

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate
September 17, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting No. 3 of the 71st Session Faculty Senate Chambers September 17, 2024

Present: Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty; Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Katharine McKee, Parliamentarian; Senators Ange-van Heugten, Burke, Daley, Davis, Diaconeasa, Drake, Edwards, Fabiku, Krim, Hyman, Jasper, Lowe Reed, Meiklejohn, Mishra, Moore, Paige, Robinson, Roland, Schwartzman, Taveirne, and Zaarour

Absent: Senators Allaire, Bell, Blank, Breen, Campbell, Edmisten, Fang, Hajbabaie, Hajibabai, Hou, Mullins, and Verhallen

Guests: Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Charles Clift, Assistant Vice Provost and University Registrar; Taquan Dewberry, Student Senate President Pro Tempore; Charles Hall, Staff Senate Chair

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Herle McGowan. Chair McGowan welcomed the attendees, both those present in the Faculty Senate Chambers and those participating via Zoom. She took a moment to remind everyone of the ongoing Faculty Senate events, emphasizing upcoming meetings, committee work, and the continued efforts to ensure faculty representation in all decision-making processes across the university. She particularly stressed the need for continued attention to university-wide initiatives that pertain to mental health, diversity, and inclusion, including in relation to the ongoing Latinx Heritage Month.

2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 2 of the 71st Session, September 3, 2024 - *Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty*

Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty, took the floor to handle the approval of the minutes from the previous session. DePerno presented the minutes for Regular Meeting No. 2, held on September 3, 2024, for review. A suggested revision to the minutes from the previous meeting was brought up by Senator Taylor. The discussion focused on the wording related to a ceasefire, and Eileen pointed out that the language used was not sufficiently clear. This amendment was noted and incorporated into the minutes, which were then approved by the Senate following this clarification.

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

Chair McGowan provided her remarks, addressing ongoing initiatives within the Faculty Senate and underscoring the importance of the Senate's role in shaping university policy. McGowan's first point was a reminder about the upcoming fall general faculty meeting, with a particular emphasis on the listening session component. She encouraged Senate members to share this information broadly with faculty in their colleges and units.

Next, McGowan provided two key updates about the Chancellor search process. First, she highlighted the importance of confidentiality in recruiting top candidates for the position, emphasizing that faculty input is critical, but occurs differently in Chancellor searches compared to other searches. Typically, faculty input is gathered toward the end of the search process, but for the Chancellor role, faculty participate at the beginning by providing feedback that informs the job description and the criteria for evaluating candidates. McGowan stressed that this early feedback is crucial and urged faculty to take advantage of the opportunities to provide input, either via the survey sent out in August or during the upcoming listening sessions, with the first session scheduled for October 1st.

McGowan also reported that the Chancellor Search Advisory Committee met for the first time on September 10th, during which they reviewed legal guidelines for searches and received the official charge from Peter Hans, the system president. The full charge, along with committee membership and the input survey link, is available on the Chancellor Search website. The Chair encouraged attendees to visit the site for updates and assured them that she would continue to provide important milestones from her office.

Regarding the timeline, McGowan explained that the fall semester would focus on developing the position description for the Chancellor. Listening sessions are a key part of this process, allowing for data collection that will shape the job description. Recruiting and reviewing candidates will take place later in the fall and continue into the spring.

McGowan then shifted to a brief update on the repeal and replacement of the university's DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) policy, which took place over the summer. She reminded the group that campuses had until September 1st to comply with the new policy and submit their compliance reports to the system office. These reports, which detail specific positions reassigned or eliminated at both the university and college levels, were presented to the Board of Governors last week and are available online. McGowan noted that the report for NC State, while lengthy at 26 pages, did not contain any major surprises and had been communicated earlier by the Provost.

In her latest update, McGowan revisited the presentation from the last meeting about the Course Ready system. This system provides a flat-fee, electronic textbook option at the beginning of the semester, with an option for physical delivery. The presenters had previously mentioned that there would be additional Zoom sessions for faculty to ask questions, and McGowan informed the group that an email with dates and meeting links for those sessions would be sent out later in the week.

Finally, McGowan looked ahead to upcoming meetings, reminding everyone about the October 1st Fall General Faculty Meeting and listening session. She encouraged faculty to promote attendance at the session. She also announced that the October 15th Faculty Senate meeting would be canceled due to fall break, and the next regular meeting would be held on October 29th.

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

Provost Warwick Arden provided a few key updates. First, he announced that the new Integrative Sciences Building, currently under construction and set to open on the Brickyard in 2026, will be named Woodson Hall in honor of Chancellor Randy Woodson. This decision was made during the Board of Trustees meeting on September 6th, and Provost Arden expressed excitement about the building's progress, highlighting that it is starting to take shape after years of planning.

He then addressed the ongoing implementation of the Course Ready program. Arden announced that an email would be sent to all faculty and fall 2024 instructors of record on September 19th, providing an overview of the Course Ready initiative and its official launch in 2025. This email will also be followed by another from Wolfpack Outfitters, which will include information about submitting course materials, with an October 31st deadline. He reiterated that this program is a digital, inclusive model, ensuring that all students, regardless of major, have access to their course materials on day one for the same fee.

In response to questions, Arden acknowledged the heavy workload that faculty have experienced due to policy changes from the system office, particularly in relation to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) restructuring. He admitted that the recent DEI report was a significant challenge for the university, with a tight deadline to comply with the system's new policies. He noted that while his office was able to maintain the essence of an inclusive and welcoming environment at NC State, the changes were labor-intensive. When asked if the system was aware of the additional burden these tasks imposed, Arden was unsure but emphasized that the university's goal was to comply with the policies while maintaining its core values.

