

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
March 21, 2023

Regular Meeting No. 12 of the 69th Session Virtual Meeting March 21, 2023

Present: Chair McGowan; Associate Chair Collins; Parliamentarian Bird; Senators Auerbach, Bernhard, Carrier, DePerno, Edmisten, Edwards, Friend, Ghosh, Hakovirta, Hergeth, Koch, Kuznetsov, Lee, Lunardi, Narayan, Phukan, Reiskind, T. Robinson, W. Robinson, Roland, Stallmann, Taveirne, Tourino, Verhallen, and Zagacki

Guests: Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Helen Chen, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Programs; Doneka Scott, Vice Chancellor and Dean of DASA; Lisa Zapata, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor of DASA

1. Call to Order and Announcements - Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty

Chair McGowan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Chair McGowan announced that General information sessions on the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) process for the Spring 2023 semester will be held this Friday, March 24, 2023, from 10:00-11:30 am via Zoom: <https://go.ncsu.edu/rptmeetings>. Those interested may familiarize themselves with the [Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure website](#) prior to participation. If you have questions please contact arjinnet@ncsu.edu.

The university is piloting a new mentoring program. Faculty who would like a mentor or are interested in mentoring can sign up at go.ncsu.edu/mentor-the-pack.

2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 11 of the 69th Session, March 7, 2023
Maria Collins, Associate Chair of the Faculty

Associate Chair Collins called for a motion to approve the minutes of the eleventh meeting of the 69th session of the NC State Faculty Senate. A motion and second were made and the minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Remarks - Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty

Chair McGowan made the following remarks.

Today we continue a conversation started last semester over student mental health. Previously we heard from the students themselves about the impacts on their mental health and well-being at the university. Today we hear what the university has done and is doing to

address this. We will have a presentation about the recently concluded Student Mental Health Task Force as well as plans for how work to support student mental health will continue.

I realize that students are not alone in their mental health concerns. Faculty face challenges as well. One theme in the Senate for next year will be faculty mental health and well-being. In the meantime, though, I want to mention the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. FASAP offers free or reduced cost confidential counseling, financial, and legal resources, among other programs. If you are not familiar with the services available, I encourage you to take a look <https://er.hr.ncsu.edu/faculty-staff-assistance-program/>.

4. Provost's Remarks and Q&A - Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Provost Arden provided the following leadership updates. The search for the dean of the College of Engineering is progressing well; Provost Arden has reviewed the survey results of the candidates for dean of the College of Engineering and has met with the search committee and Chancellor Woodson.

Finalist candidates for the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will be on campus in the coming weeks. Todd Armstrong, Phibro Animal Health Corporation will be on campus March 21-22, 2023; Gary Fox, NC State University, will interview March 23-24, 2023; and Diane Rowland, University of Maine, will interview March 27-28, 2023.

Finalist candidates have been announced for the dean of the College of Sciences. Joseph Bidwell, East Tennessee State University, will interview March 30-31, 2023; Carolyn Mattingly, NC State University, will interview April 5-6, 2023; Christine Hrycyna, Purdue University, will interview April 11-12, 2023; and Lewis Owen, NC State University, will interview April 17-18, 2023.

The position of vice provost for Global Engagement was posted on Friday, March 17, 2023. Provost Arden encourages people to share the job prospectus and send recommendations on potential ideal candidates for recruitment.

Question and Discussion

Question: There are a total of 11 finalists for the three dean searches; as far as one can discern, it seems none of them are people of color. It seems an opportunity to add diversity to our top leadership has been missed.

Provost Arden: The search committees were all diverse committees and we have emphasized diversity and inclusion with briefings from The Office of Equal Opportunity. We empower the search committee and trust the search process to bring the strongest candidates in an equitable and most frequently diverse group.

