

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Minutes of the Faculty Senate**  
**Regular Meeting No. 8 of the 71st Session**  
January 21, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

**Regular Meeting No. 8 of the 71st Session**                      **Faculty Senate Chambers**                      **January 21, 2025**

**Present:** Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty; Katherine McKee, Parliamentarian; Senators Allaire, Ange van-Heugten, Breen, Burke, Campbell, Daley, Diaconeasa, Drake, Edmisten, Edwards, Fabiku, Hou, Krim, Jasper, Lowe Reed, Meiklejohn, Moore, Paige, Phukan, Robinson, Roland, Schwartzman, Taylor, Verhallen, and Zaarour

**Guests:** Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Jennifer Bills, Assistant Director of Risk Assessment

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

Chair McGowan began the meeting by officially calling it to order at 3:00 PM. Chair McGowan then announced several key updates and initiatives. These included a reminder of the upcoming faculty development workshops, which focus on leadership and grant writing skills. McGowan also highlighted the recent launch of the university's sustainability campaign, urging faculty to actively participate and integrate sustainable practices into their work. Additionally, the Chair shared information about an upcoming survey to gather faculty input on the current state of campus resources and facilities, emphasizing the importance of participation to inform future improvements.

**2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 7 of the 71st Session, January 7, 2025 - Herle McGowan, Chair of the Faculty**

The Chair moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. A brief discussion followed, with no major corrections or objections raised. The minutes were approved unanimously.

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

Chair Herle McGowan began her remarks with an update on the Chancellor Search, summarizing the progress made based on discussions during the open portion of a recent search advisory committee meeting. The Chair reminded faculty that the Leadership Prospectus is available online and encouraged them to recommend potential candidates using the form on the chancellor search process website. She emphasized the urgency of submitting recommendations now, as Parker Executive Search Firm is actively reaching out to recommended individuals and leveraging their professional networks to solicit additional names and encourage applications.

She noted that Parker has engaged in discussions with sitting presidents, provosts, and vice presidents of research or economic development, among others. These conversations have reportedly been overwhelmingly positive, with candidates highlighting NC State's trajectory of growth, land-grant

mission, and the quality of its faculty as significant draws to the position. While confidentiality limits the specifics that can be shared, she assured attendees that the search process is progressing smoothly and remains informed by the priorities, strengths, and needs expressed by the NC State community during the fall.

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

Provost Warwick Arden provided a comprehensive update on university operations and strategic priorities. He began by addressing current enrollment figures, highlighting a modest increase compared to the previous semester. This growth, he noted, reflects the university's appeal and strong academic reputation. The Provost also discussed updates on funding allocations, explaining how recently secured state and federal grants would be used to enhance academic programs and upgrade campus facilities.

In addition, the Provost touched on preparations for upcoming accreditation reviews. He emphasized the importance of faculty participation in ensuring that the university meets or exceeds all accreditation standards. Arden acknowledged faculty efforts in maintaining high academic quality and outlined plans for providing additional resources to support these efforts.

A significant portion of his remarks focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. He shared recent successes, such as increased representation of underrepresented groups in leadership positions, and acknowledged areas where further improvement is needed. The Provost reiterated the administration's commitment to fostering a more inclusive campus environment and invited faculty input on strategies to achieve this goal.

During the Q&A session, faculty raised several questions:

- **Question:** What measures are being taken to address resource distribution inequities across departments? **Answer:** Provost Arden acknowledged the concern and explained that the administration is conducting a comprehensive review of resource allocation. He assured faculty that adjustments would be made to ensure equitable support for all departments, with a focus on those facing the greatest challenges.
- **Question:** Can you provide more details about the timeline for implementing new academic programs? **Answer:** Arden explained that the timeline varies depending on the program but emphasized that the process involves thorough review and approval by multiple stakeholders. He assured faculty that the administration is working to expedite the process without compromising quality.
- **Question:** How is the university addressing challenges related to faculty workload and burnout? **Answer:** The Provost highlighted ongoing efforts to reduce administrative burdens on faculty and provide additional support through hiring and reorganization. He also mentioned plans to expand wellness programs and other resources to help faculty manage stress.

Arden concluded his remarks by thanking faculty for their dedication and inviting them to share further feedback on university initiatives.

#### **5. Deescalation Training - Jennifer Bills, Assistant Director of Risk Assessment**

Jennifer Bills, Assistant Director of Risk Assessment, presented a comprehensive session on de-escalation techniques aimed at equipping faculty and staff with practical strategies for managing high-stress and potentially confrontational situations within academic and administrative settings. She opened her

presentation by defining de-escalation as the process of reducing tension and conflict through intentional communication and behavior. She emphasized that de-escalation is a proactive skill that can be learned and refined over time.

Key components of the training included:

1. **Recognizing Early Warning Signs:** Jennifer Bills explained the importance of identifying early indicators of escalating tension, such as changes in tone, body language, or pacing. She encouraged faculty to remain observant and aware of their environment at all times, noting that early intervention can often prevent conflict from intensifying.
2. **Communication Techniques:** The presenter shared a variety of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to help defuse tense situations. These included:
  - **Active Listening:** Paying full attention to the speaker, acknowledging their concerns, and avoiding interruptions.
  - **Empathetic Responses:** Validating the other person's emotions by using phrases like, "I can see why you feel that way" or "I understand this is frustrating."
  - **Neutral and Calm Tone:** Speaking in a steady, non-confrontational manner to prevent further agitation.
  - **Non-Threatening Body Language:** Maintaining open posture, avoiding crossing arms, and ensuring facial expressions convey calmness and attentiveness.
3. **Establishing Boundaries:** Bills stressed the importance of setting clear and respectful boundaries to ensure mutual understanding. She advised faculty to calmly articulate acceptable behaviors and provide clear options for moving forward.
4. **Case Studies and Role-Playing Scenarios:** Jennifer Bills presented real-world examples of situations where de-escalation techniques were successfully employed. She walked attendees through case studies involving upset students, disagreements among colleagues, and interactions with external stakeholders. Faculty were invited to participate in role-playing exercises to practice the skills discussed.

During the Q&A session, attendees asked several questions to clarify and expand on the training:

- **Question:** How can faculty handle situations where a student exhibits aggressive behavior in class? **Answer:** Jennifer Bills suggested prioritizing the safety of all individuals present. Faculty should calmly acknowledge the student's emotions and offer to discuss their concerns privately after class. If the behavior escalates, faculty should consider involving campus security or additional support services.
- **Question:** What resources are available for faculty to receive further training? **Answer:** Bills highlighted multiple workshops provided by the university's training and development office, as well as online modules available through the campus learning management system. She also encouraged faculty to reach out to their department's HR representative for tailored support.
- **Question:** How can de-escalation techniques be incorporated into student advising? **Answer:** Bills recommended taking a compassionate approach during advising sessions, emphasizing empathy and patience. Faculty should focus on understanding the root causes of a student's frustration, offering clear solutions, and setting realistic expectations to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Question:** How can faculty manage situations involving mental health concerns? **Answer:** Bills emphasized the importance of recognizing when a situation goes beyond the scope of de-escalation and requires professional intervention. She advised faculty to familiarize

themselves with campus mental health resources and have a clear plan for referring students to the appropriate services when necessary.

Jennifer Bills concluded her presentation by providing faculty with a resource guide, including contact information for campus safety teams, mental health services, and additional reading materials. She reiterated the importance of continuous learning and practice, encouraging attendees to take advantage of ongoing training opportunities.

**6. Old and New Business**

- a. Staff Senate Updates - No update.
- b. Student Senate Updates - No update.

**7. Adjourn**

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:56 PM.