NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
September 3, 2024

Regular Meeting No. 2 of the 71st Session   Faculty Senate Chambers   September 3, 2024

Present: Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty; Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Katharine McKee, Parliamentarian; Senators Allaire, Ange van Heugten, Bell, Blank, Burke, Campbell, Daley, Davis, Diaconeasa, Drake, Edmisten, Edwards, Fabiku, Fang, Hou, Jasper, Lowe Reed, Meiklejohn, Misra, Mullins, Paige, Robinson, Schwartzman, Taveirne, Taylor, Verhallen, Zaarour

Guests: Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Jennifer Gilmore, Director of Marketing and Communications, Campus Enterprises; Charles Hall, Staff Senate Chair; Jeff Halliburton, Sr. Director of Auxiliary Services, Campus Enterprises; Anthony Sanders, Associate Director, Wolfpack Outfitters; Daquan Tewberry, Student Senate President Pro Tempore

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

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

2. **Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 1 of the 71st Session, August 20, 2024 -** *Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty*

Associate Chair DePerno called for a motion to approve the minutes to the August 20, 2024 Faculty Senate Meeting. A motion and second were made and the minutes were approved.

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

Chair McGowan began by outlining the agenda for the session, starting with a presentation on Course Ready, a new resource being introduced by the university to benefit students. However, the chair notes that it will also affect instructors, who will need to decide the extent of their participation in the program.

Following the Course Ready discussion, the meeting will revisit the topic of IT resources regulations, which had been presented at the August 20, 2024 meeting. There will be time for further questions and discussions before holding the first formal vote of the Senate year to endorse the regulations. McGowan also introduces a new element to the meeting structure: regular updates from the leaders of the Staff Senate and Student Senate throughout the year. This will help maintain stronger connections and ensure that the Faculty Senate stays informed

about the ongoing work of these other branches of governance. In closing, McGowan emphasizes the consistent theme of strengthening relationships between the Faculty Senate, administration, and other senates on campus.

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

Provost Arden began by thanking Chair McGowan and the faculty, emphasizing his appreciation for their efforts. He calls for Honorary Degree nominations, underscoring their importance as the university's highest honor to recognize individuals for their societal contributions. Each commencement can grant up to three honorary degrees, totaling six annually, although this number is rarely reached. Arden encourages faculty members to consider submitting nominations, particularly those who could also serve as engaging commencement speakers. He reminds everyone that each college is asked to submit at least one nomination per year, and the nomination process is straightforward, with an online form available for submissions.

Arden provides updates on leadership changes, announcing that Eduardo Lorente will join as the Vice Provost for Budget and Business Operations on September 23rd, and David Monks will serve as interim Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement. He also discusses the recent submission of a compliance report regarding the new UNC System policy on equality, which replaces the previous diversity and inclusion policy. While the report is complete, it cannot yet be shared publicly until it is reviewed by the Board of Governors. Arden praises the collaboration between deans and various units in gathering the necessary data, noting that some positions were eliminated, though most were already vacant.

The provost acknowledges the significant effort involved in preparing the compliance report, thanking Kelly Wick from his office, legal counsel, and others who contributed to the process. After these updates, Arden invites any questions, but none are raised during the session. He concludes his remarks, expressing his gratitude once again to everyone involved.

5. **Course Ready** - *Rich Berlin, AVC Campus Enterprises; Jeff Halliburton, Sr. Director of Auxiliary Services, Campus Enterprises; Anthony Sanders, Associate Director, Wolfpack Outfitters; Jennifer Gilmore, Director of Marketing and Communications, Campus Enterprises*

Jeff Halliburton, Senior Director of Auxiliary Services for Campus Enterprises, introduces the Course Ready program as a transformative initiative for delivering course materials. Apologizing for the absence of Associate Vice Chancellor Rich Berlin, Halliburton explains that Course Ready aims to revolutionize how students receive their textbooks and materials.

