

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Regular Meeting No. 10 of the 70th Session
February 20, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting No. 10 of the 70th Session Faculty Senate Chambers February 20, 2024

Present: Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty; Chris DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Carolyn Bird, Parliamentarian; Senators Ange-van Heugten, Bell, Burke, Daley, Diaconeasa, Drake, Edmisten, Edwards, Friend, Hajbabaie, Hajibabai, Hou, Hyman, Jasper, Kedrowicz, Lee, Morant, Mullins, Narayan, Reiskind, Robinson, Roland, Taveirne, Tourino, Verhallen, Zagacki

Guests: Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Than Austin, Director; Holt Craven, Assistant Director for Finance and IT; Kimberly Grainger, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Policy; Katharine Stewart, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs

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

Chair McGowan called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM and requested a motion to amend the agenda due to a speaker conflict and the need to add an item of pressing nature. The motion to approve the updated agenda was passed with a majority vote from the senators present, both physically and virtually.

Chair McGowan announced the availability of reference cards from a diversity in STEM symposium, designed to provide information on prevention and counseling services available through NC State's student health and counseling. These resources aim to support student wellbeing and were offered to the senators.

Additionally, McGowan reiterated important announcements from the previous Faculty Senate meeting, highlighting upcoming online sessions hosted by the Office of Information Technology on understanding data classification at NC State, and general information sessions in March hosted by the Provost's office on the reappointment, promotion, and tenure process.

2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 9 of the 70th Session, February 6, 2024 - Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty

Associate Chair DePerno asked if there were any corrections or adjustments needed for the minutes. No corrections or adjustments were suggested. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Walter Robinson and was seconded. The motion to approve the minutes was carried unanimously with no opposition.

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

Chair McGowan announced that the meeting would feature presentations from members of University Transportation, discussing updates to parking fees, details of which were shared with Senators in advance. The guests were also prepared to answer any transportation-related questions, with McGowan hoping that Senators had solicited such questions from their respective constituents.

Additionally, Chair McGowan addressed a change in the agenda concerning updates regarding Poe Hall, including initial testing results shared by the University earlier in the month. A planned agenda item to recruit a faculty toxicologist for discussing these results had to be postponed due to a scheduling conflict. In the interim, the provost was asked to cover updates on Poe Hall in his remarks, coinciding with an email sent to the campus community earlier that day regarding the matter.

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

Provost Arden provided updates on university operations, leadership changes, recognitions, and the ongoing situation with Poe Hall, reinforcing the commitment to transparency and excellence at NC State.

- **General Information Sessions:** Arden highlighted upcoming general information sessions related to the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process, emphasizing their importance for those involved in the RPT cycle this year.
- **Leadership Announcements:** Senior Vice Provost of Faculty and Academic Affairs, Katharine Stewart, will return to faculty at the end of the academic year, commended for her contributions. Additionally, reviews for Provost Sheri Schwab (Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity) and Vice Provost Mark Bernhard (Continuing and Lifelong Education) were mentioned, along with encouragement for participation in surveys related to these reviews.
- **Fulbright Awards:** NC State was named a Fulbright top-producing institution, with 11 students and 7 faculty members selected for Fulbright awards this academic year. This recognition places NC State in the top ranks for Fulbright scholars and students among U.S. doctoral institutions.
- **University Faculty Scholars:** The latest cohort of University Faculty Scholars was announced, highlighting the broad representation across colleges and departments.
- **Poe Hall Updates:** Arden discussed the ongoing evaluation of Poe Hall, including environmental and health assessments. Initial environmental studies identified the presence of a specific PCB (1,2,6-2) and showed generally low levels of PCBs in air and surface samples. A human health evaluation, or epidemiologic study, is to be reopened with assistance from NIOSH and the Department of Health and Human Services. Arden emphasized the importance of thorough and precise work in this evaluation, indicating that results and further actions will be transparently shared with the faculty.
- **Q&A Session:** Arden addressed concerns regarding the work currently being performed in Poe Hall, clarifying that it is to isolate a data mainframe for access and operation, not for cleaning or remediation that would affect testing results. The

environmental and health evaluations are comprehensive, with efforts to ensure accuracy and transparency throughout the process.

Arden addressed a question regarding the Chancellor's memo, which seemed to imply that faculty and staff would not return to Poe Hall by the end of 2024. He explained that, given the time required for reactivating the HVAC system, conducting tests, completing the human health evaluation, and undertaking any necessary remediation, it is unlikely that the building would be accessible for regular use before the spring of 2025. He emphasized the importance of patience and thoroughness over speed in resolving the situation to ensure safety and compliance.

5. Transportation Updates - *Than Austin, Director and Holt Craven, Assistant Director for Finance and IT*

Than Austin, Director of Transportation, presented a proposal for parking fee increases at the university, emphasizing the department's reliance on parking revenues and the student transit fee as its primary sources of funding, without any support from the University or the State of North Carolina. The department operates on a nearly \$19 million budget, with parking and transit fees covering most expenses, including a significant capital improvement program and administrative costs.

Austin outlined a proposed 4.5% increase in parking fees across the board for all employees, students, and departments for each of the next two fiscal years. This approach was chosen as the fairest and most equitable way to distribute the system's costs among all users. For example, under the proposal, the monthly fee for a C permit would increase by \$1.50, and a B permit by \$2 for each of the next two years.

