

Faculty Forum

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Faculty Governance: Now or Never?

The remarks about faculty governance by Terry Kinnear, Chair of the Faculty, and John Bardo, Chancellor, at the August 14, 1996, General Faculty meeting provide the opportunity for the General Faculty to move WCU's faculty governance to another level. Terry, with his comments about dreams and responsibilities, and Chancellor Bardo, with his support of Terry's thesis, present us, the General Faculty, with a critical choice. We can choose to do business as usual (which Terry suggests is less than satisfactory), we can further withdraw (which I believe would be disastrous), or we can proactively engage in faculty governance and fulfill those responsibilities assigned to faculty by the *Faculty Constitution of Western Carolina University*. I suggest the latter.

We faculty take a lot for granted. We assume that the context in which we live our professional lives is a given. Freedom of speech, academic freedom and tenure, responsibility for curriculum, autonomy to allocate our time, and all the other reasons we chose academic life have always existed, at least in our professional lifetimes, so we do not question their continuance. However, each of the above facets of our academic lives is being challenged somewhere in higher education, and we run the risk of that life being irrevocably changed, even at WCU. At WCU, each faculty member must invest some of his or her time and talent in faculty governance, thereby preserving and advancing what the faculty says it values. If we do not, we will lose our freedoms through default, and we are already headed down that road.

In the study of groups there is a practice called social loafing, sometimes called free riding. Social loafers or free riders want the benefits of the group but they are not willing to provide the input and support the group needs to provide the desired result. How many free riders can faculty governance carry before it collapses from lack of needed participation? In a less extreme position are those who fear the consequences of speaking out, getting involved, and perhaps alienating those in power. Tenure and promotion do weigh heavily as faculty take the risk to govern themselves, but as faculty governance becomes stronger, risk is lessened, and the alternative to the risk of involvement is the risk of abdicating responsibility--in the end a far greater risk.

Ask yourself, am I investing into my profession time and talent in some proportion to what I am taking out? If you decide you could do more, what do you do? Select one of the areas of faculty responsibility (e.g. curriculum, faculty status, the academic aspect of student affairs) and do your homework. Become familiar enough with the topic so that you can be an informed participant. Become knowledgeable enough to be able to tell when anyone is misrepresenting the facts or the process. Particularly in today's environment, knowledge is power. Individually and collectively

we are powerless only if we choose to be, and to choose not to be knowledgeable is to choose powerlessness. A critical component of faculty governance lies in the work that you do in your department. Initiate and/or participate in an ongoing conversation about faculty governance within your department. How might we raise standards? How might we reform our curriculum? How do we optimize our students' learning? How do we respond to the monumental forces driving change? Without such a conversation, departments have no basis for carrying out their basic responsibilities. Talk to each other! And talk about governance!

In his remarks at the General Faculty meeting Chancellor Bardo specifically asked departments to accomplish a number of tasks concerning courses, curriculum, and scheduling. These are fundamental faculty governance tasks. The Chancellor has clearly articulated his expectations and has thereby provided departments the opportunity to step up and be professionally responsible, to make fundamental faculty governance decisions.

There are other basic departmental activities that you can initiate or participate in. For example, read your departmental Annual Faculty Evaluation/Tenure, Promotion, Reappointment (AFE/TPR) document. Insist that your department abide by it; you have that right. If the AFE/TPR document is not satisfactory, change it. Departmental AFE/TPR documents are supposed to be reviewed each academic year and revised, if so desired, with the approval of the Dean and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Department heads are supposed to be evaluated every three years (deans every five years.) Is this happening? Is there a satisfactory process in place? If not, change it. The Faculty Handbook contains a number of other departmental faculty responsibilities. Read your handbook! You might find some interesting surprises.

Carry activism at the departmental level to the college level. Does your college have bylaws? Do all members of the college live by them? There are important committees at the college level such as the Annual Faculty Evaluation Committee (in some colleges), the Tenure Promotion and Reappointment Committee, the Curriculum Committee (however named), and the Dean's Advisory Committee, for example. Are the faculty members of these committees representative of the college faculty, of your views? Are the members doing their homework and making informed decisions? Do these committees make decisions on some rational basis, in accordance with our governance documents, or have they devolved into decision making on a political basis? Do you talk to the committee members and provide your perspective on governance? If you feel that your views are not being represented, run for an elective committee membership. Campaign, organize other colleagues of similar views, and change that which you wish to see different. Colleges are supposed to be self-governing bodies in the larger context of the university. Get involved, help govern.

Chancellor Bardo is giving WCU's faculty the opportunity to step forward, get involved, and make faculty governance what it could be. I believe he is sincere, but this may be our last chance. If the faculty will not govern within its areas of defined responsibilities, the administration will be forced to move into the vacuum and take over the faculty's responsibilities. We, the faculty, will have helped destroy the university through our neglect. Universities without faculty governance will be white collar "factories," and the life that we say

we value will disappear. During Chancellor Bardo's tenure we have the opportunity to develop, improve, and strengthen faculty governance. We have the opportunity to so ingrain new and improved faculty governance into our department, college, and university cultures that future generations of administrators will take it for granted.

Bill Kane, Management

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "Faculty Governance: Now or Never?," by Bill Kane, 9/1/96

I salute and second Bill Kane's invocation to all 350+ WCU faculty members both to get informed and to get involved. Getting involved is especially important beyond the department level. Too few people are representing their individual viewpoints (and those of their disciplines and departments) at the college and especially the university levels, regardless of the activity in question. Increased involvement should include participating as respondents to the Faculty Center publications and in such worthwhile Faculty Center endeavors as the Mentoring Program. In particular, faculty seeking tenure and/or promotion should consider that unless they serve outside of their departments and thereby cultivate associations with other faculty, their efforts to gain professional affirmation and advancement within the University are essentially represented only by their paper files. And while tenure and promotion should ideally never be the result of some sort of "buddy" system, my experience suggests that both professional and social contact with faculty outside one's own department (as at the University Club or at various community functions) often play a role in a variety of personnel decisions made at the college and University level.

Jim Nicholl, English

Bill is on the money and I look forward to working with all of you on building a better governance system.

John Bardo, Chancellor

Lecturing As Learning

In recent years, many people have argued that the academic lecture is pedagogically ineffective, that it assumes passivity on the part of the student and mere transmission of information on the part of the teacher. In the place of lecture, many have proposed case method studies or group learning projects. While it is certainly worth our while as teachers to experiment with varied methods of teaching, where feasible, we might do well to question certain assumptions that perhaps underlie this rejection of the lecture in favor of case studies or group learning.

In a lively historical survey of the history of the liberal arts ("A Historical Perspective," in Rethinking Liberal Education, edited by Farnham and Yarmolinsky), Bruce Kimball points out three faulty assumptions that "case methodists" make about lecturing:

1. They assume that lecturing involves mere "transmission" of information ("telling" by the teacher in a dictatorial way to passive receptors, i.e. students) while case method does something very different. However, even in case method classes, an individual student may talk for only a few minutes and must listen to other students who are then transmitting material to them. So, if lecturing is at fault for involving transmission, so is case method.
2. Another faulty assumption is that listening does not involve the student actively and dynamically. However, Kimball notes that most students believe that something "dynamic" occurs when they listen to rock music. If this is true, then the mere act of listening is not a passive one. Certainly, every person has had the experience, at least once in life, of listening for an extended period of time to a speaker who inspired and informed him or her. Anyone who has ever heard Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, for example, will attest to the dynamic power of a great speaker. I suspect that most of us who now teach can trace our own involvement to an individual lecturer who inspired us by her or his dynamic way of bringing a topic to life.
3. Many modern educators assume that when lectures "merely convey information," students do not "analyze, synthesize, or evaluate." This implies that lectures are transmitted without interpretation. However, if information is being conveyed, how can it be heard, let alone cognitively processed, without being interpreted? Any teacher who has looked at notebooks or journals from students is amazed at the vast number of ways that students understand or interpret the material. In fact, when we talk of how good teachers make difficult concepts accessible we are implying that students are actively processing the concepts and admitting that the different approaches the teacher takes are appealing to the different ways students analyze and synthesize, that students are not simply passive receptacles.

Kimball recounts how the case method of teaching originally appeared and eventually came to dominate pedagogy in American law and business schools. The philosophical roots of this methodology were John Dewey and Progressive education, which led educators to reconsider (1) the active, participatory role of the student, (2) learning as a cooperative, democratic undertaking, and (3) the posing of problems as a central way of engaging students in dynamic forms of inquiry. However, when the practices of law and business schools were adapted to other areas of higher education, modern advocates of case method made all sorts of invidious, uncharitable criticisms of the traditional lecture method of teaching.

