

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Office of the Faculty Senate**  
**Academic Policy Committee**

**JANUARY 14, 2020 MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Rajade Berry-James (co-chair), Paul Williams (co-chair), Kerry Havner, Russel Flinchum, Richard Kotek

(Excused): Lisa Bass Freeman, Fikret Isik, Min Liu, KL Murty

**I. Agenda**

The Academic Policy Committee (APC) of the Faculty Senate revisited issues of concern to provide SUGGESTIONS for improving campus climate and/or offer context so that members of the Faculty Senate could make a motion to implement committee RECOMMENDATIONS.

On 9/17/19, APC discussed the following Issues of Concern:

- **Resource Allocation & Student Success (GPS) Advising Platform:** APC discussed two issues of concern which involve the (1) “trend for the administration to grow in both numbers and remuneration at the expense of faculty” and “budget for Athletics” and (2) “faculty report that the new GPS advising program is onerous to use and adds little new information.” Co-chair Paul Williams will follow-up with the faculty member who submitted the issue on resource allocation, addressing faculty concerns regarding trends and athletic fees. Co-chair Jade Berry James will follow-up with the CHASS Dean’s Office to seek process and outcome information about the GPS Advising Platform program. [Issue of Concern 10C1909b (Resource Allocation); 10C1909c (GPS Review)]

**SUGGESTION** > Best practices differ by college/major at NC State. In some departments, the faculty advisement system is thorough and intense. Among faculty who choose to use the advisement platform, we suggest that those faculty be informed of the preferred practice of using the notes section during the advisement process. For more information about the Student Success GPS Advising Platform, see <https://gps.dasa.ncsu.edu/office-of-advising-technology/fast-facts/>

In addition, APC reviewed the athletic budget over time. While the athletic budget has increased over time; student athletic fees have not. We find that the NC State Athletics program is self supporting and offer no further discussion on this issue of concern.

- **PhD Spring Admissions:** We reviewed an issue of concern regarding constraints on faculty who receive grants but may be unable to admit students during the Spring semester.

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > APC recommends that the faculty member discuss this issue with the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP) and program faculty in their academic department since the DGP recommends admission decisions to Graduate School.

- **Self-selected Gender Identity and Gender Pronouns:** We reviewed a request from Charles Clift, University Registrar, to “discuss a project that would allow students to self-select preferred gender identity and pronouns in MyPack portal and subsequently display preferred pronouns to faculty, advisors, and administrators through the class roster and advising center in MyPack.”

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > We discussed the white paper on preferred student pronouns and recommend that the Faculty Senate, by way of a resolution, discuss whether to support the implementation of this Registration and Records project.

- **Programs that Involve the Participation of Minors (REG 01.25.18):** We reviewed the policy revision from Stacy Fair in Risk Management planned for implementation in 2020. “The new policy will include all faculty activities in labs with minors or in the field or in any NC State space. All of these activities must be registered with Risk Management. Faculty must be background checked every two years and they must complete a required training which is in development.”

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > APC recommends that the issue of concern (10C1909a) be referred to the Personnel Policy Committee to review the requirements and procedures of the proposed personnel policy and its impact on faculty.

- **Updates on Deans of the Graduate School and the College of Sciences:** We discussed the following issue of concern: “These hirings, to my knowledge with[out] any faculty input, seem like a direct challenge by the provost to the accepted practice of strong faculty involvement in the selection of academic administrators. Whatever his reason for doing this, I think it merits a serious faculty response, starting with some probing questioning of the provost and possibly chancellor. This seems like a potentially precedent-setting moment that marginalizes the faculty in shared governance.”

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > APC recommends that the issue of concern be referred to the Governance, Communications, and Recruitment Committee for review and consideration.

