughtful comments of colleagues such as Dr. Minor. Thanks to all the participants in the FCTE who work to make Cullowhee a better place to be.
Joyce Baldwin, Human Environmental Sciences

Dr. Minor's "kinder, gentler campus" sounds nice, but what price do we pay for glossing over the conflicts between faculty and administration, teaching and research, education and training, academics and athletics, and cosmopolitans and locals? By soft-pedaling these crucial issues in our academic life we only abrogate our responsibility for making difficult value judgments. We can ease tensions and create a jollier group of academics, but if we do it by agreeing to ignore such issues we purchase this kinder, gentler campus at the price of a less enlightened and value-conscious one. For example, can we ever ignore the conflict between athletics and academics? Anyone who really believes that athletics do more academic good than harm must also believe in the tooth faery! University athletics are a cancer that can't be surgically removed, but if we face the problem squarely, we might find ways to minimize the destruction of the body academic.

If we "grow weary" of such conflicts and think that we do something noble by ignoring them under the guise of "greater mutual respect and support" and "simplification" we might as well erect a statue to Mediocrity next to the Alumni Tower. We can't ignore such difficult issues because they are the very issues that, once resolved, might lead us to true excellence. Granted, these issues may be impossible to resolve, but if we ignore them through some misguided attack on smaller problems, we might as well admit that education is impossible and rubber-stamp the students on their way to yuppie success. Dr. Minor's suggestions about eliminating faculty ranks, open-ended administrative appointments, etc. are provocative and excellent, but they are small potatoes compared to the real issues he has "grown weary of."
Dr. A. Nonymous

I enjoyed Lee Minor's "Kinder, Gentler Campus." There is a good deal of sound wisdom there, April 1st notwithstanding, which most people will probably ignore. **Dan Fredricks, NCCAT**

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Since the January 15 issue of **notes & quotes**, I've gone to the "extreme" of keeping a teaching journal. The process is simple; I do that writing-to-discover freewriting that I constantly encourage my students to do. In the beginning, my objective was simply to find out why some of my classes were exciting and fun, while others were mediocre at best. I discovered many things. Most important was seeing the role my attitude plays in classroom dynamics, but the uses of the journal have gone far beyond the issue I started with. This chronicle of successes and failures has been a source of raw material for testing pedagogical theories. I've found some direction not only in presenting material, but in testing, paper topics, grading, and dealing with different student learning and personality types. Many thanks for including this suggestion in **notes & quotes**, which I, as someone new to teaching, find extremely helpful.
Gerri Dobbins, English



Faculty Forum

From the Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

CULLOWHEE, NORTH CAROLINA

Vol. 3, No. 8

May 1, 1991

Libraries Have Changed More in the Last Ten Years Than They Have in Their History Up To This Point

Although I've only been at WCU for a year and a half, I've been hearing a lot of complaints about some of the changes in the way the library does its business. As Coordinator of Library Automation, part of my job is to investigate problems that the library and its patrons experience and to try to find technological solutions. I don't have any quick technological resolutions for everything that I've been hearing from the faculty, but I have some perspectives that might help. Here are some of the most common complaints:

- TOP CAT is so slow and hard to use, I'd rather just browse the shelves. I've even encouraged my students to do it
- This technology is changing every year and every year we have to retrain people to use it again. When will it ever slow down?
- I used to be able to use any university library. Now, they are all different. When I go to another library, I waste time just learning the new system
- No wonder we can't afford to buy more books. All the money is being spent on those damn machines

In 1970, you could walk into any library in the country and find the same kind of card catalog you used in elementary school. In 1990, this is no longer true. Automation has invaded the library setting at a pace so fast and far reaching that librarians themselves as well as library patrons are having problems keeping up with the momentum of the transition. In the past, libraries were slow to implement any technological refinements and modifications. As a result, the way that a library worked had not changed significantly for decades. But now, no library can escape the impact of technology. Most libraries have recently had to add computer personnel dedicated solely to library applications. My position, as an automation librarian, has become a necessary position in the administrative units of most libraries. The information explosion in league with the computer revolution has transformed libraries forever.

So, the first thing you should know is that libraries are not going to ever go back to that comfortable yet cumbersome card catalog we all became accustomed to in high school. Although librarians are very sensitive to user's frustrations, libraries are going to get more technological in the future rather than less. We all might as well stop complaining and learn how to make the technology work for us. In fact, we can start by seeing how the new technology is already working for us.

Although the "book" is still the basic library "unit," you can now go to the library for VCR tapes, CDs, audio tapes, statistical and bibliographic databases, microfilm, computer software, CD ROMs, kits and games, and the equipment to use it. Because of technology, you can now even

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go to our library and use someone else's library! In fact, you can even use our library **and someone else's library** without even going to the library! Technology has made it possible for users outside the library building to have access to online catalogs and other bibliographic and numeric databases. What was once available only in the library (with help from the reference librarians if needed) is now available in other buildings on campus, at home to anyone with a microcomputer, and to other libraries around the state and across the country. Access to this new world of materials is difficult at first, but once you gain some expertise, you will wonder how you did without these services for so long.

But in the meantime, there remains one serious complaint that must be answered directly, the complaint that all of this technology is taking away from the quality of the library's holdings, that is, that there are more gadgets and fewer books. Few of the decisions being made in libraries are simple and none of them are painless. In these times of budget cuts, each purchase, whether it be books, magazines, recordings, databases, or other technology, is a hard one. When we buy one book, one journal, or one database, it means that we cannot buy another just as important. With prices of regular print material rising several times the general rate of inflation, the purchasing power of the library materials budget has indeed been seriously limited. But, keep in mind, while library materials money can be spent on CD ROM products and databases, the state regulations do not allow it to be spent for computer hardware. Because these items cannot be used without some hardware, the "gadgetry" must be bought with funds in the equipment budget. Therefore, the technological revolution is difficult to fund, but it is not being funded at the expense of the book budget.

There are no quick solutions to the complaints I have been hearing about the library, but we can begin by becoming more aware of technological realities that may help make us more patient in this necessary period of transition. These new technologies are helping us all deal with the shrinking book budget by improving access to our current collections and by making available other collections. There are so many exciting innovations happening in the areas of computers and libraries, so many new ideas for introducing information, overcoming barriers, and getting to little bits of data. This technology will change the way we teach our students and the way we think about the knowledge we are trying to convey. Perhaps most importantly, it will change the way we will store and retrieve that information, thus changing the whole way we think about information.

I want the technology to help make libraries more useful, easy to use, and responsive to the individual. I want them to be fun, inspiring, and delightful places to use. However, I know we have not achieved it yet. If anything, it may seem temporarily more confusing to the library users than ever before. But, we are trying.

In fact, next time you are at the library and you have a question, comment, gripe, or praise for or about what happens there, please use our new suggestion box. It is located on the kiosk and called "HOW ARE WE DOING". Responses will be posted on the board within a week.

In the meantime, please, keep these things in mind when you have to wait too long for TOP CAT to refresh the screen, when you have to learn yet another library retrieval system, or as you are directed to yet another "gadget" to find what you are looking for.

Remember that change is never easy...

Jill Ellern, Library