

Spring 2001 Opening Remarks - January 4, 2001 **by Dr. Gayle Marie Weitz, Chair of the Faculty Senate**

Hello. I'm back, we're back, you're back, we're all back. And at least one week too soon! Why are we starting so early this year? Who's on that Calendar Committee? Anyway, welcome back.

I'm here -- we're here -- today to inform you of what we're up to this year, and to get some feedback from you. So, my comments now, serve as an introduction to this dialogue and therefore will be brief.

"Appalachian takes as its mission the practice and propagation of scholarship." (This charge comes from -- The University of North Carolina Board of Governors, 1998). ASU expands upon this mission statement by stating that "instruction [is] its primary mission" and that "scholarship and service are complementary to the instructional mission." (This comes from our web page.)

Regardless of the how we rank scholarship, teaching, and service, ASU remains an institution of higher education -- academically driven per se -- with the propagation of knowledge at its core. As faculty, we know this, but I am amazed at how often members of the General Administration in Raleigh and our administration reiterate that the university is, and must be "academically driven."

What exactly does "academically driven" mean?

Why do we need to be reminded of this?

To what degree do academics really drive ASU?

And what role do/should the ASU faculty play in this process?

It seems to me, that we, the faculty, are the trustees, the gatekeepers, the watchdogs of this mission. And I believe the Faculty Senate is the group charged with keeping the integrity of this mission intact -- keeping us academically driven -- by providing (as written in the *Faculty Handbook*) "direct participation in the process of decision making" and participating "in the formation, implementation, and review of university policy" (Chapter I, Article IV). In essence, the Faculty Senate serves as the collective conscience of the faculty, assessing what is impeding/enhancing our mission of teaching and learning.

According to the *Faculty Handbook*, "The faculty of Appalachian State University acknowledges the principle of faculty self-government and also recognizes its responsibility for helping the University administration direct the internal affairs of this institution" (Chapter I, Preamble). Shared governance, achieved through bodies like the Faculty Senate, helps keep the university "academically driven." So, basically, that is what the Faculty Senate has been up to, keeping ASU academically driven. This is no easy task. I encourage you to participate in shared governance by voicing your concerns to us, and at some point joining the Faculty Senate.

So, what are the pressing issues affecting our mission of practicing and propagating scholarship?

Some major areas of concern that the Senate dealt with this past semester are:

1. Low faculty salaries (Budget Committee, Sandie Gravett, Chair)
2. Faculty Handbook revision (Ad Hoc Committee, Stella Anderson and Mike Moore, Co-Chairs)
3. Academic Integrity Code (Student Welfare Committee, Patrick Rardin, Chair)
4. Textbook rental system (Student Welfare Committee, Patrick Rardin, Chair)

Some major issues to be discussed this semester are:

1. Workload (Ad Hoc Committee, Andy Koch, Chair)
2. The ASU budget (Budget Committee, Sandie Gravett, Chair)
3. Equity Office/Grievance process (Ad Hoc Committee, Gayle Weitz, Chair)
4. Appalachian structure (Committee on Committees, Mike Moore, Chair)
5. Merit pay (Ad Hoc Committee, Jeff Bortz, Chair)
6. Administrators' evaluation (Ad Hoc Committee, Jeff Butts, Chair)

Some major issues of concern that will not be dealt with this year (but perhaps next year?) are:

1. Childcare
2. Part-time faculty
3. Promotion and tenure standards/process
4. Core curriculum
5. General College advising

After Andy Koch, Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate, makes his pitch to get you to run for various positions, I invite you to engage in a dialogue with us on these or other issues. Thank you, and have a successful semester practicing and propagating scholarship!