

# Minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting

## September 16, 2015

*Submitted by Senate Secretary, Claudia Kairoff, Professor of English  
Prepared by Amalia Wagner and Claudia Kairoff, Ph.D.*

*Caveat: Comments recorded are not necessarily verbatim. In order to facilitate open discussion, the identity of most Senators making comments or questions are not recorded. The identity of comments from Senate Officers and Senate Ad Hoc and Standing Committee Chairs are given, as is the identity of persons commenting in their official administrative capacity (e.g., CFO, Provost and College Dean.)*

In attendance: Susan Borwick, Arjun Chatterjee, James Cotter, Stavroula Glezakos, Derrick Hiatt, Simeon Ilesanmi, Claudia Kairoff, Christopher Knott, Mark Knudson, Nina Lucas, Wilson Parker, Paul Pauca, John Pickel, Tim Pyatt, Peter Siavelis, Gale Sigal, Kathy Smith, Beverly Snively, Michelle Steward, Rosalind Tedford, Allen Tsang, Mark Welker.

There were 20 Senators present, a quorum.

### **Welcome and overview of new Rules of Procedure from President Wilson Parker (Appendix A & B attached)**

President Parker called the meeting to order. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the April, 29 2015 senate meeting. Approval by a show of hands was unanimous in favor of approval.

He noted that because the meeting in April was lengthy some items of business were tabled. One of them was the collegiate senators' committee report regarding the status of teaching professionals in the college. This report will be on the agenda for the October meeting.

President Parker reported on the bylaws. He mentioned, that it was clear that over the years many people had come and gone and never read the bylaws. The bylaws in essence were not being followed and enforced. Last year, an ad hoc committee was created to revise the bylaws and try to bring them into harmony with current practices.

The first order of business each year, under the bylaws, is that the current and former senate president conduct an orientation session for new senators. Given that we now have new bylaws and procedures, President Parker and former President Sigal proceeded with an orientation of all senators and not just the new senators. President Parker stated his view that the strength of any organization is in its structure. The institution is what is important, not the individuals who are currently serving. He asked everyone to read the bylaws and familiarize themselves with Appendix A, the parliamentary rules and Appendix B, overview of motions. These documents are on the University Faculty Senate website. Every year the Executive Committee of the senate will review the parliamentary rules. The Executive committee feels that these rules will allow the meetings to run in an orderly and professional manner.

President Parker believes that the body is only as good as its members. The body generates enthusiasm, but discussions at the meetings should be after work on an issue has been done at the committee level. The main focus of a senator's contribution should be through active

participation in a committee. Discussions regarding the committee's activity can take place at a Senate meeting after the committee has reached its conclusions about the issues under its consideration.

### **Introduction of Committee Chairs and brief overview of Committee functions:**

President Parker introduced the Committee Chairs, who spoke about their committee's charge. President Parker informed the senators of their responsibility to serve on a committee. He explained that all college senators must serve on the Collegiate Senators committee in addition to one of the committees mentioned below. The same applies to the Senators from the Medical School. They must serve on their school's committee and one from the group below. All committees are actively recruiting members and senators will receive a survey via email to express their interests.

#### **Gale Sigal – Chair of Faculty, and Staff Compensation Committee:**

Dr. Sigal explained that the AAUP previously compiled data and ran a salary and compensation report each year. Effective last year, this Senate committee will now gather this data annually and provide a report. Anyone interested in salary and compensation issues should consider joining this committee.

#### **Kathy Smith – Chair of The Senate Committee on Athletics:**

Because this is the first year that this is a standing committee, Dr. Smith read the committee's charge as stated. The Senate Committee on Athletics (SCA) shall examine and address issues raised in the annual Reports of the Steering committee of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, (COIA) paying particular attention to whether and how recommendations and best practices found in the Report(s) should be implemented at Wake Forest University and within its Senate. The SCA shall also address related issues concerning the financial and educational effects that intercollegiate athletics have on the University. Two additional charges of the SCA are to foster transparency and an increased role for faculty governance in various aspects of the Wake Forest Athletics Program. Dr. Smith asked anyone interested in Athletics to join her committee.

#### **Peter Siavelis – Chair of the Fringe Benefits Committee:**

This committee deals with very important issues. In recent years, due to the budgetary constraints that WFU has faced, this committee has been central to communication between the faculty and the administration regarding our feelings about the overall fringe benefits package offered to WFU faculty and staff. This committee serves as an advisory committee to the administration. In the past few years we have engaged in some very productive discussions with the administration to talk about our priorities in terms of what we think are the most important fringe benefits and Dr. Siavelis thinks this has been a positive influence on shaping, or sparing, some cuts. If you are interested in these issues, please join this committee.

