

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Minutes of the Faculty Senate**

February 18, 2025

3:00 p.m.

**Regular Meeting No. 10 of the 71st Session    DH Hill Jr. Library    February 18, 2025**

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

**Absent:** Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Senators Davis, Fang, Hajbabaie, Hajibabai, Jasper and Roland

**Guests:** Warwick Arden, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Dr. Marta Klesath, Chair, Council on Undergraduate Education and Li Marcus, Director, Undergraduate Courses, Curricula, and Academic Standards; Sherrie Settle, Associate Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance

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

Chair McGowan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. She welcomed the attendees and began with a series of announcements. She noted that RPT General Information Sessions would be held on March 5 and March 20, and encouraged faculty to attend these sessions, with details provided on page 2 of the agenda. No registration is required, but faculty were advised to review the RPT website beforehand.

Chair McGowan then shared updates on the Faculty Senate elections, emphasizing that every college has at least one open seat. She encouraged current Senators to personally reach out to colleagues and encourage them to consider running. She shared her own experience of being recruited via a simple email and highlighted the importance of faculty engagement in shaping policies, procedures, and traditions, particularly with a new administration taking office. Nominations, including a short bio, are due by March 3. She provided additional resources and welcomed questions about the election process.

Chair McGowan also reminded the Senate of the upcoming Spring General Faculty Meeting on March 4 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 3285 of Talley Student Union. The event will feature a conversation with Chancellor Woodson, who will reflect on his career in academia and discuss insights on the future of higher education.

A major update was also provided on the reactivation of the Transportation Advisory Group, which had been inactive since COVID-19. This effort, led in collaboration with the Staff Senate and the Director of Transportation, includes representatives from various campus groups. One of the first topics under review is the feasibility of a sliding scale parking fee structure, an issue previously discussed in the Faculty Senate. The group will analyze data and determine potential implementations.

**2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 9 of the 71st Session, February 4, 2025 -**  
*Christopher DePerno, Associate Chair of the Faculty*

In the absence of Associate Chair DePerno, Chair McGowan moved to approve the minutes from the February 4 meeting. There were no corrections or comments. The minutes were approved unanimously.

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

Chair McGowan addressed the UNC System Office's recent directive prohibiting DEI requirements in general education and major curricula. She noted that this decision required immediate compliance, shifting discussions within the Council on Undergraduate Education from whether changes should be made to how they should be implemented. Faculty will have the opportunity to provide feedback on these adjustments later in the meeting.

She also introduced an upcoming update on research administration pilot projects and their impact on faculty. She reminded faculty that disruptions to research—such as changes in federal funding policies—could be documented in their RPT dossiers through impact statements, a tool originally introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic but now a permanent option.

Finally, she addressed the recently announced hiring freeze at NC State, clarifying that while not a financial crisis, the university was preparing for potential budgetary constraints. She directed faculty to a newly published FAQ document from the Provost's Office and noted that Provost Arden would take questions on the topic following his remarks.

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

Provost Arden addressed two primary issues: the hiring freeze and the changes to DEI requirements. He clarified that the hiring pause is not a university-wide freeze but applies to units under his jurisdiction. The decision is a precautionary measure in response to several financial uncertainties, including federal executive orders, potential budget cuts, and concerns over state funding. He emphasized that this is not a sign of financial crisis but a prudent step to ensure stability.

Regarding DEI curriculum changes, Provost Arden reiterated that the university had no choice but to comply with the UNC System directive. He explained that students currently enrolled in DEI-designated courses would receive general education credit, while students enrolled in summer sessions would only receive elective credit. The Council on Undergraduate Education

has worked on a swift resolution to the situation, and their proposed changes will be discussed later in the meeting.

During the Q&A, a faculty member asked whether faculty statements on inclusivity in syllabi would be affected. The Provost stated that faculty still have the freedom to include such statements. Another faculty member questioned whether accepting these changes without resistance set a dangerous precedent. Provost Arden acknowledged the faculty's concerns but stressed the need to pick battles wisely, given the significant influence the UNC System Office holds over funding and administrative decisions.

Further questions were raised regarding the university's strategy in responding to future directives that may impact academic freedom. Chair McGowan noted that she and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee are carefully considering the best course of action and encouraged faculty members to share their perspectives. A final question from the floor raised concerns about the exclusion of student voices in these discussions. Provost Arden agreed that student perspectives were essential but noted that student engagement on this issue had been relatively low. He expressed hope that students would become more involved in advocacy moving forward.

**5. Research Administration and Support Services Task Force Update - Sherrie Settle, Associate Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs and Regulatory Compliance**

Sherrie Settle provided an update on the Research Administration and Support Services Task Force, highlighting ongoing pilot projects aimed at improving administrative efficiency and reducing bureaucratic barriers for faculty researchers. She emphasized that the task force is working to streamline grant management processes and enhance support structures for faculty engaged in sponsored research.

One key initiative discussed was the development of a centralized research support model that would provide faculty with more direct assistance in navigating compliance requirements and grant applications. Additionally, the task force is exploring new funding mechanisms to support interdisciplinary research and facilitate collaboration across departments.

During the discussion, faculty raised concerns about the impact of federal executive orders on research funding and administration. Settle acknowledged these concerns and stated that the task force is actively monitoring regulatory changes to ensure compliance while advocating for faculty interests. She encouraged faculty to provide feedback on administrative challenges they face and assured them that the task force remains committed to improving research support at the university.

**6. General Education Update - Dr. Marta Klesath, Chair, Council on Undergraduate Education and Li Marcus, Director, Undergraduate Courses, Curricula, and Academic Standards**

Dr. Marta Klesath and Li Marcus provided an update on the adjustments to the General Education Program in response to the UNC System directive removing DEI as a required component. The Council on Undergraduate Education has proposed alternative pathways to

ensure that students continue to engage with diverse perspectives and critical thinking topics without violating the new restrictions.

The proposed changes include shifting DEI-related content into elective courses and interdisciplinary seminar offerings, ensuring faculty retain the ability to teach these subjects while complying with policy changes. Faculty were encouraged to contribute to curriculum development and to explore ways to integrate themes of diversity and inclusion within existing courses where appropriate.

A discussion followed in which faculty members expressed concerns about the broader implications of these changes on academic freedom and student exposure to critical topics. Dr. Klesath reassured faculty that the council remains committed to preserving the integrity of the curriculum and will continue to advocate for faculty involvement in shaping educational policy.

## **7. Old and New Business**

### **a. Staff Senate Updates**

No report was given.

### **b. Student Senate Updates**

No report was given.

## **8. Adjourn**

Chair McGowan adjourned the meeting at 4:46 PM.