- **Centennial Campus Traffic/Speed Limit:** We discussed the issue of traffic and speed on Centennial Campus, specifically in the area of the Middle School, Main Campus Drive Trailwood Dr, Achievement Dr, Campus Shore and Varsity Dr whereby a member of the faculty has noted, “The 25mph speed limit is rarely kept and the route is used by parents

that drop the children in school, students, joggers, bikers, and people that work in Centennial like me.”

**SUGGESTION** > APC suggests that the issue (10c1909d) be referred to the Resources and Environment Committee to consider the costs and benefits of adding speed bumps along the route.

- **Graduate Student Fees:** We discussed the issue of concern “raised by some faculty colleagues in the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology regarding the 3D Memo distributed on July 22, 2019, disallowing the use of funds from federal sources to pay certain graduate student activity fees.”

**SUGGESTION** > APC suggests that this issue of concern be referred to the Personnel Policy Committee for resolution since there is not a uniform policy or consistent practice to cover students employed under contracts and grants.

- **Mentored TA Fellowships and TA Assignment:** We discussed the issue of concern from a senator in the College of Engineering. At issue is the assignment of a supplemental award for the mentor TA fellowship which may or may not provide the awardee with a TA position.

**SUGGESTION** > APC suggests that the senator in the College of Engineering discuss this issue of concern with the Dean’s office; in addition, APC further discussed the need for faculty to have collaborative input on policy decisions made at the college level.

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > APC recommends that the Provost Arden organize a special university committee to study and make recommendations on improving shared governance and developing a more collaborative relationship with departments, schools, colleges and across the university, given the serious issue of concern that involves departmental management.

On 10/1/19, APC discussed the following Issues of Concern:

- Most of our meeting was devoted to discussion of the IOC raised by Professor Andrey Kuznetsov. Professor Kuznetsov attended the meeting to explain more completely his actual issue of concern. The previous information the committee had about the issue consisted of a series of email exchanges among Professor Kuznetsov, his department head, an associate dean from his college and Chancellor Woodson. From the initial information about the IOC, the committee inferred that the issue was a technical one involving bridge support for graduate students using TAs. In a follow up explanation of the IOC provided by Professor Kuznetsov the APC came to realize the issue was not a simple technical issue but involved the process of forming departmental policy and the arbitrary adoption of policy by the Department Head. Professor Kuznetsov’s explanation of what his IOC is became much clearer to the committee as he explained it. He had two graduate

students as advisees that he has supported via a grant from Eastman, Inc. When his grant ran out he requested TA funding for his two students until he could secure additional grant funding. His department head had established a new policy of TA support that shifted the focus from students to faculty. Each faculty member was limited to one TA request. Professor Kuznetsov appealed to the College and the College provided two TA positions to his department to support Professor Kuznetsov's two students. However, the department head imposed as a condition of the students receiving the funding that they find different advisors. One student opted to do so and with three years invested in his graduate work will depart with a Master degree. The other student has opted to stay with Professor Kuznetsov at considerable hardship to himself since, as a non-resident student, he will have to pay out-of-state tuition. The Committee discussed the IOC given the new information and expressed its concern for the students and how the University has failed to keep an implied promise when the students were admitted. The Committee also discussed what the Senate could do about Professor Kuznetsov's current situation and concluded that we couldn't do anything to fix the specific situation. Professor Kuznetsov has enlisted the help of Vice Provost Stewart to investigate the current situation to see if there is a path to helping his students out of their current predicaments. The Committee concurred that was the best process for dealing with the specific issue. The Committee also agreed that Professor Kuznetsov has the basis for a grievance; that will be up to Professor Kuznetsov to decide.

What the Committee will continue to pursue with respect to Professor Kuznetsov's IOC is the feasibility of university policy aimed at limiting the department head's arbitrary use of their authority. As one APC member noted the issue of department head quality has been a long standing issue. Provost Hall appointed the Faculty Senate Special Elect Committee on Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure in 2000 to develop an RPT process that would treat very faculty member the same through whatever door they entered N.C. State. The Special Committee learned from its research that there was wide variation in the quality of departmental management by Heads. Perhaps Professor Kuznetsov's issue should involve the Governance Committee as well. His issue is an issue of faculty governance. What are the limits of Department Heads to make decisions like the one that affected Professor Kuznetsov or personnel decisions or departmental policy decisions? The APC will pursue a remedy long term to see if there is some way to prevent such episodes from happening to other faculty or, if they can't be prevented, if there is better recourse for dealing with them via a specific policy.

