

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
Minutes of the Faculty Senate

August 18, 2026
3:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting No. 1 of the 73rd Session Faculty Senate Chambers August 18, 2026

Present: Walter Robinson, Chair of the Faculty; Michael Taveirne, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Eileen Taylor, Chair-elect; Katherine McKee, Parliamentarian; Senators Allaire, Blank, Burke, Campbell, Diaconeasa, Doll, Dur, Fabiku, Fitzpatrick, Genereux, Gruber, Hou, Hyman, Jasper, Kiassat, Kulesza, Loflin, Lowe Reed, Marshall, Pacifici, Paige, Pearson, Petritz, Pourghaz, Purnell, Rabiei, Schwartzman, Sirota, and Xu

Absent: Senators Dur and Little

Guests: Kevin Howell, Chancellor; Jim Pfaendtner, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

1. Call to Order and Announcements - *Walter Robinson, Chair of the Faculty*

Chair Robinson shared announcements regarding Packapalooza which will be held on Saturday, August 22, from 2–10 p.m. on Hillsborough Street, featuring live music, food, games, and activities to celebrate Wolfpack pride and kick off the new academic year. Robinson also announced that Lakeside Kitchen offers a discount; the first full week of each month NC State University faculty members receive a 10% discount on lunch or first Sunday brunch when they show NC State Faculty ID.

**2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 13 of the 72nd Session, April 21, 2026 -
*Michael Taveirne, Associate Chair of the Faculty***

Associate Chair Michael Taveirne stated that the minutes from the previous meeting had been distributed by email and asked whether there were any changes or additions. Hearing none, he called for approval. There were no objections, and the minutes were approved as presented.

3. Chair's Remarks - *Walter Robinson, Chair of the Faculty*

Chair Robinson addressed faculty and university employee compensation. He noted that NC State's teaching, research, extension and service depend on the work of faculty, staff, students and graduate workers. He expressed concern that compensation has not kept pace with increases in the cost of living.

Chair Robinson reported that employees recently received a 3% salary increase, while the Consumer Price Index had increased by 6.2% since the previous across-the-board increase in July 2024. He also

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discussed compensation challenges facing lecturers, teaching assistant professors and graduate teaching assistants. Graduate teaching assistants were excluded from the across-the-board increase and continue to pay student fees from their stipends.

Chair Robinson stated that inadequate compensation affects recruitment, retention, morale and employees' ability to focus on their work. He noted that the Triangle's rising cost of living, particularly housing costs, has made compensation concerns more pressing.

Chair Robinson proposed establishing a campus compensation task force representing relevant university constituencies. The task force would examine savings, revenue growth, reallocations, policies and procedures to identify ways to provide adequate and fair compensation. He emphasized the importance of addressing compensation through shared governance and collaboration across the university.

4. Chancellor's Remarks and Q&A - Kevin Howell, Chancellor

Chancellor Kevin Howell welcomed new and returning senators and thanked them for their service. He emphasized the Faculty Senate's role in shared governance and acknowledged the compensation concerns raised by Chair Robinson. Chancellor Howell stated that university leadership has discussed the issue with the Provost and Chief Financial Officer and recognizes the importance of faculty compensation.

Chancellor Howell welcomed students back to campus and reported that more than 6,100 new students and approximately 1,650 transfer students joined NC State. He thanked faculty for their teaching and research and described faculty as central to the university's success.

Chancellor Howell provided an update on the state budget. He reported that NC State received nearly \$35 million in enrollment growth funding for the previous two years, including approximately \$21 million in recurring funding and \$14 million in nonrecurring funding. He also highlighted funding for engineering, semiconductor and nuclear research, facilities operations, the Veterinary Medicine hospital, Poe Hall reconstruction and other campus projects.

Chancellor Howell discussed the university's continued work on compensation and emphasized the need for NC State and other UNC System institutions to work together on the issue. He stated that the 3% salary increase represented progress but acknowledged that additional work is needed.

Chancellor Howell also recognized the appointment of the new Provost and thanked members of the search committee. He noted that the search attracted approximately 120 applicants and welcomed the Provost to his first official Faculty Senate meeting in the role.