The modern academic lecture originated in the "lectio" of the medieval university. The "lectio" was in some cases an instructive discourse given before a group or in other cases the act of reading from a book as a group listened. However, from its very inception, the university regarded interpretation as an important part of the transmission in the "lectio." Kimball cites a thirteenth century master's description of the lectio method to show the rich, complex structure of learning appreciated by the medieval instructors. This medieval master distinguished five different aspects involved in the method of lectio:

- a) summarizing each topic that will be covered in the text
- b) explaining in clear, distinct language the import of each topic
- c) reading of the text in order to correct it
- d) briefly restating the meaning of the text
- e) resolving conflicts and adding subtle and useful distinctions as well as questions

What happens in the mind of the audience when a speaker is dynamic? The audience is not simply in a trance. In the process of perceiving the dynamic quality of the lecture, the listener is helping to create that dynamic quality. When young people listen to their favorite rock music they "get" something. It's the same music for those of us who don't get anything, so doesn't it appear that the listener is bringing something dynamic to the process of listening? When the medieval audience heard the "summary" of topics to be covered, the listener was recognizing the summary as such and also recognizing it as an effective or ineffective summary, thus actively participating in the construction of meaning that the lecture entailed. In any lecture, for communication to occur, the listener has to participate cognitively or the lecture will seem "boring." When a lecture seems exciting to the listener, it's because the listener is participating intellectually as a receiver and processor of the message. And many lectures, like the medieval lectio, are revisionist in nature, "correcting" a text by commenting on it. For the medieval and modern listener alike, the process of "correcting" a text involves as much responsibility for the receiver of the message as it does for the sender. Cognitively, the listener must recognize that in the act of correction one interpretation is being modified or even being replaced by another interpretation. Thus, the process of receiving is by nature an active cognitive process.

It is, of course, possible that even with a brilliant lecture the listener may, for one reason or another, not have gotten "tuned in." Great lecturing is certainly more than simply being a great showperson. But part of the great lecturer's skill is the ability to "read" the audience and know when it needs a slower pace, another summary, a restatement of a point in different words, a provocative question, or even a rest period to process what's been covered so far. Perhaps the key to the great lecture with any group of students is the strategy we use to prepare the student to listen well.

It is evident, I think, that the lectio, especially as perfected by Erasmus and other humanists, required from the audience a great deal of interpretation for its successful execution. Contrary to the assumptions of modern critics, the lecture, at least in its origins and mature development, was a lively, richly interpretative enterprise. It is surely possible to imitate the success of the Medieval lectio and highly likely that the best current practitioners can duplicate its dynamic quality in the context of the modern academic lecture.

Daryl Hale, Philosophy & Religion

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "Lecturing As Learning," by Daryl Hale, 10/1/96, continued

groups (read: lots of FTE), do not have to produce products to be evaluated after class, do not require a lot of attention after the first time they are developed, and keep the professor in control in terms of what is taught/learned and in terms of ensuring that the "right" amount and type of material will be "covered."

The moral of the story is that we need to keep the lecture in its place. One of the best courses I took as an undergraduate was taught by a 4-yawner. He knew he couldn't lecture and rarely did. The lecture is one method to engage student learning. Decisions about a teaching method for a particular day, week or month of a particular course or a particular part of a course should be flexible. We should not put ourselves in positions where the lecture becomes the only practical method we can use (e.g., by creating large classes, by bolting the desks to the floor, or by defining outcomes in terms of facts that have to be transmitted).

Bruce Henderson, Psychology

Lecturing as a Quasi Teaching Method

There is a dynamic interaction between the teaching method and the learning process. And, judgments about the method of teaching cannot be made independent of the knowledge of the learner's entering skills. In his essay on "Lecturing as Learning," what Hale does not consider is that the times have changed; no longer can the college classroom be seen as a venue for each professor to deliver lectures to only those students who have "gotten tuned in." He has failed to understand the change in the nature of the contemporary learner's frame of mind, and how the craft of teaching, in the 21st century, will be practiced to meet their needs.

Given the number of media methods for representing and communicating knowledge and subject matter, to say nothing about the variety of teaching methods, is it realistic to think that lecturing is a strong pedagogical technique today? Or, more compelling, given the heterogeneous character of our students, i.e., nontraditional students, "special learners," transfer students, and the tolerant policies regarding the entering cognitive skills of freshmen, is not the selection of the lecture method ill-advised and, incongruent with the high-tech learner's mode of acquisition? No longer do we have a homogeneous group of students whose singular focus is on the acquisition of knowledge, for knowledge sake. Instead we must now teach to different learners, work with students with varying personal needs, work with students at risk for academic failure, and teach students strategies for self-guidance and self-help. The shift in teaching methods must be toward pragmatic learners that confront the instructor, the relevance of knowledge and in different contexts. Thus, the key to teaching is not the method we use "to prepare the student," as Hale maintains, but rather, determining in what way "the student prepared for teaching."

William Chovan, Psychology

Teaching Awards: A Modest Proposal

The Problem

A change has occurred in the dynamics of teaching awards at WCU. For years the largest prize was the \$1,000 Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. In addition, another thousand dollars or so floated around in smaller college and departmental teaching prizes. This situation changed when state politicians decided that teaching awards were a high profile way to reassure the citizens of North Carolina that our colleges had their priorities straight.

How much money did we hand out this year in teaching awards? More than you think. The Chancellor's Award was demoted to a sort of consolation prize when the UNC system instituted the \$7,500 Board of Governors' Award two years ago. In 1994, the Board directed the General Administration to designate an additional \$6,500 to go to WCU for teaching awards. From this, each of the colleges was given \$1,000 to distribute with a \$2,500 prize given to the department with the best "education beyond the classroom" record.

These one-shot awards, however, pale in comparison with this year's Rewarding Excellency in Teaching initiative in which the legislature dictated that 10% of our 1996/97 salary increases be distributed as teaching awards. At WCU this amounted to \$88,734. These awards are unusual in two respects. First, the funds are added to the winners' base salary. Thus, like sexually transmitted diseases, they are gifts that keep on giving. Second, they represent the spoils of what economists call a zero sum game; the prizes for the winners were essentially deducted from the salary increases of the losers--the majority of the faculty.

The bottom line is that approximately \$103,000 in teaching awards was distributed at Western Carolina University in 1996.

There are ways that we could spend this money that would significantly enhance educational opportunities on campus, but teaching awards are not among them. Indeed, these awards may actually have a deleterious effect on our campus teaching-learning environment. Here are some reasons why:

1. **The selection process is doomed to fail.** Teaching is not like a hot rod race in which the winner is determined by performance on a single variable--whose car is fastest. Ours is a complex multidimensional endeavor. The teaching award selection procedures are based on the assumption that there is a single best teacher in the university. This is false, and, as a result, it is virtually inevitable that the process will be perceived as unfair.
2. **The selection process wastes a lot of time.** One of the finalists for the Board of Governors' Award estimates that it took eight to ten hours of time in documentation, presentations, receptions, etc. Multiply this by the number of nominees and add the many hours spent by the selection committee. I suspect that we are talking about hundreds of hours that might be used

preparing for classes, writing lectures (in the case of Dr. Hale), and drinking coffee with students.

3. **Teaching awards create a large caste of losers.** Most of us have gotten at least one letter that went sometime like, "Dear Professor Smith: Congratulations! The good news is that you have been nominated for the So-On-And-So-Forth Teacher of the Year Award. The bad news is that you were not good enough to win." When it comes to the \$7,500 award, there is one winner and more than three hundred faculty losers--not exactly a morale booster.
4. **Even the winners of big teaching awards lose.** Upon announcement of their achievement they are instantly resented by us jealous losers who mutter, "He or she only got the award because he or she: (a) gave all the students A's; (b) blatantly campaigned for it; (c) benefited from the committee's bias against researchers; (d) got a sympathy vote; or (e) sucked up to the dean."
5. **Awards do not make people become better teachers.** We should strive to be good teachers because it is our job, not because a teaching award is dangled in front of us.

I believe that some teaching awards are more harmful than others. I term this phenomenon Herzog's Principle. It states, "The harm done by teaching awards is directly proportional to their monetary value." Simply put, bigger awards mean bigger problems.