The Course Ready program focuses on three key principles: Day-One Access, Digital-First delivery, and a Flat Rate pricing model. The initiative is designed primarily for undergraduate students, who will have their required materials available in a digital-first format from the start of classes. A flat-rate charge, determined by whether the student is full- or part-time, will be included on their tuition bill, though students can opt out if desired, in compliance with federal

law. The program represents a shift from the existing model, where students had to purchase materials after registration, to one where they receive them immediately.

Course Ready builds on the success of the university's All In program, launched in 2017, which provided digital-first materials to students as part of their registration. The program has grown significantly, covering over 1,000 course sections per semester. Halliburton explains that the decision to move forward with Course Ready came after an extensive review conducted with faculty and university leaders, and the program is set to launch in the spring semester.

Halliburton emphasizes that Course Ready aligns with similar programs at peer institutions, such as Appalachian State and UC Davis, which pioneered equitable access to course materials. Appalachian State's program, for example, has seen a 98% retention rate, with most students choosing not to opt out. The presentation went on to highlight the broad support for Course Ready among university leaders, including a recommendation from Provost Arden, and its expected benefits for NC State's students and faculty. The program simplifies the process of obtaining materials, removing the burden from students and ensuring they have the resources they need from day one.

The presentation continues with a focus on the second key consideration for the Course Ready program: its digital-first approach. Jeff Halliburton explains that while many course materials are now sold digitally, only about 7 out of 10 titles are available in a digital format, meaning that print materials are still a significant part of course transactions. Additionally, many publishers sell directly to students, bypassing the university bookstore. Halliburton uses WebAssign as an example, where all transactions are managed by the publisher Cengage. Despite the move to digital, there is still a role for print, with on-campus-developed course packets and other hybrid models such as scratch-off access codes still being used.

Halliburton then introduces the third key aspect of Course Ready: the flat-rate pricing model, which simplifies the cost structure for students. Undergraduates will pay a set price for their course materials, much like how they pay for housing, meal plans, and health insurance. He compares the flat rate to other mandatory student fees, which help standardize costs and make services more accessible, though he notes that not all students take full advantage of certain resources, like campus gym facilities.

The program is compliant with federal law, which requires an opt-out option for students who prefer to purchase their materials elsewhere. Halliburton emphasizes that Course Ready bundles course materials into a bookstore transaction, not a mandatory fee, ensuring that students retain the freedom to opt out.

The Course Ready presentation outlines four main pillars that align with the university's strategic plan, focusing on affordability, accessibility, convenience, and sustainability. The goal is to create a program that is affordable, predictable, and transparent for students, ensuring that they have access to all necessary materials without having to navigate complex purchasing

options. While the program is not designed to be perfect for every student, the opt-out provision ensures flexibility for those who prefer alternative methods of acquiring materials.

Affordability is a key concern, as the program aims to reduce the financial burden on students, particularly for those who may choose majors based on the cost of course materials.

Accessibility ensures that all students have the necessary resources from day one, which benefits both students and faculty by eliminating the friction often seen at the start of the semester when students scramble to obtain materials. The program will also help faculty by reducing the need for them to troubleshoot access issues for their students.

Convenience is another significant benefit, with feedback from peer institutions like the University of Colorado highlighting how important it is for students and families to have peace of mind, knowing that all materials are bundled and ready. Lastly, sustainability is emphasized through the digital-first approach, which reduces costs associated with printing and shipping textbooks, aligning with the university's sustainability goals.

The program maintains academic freedom, ensuring that faculty can choose the most appropriate materials for their courses, whether digital or print. It also supports Open Educational Resources (OER) and licensed content, allowing faculty to include a variety of materials. The goal is to centralize all digital content for easy student access, reducing the administrative burden on faculty.

The presentation also addresses what is included in the program: materials with an ISBN, digital content, physical access codes, and lab manuals. Excluded items, such as physical lab supplies and optional materials, will still be available for separate purchase, maintaining flexibility for students and faculty. The program focuses solely on required materials that have an ISBN, streamlining the adoption process and ensuring students get exactly what they need.