The presentation included a benchmark comparison with peer institutions in the UNC system, indicating that the proposed rates are typical for one of the larger schools in the system. The need for the increase was attributed to several factors, including inflationary pressures post-COVID-19, which have significantly raised the costs of parking maintenance and repairs, labor, and general operational expenses on campus.

Austin further elaborated on the Department of Transportation's plan for the proposed parking fee increases, emphasizing the necessity of planning for future developments on campus. He noted that upcoming projects would affect parking availability and demand, particularly mentioning the anticipated demolition of an old section of the Coliseum deck due to its age and condition. This highlighted the need for careful consideration of parking infrastructure replacement and the future of campus parking.

Austin showcased several recent improvements and initiatives undertaken by the Department of Transportation to enhance parking services. These included the construction of new parking spaces, a seal coating program, the conversion of lighting to LED in parking areas, pressure washing of parking decks, improved exterior signage, and the introduction of new technology to indicate parking deck occupancy. These efforts

aimed to not only improve the efficiency and sustainability of parking facilities but also to enhance their appearance and structural integrity.

Addressing questions about alternatives to the fee increase, Austin explained the rationale behind the proposal. Given the significant number of parking permits issued to students and the extensive use of parking assets by the student population, it was deemed necessary to include them in the fee adjustments. This approach was part of a broader strategy to ensure the financial sustainability of the parking and transportation system while supporting the university's missions. He explained that the proposed fee increases were carefully considered to distribute the financial burden equitably across all users, including students, for whom new facilities had recently been constructed. Austin highlighted the financial responsibility of renovating the parking deck associated with the University Towers acquisition, emphasizing the deck's poor condition and the significant investment required for its renovation.

Addressing questions about future planning and the allocation of parking resources, Austin acknowledged the challenges posed by construction projects and the high demand for B zone parking on North campus. He noted that while there have been efforts to manage the impact of these projects on parking availability, the Department is also considering the long-term implications of the physical master plan, which may not significantly increase net parking but rather focus on alternative transportation methods and land use decisions.

Responding to inquiries about sliding scale fees for parking based on income, Austin shared his openness to discussing this approach, recognizing its potential to address equity concerns. He cited his experience at UNC Chapel Hill, where a sliding scale is implemented, but also noted the complexities and policy implications of such a system.

Austin also addressed concerns about the disappearance of B spaces on North Campus prior to recent construction projects and assured that the Department is committed to finding solutions to parking challenges while also considering the broader goals of campus development and sustainability.

6. NC State's Response to UNC System Policy Changes - Katharine Stewart, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs and Kimberly Grainger, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Policy

Katharine Stewart and Kim Grainger discussed NC State's response to upcoming UNC System policy changes affecting faculty work and employment. They highlighted that the UNC System Office is updating several policies that haven't been revised in years, including faculty workload, faculty grievance and non-reappointment, performance review of tenured faculty, teaching effectiveness, annual review, and policies fostering undergraduate student success.

Specifically, the new faculty workload policy will require every full-time faculty member to have a workload plan, a practice already familiar at NC State through the use of SFRs

(Statements of Faculty Responsibility). Although this change aligns with NC State's existing practices, other policy updates will necessitate adjustments at the institution.

To ensure compliance with the system-wide policy revisions within a likely tight timeframe, Stewart and Grainger plan to convene an active working group comprising a majority of faculty members, including representatives from relevant Faculty Senate committees, faculty involved in faculty affairs, and representatives from the Provost's Department Head Advisory group. This group will work with the Office of General Counsel to draft revisions to NC State's corresponding policies.

Due to the expedited nature of these changes, Stewart and Grainger are committed to embedding a mechanism for regular review of the implementation of the revised policies, allowing for future adjustments based on feedback and impact assessments. They aim to involve faculty voices as much as possible in the initial compliance efforts and ensure ongoing evaluation and improvement of the policies to reflect the needs and experiences of the NC State community.

7. Old and New Business

- a. **Elections** - Chair McGowan emphasized the importance of recruiting faculty from various colleges. A template email prepared by the GOCORE Committee will be shared to assist in messaging about open seats for the 603 Hearing Committee and the 604/607 Faculty Grievance and Non-Reappointment Committee. Elections for the Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate and the NC State delegation to the UNC Faculty Assembly were also announced. There was a push for involvement in the UNC Faculty Assembly, which does not require elected membership in the Faculty Senate at NC State.
- b. **Faculty Wellbeing** - The discussion focused on addressing "process sludge," referring to unnecessary and excessive friction in administrative processes that can impact faculty wellbeing. The Executive Committee has been focusing on identifying areas where administrative processes can be streamlined to remove such sludge, particularly in research administration. A survey is being planned to gather faculty perspectives on administrative processes most in need of review and streamlining.
- c. **System Proposal (Foundations of American Government)** - An update on the feedback submitted to the UNC System Office regarding the Foundations of American Government proposal was provided. While recognizing the importance of civics education, faculty across the system raised concerns about academic freedom, the details of proposed student learning outcomes, and the realities of implementing such a requirement. Feedback from NC State faculty was summarized and submitted along with comments from other campuses. The combined feedback showed consistent concerns, particularly regarding academic freedom and implementation challenges. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available on how the feedback was received and any resulting changes to the proposal.

8. 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 online or via email at Faculty_Senate@ncsu.edu

9. Adjourn

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:30 PM.