Even awards that start out little can slip unnoticed into the big damage category. For example, each department in my college gives an annual teaching award of \$250. Take out taxes and divide it by 12, and you get enough to purchase a better than average bottle of wine each month for a year. This is not an amount that will cause the winners to take themselves too seriously nor for their colleagues to become too resentful. This year, however, the past winners of this apparently innocuous award received a retroactive bonus of \$1000 that went into their base pay. For a faculty member who stays at WCU for 20 years, this adds up \$20,000, not including the proceeds that accrue from the compounding which is the result of future percentage-based salary increases. This will buy a lot of very good wine.

The Solution

With apologies to Jonathan Swift, I would like to suggest a couple of modest proposals to get us out of the present teaching award mess.

Option 1: Go small. Minimize teaching-award-induced morale problems by insuring that the awards are so small as to do virtually no harm. We can reach this goal by simply allotting all faculty members an equal share of the pot. Each person would be given an award for what he or she is best at. One might be given the Best-Lecture-On-A-Sixteenth-Century-Poet Award, another the Best-Essay-Question Award, etc. I will admit that in some cases we might have to dig pretty deep (Best-Casserole-At-A-Departmental-Luncheon?).

Option 2: Go big--very big. An alternative would be to create a teaching award really worth the aggravation involved by combining all the present awards into one monster prize. This mother of all teaching awards would, like last year's gift from the state legislature, become a permanent addition to the winner's base salary. Here are the mathematics. This year's winner receives a base salary increase composed of the combined total of all the teaching award money given out by WCU. As noted, this year the pot is about \$103,000. Next year, the winner's new base salary will include this \$103,000 raise plus the standard annual merit pay based on a percentage of the new salary. You can probably see where this is going. Suppose that the winner has a 20-year post-award tenure at WCU. Given an average annual salary increase of four percent over this time period, the lifetime value of the teaching award climbs to \$3,324,796.

Now that is an award worth winning. And I suspect that the winner will not really care that the rest of the faculty hates his or her guts.

But can an award of this magnitude be given out fairly? Of course not. Given the difficulty of developing objective criteria for good teaching, I suggest we abandon all pretense that the winner actually deserves the award by holding an annual teaching-award lottery. Unlike the present awards system, allocation by lottery will actually improve faculty morale as the losers would not feel that they are any less adept at teaching than the winner. Plus it offers us hope; we could all be next year's winner.

I will suggest a second alternative for those who find the lottery approach a bit capricious. We can hold what amounts to a playoff series. Each contestant will have 15 minutes to demonstrate his or her pedagogical skill. As in Olympic figure skating, a panel of judges will rate each performance on a 10 point scale. The departmental teach-off winners will go on to the college level. The winners from each college will then compete in a grand event to be held each year during half-time at the WCU-ASU football game. The specter of the best teachers at the university duking it out over a lifetime of financial security would be just the sort of public acknowledgment of good teaching that state legislators love.

Personally, I favor this approach. I have a lecture on the evolution of the sexual orgasm that will knock their socks off.

Hal Herzog, Psychology

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "Teaching Awards: A Modest Proposal," by Hal Herzog, 11/1/96

I found Hal's piece interesting, though I don't agree with all of it. Back in the '70's the Chancellor's Teaching Award monies were designated: a modest amount went directly to the "winner," some was earmarked for book purchases, some was specified for teaching supplies, and some went for a student scholarship in the awardee's name. These designated distributions wouldn't satisfy all of Hal's objections, but I thought this was neat. Oh yes, the stigma is real and persistent.

Gary Pool, Chemistry

I agree with Hal, mostly, but. . . . If the purpose of the teaching awards is to give money to good teachers, based on what I hear there is little argument about the selectees being "good" teachers. What I hear is: there is no way to pick a "best" teacher and /or the amount of money is too much and/or the present system is adequate although probably more time consuming than is necessary.

The current system of prizes does not teach us how to be good teachers. It teaches us, it seems to me, that striving to be a good teacher may not lead to money prizes; it teaches us that there is no certain link between good teaching and prizes. What is needed is a system that rewards us for striving to be good teachers because that striving is the job we have chosen. We need a system that gives us external rewards even though we value internal rewards more than external ones, not a system that tries to make the external more valuable to us. We need a system that understands that time spent consciously pursuing external prizes is time snatched from improving teaching. We need a basic annual salary adjustment system that is fair and perceived to be fair; then prizes can be appended. I think we have on the campus a generally fair salary adjustment system, but that's a statement we can debate. What I believe we cannot debate is that the time that goes into prizes and contests would be better spent on the basic salary system.

If we are to have prizes, let me make a semi-frivolous suggestion.

Each term each student is given 25 tokens for each class he/she is taking. At the end of the semester each student distributes the tokens to the teachers she/he has had that semester. The rule for distribution is this: give the most tokens to those from whom you learned the most and the fewest tokens to those from whom you learned the least. You may give a teacher zero tokens, you may give all your tokens to one teacher, or you may return any or all of your tokens to command central. Once each year, each faculty member would turn in her/his tokens, the tokens would be pro-rated against the teaching prize money available, and prizes would be distributed. Tokens could not be carried forward from year to year. Fine tuning of the concept could be worked out by a committee.

Jack Wakeley, Psychology

Hal Herzog's comments on teaching awards should definitely win the WCU award for Best-Tongue-In-Cheek-Article ever presented in the Faculty Forum; he is also in contention for the Valid Points Award as well.

Joyce Baldwin, Human Environmental Sciences

Oh, yeah, Herzog? Well, I'll put my "Geography of Prostitution" lecture up against your "Evolution of the Sexual Orgasm" lecture ANY day.

Jeffrey Neff, Geosciences and Anthropology

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "A Modest Proposal," by Hal Herzog, 11/1/96, continued

My friend Hal Herzog's clever attack on teaching awards probably hit a chord with the cynic in all of us. At the risk of being a spoil-sport, let me suggest that we should not be seduced completely by his cleverness. \$103,000 toward teaching? PEANUTS! In my 18 years at WCU, millions of dollars (tons of wine!) have been doled out to individuals in the form of "merit" pay. How many of those millions (not to mention the results of compounding) went to reward outstanding teaching? How many went for getting esoteric research published? How many for doing the bidding of a powerful administrator? Who knows? At least the money provided for rewarding teaching highlights the importance of our central business in a concrete way. Have we forgotten already what it was like before teaching started getting some attention in higher education? Are there problems in deciding which teachers should receive awards? Surely. Was the distribution of this summer's windfall handled poorly? Undoubtedly. Should we forget individual differences in teaching performance and stick to counting publications and brownie points? I hope not. My own immodest proposal: let's reject the assumption that good teaching can't be measured. Instead, let's work together to find better ways to identify and reward good teaching in its many forms. Let's not go back to the days when it was assumed anyone with a degree could teach (a "given" in the words of Chancellor Robinson) so that all the rewards go to those who do things other than teaching well.

Bruce Henderson, Psychology

What Does "Raising the Bar" Mean When We Talk About Computers in the Classroom?

Chancellor Bardo's phrase, "raising the bar," has been widely discussed on campus this year. In the area of computer technology and teaching, I would suggest that "raising the bar" does not simply mean challenging our students to learn more about computers and how to use them to enhance learning. I believe the phrase also implies that faculty must learn how computer technology can enhance teaching. Specifically, I think faculty and staff need to raise their own skills in the use of the Internet--especially in the use of the World Wide Web. What would happen if all of us--even English teachers--made the World Wide Web a requirement in our classes, with a class Web page an end-of-term student publication?

Last year, after seeing what students at Montrose High School in Malibu, California, had created--their own pictures and articles about what they had read, observed, and discovered during several weeks and months of their school term--and after seeing the pictures and articles they presented from the Sistine Chapel, the Lascaux Caves, and Ireland, I decided that I should encourage my students to use and work with the World Wide Web, too. Bob Houghton in Elementary and Middle Grades Education started me out. "The students need this," he said. "Put requirements for Web use into all your classes and--though some may complain--they'll teach you how to make the best use of the Web."

So, in the Fall of 1995 and Spring and Summer of 1996 I made Web work an integral part of each of my classes, in both literature and writing courses. I was assisted from the beginning of the project by Laura Chapman and Chris Martin in the Faculty Center, by Bonnie Beam in Micronet, and by Debbie Justice, Patti Johnson, and Carlos Benevente in the Computer Center. With their guidance, I settled on three computer tools: CONFER, VAX e-mail, and LYNX and Netscape 2.0 to access the World Wide Web. CONFER linked my students and me so we could talk outside class about reading, projects, and class discussion. E-MAIL permitted individual communications. NETSCAPE gave students (and me) new materials to investigate--including pictures and other graphics, as well as articles and opinion pieces.