5. Student Mental Health Task Force(SMHTF) and Q&A

Helen Chen, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Programs and co-chair of SMHTF

Lisa Zapata, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor, DASA and co-chair of SMHTF

Doneka Scott, Vice Chancellor and Dean of DASA

Senior Vice Provost Chen presented background information and updates of the Student Mental Health Task Force (SMHTF) since November 2022. In 2022, Vice Chancellor and Dean Doneka R. Scott charged the NC State Student Mental Health Task Force with urgently re-evaluating the university's mental health services, resources, and policies. The Task Force, consisting of students, faculty, and staff, received input from over 550 individuals in listening sessions and close to 1,100 public comments from the wider Wolfpack community, including parents and alumni. Additionally, faculty and staff across campus shared more than 400 existing resources, programs, or initiatives addressing mental health and well-being. The final report highlights the significant programs, services, and resources at NC State and where there are opportunities to expand and better support student mental health and well-being.

An implementation steering committee, made up of students, faculty, and staff, will oversee several teams to evaluate and operationalize the task force's recommendations. The Task Force identified overarching action items to improve student mental health, including integrating diversity, equity, inclusion, and mental health planning; forming implementation teams; continually assessing existing mental health services and programs; finding ways to increase awareness of current mental health and wellness resources; and engaging the campus community in the ongoing conversation regarding student mental health. The implementation teams can bring forth recommendations centered around culture of care, resources, and policy. A full list of recommendations can be found at wellness.ncsu.edu/updates.

Vice Chancellor Scott mapped the path forward and also reiterated that mental health has been a major part of NC State's previous strategic plan from 13 years ago. NC State has been working on initiatives and putting things in place for over the past decade. The Task Force's recommendations will be put into action as soon as possible by a newly established steering committee, which will start meeting immediately.

The steering committee has been tasked with carrying on the work of the Task Force and will select members to serve on implementation teams that will research and evaluate each recommendation. Acknowledging that not all recommendations may be feasible, evaluations will take into account cost, time, potential barriers, prioritization, and other factors to determine feasibility at NC State. Throughout the process, implementation teams will seek advice from and report to the steering committee. Once fully developed, the steering committee will share the implementation plan with the university community.

Question and Discussion

Question: Could you please give more information on what is meant by reviewing rigid academic expectations?

Senior Vice Provost Chen: The ideas we want to explore are the types of assessments available towards what pedagogy we can use to really help our students. We want to know if they have some richness in the course design or assessment method to support our students.

Question: As graduate student association president, Deveshwar Hariharan, mentioned, graduate students have repeatedly cited financial burdens as a key source of stress on campus, however the report does not appear to mention student fees, which are in our power to control or tuition which is suppose to be free or close to it, according to our State constitution.

Senior Vice Provost Chen: We discussed living costs and we understand how food insecurity is a threat to our students. We have recommendations to consider on how to identify available resources to support both graduate and undergraduate students. There has also been talk about additional endowments, scholarships, and graduate stipend assistantships. We did not talk about tuition fees; the tuition office is not really the purview of the Task Force.

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Zapata: There were two recommendations that touch on this a bit: to continue to address financial barriers to success among students, and also looking at if and how we can provide student services for distance education students.

Vice Chancellor Scott: There are 2-3 places where we talk about the finances, so the fees and finances will be discussed.

Provost Arden: Tuition and fees are an annual process; an advisory committee meets throughout September - October and makes a recommendation to the Chancellor, who then may modify that recommendation, and recommend something to the Board of Trustees. That eventually goes from BOT to the Board of Governors who have the final authority both on tuition and fees, which is delegated to them by the legislature.

The university has worked hard and continues to work hard at these issues. On the undergraduate side, tuition for in-state undergraduates has held constant now for seven years; there has been no increase in fees. There has been a slight decrease in fees because of the retirement of a debt service fee. We have also worked hard to try to expand the graduate student support where we can.

Question: Did the Task Force look at the fact that spring break has been a week later for the second straight year? We have been going nine weeks before breaking, and the students are stressed.

Senior Vice Provost Chen: The process in building the academic calendar is a complicated process with a lot of factors. The academic calendar is typically done 1-2 years in advance.

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Zapata: That was not a charge of the Task Force so we did not look at that.

Provost Arden: This Friday we will release the dates of the Wellness Days for the next three years. The next six semesters there will be one Wellness Day per semester.

