

**North Carolina State University**  
**Minutes of the Spring 2021 General Faculty Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 23, 2021**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Chair Hans Kellner, Associate Chair Philip Sannes, Senators Reiskind, Zagacki, Bernhard, Scott, Darhower, Nelson, Koch, Kittle Autry, McGowan, Erdim, Taylor, Nicholas-Walker, Yoon, Kirby, Boyer, Funkhouser, Riehn, Ashwell, Vincent, Bird

**Guests:** Chancellor Randy Woodson, Provost Warwick Arden, Dr. Monica Osburn, Dr. Angie Smith, Marc Hoit, Roy Baroff

**1. Call to Order**

*Hans Kellner, Chair of the Faculty*

The spring 2021 General Faculty Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm

**2. Remarks from the Chair**

*Hans Kellner, Chair of the Faculty*

Chair Kellner introduced the topic of the meeting and announced that March 24<sup>th</sup> is NC State's Day of Giving.

Chair Kellner commented on the March 17<sup>th</sup> General Faculty Meeting, chaired by Dr. Carolyn Bird, "she did a great job and it was an interesting meeting." It was the first time many of the faculty had heard from the presenters, Amy Orders, Emergency Management and Mission Continuity; Dr. Julie Casani, Student Health Services.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the October 13, 2020 General Faculty Meeting**

*Hans Kellner, Chair of the Faculty*

The minutes from the October 13, 2020 General Faculty meeting were presented and approved.

**4. Remarks and Q&A**

*Randy Woodson, Chancellor*

Chancellor Woodson welcomed everyone to the spring 2021 General Faculty meeting. He remarked on the importance of the topic, Faculty Mental Health & Wellness, due to the challenging conditions everyone has faced due to the pandemic.

He added, in regards to Dr. Casani and Amy Orders, "I've never been around two harder working individuals that have given this university so much in the last year." He also thanked Provost Arden, Katharine Stewart, and others in the provost's office for everything they've done to maintain mission continuity on the academic side

The Chancellor acknowledged the hard work that went into planning for the spring and the efforts that were surmounted to deal with the testing protocols. "To date, we've done over 60,000 tests since the beginning of the spring semester." He went on to say that the tests are free to those receiving the tests, but it's not free to the university; the 60,000 tests completed so far cost six million dollars.

Chancellor Woodson also thanked colleagues in the College of Veterinary Medicine who worked hard over the holiday break to get a laboratory up and operational. The laboratory will be running the majority of the tests on campus going forward and doing so at about 40% - 50% of the cost of private labs. The lab is officially CLIA certified, which means the university does not need backup plans in the event of positives. Charlie Maimone's office in Facilities played a big role in figuring out how to set up the lab, get the renovations completed, the equipment in place, and supplies ordered. The Chancellor also acknowledged Brad Bohlander, Chief Communications Officer and Associate Vice Chancellor for University Communications, for making the website more transparent and up-to-date even with the rapidly changing statistics.

"I know there are a lot of questions about the vaccine, I have the same questions. We're hopeful now that we are certified as a vaccine center. We will be authorized to distribute the vaccine when we have it. We're still working on the protocols we would use to give vaccines to those in our community who are most vulnerable and those that have no choice but to work on campus. If I have any say, it will go to those frontline workers in housing and dining and places that have to work face to face with our students and faculty and staff every day."

Chancellor Woodson went on to say that, "NC State continues to be a highly in demand university. We have an all-time record high number of applicants. As of this morning, close to 35,000 students have applied for fall admission to the freshman class. It looks like we'll have another robust freshman class."

Chancellor Woodson also gave a shout out to Dean Louis Martin-Vega for being elected to the National Academy of Engineering, the highest honor an academic engineer can receive in the country. "He was elected largely because of his contributions to bringing underrepresented students into engineering." Dean Louis Martin Vega is NC State's 18<sup>th</sup> member elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

## **5. Remarks and Q&A**

*Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost*

Provost Arden began by providing updates on the search for Dean of CHASS and Senior Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. The search for the next dean of CHASS is well underway with Dean Mark Hoversten chairing the search. The finalist will be scheduled the weeks of March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup>. "I'm very excited about that search. We have a very strong field and I appreciate those who are sitting on the search committee."