Despite continual glitches in the learning process--for me as much as for my students--most were using e-mail fairly quickly, many accessed Micronet CONFER, and all learned to use the WORLD WIDE WEB as a research tool. At this point, I decided to require students to

- (a) provide some discussion feed-back on CONFER each week,
- (b) check their e-mail for messages from me at least every 2-3 days,

(c) incorporate at least one Web site into their class presentations and research papers, and

(d) turn in two "Reviews of Web Sites," (to teach discriminating choice of Web materials).

The final outcomes for my experiment with computers in the classroom were mixed but in each class a handful of students blossomed into the use of the technology. These students provided ideas, reactions, and questions on CONFER, to which I responded on a regular basis. In this way, students generated ideas for papers, exam questions, and follow-ups to class discussion; they also helped design and write the class Web page. Others merely used e-mail to explain problems or request extensions, but most provided an on-going stream of questions and reactions to the works assigned for class. Use of the WORLD WIDE WEB produced exciting and unexpected materials for presentations and papers: all the classes benefited from handouts including maps, diagrams, and pictures on such topics as US Army persecution of the Mormons, the structure of Roman baths, and Mme Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society.

Let me admit that this was as much a challenge for me as it was for the students. Almost at once some students--particularly commuters and older students--complained that they could not get to a lab often enough to do what I was asking. And though I took groups who needed more help into labs for additional practice, a vocal minority complained mightily. "This is a literature class, for God's sake!" one said. "I've spent my entire educational career avoiding technology, and now you want to force me into it!" I also had trouble at times even figuring out how to make things work. In short, I experienced what perhaps leads a number of faculty to resist the engagement with technology in their classrooms.

There are perhaps some "Luddites" on campus who are chucking in glee at this point. They are possibly saying, "Even if I wanted to use Netscape, I don't have the time to learn. I'm quite busy enough, thank you, with the work that really needs doing in my classes. Besides, my classes are working well enough the traditional way."

Yet, I would suggest that in the coming decade it will be impossible to ignore or avoid the demands of technology in the classroom. Some businesses are already asking for résumés on the applicant's personal Web page, and WCU graduates have reported that use of the Internet is the one area most expected by their employers. If we refuse to learn and use these technologies we will not be able to help our students prepare for life after graduation. Certainly there is nothing magical about technology but it is very powerful and teachers need to learn how to harness that power. But in order to encourage students to expect more of themselves, we must show the way by doing more ourselves with the technologies available to us on campus. When we accept the challenge of something new and difficult we are perhaps put back into the position students are put into most of the time. We are no longer the "master." We are no longer in complete control. And it can be uncomfortable. But perhaps it's beneficial for us to feel this way from time to time.

In each class we teach we should help the class learn how to use presentation software and how to create Web pages. In order to do this, of course, we must learn PowerPoint and Netscape ourselves, create our own Web pages, and practice integrating graphics into our

handouts. As a consolation, we can use students as peer instructors because some know more than we do. We simply make it clear that (1) we see the skills as necessary, and (2) we will permit ourselves to be seen by our own students at times as learners, not always as “experts.” I challenge all WCU faculty to push students to expect more of themselves (and of us) and to do more with the technologies available to us on campus. Students can do some wonderful things, but we need to help them raise this particular bar.

For examples of such pages, see any of the following:

<http://www.wcu.edu/english/brian/johanna.html>

<http://www.wcu.edu/eberly/steve/courses/479.html>

<http://www.wcu.edu/eberly/steve/courses/496.html>

<http://www.wcu.edu/eberly/steve/courses/697.html>

Steve Eberly, English

If you would like to **respond** to Steve's opinion piece, please send your responses **BY THE 8th OF JANUARY** to Terry Nienhuis at the Faculty Center. Your response will appear in the January 15 issue of notes & quotes.

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Response to "What Does 'Raising the Bar' Mean When We Talk About Computers in the Classroom?," by Steve Eberly, 12/1/96

Although one might acknowledge, from Eberly's essay, that students may become emotionally challenged when engaged in an advanced course in computer technology, it is difficult to consider that raising the bar is evidenced by "a handful of students blossomed into the use of technology." How disappointing! At the 1996-97 Forum/Assembly on "Raising the Bar," there were very different implications drawn from the discussions about the role of computers in the university. There, among 100+ colleagues, it seemed obvious that raising the bar was not the same as increasing computer standards nor was raising the bar thought of as being independent of student input and behavior.

William Chovan, Psychology

Lecturing Revisited

The appearance in October of my Faculty Forum opinion piece, "Lecturing as Learning," brought me a number of responses and it has become clear that the main gist of my argument was lost to some readers. I would like to clarify several points.

1. I was not arguing for a return to a single "medieval" method of education, for there never was a single medieval method of educating (although many moderns think so). I fully acknowledge that lecturing is "only one method of educating," as one responder put it. I never said nor implied that lecturing is to be preferred to group discussions or other methods of educating. I simply pointed out that the assumption that lecturing only transmits information is mistaken. Just as there is a rich array of learning styles, due to the diverse, complex character of humans, there must also be a rich, comprehensive spectrum of teaching and lecturing styles.

2. From (1) it follows that I was not advocating that all instructors make their classes into "lecture courses." Sadly, we must admit that there are a number of lecturers who are truly boring teachers, not only in many undergraduate and graduate courses far, far from here, but even at our own institution. So, I don't find it surprising that some people report very unsatisfactory experiences with teachers as boring lecturers. However, even responders who reported a preponderance of bad lecturers in their educational experience prove my point. As one responder conceded, "at their best lectures can inspire, model organized thinking, or transmit new information." In the same spirit of fair generalization, I can concede that bad practitioners of lecture exist, and it still does nothing to my argument, since I was pointing to the best examples of **lectio** in the richer senses of instructive discourse, reading as interpreting, and correcting. Simply because there are bad practitioners of a pedagogical method does not prove that the method is no longer valid. Were that true, then group discussion, dialogical interaction, problem-solving, and Socratic dialectic must also be abandoned.

3. I was also not assuming that all our students, nor for that matter, all disciplines, are homogeneous (though they are less "heterogeneous" than we might pretend). I acknowledge heartily that the nature of teaching is presently different from what it once was (though I suspect that an incomplete knowledge of the history of education tends to exaggerate differences). I am very aware that learners are not a homogeneous group focused on acquiring "knowledge for the sake of knowledge alone." In fact, the sources for this shift from theory to utility of knowledge are fairly easy to trace: over-specialized faculty with

little liberal education themselves, misreadings of John Dewey's concept of "practice," American educators' over-emphasis on immediate usefulness, domination of education by method and technique rather than content, job skills taking precedence over making humans self-critical thinkers, etc. Does that mean we must give up trying to show the long-term advantages of knowledge for its own sake? Hardly. What we must question is the facile assumption that the latest fads in education, current student wishes, or present administrative and legislative thrusts represent anything more than short-term thinking. Even by present lights, since students' interests (and jobs, hence educational needs) will likely change many times in their lives, we are serving our students ill by not teaching them to value knowledge for knowledge's sake, since the appreciation of learning itself will last long after current trends and present interests have faded into the dust.

What is most disconcerting about some of the responses I received is not their advocacy of alternative or optional methods of educating but the degree to which they uncritically mimic current educational pedagogies. The conclusion from several respondents and the reigning pedagogical theory is that the lecture is dead. In its defense, I have argued theoretically that such an assumption is false. Many advocates of more recent methods, though admirable for their tenacious inquiries into the learning structures of students, have ignored dogmatically the multilayered dimensions of the pedagogy of the lecture. That dogmatism emerges in remarks like, "lecturing is not a strong pedagogical technique today." Empirically, we know this to be false, from the many adulatory comments by students about a number of spell-binding, enlightening lecturers active on this campus alone. Other respondents are a bit more modest as they urge that perhaps we just need to "keep lecturing in its place." Although that moderate position may sound enticing, it is not truly representative of either the richness of good lecturing or of the more radical "anti-lecture" educators. As an example of the latter, one may consider this posture: "we need to liberate education from the method of passing on corpses of information to that of interacting dialogically on living issues" (Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, Pedagogy for Liberation). The principle operant here is not "keeping lecturing in its place" but not allowing lecturing any sort of place in the allegedly vast, pluralistic repertoire of education. Counteracting such intolerance of lecturing was my original concern. We must at least acknowledge that lecturing has a rightful place in current pedagogy, or else we must give up the pretension of being pluralistic, diversified, and inclusive.

