

General Faculty Address - January 9, 2002
By Gayle Marie Weitz, 2001-2002 Faculty Senate Chair

Hello and Happy New Year.

It has been another productive semester for the Faculty Senate. Some highlights include:

- The opening of the Jimmy Smith Faculty/Staff Lounge
- A new electronic faculty handbook (coming out this semester!)
- Faculty evaluation of the deans (happening in February)
- A new grievance process (pending approval by the administration)

Some topics on the Senate's spring agenda include recommendations for:

- DPC reform
- Implementing the proposed workload document
- Faculty input regarding university space decisions
- The role faculty play in the budget process

I would like to thank my fellow senators -- especially the officers and the committee chairs for their extraordinary voluntary service. (And I encourage other faculty to come forward and participate in shared governance -- elections are coming up soon!) I would also like to thank members of the Council of Chairs and the administration for their efforts to improve shared governance at Appalachian.

At the heart of shared governance in higher education are the issues of academic freedom and freedom of speech the topics of today's forum.

What is academic freedom?

How does it relate to Appalachian's mission "the practice and propagation of scholarship?"

Or to the broader UNC system's mission "to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society?"

In the Faculty Senate office hangs an AAUP (American Association of University Professors) poster that reads, "ACADEMIC FREEDOM IS NOT FREE."

So, why isn't it free?

Who controls/owns academic freedom?

Is it the faculty,
the administration,
the institution,
the university system,
the courts?

How much freedom of speech do faculty really have?

What constitutes the public and the private realm of speech for faculty?

I am grateful for the expertise of our panelists, and for their willingness to clarify the meaning of academic freedom and freedom of speech to those currently working at Appalachian.

Onto the forum (and a prosperous semester for us all) . . .

- Gayle Marie Weitz

Chair of the Faculty Senate