*President Parker mentioned that one of your duties as a senator is to go back to your respective faculty and at faculty meetings report what the Senate is doing. The Senate does a lot of work for the good of the commonwealth. Dr. Siavelis and his committee advocate for us with the administration. For another example, the Senate participated in drafting the sexual harassment*

*and background check policy to make it more equitable for faculty. But not everyone knows the Senate's involvement in these activities. Senators should let colleagues know that we do things that significantly benefit the entire faculty.*

**James Cotter – Chair of The Resources Committee:**

This is a committee that focuses on the allocation of resources. We look at past decisions and their outcomes, and how these have affected the University's financial performance over the past 10 years. Examples include increasing the undergraduate student body, increasing the residence requirement to three years, and University support of athletics. We have tried to look at such actions and their consequences, and meet each year with key people to assess our financial profile. Dr. Cotter feels that in his short time at WFU, the University's financial position has changed drastically; this committee keeps the faculty informed and able to speak in an informed way in response to University initiatives.

*President Parker shared his hope that senators will volunteer for nomination to a second term on the Senate, in order to increase the body's institutional memory and expertise. A senator who currently serves on the College Nominations Committee observed that Nominations does not typically nominate faculty members to a second term, so this initiative will require discussion with them.*

**Mark Welker - Chair of The University Integration Committee:**

This committee shall initiate and implement projects and programs that foster cooperation and communication among the various schools in the university. Of particular concern to the committee is fostering joint projects and programs between the Reynolda and Hawthorne campuses. This year, the move of some Reynolda faculty to the downtown campus will be a topic of interest.

**Ad Hoc Committees:**

President Parker discussed the Ad hoc Best Practices Committee that was created last year. Michele Gillespie was the chair and the charge they received from the executive committee was to look at the relationship between the board of trustees and the faculty senate. The full report is available in the April 2015 minutes. Wilson thinks it would be useful for this committee to continue in existence this year but to look at ways that other Universities use their faculty senate. Are other universities doing anything creative? If you do not want to be on a standing committee then this might be of interest. This committee is in need of a chair. If you would like to chair this committee, please express your interest to President Parker.

The executive committee thought that by forming a new ad hoc committee on Forum Planning, they could take advantage of the senators' talents. A different format for one fall and one spring meeting might would spark more active participation. Will Fleeson has agreed to chair this committee. Will mentioned that the November meeting will be about the direction of the university from a faculty perspective. There are two articles that Wilson emailed to the senate body that are up for discussion. Senators interested in designing this forum are invited to join the Forum Planning Committee.

President Parker informed the senate about Dr. Hatch's annual address to the University, which is sponsored by the Senate and will take place on October 6 at 4:00pm. Dr. Parker is currently negotiating with the President's office to determine whether any questions may be asked. If Senators have questions that they would like addressed, please email them to Dr. Parker. At Dr. Hatch's address, we will hear the state of the university from his point of view. The Provost will give his "state of the University" address in the spring, and the University's CFO also addresses the faculty each year under Senate sponsorship.

*Discussion ensued:*

*Q: I went on the website and there are several committees on the website, like the planning committee, that you haven't discussed.*

*A: The planning committee is another name for the Executive Committee. Among the committees omitted from today's discussion, the mission of the Senior University Appointments Committee has drifted over the years as searches for top administrators changed and as the University's units took charge of choosing their recipients of honorary degrees. The Executive Committee is negotiating with the Provost's office as we speak about how that committee will be changed. At this time and probably in the future, people will not volunteer in the same way as other committees for membership in the Senior University Appointments Committee. Another example, the Committee for Academic Freedom and Responsibility, is technically not a senate committee. It is composed of two representatives from each constituent unit of the university. The Executive Committee appoints the chair of this committee.*

*Q: As a new Senator I should choose one or more of the subcommittees that I would like to serve on?*

*A: Yes, Dr. Parker will send out a survey for you to list your talents and express your interest in the committee of your choice. Additionally, it would be helpful to note what other committees you serve on in the college.*

### **Report from Mark Welker regarding Faculty/Staff Retirement Plan**

Dr. Welker noted that Jim Strodel of CapTrust, the University's financial advising group, was not able to attend this meeting, but he hopes to attend the October meeting. Mark informed the group that the retirement plan he is discussing is for the Reynolda campus Faculty and Staff. He gave a brief explanation of changes to the retirement plan. WFU has a defined contribution plan. For each Reynolda campus employee, WFU puts a defined amount of money into a retirement account, depends on years of service. We also have a tax-differed annuity plan for faculty and staff to to put additional salary into a retirement account for themselves. There are over \$400 million in plan assets; about \$300 million with TIAA-CREF, and other contributions with Vanguard and Fidelity. About 75% of Faculty and Staff are eligible to receive WFU contributions. Dr. Welker and Mr. Strodel would like to educate employees and increase the number contributing to the tax-differed voluntary plan. A couple of years ago, the Department of Labor changed the rules that govern employer-sponsored retirement plans. Employers must provide more information, guidance and oversight. As a result, WFU set up a retirement plan investment committee.