Finally, my concerns connect with a theoretical position, but on the level of actual practice, I (as well as others) engage in a mixture of lecture, dialogue, and group discussion (depending on what content will best be served by which methods). I am not committed to lecture as the only pedagogical method of educating. However, it is time that we acknowledged not only the heterogeneous character of our students but also of our professors. If it is true that teachers, no less than students, have different ways of gaining insights and of sharing those with others, surely one of those ways is through dynamic interaction with a text or another person, and that may be done just as well by one method as another (given that one is concerned with learning together, not with badgering students).

Modern education is continually tempted, rather simplistically, to think polaristically, and one example is the notion that we must move from the old, "bad" teaching paradigm of lecture to the new, "good" learning paradigm of education. Perhaps it is time we recognized that no single method is a panacea for the problems of education. Perhaps what we need instead of a **lectio**, or perhaps even

a diatribe, is a **colloquium**, a conversation, that is, between colleagues whose minds are open even to ideas that are not in fashion.

Daryl Hale, Philosophy and Religion

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Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "Lecturing Revisited," by Daryl Hale, 2/1/97

I find myself in rather complete agreement with Daryl Hale's main point: there is more than one way to convey information to students. Admittedly, it is difficult to have good discussions with larger groups, but some mixture of dialogue does seem to bring the students back into the communication loop. In my classes, which are not all large, I like to punctuate lectures with activities and dialogue when questions arise, followed by Socratic questioning. While the students often fuss about the Socratic questioning ("Just give me the answer," they say), they seem to really get the ideas more firmly in mind if the Socratic questions connect them with their personal experiences. Consequently, I appreciate the fact that Daryl is encouraging me to include group discussions as a part of my repertoire of teaching techniques. This gives me confidence to expand my experimentation with better teaching methods.

Dan Pittillo, Biology

I'm glad Daryl came back with a second round of his Forum on lecturing. The points he makes really are important. Personally, I think it would be a crime to deprive our students of the opportunity to listen to someone who uses language as eloquently and richly as Daryl does, and for that reason alone he can lecture all he wants and it won't bother me. The really important thing, as Daryl says, is that each of us recognizes the strong and weak points in our individual teaching approaches so that we can improve on our weaknesses and exploit what captures our students' interest. We must be scrupulously honest in identifying what really works and what serves our subject the best so that we don't just fall back on what we personally enjoy doing or what is easy. And then, if we just keep our eye on the ball—which is to educate our students and ourselves—the method we choose will not matter because our quest for the result will drive us to get the job done the best way we know how.

Nory Prochaska, Math & Computer Science

Lectio, or Hale's versions of the lecture, are significant historical events. They are collateral products of a communication system in a relatively select environment of the past. Their roles have not changed in hundreds of years—it is essentially a one-way communication system that has as much value as a reporter does today, say like Peter Jennings—namely, to inform. It is, in short, a static concept without teachable aspects or properties. That is, (a) the locus of instruction rests in the hands of the professor, and, consistent with Dewey's theory (1916), (b) it treats each lesson as an independent whole, (c) it places the learner in a non-reflective state, and (d) "It does not put upon the learner the responsibility of finding the points of contact between it and other lessons on the same subject, or other subjects of study" (p.163, Democracy and Education). Lectio may have had a sense of purpose and "fit" well in medieval times, but as such it belongs there—in the archives. As my friend Nan would say, "Das ist alles."

William Chovan, Psychology

Forget Massey: Think About The Future and Roy

I was in a bar called the Plano Pumphouse, just outside Dallas, havin' a beer, when these two gigantic rednecks named Roy and Buddy began arguing about the presidential race. Now this was some time ago so they could have been arguing about Clinton and Dole or Clinton and Bush. I don't remember and I don't care. For that matter they could have been arguing about Truman and Dewey; who knows. All I know is that I'd finished my beer and was about to get another one when an ashtray hit me in the face.

Stunned, I jumped off my stool in time to catch Roy falling back into my arms. He regained his balance and pushed me into this older woman who had been on her stool since the Lincoln-Douglas debate and I might have enjoyed having a conversation with her but there wasn't time because Buddy pulled a gun and shot Roy in the right testicle. It might have been better if he'd killed him. Well, the Dallas police came fairly quickly and they put Roy and his single functioning testicle in an ambulance and Buddy in a squad car and drove off. I still remember Roy and Buddy yelling at each other as they drove away. My only question was "Why?" I mean, what could possibly be so earth-shaking about a presidential election that could make a man shoot another man in the testicle?

I was reminded of this incident in Dallas the other day in a faculty meeting when our department head made what was supposed to be an earth-shaking announcement--the message brought to us from the Reverend Massey Starbuck that the university was going to be reorganized on the corporate TQM model. "Consumer-based education," my department head said. "That's what the future is folks." Everyone was so upset, and I kept thinking, I'm gonna have to walk around campus banging a drum. But when he asked for comments, the only thing I could think of was what my daughter says to me all the time--"COOL!"

Let the folks in the White House have this new project. Tell them to take charge and go for it. Control is an illusion. They think they have it and we don't want it. But real power is found in the most unlikely places. For example, the guy with the yellow line-painting machine; now he has power. He could make all the administrator parking spaces into little boxes. That way if they were here when he did it, they could never leave. Or, when they arrived the next morning they would have to airlift their cars to park. "COOL!" The lady who brings the mail has power, mostly because she doesn't have to obey the yellow lines. And teachers have power. They can make things better. Teachers excited by their craft, their subject matter, and their students--that's where real power lies.

Of course, we have our own Plano Pumphouse; it's called the Faculty Senate and it accomplishes about as much. Those of you who have been around here for awhile know what all of those Senate committees, subcommittees, councils, and deliberations add up to and how long they take to add up to nothing. The Senate's work reminds me of the 106 years it took for the university to switch to the Marriott corporation for our food service. Boy are things different now. I mean we all notice the students running around campus freaking out about how good the green beans are. Gimme a break. From all that I can tell the only difference is that now the white truck that drives from cafeteria to cafeteria has "Marriott" painted on it. Maybe the food is supposed to taste better because we feel safer under the protection of some corporate dictator. Switching to Marriott took 106 years and 3115 committees, which met an unprecedented 62,374 times (this is still a school record), and Lincoln won the debate during the process. Today nobody can tell the difference. Oh yeah, and now you can get a taco.

Back to the future. This project could take the administration centuries to bring about. They'll be busy. We'll be teaching and the golf courses will be less crowded. We already know that real change takes place in the classroom, not on the stupid "Web." Be careful that you don't get sucked into the "Great Plano Pumphouse Debate" by spending all of your time e-mailing some Norwegian historian or suffering from Massey-steria. Go to the library for god's sake. Pick out a book, read it, and tell your class about it.

Incidentally, the whole concept of having one's own Web page is the dumbest thing I ever heard of. Who gives a crap? But don't tell the administrators this! Cheer for Massey. Say "COOL!" a lot and help the Senate form committees, lots of them. We need committees with really long names so they can do cool things with the initials. In fact, we should encourage them to try and break the food service record for committees. We could put a new number on the clock tower each time a new committee is formed and start a countdown (finally something we can do with the clock tower). "Who me? I am the new chair of the TCTSTCDTNNOTCT!" (The Committee To Select The Color Of The Next Number On The Clock Tower). "Cool!" all the administrators will say. They will begin to flood each other's computers with E-mail, work weekends, stay up late, become fans of the Shopping Channel, make long distance phone calls, and get high blood-pressure. When all is said and done there will be two new courses on the books, both taught by the historian from Norway, twelve new computers with 10,000 megabytes of RAM, new stationery, and a couple of articles in the "Neighbors" section of the Asheville Citizen. Who cares? Just do something useful in the classroom. If a student is working with a computer, COOL! We'll still have to be there to answer questions. We must not get sucked into another Plano Pumphouse Debate over inflated "business speak" about "consumers, products, clients, or productivity." Nothing will change. Let the administrators have their fun. Meetings is what they DO!

Of course, in the next millennium what eventually appears to some as revolutionary changes will occasion victory parties in the White House where new administrators will arrive and park their spaceships over the Sacred Car Mounds, where all the cars that were airlifted in centuries ago were parked and never moved. They will move along the Disney-like monorail to the inside of the Administration Building, marveling at Caveman Cobb's baseball glove, and be served a slice of roast beef, mashed potatoes, and those green beans. Poor long dead and buried Roy will be in his coffin, sans testicle. Lincoln, Truman (not Dewey), and Clinton will still have won and

we will have had the pleasure of teaching young Roys and Buddys, with their backwards ballcaps and spit cups, that a colon is not what their grandmas died of.