The presentation continues with a focus on ensuring that the adoption process for the Course Ready program remains seamless and similar to current processes. As the All In program phases out, the question regarding participation in All In will be removed, and instructors will simply indicate whether materials are required or optional. The aim is to make the adoption process straightforward for faculty, while reducing administrative burdens by automating tasks like linking materials to Moodle.

Jennifer Gilmore then disusses pricing for the Course Ready program. She shares her personal perspective as both a parent of college students and a team member, noting how the program will alleviate parental anxiety about the cost of materials. The program sets a fixed price of $279 per semester for full-time students and $179 for part-time students, helping to ensure that students have all necessary materials without unexpected costs. The fixed price reduces the burden on students to shop around or risk missing out on important resources due to cost concerns. The pricing strategy is based on current student spending patterns, and the program

aims to balance the needs of students across different disciplines, particularly those in STEM fields where materials are often more expensive.

The rollout will take place in spring, and the communication plan is designed to ensure that students, parents, and faculty are well-informed. This includes a robust outreach plan featuring messaging from the Provost's office, a dedicated Course Ready website, and direct communication with student groups. Students will be given clear guidance on how to opt out if needed, with a postcard being sent to their homes to ensure the message isn't missed.

The final part of the presentation emphasizes the benefits of convenience and sustainability. By bundling materials and making them easily accessible, students save time and avoid confusion over finding the right resources. The digital-first approach also supports sustainability goals by reducing the need for printed textbooks. The program helps the institution regain profits that would otherwise go to publishers, allowing those funds to be reinvested in student scholarships.

The administration is also looking into how to staff up for the rollout and how to communicate better with faculty about the program. Suggestions to involve department heads and associate deans in communications were also made to increase awareness.

Question and Discussion

Q: What happens when students opt out of the program, and how does it affect spreading costs across participants?

A: Students can opt out each semester, but many will stay for the convenience of having all materials provided. This helps spread the cost, even if some students pay more in certain semesters.

Q: Can you negotiate with publishers for textbook discounts, and how does this affect royalties?

A: The university negotiates with publishers, ensuring no impact on royalties. Publishers benefit from higher participation, reducing their transactional costs and passing savings to students.

Q: Have you modeled the program based on average students, especially those in less expensive programs like humanities?

A: The initial modeling includes all undergraduate students and their materials. The university anticipates about 40% opt-out in the first semester and has built a buffer for potential changes in material requirements.

Q: What happens if you don't hit your participation targets, and who subsidizes any shortfall?

A: Campus Enterprises and Wolfpack Outfitters will bear any financial loss as this is a self-funded program without university subsidies.

Q: If faculty start marking optional materials as required, will this cause prices to rise over time?
A: So far, programs like this have not seen significant cost inflation, as faculty generally avoid burdening students with unnecessary materials. However, some expected growth in adoption has been built into the pricing model.

Q: How does the program handle courses with multiple required texts for different student tracks?

A: In courses where students choose different materials based on their track, all options will be marked as required, and the cost will be folded into the program.

Q: Is there a limit on how much faculty can increase costs by including materials that benefit them but not students, such as AI-based grading tools?

A: Currently, there are no limits in place for faculty on how much course materials can cost. However, if extreme cases arise, they may be addressed with the administration.

Q: Why do a full university rollout instead of starting with one college at a time?

A: The decision for a full rollout was based on the cross-pollination of courses across different colleges and years. It would be difficult to segment students by college or year due to the diverse course loads they take.

Q: What if materials provided through Wolfpack Outfitters cause issues for students, especially compared to direct-from-publisher purchases?

A: The issue will be looked into, and they are working to improve the process. The goal is to reduce errors and ensure seamless delivery for all students.

Q: Will the communication about what is included in "all course materials" be clear, especially regarding items like rock hammers or lab equipment?