The search for Senior Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, previously held by Louis Hunt, is also well underway. Senior Vice Provost Duane Larick is leading the search. Candidate selection will occur today and the first round of interviews will occur mid-March and finalist interviews will be in April.

The Provost continued by welcoming Dr. Doneka Scott, the new Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. She joins us from the University of Oregon. "I also continue to be indebted to Dr. Zapata and Dr. Smith for serving in interim roles."

Provost Arden gave brief updates on two 5-year leadership reviews. The Dean of the College of Design, Dean Hoversten and the Dean of the College of Textiles, Dean Hinks, underwent comprehensive five year reviews this year. Great reviews were received on both. "In all honesty, both had very strong reviews and there is a lot of material in those reviews that both deans will be able to capitalize on."

In regards to the strategic plan, the Provost noted that the strategic plan is taking shape with several overarching goals and brief narratives. Over thirty listening sessions were conducted across campus. The Executive Steering Committee will take the input, collate, review, and integrate it into the final draft of the plan. Afterwards, the plan goes on to the Chancellor and then to the Board of Trustees. "I am excited about this plan and I think it really builds on the last plan. It emphasizes the things that are important to

us, and I'm hoping that every member of the NC State community can see themselves in this plan and help us provide a pathway forward."

### **Questions and Discussion**

Chair Kellner: Is there a central guiding force that will keep the racial equity process moving and measured? I'm wondering if a racial campus climate dashboard, analogous to what we have for Protect the Pack, might not be an interesting and original thought.

Provost Arden: I give a lot of credit to Sheri Schwab, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, for creating a lot of momentum. We had a racial equity summit and a to-do list came from that. We are also responding to requests that we've had from multiple groups of students and individuals. We've studied this with task forces, we know where the issues are, and we are moving forward in terms of compulsory training for employees and training for students. One of the things I am committed to is that equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging will be highlighted in the strategic plan.

Chancellor Woodson: There are two separate task forces that have been active. The system-wide task force, where the report came out at the last board meeting, is located on the UNC System webpage. The report for NC State's Racial Equity Summit, held late fall, will be published on the OIED's website. Actions, current initiatives, and status of the initiatives are located on OIED's website.

Associate Chair Sannes: A question coming from several faculty has to do with the wellness free days taking the place of spring break. I think some have to do with student's response to it and maybe faculty members not observing it effectively enough. What feedback have you received, either positive or negative, to this approach?

Chancellor Woodson: The students do not like taking spring break and splitting it up into multiple, isolated days, various days of the week. We did that for health and safety reasons. We work with students and others to think differently about how we would have wellness days throughout the semester. You're right that students have expressed a lot of concern that faculty don't necessarily view those as free days. We've reminded students that faculty have a lot of discretion over their coursework, assignments, etc, but we've told the students that we'll continue to advocate to deans and department heads and faculty, that we would like our faculty and students to give our students, and themselves, a day for rest and reflection and not additional work.

Associate Chair Sannes: Will anti-racism be included in the strategic plan?

Provost Arden: The word 'anti-racism' is not included in the overarching goal, but it is a very important subtext. Yes, absolutely that will be part of what is becoming Goal 4 for the emerging strategic plan, which is focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, wellbeing, and wellness.

Associate Chair Sannes: Are plans for May commencement on target or ongoing?

Provost Arden: I, along with the Chancellor and Dr. Hunt, are working through a number of alternatives. The reality is that a large convention with 18,000 people is just not going to happen. We are not confident that things will be safe enough by early May to do that.

Chair Kellner: Will you say a few words about the finances of the university and about the number of furloughed employees who have been brought back to employment?

