

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Regular Meeting No. 9 of the 70th Session
February 6, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

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Faculty Senate Chambers

February 6, 2024

Present: Chair McGowan, Associate Chair DePerno, Parliamentarian Bird; Senators Ange-van Heugten, Bell, Blank, Breen, Burke, Daley, Davis, Diaconeasa, Drake, Edmisten, Edwards, Friend, Hajbabaie, Hajibabai, Hou, Hyman, Lee, Jasper, Kedrowicz, Marchant, Morant, Mullins, Narayan, Phukan, Reiskind, Robinson, Roland, Taveirne, Tourino, and Verhallen

Guests: Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Wade Maki, Chair of the UNC Faculty Assembly

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

Chair McGowan officially commenced the ninth meeting of the 70th Session of the Faculty Senate, extending a warm welcome to all attendees. She went on to announce the opening of the COACHE survey on faculty job satisfaction, emphasizing the addition of new questions related to well-being and workload. These topics have been previously discussed in the Faculty Senate, indicating a responsive and evolving approach to faculty concerns. The survey results are anticipated to guide the development of university initiatives and policy adjustments; McGowan specifically mentioned improvements in promotion policies for professional track faculty and the enhancement of mentorship resources for tenure track faculty.

McGowan highlighted upcoming informational sessions hosted by the Provost's Office on the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process, as well as sessions by the Office of Information Technology on data classification at NC State. She also recognized Black History Month and NC State's themed observance around "Divine Hands: An Exploration of Black Spirituality, Healing, and the Arts."

2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 8 of the 70th Session, January 23, 2024 - *Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty*

Associate Chair DePerno called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 23, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously without any corrections.

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

Chair McGowan noted that the upcoming session on February 20, 2024 promises to be informative, featuring several leaders from NC State Transportation. The focus will be on presenting updates regarding parking fees, a subject of significant interest and relevance to the faculty. Furthermore, there will be an open floor for questions concerning any aspect of transportation and parking, underscoring the Senate's commitment to transparency and dialogue.

Faculty members were encouraged to gather and submit questions beforehand, either through direct email or the faculty senate address, ensuring a well-prepared and productive discussion.

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

Provost Warwick Arden began by acknowledging the full agenda of the day's meeting and expressing gratitude for the acknowledgment of the COACHE survey on faculty satisfaction. He emphasized the importance of the COACHE survey, conducted every three years to longitudinally track faculty satisfaction. The survey, focusing on aspects such as well-being and workload, is crucial for gaining insights to inform university initiatives. He urged participation from February 5th to April 1st, highlighting the survey's role in gathering valuable information for the university's improvement efforts.

Next Tuesday, February 13th, is designated as a Wellness Day, during which no classes will be held, and instructors are encouraged to avoid scheduling tests or deadlines. This initiative underscores the university's commitment to health and well-being, with resources available specifically for faculty at the faculty wellness website.

Provost Arden provided a detailed update on Poe Hall, explaining the ongoing investigations and testing phases by consultants Geosyntec to assess the building's environment and air quality. He assured that the university is methodically and thoroughly addressing concerns, with initial results expected soon.

In light of recent media scrutiny, particularly a WRAL article questioning the university's compliance with federal requirements, both Provost Arden and University Legal Counsel Allison Newhart clarified NC State's position. They refuted claims of non-cooperation with federal investigations, emphasizing ongoing collaboration with various federal and state agencies, including the EPA and NIOSH. The university remains committed to transparency and due diligence in addressing the situation at Poe Hall.

The Provost announced leadership transitions, including Kevin Howell's departure and Julie Smith's appointment as the new Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, Partnerships, and Economic Development.

Arden paid tribute to Dave Rainer, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Environmental Health and Public Safety, who passed away on January 30th. Rainer's contributions to NC State over 30 years were highlighted, noting his role in several key safety and efficiency innovations.

5. Discussion of UNC System Proposal "Foundations of American Democracy" - Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty; Wade Maki, Chair of the UNC Faculty Assembly

Chair McGowan introduced the main topic of the meeting, focusing on the UNC System's proposal for "Foundations of American Democracy." Dr. Wade Maki from UNC Greensboro, Chair of the UNC Faculty Assembly, was invited to provide insights into the proposal, its background, and its implications.

Dr. Maki emphasized the educational need for students to have a deeper understanding of the country's foundational documents and principles, suggesting that public universities play a role in preparing students for democratic life. He highlighted the NC Reach Act, a legislative proposal that mandates specific curriculum requirements, which he described as an overreach into curriculum by legislation.

The "Foundations" proposal, initiated by the System Office and not the Faculty Assembly, aimed to address the educational need and the looming Reach Act by involving faculty in the process to

ensure academic integrity and autonomy. Faculty members from various disciplines and institutions were involved in developing the proposal, emphasizing the importance of faculty control over curriculum and the use of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to meet educational objectives. The proposal aims to preserve faculty control, ensure college-level courses, and allow flexibility in how institutions meet the requirement.

The potential for this initiative to set a precedent for further curriculum mandates was discussed, with assurances that steps would be taken to prevent such outcomes. Institutions will have autonomy in implementing and assessing the SLOs, with the UNC System providing guidance but not dictating specific courses or methods. Feedback on the proposal is being collected, with a timeline leading to potential Board of Governors approval in April 2024 and implementation in Fall 2025.

Dr. Maki and participants discussed the potential legislative intervention despite the UNC System's efforts with this proposal. Maki suggested that halting the progress of the Reach Act in the Senate might be due to behind-the-scenes efforts to present an alternative that would be more favorable and controllable within the UNC System. The timing of the Board of Governors' decision, before the legislature's return, aims to position this proposal as a preemptive measure to avoid direct legislative curriculum mandates.

Participants expressed concerns about the implementation, emphasizing that many courses already cover the proposal's requirements. The focus was on ensuring the proposal doesn't increase time to degree or significantly divert resources. Maki encouraged feedback, especially on making the proposal workable and addressing exemptions.

Questions were raised about the inclusion of specific readings in the student learning outcomes (SLOs) and whether AP credits could satisfy the requirements. Maki confirmed that the choice of specific readings aimed to meet stakeholder expectations while minimizing the proposal's scope compared to the Reach Act. He also noted the flexibility in assessing whether courses meet the SLOs without strictly requiring students to read the listed documents in full.

The discussion highlighted that each institution would determine how to incorporate the requirement into their curriculum, deciding which existing or new courses could meet one or both SLOs. Feedback on exemptions and the process for certifying courses as meeting the requirement was deemed valuable.

Participants voiced concerns about the proposal's philosophical implications, suggesting it might represent a selective portrayal of American values. The need for a comprehensive and balanced curriculum that includes various perspectives, including oppositional viewpoints from the founding period, was discussed.

6. Old and New Business

a. Elections

Chair McGowan provided updates on upcoming faculty senate elections, stressing the importance of having a full senate to strengthen shared governance, especially in a political climate where higher education is a focal point. She encouraged faculty to participate in recruitment efforts for senate positions and expressed openness to discussing the role of faculty chair with interested individuals.

7. Issues of Concern (IOCs)

Chair McGowan encouraged faculty to submit issues of concern via the online form on the Faculty Senate website, either confidentially or anonymously. Issues of Concern can be submitted at any time to a senator or to the Office of the Faculty Senate [online](#) or via email at Faculty_Senate@ncsu.edu

8. Adjourn

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:38 p.m.