A: Yes, they will work to make messaging clearer to avoid confusion about what materials are included in the program.

Q: How will students who are fully online get physical copies if there are no digital versions available?

A: There will be a shipping option for remote students. The program is designed to ensure that enough print copies are available, and print books will be sold as new copies that students keep.

Q: Are digital textbooks always the latest edition, and how does that affect faculty who prefer older editions?

A: Digital textbooks are often available in the latest edition, but older editions can be requested and provided on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Will WebAssign be included in this program?

A: Yes, WebAssign can be included, but they are still in discussions with Cengage regarding the delivery model.

Q: Why not make the program opt-in instead of opt-out?

A: The university has used an opt-in model for seven years, and many students did not access their materials. The opt-out model increases the chances that students will have the materials they need for success.

Q: Will there be any charges for OER (Open Educational Resources)?

A: OER and other non-publisher materials will have a flat-rate charge bundled into the program, so there is no extra cost.

Q: What is the anticipated ROI (Return on Investment) from this program?

A: If there are profits from the program, they will be reinvested into student scholarships, and these will be reported to the campus.

Q: How accessible are the materials for students with visual or other disabilities?

A: The digital materials are designed to be fully accessible through screen readers and other assistive technologies, and they are working with the Disability Resource Center to ensure all needs are met.

Q: Will additional staff be hired to help with the transition to this program?

A: Yes, they are in the process of onboarding additional staff to support faculty and students during the transition.

Q: Has the Provost's initiative to reduce textbook costs been effective, and has the number of required textbooks decreased?

A: Yes, the initiative has been effective, with a noticeable reduction in textbook costs over the years.

Q: How does the Department of Education's rulemaking process on automatic textbook charges affect this program?

A: The Department of Education is currently pausing discussions on course materials in the context of automatic charges, and they will revisit the topic in 2025. For now, the program will continue as planned, with students having the option to opt out.

6. Old and New Business
a. REG 08.00.02 – Use of IT Resources Regulation

Faculty raised concerns about privacy in relation to the use of university email on personal devices. The conversation touched on how access to university emails via personal phones might open up those devices to potential scrutiny, especially in cases involving litigation or public records requests. Damon Armour clarified that university emails are already stored in Google Vault, meaning access to personal devices would not be necessary for these records, and personal emails or other private data on the same device would remain unaffected.

Additional concerns revolved around ensuring a clear separation between personal data and university data, especially when accessed from a single device. Armour clarified that while there is no technical way for the university to access personal devices, if university data is stored on those devices, the university may request access to that data under specific conditions, such as an investigation or legal obligation. However, personal data on those devices remains protected, and there are no mechanisms to automatically access private information like text messages or personal emails.

Several faculty members raised concerns about the potential for misuse or overreach, especially in light of public records requests and legal inquiries. One faculty member expressed concern about the lack of a formal privacy policy governing how Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is handled, noting that breaches of such data put faculty and their families at risk. The IT representative acknowledged these concerns but explained that the current privacy statement serves as the equivalent of a privacy policy, although it is not in the formal PRR (Policies, Rules, and Regulations) structure.

There was also discussion about the difference between policies, regulations, and rules, with the Armour explaining that policies are higher-level and approved by governing boards, while regulations provide more detail and flexibility, and rules govern local implementation.

Chair McGowan agreed to postpone the vote on the IT Resources Regulation until a future meeting, pending further clarification from the university's General Counsel on legal questions related to privacy and data access. A Google Doc will be created for faculty to submit specific questions, and Damon Armour will return with General Counsel to address concerns.

b. Staff Senate Updates

The Staff Senate is having ongoing discussions about sliding-scale parking fees and transportation issues between campus locations.

    c. Student Senate Updates

 The Student Senate is also considering resolutions related to global conflicts and student support. The meeting adjourned with plans to revisit the IT regulation discussion at a future session.

7. Adjourn

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:55 PM.