Vice Chancellor Scott: I have asked Charles [Clift from Registration and Records] to have an assessment plan for the three years to assess the impact and the utility of Wellness Day, so that we would have our own information and data regarding the path forward.

Question: Will the requirements for Wellness Day be more stringent? I had several students who had professors assign work for those days.

Provost Arden: We communicated that that is not our preference and if possible, that assignments are not issued the following day. I think most faculty try to be respectful of that because they care about student health and mental health and well-being.

Question: Will Wellness Day assessment include input from professors? It can be very difficult for labs, with many sections per week, to accommodate these one off days off.

Vice Chancellor Scott: There will be faculty and staff. Charles Clift is the implementation lead; he will be bringing together faculty and students as part of this team to develop the assessment to move the conversation forward.

Question: My suggestion regarding Wellness Day, is it seems a lot of the opportunities for programming development can be turned over to the students and maybe Student Government evaluates them. So, rather than guessing what students want or need, having them do it would be empowering for them and help them build community.

My question is what are the plans for assessing whether you are doing the right thing? How are they going to be assessed to see if they are actually working in the context of a background society, which of course, is not static.

Vice Chancellor Scott: For each of the implementation teams, one part of the charge is to develop the assessment plan for the recommendations moving forward, because we do want to be evidence-based in a world in which much of this is not evidence-based.

Question: One of the long-term recommendations of the report is to modify the Department of Health and Exercise studies GEP courses, to increase wellness and life skills education. Please explain the recommendation and how to implement it.

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor Zapata: Given that every student has to take two health and exercise studies classes, we really wanted to see if we could take a look at infusing and increasing what was already there, as well to really have a wellness component, so that we know every student, in at least two courses, has a focus in this area.

Comment: Another level of complexity and perhaps opportunity; it is difficult to improve culture for students without also addressing culture for all employees, faculty, staff, and admin. Yesterday I asked a colleague about what NC State could learn from the successes at her land grant HBCU, and her answer was that they have a strong culture of service and community.

6. Old and New Business

a. Update on revisions to UNC System Policy Manual Section 300.5.1

Chair McGowan shared that, “In our last meeting, I said that we could expect guidance from the System Office on “green light” activities that are acceptable under the new Compelled Speech Policy. Just this morning, I received word that this had been sent to campuses; once I learn more, I will provide an update.”

b. Other proposed revisions to UNC System Policy Manual

Chair McGowan provided updates at the System level. “First, I want to share a positive example of shared governance at the system level. A series of working groups with members representing faculty and administrators from across the UNC System campuses are examining several sections of the Code that have not been updated in years, including Faculty Workload and Recognition, Evaluation of Teaching, and Post-Tenure Review.

This is a link to a slide show summarizing each of the working groups and their leadership:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1VrIJ8Wvhu1bZkuHeXIEFdJGcqxdCxmN/edit?usp=sharing&oid=107402470220469795594&rtpof=true&sd=true>

As reports and recommendations from these working groups are made available, I will share them with the Faculty Senate.

There are some additional policy revisions that have been proposed without faculty input in their drafting. Some of the most extensive such revisions will affect faculty rights to due process and grievance, including in the case of discharge or denial of reappointment, promotion, or tenure. This link will bring you to a summary of the key proposed changes:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ehnBVRG7ywXOclw8MISL_BNf8WaKdQokiidc9zoxh9Y/edit?usp=sharing

Given the concerns outlined in this document, members of the Faculty Assembly have already prepared and delivered a response. Again, I will keep an eye on this situation and keep you informed.

c. Faculty Senate Elections

Chair McGowan provided an update on the 604/607 and 603 elections that occur at the same time as the Faculty Senate elections. She encouraged colleagues to reach out to

those they feel would be a great addition to the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate committees. The deadline for receiving nominations has been extended in order to get a robust shared governance process in terms of the elections for the Faculty Senate.

7. Issues of Concern (IOCs)

Faculty Issues of Concern can be submitted at any time to a senator or to the Office of the Faculty Senate via email at Faculty_Senate@ncsu.edu

8. Adjourn

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:29 p.m.