Chancellor Woodson: We had over 50 employees that had been furloughed temporarily for different periods of time. As of last week, we were down to just a little over 100 that are still in some stage of furlough. A lot of that had a lot to do with bringing our students back. What is often not discussed, but

should be, is how many jobs the university provides for students that were not part of the furloughs because they're temporary employees. We've been able to give many more jobs to our students this spring.

With regards to the finances of the university, we are in good shape. Our deans and other unit leaders are required to spend within their budget and not beyond their budget. We don't have long term systemic structural deficits, and so we started in a better place. Funding from the federal government has helped because those funds can be used to support our students and support COVID related expenses, such as testing. The university system is not asking for a lot of additional expenses, other than raises for employees and enrollment growth funding.

One final point, with the strong bottom line budget for the state, a lot of the money is nonrecurring. We could see an infusion of a fair amount of cash that could help us with a lot of deferred maintenance and some of the buildings that have significant R&R needs.

Chair Kellner: Do you have developing plans to decommission buildings in the future?

Chancellor Woodson: There are a lot of buildings where we've got a lot of work to do to bring them back, but we don't have any immediate plans to tear anything down at this point.

Chair Kellner welcomed and introduced Dr. Doneka Scott, Vice Chancellor and Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. Dr. Scott thanked Chair Kellner for the welcome and mentioned how she is looking forward to meeting everyone.

## **6. Faculty Mental Health & Wellness**

Monica Osburn, Executive Director, NC State University Counseling Center

Dr. Osburn presented data related to student mental health and wellbeing.

Students in Generation Z are the least likely to say their mental health is excellent. Their level of impact and stress of what's happening in the world is significantly different than what others may be experiencing.

NC State participated in a national study called the Healthy Minds Study. The Healthy Minds Study occurred last fall, which was pre-pandemic. An estimated 55.1% of students at NC State University are experiencing symptoms of at least one significant mental health problem, such as depression, anxiety disorders, self-injury, suicidal thoughts, or eating disorders. From our population of 35,298 students, this translates to approximately 19,460 total students with mental health problem. Among these students, an estimated 52% have received mental health services within the past year, whereas 48% have not.

Dr. Osburn also shared utilization rates where there have been a significant increase in the number of appointments, some of which is related to increased number of staff at the counseling center. Yearly utilization rates related to students has shown an increase as well.

Dr. Osburn went on to share Covid-19 impacts and highlighted a study from Dr. Lincoln Larson. The Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) analyzed data from 47,797 college students seeking treatment at 143 counseling centers during fall 2020. NC State's data look similar to this data.

### **Question and Discussion**

Associate Chair Sannes: Is there any chance that there could have been any non-response bias in any of the categories that you looked at.

Dr. Osburn: There is always a chance for bias. All of that was reviewed and implemented through Nancy Welchel and her office. It was reviewed thoroughly by the data management team through Healthy Minds as well.

Senator Bass-Freeman: You said generation Z was least likely to report higher levels of wellbeing. I'm wondering if that's because they have higher expectations than other people in other generations.

Dr. Osburn: Speaking freely, that may be part of the factor, however, I also think a big contributor there is related to stigma. I think that the work that we do around reducing stigma and having these conversations also plays into feeling more genuine and honest as opposed to a 'figure it out' mentality.

Senator Bass-Freeman: What about the impact of social media? Do you think that has anything to do with it?

Dr. Osburn: I absolutely think there is a connection with the ability to share the screen or a text, as opposed to having an in personal conversation and the added components of social isolation

Associate Chair Sannes: 31% of students saying that they've got some kind of diagnosis of lifetime depression would seem to indicate that students are actually showing up on campus already depressed. Are we doing anything to identify or to assess this after they're here?

Dr. Osburn: We know that students are showing up on campus with mental health histories at greater rates than they ever have before. We try and get to them in orientation and earlier to have those conversations, to make sure that they are connected and supported before crisis happens. We try to make sure that there's a transition of care if they have care from home, so we really do try and work with the disability resource office, as well as orientation and housing. There are lots of faculty who invite us into some of their classrooms just to talk about mental health in general and the services that are provided on campus as an additional layer of awareness. Some faculty have also made me aware of information that they put in their syllabus or that they have a slide of the resources at the Counseling Center in case of need.

