

Martha Marking, Faculty Senate Chair, Address to the Faculty, August 21, 2006

Good morning all. On behalf of my Faculty Senate colleagues I welcome you to the 108th academic year at Appalachian.

We, as administrators, faculty, staff and students, have an amazing amount of work to do this year, but before I begin I want to tell you a little bit about myself. Yes, I am in the Theatre and Dance department but no, I am not a performer. I am a bit uncomfortable speaking before such a large group. I spoke with Jenny Ware recently who was the Staff Council president last year. She mentioned that when she was to address you she was nervous as well. She said that someone had suggested to her that she should imagine all of you in your underwear so she wouldn't be so nervous. Well, I have a couple of problems with this advice. One is that I have seen some of you play basketball in the gym without your shirts on...and the other is that I am a costume designer and not only can I imagine you in your underwear it would be part of my job to imagine what kind of underwear you would wear.

Seriously though, in preparation for this address I reviewed the speeches of the past three Senate chairs, going back as far as 1999. In some ways it was very fulfilling to read what we have accomplished in this 7-year period but it was also somewhat staggering to realize that many of the same issues are with us still. We have taken care of reducing the office hours required by faculty. The periodic review of chairs is now in place with a system that is clearer and more streamlined. A thorough investigation of our Textbook Rental system has been done and final approval and recommendations now lie with Dr. Aeschleman and Dr. Peacock. A Grievance Hearing process manual has, hopefully, removed the mystique of the hearing process. We now have a beautiful new library and a plethora of other construction projects that have been started and finished during this time. Both Drs. Durham and Aeschleman have been committed to take non-teaching personnel salaries out of the faculty lines. In 2001 Gayle Weitz spoke of the need for a regular process with which we evaluate the Deans of our colleges. This evaluation process has been put in place. Brian Felkel, chair of the Faculty Welfare and Morale Committee, has met with Bobby Sharp and Pete Wachs to implement this process for three Deans to go through this fall.

We still do, however, have much to do and some very large projects looming that will shape the future of this institution and our professional lives.

In 1999 Stella Anderson spoke of Post Tenure review and the need to simplify this process and make it less burdensome on the faculty. Gayle Weitz, Paul Gates and Mike Moore have all put out a call to look at the faculty evaluation process at Appalachian and it appears that we are now starting to do this in earnest. Dr. Dave Haney has appointed a Faculty Evaluation and Development Task Force. We will be investigating the myriad of ways in which this is accomplished at ASU. A review of current faculty evaluation practices, workload expectations and reward structure will hopefully lead us to a more succinct and fair process. This may be a little unsettling to some but if we all become actively involved in the analysis of the practices in place now I believe it will make us an even more productive and effective faculty. We all do wildly different types of academic work and my hope is that this process can put a system of evaluation in place that will recognize and reward this.

We will soon be undergoing a Herculean effort to develop a new Strategic Plan for Appalachian. Dr. Peacock has established a Strategic Planning Advisory Council and you have received an email in this regard. We must develop a new vision and establish a set of goals for Appalachian. We have had

significant turnover in the upper administration in the past few years and as the players get “cast” we can settle down and do this important work. We will need all of you to participate!

Sadly, an issue that has remained is salary compression. Stella Anderson mentioned this in her 1999 address and stated, “I guess this means that the longer you stay here, the worse you fare”. Dr. Aeschleman is committed to working on this issue. I applaud him for his efforts but there is still much work to do to bring us to parity with our peer institutions.

We must continue to make our voices heard in Raleigh. We need to encourage our students to energize their parents. We all need to vote for those politicians who support higher education and vote out of office those who don't. Having to raise funds through campus based tuition increases is distasteful to all of us and to say that the permanent reversion of funds that we had over the past several years has hurt us would be a drastic understatement. Even prior to the budget cuts of the past several years we are woefully behind our fifteen sister institutions.

Now you didn't think that you would be able to leave this morning without hearing the “P word”, parking. As most of you are aware, we lost a court battle to allow us to keep the revenue from parking fines assessed on campus. We must investigate ways to recreate this revenue stream. Paul Gates spoke eloquently concerning this situation in his 2003 speech. I urge all of you to go to the Faculty Senate website and read his comments. This is, as Paul states, “an issue of fairness”. There are many that utilize our parking facilities who don't pay anything for the use, upkeep or parking personnel costs during such events. There are many in our campus community for whom the \$208 parking fee is a disproportionate amount to pay compared to the salaries they earn.

Faculty governance is a very important issue to the Faculty Senate and administrators alike. We need you to mobilize. We need your help to make this the best working environment we can. If each of you volunteers to be on one university committee imagine how much more powerful we will be. Soon I will be sending out a call for volunteers for University service. I am pleading with you to answer our call. The administration is supportive of, and recognizes the value of, our service activities. If I know who you are I WILL call you!

We are doing many things right. We are becoming a more diverse campus and the quality of our incoming students continues to improve. Our students are, as indicated by post graduation surveys, extremely satisfied by the “Appalachian experience”. I read in the Charlotte Observer yesterday that we are preceded only by UNC-Chapel Hill and NC State as the school of choice for the top freshman in North Carolina. Appalachian has retained our fifth place ranking among the South's top public master's universities and is listed twelfth in the Best Universities-Master's in the South category in U.S. News and World Report's 2007 America's Best Colleges Guide. We are also a “Program to Look For” in its First-Year Experience and Freshman Learning Communities Program section. We are all to be commended for this achievement.

There are many concerns that Senate will be attempting to resolve this year. Tim Harris will be chairing an ad-hoc committee regarding the very important issue of voting eligibility on campus. This will be brought to you for a vote in January 2007. I urge you to give his committee feedback and to vote. Last year there was an ad-hoc committee on the role of Faculty Senate at ASU, chaired by Chip Arnold, and the report is on the Senate website. I encourage you to have discussions in your departments regarding the recommendations put forth. The Faculty Welfare and Morale Committee will be investigating ways

to honor our retirees and strengthen the privileges for our emeritus faculty. The duties of Assistant Chairs will hopefully be included in the Faculty Handbook this year. We have started receiving replies to the email I sent last week asking for your concerns. I feel uncomfortable to speak on your behalf unless I know what you want me to say.

In hopes to have better communication with you we plan to send out the agenda for the Senate meetings a week prior. Be proactive, stay abreast of the topics of our conversations, and inform Senators of your opinions.

I look forward to working with all of you. I look forward to effecting positive change with the administration, with Charlie Wallin and Staff Council, Forrest Gilliam and Student Government Association and Tony Calamai and the Council of Chairs.

I want to join with Charlie Wallin to encourage you to give to the SECC campaign. I would love to have one hundred percent participation.

In closing I would like to quote Sir William Henry Perkin, an English chemist, who was the father of the first aniline dye. Excerpted from a speech he gave to faculty and students at MIT in 1906, he said; "Be very earnest and out and out in your work and always do it in such a way that you will never have any regrets that you didn't do it better." I promise you that we will try to do just this but in order to do this we need your help. We need your participation and your opinions.

Have a great semester! Thanks for your time.