Arden also mentioned that more policy changes are expected, which would further increase the workload for faculty and administrative offices. He recognized the irony in the system's desire for more streamlined administration while simultaneously imposing additional tasks. Despite these challenges, he expressed a commitment to working through these changes to create the best possible outcomes for the university.

Lastly, a question was raised from the Q&A about the Course Inventory Management System (CIMS), with concerns about its slow performance. While Provost Arden did not have an immediate answer, he acknowledged the issue and suggested that gathering feedback from faculty would be important to determine if this was a widespread problem. Chair McGowan noted that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will address the issue in their upcoming meeting.

5. Discussion on Wellness Days

Wellness Days are a fairly recent addition to the semester calendar, and they will be a part of the calendar for the next few years (likely longer). Campus stakeholders—students, faculty, and staff—have a variety of experiences with and opinions about the Wellness Days—both good and bad. As the elected representatives of the faculty, Faculty Senate will discuss the potential benefits of and concerns about Wellness Days.

The discussion on Wellness Days revolved around the introduction to the academic calendar and the diverse perspectives on the impact of Wellness Days. The discussion centered on whether these days benefit both faculty and students, with concerns about their disruption to teaching schedules, especially when students treat them as long weekends.

Faculty expressed frustration with scheduling conflicts, particularly around exams, assignments, and labs, which require consistent timing. Some faculty noted that students do not always engage in wellness activities; this was viewed by some as counterproductive, as Wellness Days were intended to relieve academic stress rather than cause students to fall behind.

Charles Clift, Assistant Vice Provost and University Registrar, explained the logistical constraints behind scheduling Wellness Days, which are always on a Tuesday to ensure an even distribution of instructional days.

Several faculty members raised questions about the long-term implementation of Wellness Days, as these were initially introduced as a temporary trial period. Although there has been an annual review, and the Calendar Committee has repeatedly endorsed their continuation, there are still concerns about whether Wellness Days address the root issues of student mental health and academic stress.

Suggestions to adjust the calendar to better accommodate Wellness Days, such as aligning them with long weekends or moving them closer to exam periods, were discussed. Additionally, faculty raised concerns about the impact on various teaching formats, like labs and online courses. Some proposed gathering data on student participation in wellness activities and faculty perceptions to better evaluate the effectiveness of these days.

In conclusion, while there is support for the continuation of Wellness Days, the faculty urged for more systematic data collection and a broader review of how these days fit into the overall academic calendar and their effectiveness in promoting student and faculty wellness.

6. Old and New Business

a. REG 08.00.02 – Use of IT Resources Regulation

The focus of the IT presentation was on section 5, which addresses privacy and monitoring concerns related to the university's IT resources. The presenter highlighted that the university

aims to respect privacy by complying with various statutes and regulations, ensuring personal information is protected.

A significant change from previous regulations was clarifying the university's access to IT resources, which could include third-party and personal devices if used for university purposes. One of the main concerns from the previous meeting was the language suggesting that users should have no expectation of privacy. The presenter emphasized that this statement is tied to specific situations, such as active investigations, public records requests, and audits. The revised language aims to clarify these use cases and reassure faculty that the university is bound by law to protect personal information.

A key clarification was the importance of maintaining a clear separation between personal and university data, especially for those concerned about privacy. Faculty were encouraged to use university-owned devices for university business when possible, though the speaker acknowledged the reality of a "bring your own device" campus. They reiterated that while faculty should be aware of the potential for personal data to be accessed under certain conditions, the university does not actively seek out personal information.

Throughout the discussion, several faculty members raised questions about the practicality of separating personal and university data, especially when personal devices are used for two-factor authentication or email access. The presenter and other IT staff clarified that faculty should avoid storing personal information on university systems to maintain that separation and reduce the likelihood of personal data being accessed inadvertently.

There were also discussions about records retention, particularly regarding the management of Google Drive limits and how to handle administrative documents. It was confirmed that the university retains historical copies of emails, chats, and files for up to seven years, meaning that even if faculty delete files, the university can recover them.

The session concluded with a proposal to provide additional guidance through an FAQ to address common concerns about privacy and IT usage, and it was agreed that this would be developed to clarify the updated regulation.

b. Staff Senate Updates

Charles Hall, Staff Senate Chair, reported that the Staff Senate is working on initiatives to improve staff working conditions and increase opportunities for professional development.

c. Student Senate Updates

Taquan Dewberry, Student Senate President Pro Tempore, shared that the Student Senate is focusing on improving internal transparency and cooperation to ensure effective governance. He mentioned that two resolutions were recently passed: Resolution 29, which calls for a permanent ceasefire in the conflict between Israel and Gaza, and Resolution 36, which seeks institutional support for students affected by global conflicts. These resolutions have been sent to the student body president for final approval.

Dewberry emphasized that, in line with Resolution 36, the student government is actively discussing the impact of international conflicts on students and the broader campus community. These discussions are ongoing, and the goal is to create a strong, effective plan. He hinted that more detailed discussions and potential collaboration with the Faculty Senate will take place during the October 29th meeting.

Additionally, Dewberry noted that the Student Senate will have a deep discussion on the university's OIT (Office of Information Technology) policy during their next meeting, which had been delayed due to other priority agenda items, particularly the two resolutions. They will also discuss the campus ready program at this meeting. He invited Faculty Senate members to attend, noting it will likely be a lengthy session.

7. Adjourn

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.