Dr. Welker informed the Senate that, as part of WFU response to these new regulations, CapTrust was hired to review our current investment plan (they are paid by WFU). Specifically, they were asked to assess whether WFU is offering their employees “good vendors and good investment packages.” WFU currently has 3 providers and over 300 fund options. Jim Strodel has already negotiated lower administrative fees with TIAA-CREF, Vanguard and Fidelity.

Dr. Welker indicated that he would like our plan to look like Rice University’s plan. Their plan has about 25 to 30 recommended funds. The retirement plan committee is charged with presenting employees products with the lowest fees and best long term performance records. If they don’t like any of the options being proposed, employees may have the option of putting their money into their own brokerage account.

*Discussion ensued:*

*Q: I hope that you consider the social aspect of the funds in addition to the costs, fees and returns.*

*A: I think that will remain an option.*

*Q: What is the time line?*

*A: Sometime in February, spring time.*

*Q: After the last meeting when you and Jim spoke, I sat down to craft an email about the changes to the retirement plan for the business school but decided it might cause more fears than good. I struggle with what’s the best way to share things from the faculty senate. Has the committee thought about sending out a summary of what you just shared with us?*

*A: This committee meets on Monday and maybe we could send the same email I sent to the college chairs. I think it would be best if Jim Strodel could go to faculty meetings and discuss the changes.*

*Comment: This might be off track, but I feel that this idea of communication needs to be more structured. I hope we discuss this issue of procedures of communication to the faculty. This is a great example that we could be creating more rumors and harm by communicating with colleagues. I’m not sure about when I should be communicating information with faculty members.*

*President Parker clarified that Mark Welker is here wearing his University committee hat, but he is also a senator. His report brings up one of the issues about the function of the senate. Why are we taking senate time to get a report from a University committee? Wilson feels that WFU is transitioning. It used to be small enough that people relied on informal communication networks, but now it is much bigger. One role of the Senate should be to help tear down the “silos” in which we now work, and in which few people are informed about the University as a whole. On this particular issue, one thing we need to think about, and perhaps the best practices committee could study, is whether the Retirement Plan Investment Committee should be folded into the senate, as a branch of the fringe benefits committee, or whether it should be freestanding.*

*Wilson wanted to be clear that what Mark is reporting is a report to the senate, on a topic of interest to the senate, but is not from a senate committee.]*

*Dr. Welker said that human resources came to us and asked for senators to serve on this committee.*

*Dr. Wilson commented that this is another example that the administration is interested in having our input. We just need to devise an effective way to make sure that we provide it. It's a huge problem of "silos."*

*Q: Has there ever been any sort of formalized communication between the senate and the faculty?*

*A: I don't think so. This would be a great thing for the Best Practices Committee to review.*

*Comment: In the past, our bylaws required the Senate to take an action statement from the minutes and post it where it was available to faculty members.*

### **Update on campus parking (Refer to Addendum A for the full report)**

Susan Borwick introduced James Harper, who serves on the Parking and Transportation Committee. James was here to answer some issues raised at a previous Faculty Senate Meeting. The committee's main responsibility, up until the last few years, was to hear second-level traffic appeals. The committee consists of approximately 12 members and is chaired by Alex Crist, the Parking and Transportation Director; John Wise also sits on the committee. John has wanted the committee to act as an adviser to parking and transportation. Recently, for examples, the committee discussed turning some of the service parking spaces into 15 minute spots and approved signage for crosswalks. They are also tackling the issue of multiple tickets for the same offense. The decision to charge faculty for parking did not come from this committee. That decision came out of the strategic initiative committee, but they charged the parking and transportation committee to come up with the rules and guidelines. James is the faculty senate representative for this committee but is not a senator. He is a liaison and wants to be available for questions. Senators are welcome to email James Harper or Susan Borwick parking and transportation questions.

A Senator thanked the parking committee for the signs and speed bumps, because they have saved lives. The Senator hopes they continue to come up with great ideas.

### **New Business:**

President Parker asked if there was any new business. There was not. He adjourned the Senate at 5:18 p.m. after announcing there would be a wine and cheese reception immediately following in the lobby and inviting all to attend.