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION)** > APC recommends that the Provost Arden organize a special university committee to study and make recommendations on improving shared governance and developing a more collaborative relationship with departments, schools, colleges and across the university, given the serious issue of concern that involves departmental management.

On 10/15/19, APC discussed the following Issues of Concern:

- Christopher Poteat, a graduate student in chemistry, was our first guest who came to discuss the issue of graduate student fees. Graduate student fees is an IOC raised by Prof. Jeremiah Feducia. The issue is the rising cost of student fees that produce financial hardships for many graduate students and hardships for faculty who support graduate students with grants. As fees increase the number of students a faculty member can support with his or her grants decreases since grants are not increasing to accommodate the increasing cost of supporting graduate students. Christopher discussed the results of a Google poll of graduate students in chemistry designed to catalogue the kinds of hardships increasing student fees were imposing on students. A particular problem, emphasized in Prof. Feducia's IOC, pertained to students who are just entering the graduate program for the first time. Student fees are due must be paid by August 1 but student stipend checks are not issued by the time the fees are due. Thus, many students do not have the means to pay the fees when they are due and must borrow funds to pay them or they are assessed an additional fee of \$65 -- \$100 to pay the fee on an instalment basis. Another issue is the competitiveness of graduate student stipends. As fees increase and the stipends don't keep pace; NC State loses talented graduate students to other institutions whose stipends and/or fees are more financially beneficial to students. The committee discussed courses of action. In the short-term, the committee will investigate the feasibility of delaying until mid-September, the due date for payment of fees via whatever mechanism is possible in order to relieve the pressure on first year students. The longer-term issue is the adequacy of the Graduate Student Support Plan. What options are available to increase financial support to offset the increasing fees?

Current NC State for "Spring 2020 Important Dates, Deadlines, Billing, Payment and Late Registration Information" (see <https://studentservices.ncsu.edu/2019/10/spring-2020-important-dates-deadlines-billing-payment-and-late-registration-information/>) reads:

# Spring 2020 Important Dates, Deadlines, Billing, Payment and Late Registration Information

October 14, 2019 | [Student Services](#)

Students registering on or before November 13, 2019 will have a [billing statement](#) posted on their Student Account and charges are due on December 3, 2019. Payment of billed charges must be received by the due date or your schedule is subject to cancellation. Any additional charges added after you have been billed, that increase your tuition and fees, must also be paid by the due date.

Late [Registration](#) begins on November 13, 2019. Students who register for the first time this term during the Late Registration period may be subject to a \$100 Late Registration fee and will not receive a billing statement prior to the payment due date. However, charges are posted to your student account as you register and are viewable on [your account](#) Summary via MyPACK Portal. Find out more information about [Late Registration fees](#).

The schedule below will apply to all students registering during the Spring 2020 Late Registration period:

- › Register November 13 through December 4 – payment is due by midnight on December 3, 2019
- › Register December 4 through December 16 – payment is due by midnight on January 1, 2020

Students wishing to register on or after December 17, 2019 will be required to pay in advance or have posted Financial Aid, an Authorized [Third Party](#) Sponsor, or a current Monthly Payment Plan. Please email [studentaccounts@ncsu.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@ncsu.edu) to have your registration hold removed.

You must pay your account balance, have posted financial aid, an approved sponsorship, or be enrolled in an authorized payment plan by the due date associated with your registration period or your schedule is subject to [cancellation](#). Students who have been cancelled for non-payment will be required to pre-pay all charges plus a \$100 Late Registration Fee before being allowed to re-register.