Chair Kellner: Your charts about the issues that you're dealing with never mentioned alcohol. I was wondering several things about campus alcohol use, which it's my understanding, is a major factor on all college campuses. Do you believe instinctively that the COVID situation, the social isolation, the problems of obtaining relationships, has increased or changed or decreased alcohol use?

Dr. Osburn: I can absolutely tell you that we are experiencing higher rates of alcohol and drug use, as well as domestic violence. Pre-COVID, we were actually below average in respect to alcohol use and risk on campus. Our last statistic on this indicated that about 24% of students endorsed participating in some level of binge drinking.

Associate Chair Sannes: Given the unusual circumstances we're all facing right now, are you providing any tele-counseling to students who are either in their hometowns or maybe other temporary locations?

Dr. Osburn: Yes, the only students that we can't by law serve right now are students who are out of state, and that is based on our jurisdiction with our license so out of state out of country. For those students, we are working with other campuses across the nation. We're getting them referrals, and our case managers are making sure that they are set up. We are absolutely seeing students all over the state of North Carolina.

## **7. Faculty Wellbeing**

Angie Smith, Teaching Associate Professor, College of Education

Dr. Smith began by introducing herself as a partner, a mother, a faculty, a counselor educator and licensed professional counselor in North Carolina. “Pre-pandemic, I actually moved in those spaces at varying times and rates and but never at the same time. So as a parent, navigating those spaces was challenging.”

“It’s important for us as faculty to think about how we’re doing in relationship to all of these different factors. How are we feeling about the meaning of our work and what we bring into the spaces where we’re teaching and researching and providing service? How are we doing socially even in isolated situations where we may not be meeting in person, but connecting in a distance? How are we feeling about the fiscal way that we show up into our university space, and how are we feeling personally and professionally about that? I’m so excited that we’re talking about this, because I think the more we talk about it, the more we can reduce the stigma of talking about mental health and continue to put things into place that align with our mission and also our strategic plan.”

Dr. Smith shared a survey that went out in October 2020. There were about 1100 respondents across multiple areas. It was a very enlightening survey and not necessarily surprising, but also it’s a little frightening in terms of the results. Number one, the majority of our faculty are experiencing elevated levels of frustration and stress and anxiety. Two thirds of the survey respondents are struggling with increased workload. Even without a commute and being able to log on and log off, working hours have exponentially increased for many of us. Therefore, work life integration could really be deteriorating.

Finally, another highlight is the idea of retirement. More than half of faculty are considering retiring or at least changing careers and leaving higher education, with many of those being tenured faculty.

Dr. Smith shared ideas that can be implemented in colleges, departments, programs, and on individual levels. Systemic change can include hiring practices, HR systems, policies, and reducing time for meetings to 30-45 minutes. At the college level, ideas include clear communication, promoting wellness, administrative check-ins and providing optional virtual spaces. At the department level, individual connections with faculty and staff, prioritizing self-care, and flexibility could help. For the program and individual level, ideas include peer groups and asking staff/faculty what they need.

Dr. Smith went on to share events planned for NC State Wellness Days: Restorative Yoga, High Ropes Climbing Outing, Faculty Chat Café, Wolfpack Scavenger Hunt, and others.

### **Question and Discussion**

Associate Chair Sannes: You mentioned the Higher Education article. Is there any specific faculty group that seems to be experiencing the most elevated levels of stress?

Dr. Smith: If memory serves me right, female faculty are really highlighted. People of color are also highlighted.

### **8. Issues of Concern (IOCs)**

Chair Kellner reminded faculty that IOCs are assigned to the appropriate committees and the minutes from each committee are found on the Faculty Senate website. New Issues of Concern may be presented by emailing [faculty\\_senate@ncsu.edu](mailto:faculty_senate@ncsu.edu) or by contacting your college’s Senator(s).

### **9. Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was moved and properly seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.