Technology is not a panacea. It won't solve any educational problems. Teaching and learning will always be about human contact, the relationship between teachers and students. Period. There is no revolution coming. But if the administrators think so, don't panic. Let them do what they do. Let them form their committees. Don't confuse this message with apathy. I can hear you saying things like, "If we don't show up and serve on these new committees we won't have a voice; we will lose control." You didn't read carefully. Control is an illusion. Just teach your classes best you can and say "COOL!"

Steve Ayers, Communications & Theatre Arts

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Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "Forget Massy," by Steve Ayers, 3/1/97

OH MY GOD!! Steve, I was there! Not in the bar, of course, but at the hospital emergency room when Roy and his missing left testicle showed up. And I overheard Roy explaining to the ER doc that his fight with Buddy wasn't over any old presidential dude; it was over a play they had just seen at the University of Dallas. Roy believed with his entire beating heart that Theseus held the Truth of all human kind: fathers must arrange marriages for their daughters. Buddy, on the other hand, was a firm supporter of Hermia and her progressive right to choose her own beloved husband. Yes, Steve, I, like you, can't believe these two Texas Neanderthals whipped out their big guns in a city bar, but clearly the topic was worth fighting over. Hermia, symbolically speaking of course, represents the new generation, radical ideas, pure passion and energy, and the way to improve the world as we know it. For you see, I'm no Norwegian historian, but I do know that back in those days of Bill Shakespeare, women were considered the property of their fathers until they were given away to become the property of their husbands.

And was it technology that saved the day? No, indeed not! Or, at least, not quite then. It wasn't until the development of the birth control pill several centuries later that women were truly liberated from the property-owning men and the eternal bondage of the female reproductive system. So, is this truly a debate between the traditional and the new? Adminis-

trators and faculty? Zen and fishing? The old and the young? Japan and America? Rhythm and the pill? Puck and the tree? Industry and education? No, all of those are simple dichotomies. You and I, Steve, have evolved well beyond those cowboy thespians. You and I know that life is much more complex, much richer and encompassing. You and I know that life is not stagnant, that we are not permanently cast in the roles of Theseus, Roy, or even Reverend Starbuck. You and I know that a few modern four-letter words can give playwright Bill a lot more laughs. And, lastly, I hope we both know that we must move beyond TQM to find something that works for us.

No, technology is not a panacea. And, no, cleverly couched committees will not solve all educational problems. But the lives of billions of women--and men--have been enhanced thanks to the invention of condoms, coffee warmers, cellular phones, birth control pills, portable pagers, penicillin, and compact disks. And I don't buy into that Freudian stuff; when Reverend Starbuck explained, "technology helped to flatten the faculty," he simply meant to say factory." We all know that industry has always been a couple decades ahead of education, anyway. Oh, and by the by, Steve, my son let me in on a secret: "COOL"--that term your daughter says to you all the time--is teen lingo for "Chill Out, Old Loser." No, no revolution is coming. That would be way too cool.

*Chris Gunn,
Counseling & Psychological Services*

Bill Massy's discussion was controversial, and Steve's opinion is an interesting perspective. I don't see us going to a TQM approach with all the bells and whistles, but while I don't agree with everything Bill said, much of what he is suggesting is already happening to higher education nationally. Massy's visit got us talking and thinking. That's useful on a campus regardless of what he actually said or how it was interpreted. My only real concern is the misinterpretation by many regarding the role of technology. I think his actual point, that got missed, was that technology provides options. Some people, especially those who are place-bound or credential oriented, will choose to use distance providers. But traditional universities provide a learning environment not supported by distance education alone. Massy is calling for all of us to think about how we can effectively use technology to increase our ability to concentrate on higher level skills and to enhance the quality of the learning environment. He says our future is in that direction and in this regard, I think he is right. Unfortunately, his language made the message difficult to understand, at best.

John Bardo, Chancellor

Responses to "Forget Massy," by Steve Ayers, 3/1/97, continued

"Cool!"

*Richard Beam,
Comm. &
Theatre Arts
(and others)*

Steve, if your powerful Forum piece was intended to oppose the ideas in Massy's article or the content of his presentations, then I strongly disagree with you. In my opinion, Massy presented his message very poorly, but that should not cause us to overlook the importance of the message. The singer stank, but let's not throw out the song because of a bad performance.

It seemed clear to me that you were trying to tell us that it's a waste of time to consider the Massy message because the changes it advocates and requires will never happen in the environment in which we operate. You seemed to blame everyone above the faculty level for the stagnant condition of our academic swamp. But re-member the famous words of another swamp denizen, Pogo, who said "We have met the enemy and he is us."

The collective reluctance of faculty to contemplate new ideas, their unwillingness to fight for needed change, and the passive acceptance of the status quo make us part of the problem, not mere members of a theatre audience watching a tragedy unfold.

Perhaps I misunderstood your position, but it seemed to me that you were suggesting that trying to restructure the university along the lines of TQM with students as the focus in a client-driven process is a waste of time. I submit that it is absolutely imperative that such a restructuring be accomplished. Actually, we've quietly begun the process at WCU; we just need to continue.

The old academic system of internal decision making without the participation of our customers (yes, customers) is dead. People who furnish the money we spend rightly demand to have some say in how it's spent and rightly expect accountability from their employees. For those of us who put the interests of students and other buyers of our services first, these demands are not threatening. In fact, they are supportive.

I, for one, welcome the changes advocated by Massy. They would help me facilitate learning and measure my value as a teacher far better than the existing system, which still rewards us for teaching Saber-Toothed Tiger Hunting 101 the same way everyone else teaches it while ignoring that Saber-Toothed-Tigers disappeared long ago and that all our concerns about how well we teach young people to hunt them is academic (pun intended).

Without restructuring, I seriously doubt Western's ability to attract and retain quality faculty or quality students. WCU cannot hope to compete in the marketplace for scarce resources without both quality and accountability. Whatever the components of tomorrow's computers, Western must get them, must use them productively, and must tell others what we did with them.

John Moore, Communication and Theatre Arts

*Wow! They
don't call the
Director God
fur nuttin'!
Steve Eberly
English*

*For the last two
forums this
semester, I'd
like for Steve
to address
"raising the bar"
and post-tenure
review.*

Anonymous

*Yes, BUT if we weren't here forming committees we might
be in the streets causing real trouble. In the meantime,
I'm going to get me a bullet proof jock strap.
Chris Martin, Faculty Center*

Responses to "Forget Massy," by Steve Ayers, 3/1/97, continued

I, too, came away from Massy's presentation with negative feelings. I think my comment to a colleague was, "are you buying in to all of this?" However, the next day I was subjected to more Massyism via a campus leadership retreat and came away with an entirely different perception. After a near repeat of the previous day's rhetoric, Massy added some more pieces to the puzzle and some of what this guy was talking about started to make some sense. But it only made sense after Dr. Bardo asked us the right question. He said, "What is it that keeps you from doing quality work?"

There is a lot that is wrong with the current system of faculty governance and Dr. Bardo is trying to assist the faculty in changing that. However, it is the faculty who have to make their voices heard. We are looking at alternate forms of faculty governance, and Dr. Bardo's position on this is to give the faculty a stronger voice. Part of that is to remove administrators, or at least their vote, from many if not all of the Faculty Senate committees and councils. But let us first deal with the current system. I, too, have been on committees that have been a total waste of my time. However, it is one of the Faculty Senate councils that reviewed and presented the new + and - grading system and another one that was able to get the 40% rule deleted. Now, everyone can take sides with these issues as armchair quarterbacks, but I have not seen one faculty member other than senators attend the Senate meetings to discuss these issues this year. And both of the above issues were about teaching! At the next Faculty Senate meeting, we are discussing class scheduling. Want to come? It is March 19th at 3:00 in Killian 104. Faculty can ask to be recognized.

I applaud Dr. Bardo for being a transformational leader (one who sees what could be)! Heaven knows we have a lot of transactional leaders (those who are satisfied with status quo, don't want to rock the boat, and only communicate with underlings when they screw up)! Dr. Bardo is trying to empower us to take greater responsibility for addressing key issues on this campus. Answering his question about barriers to quality work is a good place to start.