Note that returning degree students who register during the late registration period are subject to a \$100 Late Registration fee. Any student who registers after census (January 17, 2020) will be charged a 250.00 late registration fee.

**RECOMMENDATION (Seeking MOTION):** APC recommends that NC State defers student account charge penalties and interest as well as avoids cancelling registration for graduate students supported by GSSP. We also recommend that financial support for graduate students be identified as a *high priority* in the upcoming strategic plan for North Carolina State University.

- The Committee's second guest, Nikki Glenos (Director of Advising Technology), addressed the IOC of faculty frustration with the GPS system purchased in 2015 and has been employed university-wide starting in 2017. Nikki explained that the GPS is a unified advising platform, which puts information about student advising in one place. GPS provides a unified note-taking platform and provides the capability to identify students in

need of assistance earlier so that intervention occurs the student gets into serious academic trouble. The system facilitates the movement of students from one academic program to another. A structural problem with advising at NC State has been the differences in local rules by programs. If a student wants to migrate from one program to another the coordination of advising can be a problem. The particular issue of concern, which came from Professor Vincent in the History Department, was the difficulty faculty were having using the system to schedule advising sessions. There is a belief among faculty that they must use the system. However, as Nikki explained, that is not the intent. She acknowledged that there are many different advising models at NC State and that no one-size-fits-all system is the intent of GPS. Nikki emphasized that faculty who do not want to use the scheduling features do not have to do so. Whatever system they are using to arrange to meet with their advisees they may continue to use. The only feature of GPS that faculty need to employ is the note-taking feature. This feature enables the system to provide the early-warning information needed to retain students who are experiencing difficulties. As Nikki explained the professional advisors on campus utilize all of the features of the system, but faculty need only use the note-taking feature and accomplish the rest of their advising tasks with any system that works for them.

Though some committee members expressed the frustrations of having systems imposed from above, we have to acknowledge that the system is in place. The issue is how to make it work for faculty rather than work against them. The issue seems to be one of communication. There is a misperception that faculty are required to utilize all features of the system when they are not. Nikki advised us that she provides custom training on the system so perhaps those faculty frustrated with the system should have their department heads schedule a training session so she can explain to faculty what features would be beneficial to them and what features they do not need to worry about. Nikki indicated that Brett Smith is available to discuss this issue further so we will probably invite him to attend a future meeting of APC.

On 11/12/19, APC discussed policy recommendations and provide guidance for the following Issues of Concern (IOC):

- **Student Success GPS:** We discussed the issue of concern (10C1909c) whereby a faculty member reported that the new GPS advising program was onerous and added little new information. The Student Success GPS is a "suite of advising tools combining advising services, real-time data, analytics, and reporting to help advisors identify students in need of support and provide early interventions." DASA requires that faculty use the "**shared notes**" feature of the advising and tutoring platform; otherwise faculty are not required to use the additional course schedule features. More information About GPS can be found online at <https://gps.dasa.ncsu.edu/about/>

**SUGGESTION** > Best practices differ by college/major at NC State. In some departments, the faculty advisement system is thorough and intense. Among faculty who choose to use the GPS advisement platform, we suggest that those faculty be informed

of the preferred practice of using the notes section during the advisement process. For more information about the Student Success GPS Advising Platform, see <https://gps.dasa.ncsu.edu/office-of-advising-technology/fast-facts/>

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**SUGGESTION** > APC suggests that the senator discuss this issue with the dean’s office at the College.

**SUMMARY:** Going forward, APC will continue to provide suggestions and recommendations following our committee meetings. Committee suggestions underscore the importance of pursuing opportunities that provide greater collaboration between faculty and administrators. Committee recommendations seek support for a motion to strengthen shared governance as well as address policies that impact academic and governance issues at NC State.

II. **Old Business**

None discussed.

III. **Adjournment**

Academic Policy Committee adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jade Berry James  
Co-chair Academic Policy Committee