

## **Spring 2005 Faculty Meeting**

### **Michael Moore**

Good Morning faculty colleagues, Chancellor Peacock, Provost Aeschleman, and other friends and supporters in this audience.

Isn't it a bummer to have no ice or snow outside to prove that those of us here this morning are hardy, committed souls? Instead, it's the naturally gregarious, those seeking free orange juice, coffee and rolls, and those who like rituals, who must be here. Well, welcome one and all.

Last semester we finally settled on a provost's appointment and Senate passed a resolution approving of the Chancellor's appointment of Dr. Stan Aeschleman as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, with the codicil that there should be no further senior administrative appointments made without national searches. Obviously, national searches can bring us the best candidates, and we do not want to set a precedent of avoiding them. But it is also true that even had we conducted a national search we would probably not have found a person of the caliber of Stan Aeschleman, whose academic values and leadership are widely supported by faculty.

So, let us welcome Stan Aeschleman as our new Provost.

When I last spoke to you I said I had a major purpose in mind, which was to encourage your greater participation in the business of this university to the end of improving our professional lives. Quite a few of you have responded positively, and we need more, even when it pinches the available time in our professional lives.

Appalachian is entering, rapidly, an era of significant demands for academic productivity and for its expansion. And this comes when we must also replace the largest 10-year cohort of faculty in our history—that from 1968 to 1978. In addition, the numbers of students will increase; but there's good news in that, too—greater opportunity to teach very good and motivated young people.

Nonetheless, the demands on our professional time will not lessen; but there's good news in this as well. We have the opportunity to build a faculty and curriculum that is second-to-none among our peers. This will bring us the better students we want, and it will become the major calling card of our fundraising efforts. If we do this, there will be no room for suspicion that our academic excellence is not adequately shared by our administration. If we do this, it will make it impossible for the best teaching and scholarship to not be the centerpiece of Appalachian State. It will define our public image.

We've had our doubts about that. The appearance of encouraging popular culture and personal indulgence among our students at the expense of appreciating the creative life of the mind, has not been without foundation. But we can change that permanently—and I believe that new administration wants that to happen and will lead toward that end.

In August I also raised the train metaphor, and I admit to being pleased to have initiated some historical dialogue between older and younger generations that puts where this university has been, where it is now in some common context. It seems clear to me that we no longer have a significant conflict between teaching and scholarship; it has been demonstrated repeatedly that good teaching follows naturally from good, productive involvement with one's discipline. Teaching is merely the obverse side of the coin—there are not two different coins.

All of this leads to this observation: We will be very busy hiring, evaluating, and retaining faculty for the foreseeable future. And this will be in addition to the other requirements of our jobs.

But we can't say no to service within the university. A self-respecting and self-governing faculty must share widely the responsibilities that real participation in governance requires.

Finally, in order to reach our goals, we must have in place structures that make central a faculty voice hiring, retention, and rewarding at all levels of the university. We must have in place realistic and trustworthy standards by which faculty are measured and have these reviewed regularly, by faculty as well as by administrators.

Recently, Faculty Senate passed unanimously a motion to create a University Bookstore Committee to replace the present Bookstore Advisory Council. The principle reason for this was to coordinate and clarify policy regarding the textbook rental program. It also rests fundamentally on the principle that faculty are alone responsible for determining the materials to be used in their classes.

From that principle came a second motion, which was supported by a vote of 18-3, to end the textbook rental program.

The chancellor has supported the creation of a committee appointed by the Senate and has asked that that committee study the feasibility of the textbook rental program and make a recommendation to the Provost about its future.

Here is an example of faculty governance consistent with achieving the best possible education of our students.

We have a lot of work to do. We also have elections scheduled for later this month. So, please participate, and let your senators know what you think Senate should be dealing with.

I hope you all have a productive semester.

And now, let me open the floor for questions and comments.

Mike Moore