But in order to get the right answers, all of the administrators must ask--and keep on asking--What keeps us from doing quality work? After asking the RIGHT QUESTION, then they must be willing to act and not ignore. If they get our answers to that \$64,000 question and are not willing to fix that which is impeding quality, then we are back at square one. Of course, we are not all going to get overnight what we want when we want it. But if some had been asking that question for the nine years I have been here, many more faculty would be a lot happier in their "teaching" roles and perhaps we would not all have to be asking the "quality" question all at the same time. We also must remember that the legislature may not be asking the right questions either, but perhaps that has come about because we and our administrators have failed for so long to ask the RIGHT QUESTION.

Things do not get changed by just doing our job. Things only get changed by speaking up and communicating with the administration. Yes, everyone has to be on the same page. That is not going to happen over night. Change is good, but we must be willing to embrace change. The faculty voice has to be an advocate for positive change that relates to teaching and there is a lot beyond the classroom that impacts teaching. We cannot just teach and expect positive change to be at our finger tips. Our administrators cannot read our minds. Unless those of us who administer the academic major and are in the classroom speak out, all of the things that impact teaching will be changed based on misperceptions by administrators rather than through communication. Our faculty governance system is far from perfect, but all those who serve willingly and positively on those "committees" are to be applauded. At least they are providing a voice if they speak up and are not afraid to speak their mind even if their boss does walk into the room. If we do not respect each other for our opinions and our right to voice them, then none of this works either.

I applaud Steve Ayers for one thing about his statements. He brought up the issue. Many administrators are not asking the RIGHT QUESTION perhaps because very few are listening. Dr. Bardo is trying to empower us. We do not have to accept everything as gospel truth, but EVERYONE does have to listen.

*Susan C. Brown
Sport Management*

Responses to "Forget Massy," by Steve Ayers, 3/1/97, continued

Hoo, boy! Why does the person with the gun get to "win" the discussion? (Although, in a way, Buddy had the right idea--removing some of the excess testosterone from the scene). Steve is right when he urges faculty to seize the power inherent in their teaching role. If the administration keeps telling us that teaching is the most important activity at WCU, why don't departments revise their TPR criteria to reflect that emphasis and keep "scholarly activity" and "service" within the framework of the teaching mission of the department? We keep moaning about what actually gets rewarded here, but the power to change criteria lies firmly in the departments, which is where faculty have their strongest voice.

Sharon Jacques, Nursing

AT LAST!! The whole, sordid truth of the real function of the Faculty Senate is exposed by Steve Ayers. Committees to decide when to go to the bathroom and other weighty discussion items--FOR THE ADMINISTRATION. The magic bullet, long sought for cancer, now found as a cure for education--THE COMPUTER!! Engineers have known for 50 years that the computer is a tool, not a SOLUTION. We can do things (simulations of reality) that were never possible before cheap computing power. But, as for all tools, if the user does not understand underlying principles then the tool is useless. Or, a simple tool can not use a complex tool.

*Kenneth Ayala,
Industrial & Engineering Technology*

The author of "Forget Massy" pulled out all stops to merely gain the attention of his colleagues (he got mine, but, then, he always had mine beginning with his 1991 article in the Faculty Forum, "It's Okay To Be Smart In College" to his current one on "Raising the Bar"). However, after gaining my attention he told me more about the messenger, than the message--about his emotional appeal to pubertal themes, secondary sex characteristics, scapegoating, and prejudices against minorities. It is a well-known and frequently discussed topic in psychoanalytic literature (psychology, too) that the verbal behavior of immature levels of moral development, particularly Kohlberg's Stage 2, is highly ego-centered and irrational. The ego, in a manner of speaking, slips away from the processes of rational thought and reality-testing and indulges in (preadolescent) fantasies. To narrow the scope, Ayers fails to distinguish between two rather basic notions in General Education objectives--referencing (a primary source of an idea) and regressing (to an early form of thinking). If he would have done his homework with regard to the utility of the refrain "stay cool" when confronted with a stressful event, he would have had a more productive precept: namely, the reliance on an earlier level of adolescent mentality. "Stay cool" is not the same as securing a strong emotional base for meeting stress. Indeed, Ayers would have discovered instead, "I (Steve) lost my cool" or as my friend Anita told me, "Nun--habich mich verstanden?" ("Now--have I understood myself?").

William Chovan, Psychology

Very witty and poignant piece. It's about time someone with at least one testicle said something against the Technomaniacs. Many Hurrahs to Steve. In this spirit, I did not use the latest technology for my "chat" on Celebration of Teaching Day. I asked for an old-fashioned blackboard and got a slightly more modern white board with felt-tip marker. I hope Steve's piece stirs up the sleeping dogs.

*Daryl Hale
Philosophy and Religion*

About Steve Ayers and what he writes. Mine is more a reaction than a response. I am pleased to see you publish material that does not suffer from understatement. Pleased to see humor and amusement, but I assure you I have taken the serious parts seriously. Pleased to see free speech freely exercised. Pleased to hear another voice speak for self-control as the only worthwhile control for scholars as scholars. Pleased to see the emperor's costume examined. Pleased Steve wrote. He seems to me not so much a Luddite as a Dilbertian.

Jack Wakeley, Psychology

Reexamining "in loco parentis": Being Mindful of Entering Freshmen

How may I fault thee? Let me count the ways:

Catamount hemper scammer	Anti-social personality	Walmart
Non-student	Predators	Impulsive Person
Marijuana monger	Dependent personality	Libbies
Homos	Emotionally disturbed student	Psychopathia

We currently face a situation at WCU where the non-academic or non-intellectual factor is being powerfully projected into university life. When one notes the typical burdens of contemporary undergraduate students at WCU, the nature of the burdens seems to be different from those experienced by former students. Part of the explanation might lie in our accommodation of a more heterogeneous group of students at WCU (i.e., nontraditional students, "conditional" or marginal students, transfer students) or in more liberal policies regarding the entering behavior or readiness of freshman. In any event, as a faculty member I have had to field a number of undergraduate burdens that were not always associated with academic matters alone. For example, characteristic undergraduate problems have recently included:

01. "I like psychology but everyone tells me that the courses are too hard." (In a telephone interview with an undergraduate student.)
05. "I'm worried about an interview that I will have soon for admission to teacher education. What do I say? I'm worried" (From a former student of mine who was scheduled for an interview)
08. "I took a psychological test. They told me that I should not go to graduate school. This really bothered me. Can I talk to you about it." (A student who recently was administered an individual intelligence test.)
09. "I'm divorced and have one child and am looking for a job. I can't go to class now until I find a job." (Silence) "I need this course to graduate." (A telephone interview with an undergraduate who had missed classes for two consecutive weeks)

My list reveals that undergraduates are as likely to verbalize burdens of a **nonacademic** nature as they would the more traditional academic burdens (Note: because of space, #02 to #04; #06 and #07, are listed in my E-mail, Chovan@WCU.edu).

Changes in contemporary students' profiles means that efforts should be directed toward redefining the role of student advising. That is, the professor, as advisor, should at least be aware of--and perhaps even receive some formal training in--how to employ a variety of approaches to dealing with the advising of undergraduates. Even more than ever in the past, advising must now involve responses to nonacademic problems. What we need in the university setting is a sensitivity to the "whole student," to their emotional as well as their intellectual character. That university life offers the opportunity for transformation of the whole student was noted at a recent assembly on Raising the Bar. While the university's guidance for the intellectual side supplies excellence of thinking and reasoning and the values of knowledge, the university must also help guide the emotional side of student life, providing the bridge between personal judgment and responsible behavior--a matter of some concern to the 100+ colleagues at the 1996-97 Forum/Assembly. Thus, we must consciously modify and extend the advisor's role to include at the very least an awareness of the concept of wholeness and the way it can prepare students for non-classroom environments.

One important part of our role as faculty members takes place inside the classroom, the implementation of effective teaching methods; but equally important is the one outside of the classroom--the advising of students and their adaptation to various learning environments. Academic advising is unmistakably critical; and it needs to be reviewed periodically in light of the contemporary profiles of entering students and in light of their needs for academic achievement and their needs for "achieving wholeness" (Jung's affective domain concerning thoughts and feelings about the self). Indeed, most of the difficulties that students are confronted with, particularly entering freshmen, though not difficulties directly related to academics, per se, are difficulties that never-the-less impact upon their academic achievement, often in very detrimental ways.