5. Provost's Remarks and Q&A - Jim Pfaendtner, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

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Provost Pfaendtner welcomed senators, faculty attending online and faculty who were new to NC State. He stated that his goal as Chief Academic Officer is to strengthen connections across NC State and improve the ability of faculty and academic staff to perform their work. He emphasized collaboration, alignment of university resources with strategic priorities, transparency and support for students.

The Provost emphasized the central role of faculty in NC State's academic mission and stated that his office would serve as an advocate for faculty. He described his responsibility to represent the academic mission and faculty perspectives within university leadership.

Provost Pfaendtner provided updates on leadership changes and searches across several colleges. Interim deans are serving in the Colleges of Design, Natural Resources and Engineering. He also discussed plans for the permanent Dean of Engineering search and indicated that additional leadership searches would begin during the academic year.

The Provost reviewed organizational changes within Academic Affairs. These included changes involving the Office of University Interdisciplinary Programs and the Office of Academic Strategy, Innovation and Solutions. He also discussed the transition of the Department of Applied Ecology, the movement of Performing Arts Technology and Health and Exercise Studies into the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the transition of University College functions primarily into the Division of Academic and Student Affairs. He stated that the university worked to maintain continuity for faculty, staff and students during these transitions.

The Provost reminded faculty of Wellness Day on September 29. He encouraged faculty to avoid scheduling tests or deadlines on Wellness Day and the following day.

Discussion

During the question-and-answer period, senators discussed Wellness Day, shared governance, faculty compensation, hiring, graduate student employment, faculty support and academic program review.

A senator raised concerns about inconsistent expectations surrounding Wellness Day and requested clearer university guidance. The senator also encouraged greater Faculty Senate involvement in decisions involving university realignments. The Provost expressed support for deeper engagement with the Faculty Senate and agreed that greater clarity regarding Wellness Day would be helpful.

Discussion returned to Chair Robinson's proposed compensation task force. The Provost requested a written proposal and expressed willingness to work collaboratively to examine compensation data and possible approaches. Chancellor Howell added that compensation should also be addressed across the UNC System and through continued work with governing boards and state leaders.

Senators asked about faculty and staff hiring following a period of limited hiring. The Provost reported that he was working with deans on college hiring plans and a broader campus hiring plan. He

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emphasized the importance of giving colleges and departments greater clarity regarding authorized searches and filling positions in areas critical to students and faculty support.

Associate Chair Michael Taveirne raised concerns regarding restrictions on outside employment for graduate students participating in the Graduate Student Support Plan. The Provost stated that he would seek additional information regarding the applicable policies and discuss the matter with Graduate School leadership.

Another senator asked how deans were responding to changing classroom needs, including artificial intelligence, class sizes and student demand. The Provost emphasized continued communication between faculty, department heads and deans. He also discussed university efforts to support faculty with digital accessibility requirements and stated that he planned to visit colleges throughout the academic year.

Additional discussion addressed the transition of the Department of Applied Ecology and the role of faculty consultation and shared governance in academic restructuring. The Provost stated that the approved transition followed university policies, rules and regulations and clarified that he was not considering similar actions involving other departments.

The Senate also discussed leadership searches. The Provost emphasized the importance of clear position descriptions, broad representation on search committees and strong recruitment of qualified candidates. He stated his intention to fill the interim leadership positions currently under his authority by the end of the academic year.

An online question addressed UNC System academic program review requirements and the use of measures such as return on investment. The Provost discussed NC State's college-based approach to the review process and noted that the Wilson College of Textiles had completed an early review. He stated that the process and outcomes would be discussed with other UNC System chief academic officers.

6. Introduction of New Senate Leaders

Ashley Arya, Staff Senate Chair

Judson Avery, Student Senate President Pro Tempore

Neither senate leaders were available to attend. They will attend at a later date.

7. Old and New Business

Chair Robinson stated that Faculty Senate meetings this year would focus on specific topics and meaningful participation. He noted that meetings would end when the Senate had completed its business rather than continuing solely to fill the scheduled meeting time.

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Chair Robinson asked whether there was any additional new business. Hearing none, he reminded attendees of the Chancellor's hospitality event scheduled for later that evening.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.