For example, undergraduates face various kinds of transactions outside of the classroom like field placement, culturally different persons, psycho-sexual confrontations, job interviews, admission into teacher education programs, etc. Students need to have some idea about how to prepare themselves for these situations, or, in another sense, how to present themselves in a realistic and coherent manner in a variety of social environments. To illustrate, quite recently I was involved in an evaluation interview for a candidate being considered for admission to a teacher education program (TEP). Needless to say, the candidate was anxious and it was apparent that the anxiety spilled over into the first and second interviews. A faculty-advisor-facilitator could have encouraged this student to practice wholeness--that is, to examine her personal attributes and roles objectively, much in the same way that an outside observer would. Through counseling an advisor might lead **her** to say, "This is my second interview; I guess I was more anxious than I thought. I see this now." Here, the student has decided on the basis of self observation that she had originally misjudged an internal state. Advisors as facilitators can prompt and encourage the undergraduate to generate an internal frame of reference and in this way monitor her/his own conscious activity prior to and during the process of behaving in a particular environment.

Through an intense engagement with faculty (in the context of advising), the student may discover an opportunity to grow emotionally. Advising provides access to the creative side of the

student's life. But how is a faculty member to stimulate this attribute of self regulation? The answer is to go beyond the traditional role of addressing methodologies in the classroom and to facilitate the practice of wholeness in students. As one faculty member expressed it so aptly in a recent Forum/Assembly, " We need to become more sensitive to the *whole* student." Or, in other words, we must "Ask students [and be concerned] about their lives and problems."

William Chovan, Psychology

The opinions printed here belong solely to the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Faculty Center. If you would like to respond, e-mail Nienhuis by the 8th of the month.

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Responses to "in loco parentis," by William Chovan, 4/1/97

I wholeheartedly agree with Bill Chovan's position that we must be engaged in the lives of our students. His article, however, has broader implications than just attending to the students' development. We can carry Bill's position to the institutional level: In The Abandoned Generation, Willimon and Naylor argue that the "ultimate test of whether or not. . . a university is a community is whether students and faculty are seriously concerned about each other's well being." In other words, true community also means faculty caring not only about students, but for each other, and not simply in the sense of scholarship. Faculty engaged in the lives of faculty, faculty engaged in the lives of students, students engaged in the lives of the faculty, and students deeply involved with each other is what is meant by a university community.

Terry Kinnear, Management

Armer Bill Chovan
Er entschlummerte leise im Schlummer
Nicht wie das Volk in seinem Wagen
Schreiend vor Kummer

Steve Ayers, Communication and Theatre Arts

If you think the faculty would be interested in the other advisees' responses noted in the April issue of the Faculty Forum, then may I suggest this from David McCord: Sample responses to these and other questions may be found on my web page, near the bottom. Under "Web Links of Interest," click on "Contemporary Stressors of WCU Undergraduate Advisees." My web page is off the "Faculty" link of the Department of Psychology page. The direct address is: <http://www2.ceap.wcu.edu/chovan/>

William Chovan, Psychology

I agree completely with Bill. If we address only a student's academic needs we have, in my opinion, cheated the student of a substantial portion of his or her education. Much of a college education consists of the maturation process that a student goes through, and advisement assistance there seems as or more important than the "facts" that they receive in the classroom. If we are indifferent to the students' individual needs outside the classroom, do we model a behavior for them that we would not want them to adopt? Being an advisor means far more than merely helping them schedule classes twice a year. What I find heartening, though, are the reports of my students that the professors they have dealt with across the campus do, for the most part, want to assist in the development of the whole student and not simply view them as a body taking up a chair in their classroom, and for this WCU should be commended.

William Hyatt, Criminal Justice

Writing, Thinking, Teaching, Learning, Flying

What have you written today? Why have you written today? And what have your students been writing? In your courses, are your students' main writing tasks taking notes for their own use and producing formal papers for your eyes? Are you satisfied with their writing? See if your experience would bring you to agree with the following statement:

In every field, and at every level, students need practice formulating and critiquing ideas, articulating more clearly, capturing the vagaries of the mind and getting thoughts and concepts into words. Putting things into words, we make them ours, make them part of our own cognitive maps, make them tools we can use not just to pass a test but to call on whenever they are needed. In fact, this practice not only expands our knowledge base but gives us more flexible, more extensive cognitive maps; it expands our ability to learn.

We've talked a lot this year about new technology and how to use it as a tool for learning. What if you had fairly easy software to help your students work with writing frequently, discussing and refining their thinking, challenging each other and themselves to sharpen their thoughts?

Daedalus does that, and Daedalus came to campus this spring.

Named after the mythic Greek inventor who escaped his island prison by building a set of wings, Daedalus creates an integrated writing environment. It offers six tools in one package (note: one menu bar), combining the features of a simple word processor, a newsgroup, electronic mail, research citation, a tool for peer response to writing, and a powerful heuristic tool that carries students through the invention phase as they respond to your questions and build their evidence.

In a Daedalus classroom, you can post the prompt to get discussion started and students can respond at their own pace, posting their thoughtful answers and responding to each others' thoughtful answers. Sometimes you'll get silly responses, too, just as you do in an oral discussion, but as students get used to the idea, and as you guide them, they can move through a complex thinking and formulating process that makes the material and the ideas their own. It's writing, but it's not formal, though it can have a formal product at the end; meanwhile, it's real communicating to a real audience for a real purpose. I would call it real education, leading students from half-formed ideas to fully formed knowledge and understanding.

The guidelines for general education here and elsewhere reflect what's clear in the real world, that writing isn't just for English classes. Biologists write, mathematicians write, nurses write,

engineers write, historians and social workers and teachers write. And we don't just write to perform; we write to find out what we think, what we need to say. We write to work out a problem. It's one of the principles of "writing across the curriculum" or "writing in the disciplines." Writing can make all learning experiential, as we lay down the verbal tracks to understanding and articulate our growing knowledge.

We in the freshman English program are excited about Daedalus because it integrates writing more completely into everything we do. We spent the fall learning how to use other powerful programs for the new electronic classrooms. We were thrilled to begin making our dream of computer-integrated instruction a reality. It was sudden, demanding, and not quite what we expected, but we plunged in, worked together, and taught each other what we were learning. We had people with prior experience who helped us solve problems, and, of course, we were also relying on the Computer Center and Faculty Center, having dumped a completely unexpected load of inexperienced faculty in their laps. Miraculously, most of us got sort of up to speed and most every freshman got taught in a computer classroom and learned to write the way most writers do nowadays--as a process of continuous drafting and revising, publishing their work to each other throughout the process.

For us it's good pedagogy. Many of our students have written very little before they come to us; they need this immersion where student writing and learning become the focus. Students can see what they are doing, they can pull in research, they can revise till the paper's done and then revise again. They can even get playful in email or Daedalus Interchange and all that time they are writing--just what we want them to do. We can guide their practice because we are all present at the scene of writing and revising. We can catch and transform ideas or papers while they are still fluid, "in the electricity." We can become a writing community.

That brings us to the next big leap, on the wings of Daedalus. This spring the Summer School bought a campus-wide site license, and the Computer Center got Daedalus on the Appserver. Now we're learning to maneuver in this program. We're hopeful that the new Jay M. Robinson Distinguished Professorship in Educational Technology, made possible by the C.D. Spangler Foundation, will make these things easier as more advanced technologies and pedagogies come to all our colleges; however collegial, it's been very time-consuming for us.

And it's risky. Maybe the software won't work the way we think it's supposed to for the class we've planned. Maybe it will confuse us and push us to understand something that seems too hard. Maybe we'll have to rethink the way we teach; some of us really don't want to work in new ways any more than some students do, and probably some of us really don't want to "share the chalk." Maybe, on the other hand, this scene doesn't fit our notion of academia, of what being a professor is supposed to be. Maybe it seems like something that won't get us tenure or promotion (maybe that's a part of our system that needs to be fixed).

But the very word technology implies "tool"-- for whatever the art, the craft, the specialty we profess to our students. If we trade a mule-drawn plow for a tractor, are we not still cultivating the soil so that new things can grow?

Whatever our fields, we want new things to grow. The cultivation begins with challenging ideas, critical questioning, discussing, forcing vague suppositions into sharp and focused language.

These are the values upon which the liberal arts have always stood, and these are the values that Daedalus is designed to implement. We will be using it widely in composition this summer and fall, and we welcome people in any field to our workshops. Check it out on the Web (www.daedalus.com). Take the guided tour you'll find there. Look into the archived ideas for teaching in the Daedalus journal Wings or their listserv. Let me know if you want to be notified of opportunities to learn--we hope to have a full learning workshop before classes start in the fall.

If you've looked at a research paper lately and said, "Why won't someone teach these students to write?" then here's your chance. We've done what we could. Have you?

Elizabeth Addison, English