

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Faculty Senate

September 1, 2026

3:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting No. 2 of the 73rd Faculty Senate Chambers September 1, 2026

Present: Walter Robinson, Chair of the Faculty; Michael Taveirne, Associate Chair of the Faculty; Katherine McKee, Parliamentarian; Eileen Taylor, Chair-elect of the Faculty; Senators Allaire, , BlankBrongo Pacifici, Campbell, Diaconeasa, Doll, Fabiku, Fitzpatrick, Gruber, Jasper, Kiassat, Little, Loflin, Lowe Reed, Marshall, Paige, Pearson, Petritz, Schwartzman, Sirota

Absent: Senators Burke, Dur, Kabukcuoglu Dur, Hou, Hyman, Kulesza, Pourghaz, Purnell, Xu

Guests: Jim Pfaendtner, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost ; Miriam Ferzli, Teaching Professor, Biological Sciences; Anna Howard, Teaching Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Whitney Jones, Associate Teaching Professor, Biological Sciences

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

Chair Walter Robinson called the second meeting of the 73rd Session of the Faculty Senate to order at 3:00 p.m. Senators attending in person and online were reminded to register their attendance.

**2. Approval of the Minutes, Regular Meeting No. 1 of the 73rd Session, August 18, 2026 -
*Michael Taveirne, Associate Chair of the Faculty***

Associate Chair Michael Taveirne presented the minutes from the Regular Meeting No. 1 of the 73rd Session, August 18, 2026 Faculty Senate meeting for approval and asked senators to review the attendance record and report any corrections. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. There was no opposition, and the minutes were approved.

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

Chair Robinson introduced the meeting's primary topic, large in-person class instruction at NC State. He reported that, based on information provided by Registrar Charles Clift, 238 course sections enrolled more than 100 students during the previous fall semester, with total enrollment across those sections reaching 40,308. With undergraduate enrollment of approximately 28,000, large classes represent a substantial part of the academic experience for many students, particularly during their first years at NC State.

Robinson identified several pressures affecting large-class instruction, including growing enrollment, limited growth in the number of faculty and graduate teaching assistants, classroom and testing capacity, and the increasing influence of artificial intelligence. He also connected the issue to faculty and graduate teaching assistant compensation.

Faculty Senate members had previously been asked to identify their most pressing concerns regarding large in-person classes. The leading concerns were testing, teaching assistant support, classroom scheduling, artificial intelligence and grading.

Robinson explained that the Senate would use the meeting discussion and survey responses to develop recommendations. The Academic Policy Committee will review the information and return to the full Senate with proposals concerning resources, policies, procedures and practices related to large classes. Following Senate discussion and possible revisions, the proposals will become recommendations to campus leadership.

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

The Provost thanked faculty and Faculty Senate members for their work related to the UNC System syllabus submission requirements. He reported that NC State had achieved a submission rate exceeding 95 percent and reminded faculty that the university's goal and requirement remains 100 percent submission.

The Provost also addressed Wellness Day and acknowledged questions regarding expectations for faculty, staff and students. He noted that no classes or assignment deadlines are permitted on Wellness Day and encouraged instructors to avoid scheduling examinations or quizzes on the following day. He committed to reviewing Faculty Senate feedback and clarifying university communications regarding Wellness Day.

The Provost provided an update on NC State's work with the JED Foundation. The university is entering the fourth year of a four-year process focused on campus well-being, suicide prevention and postvention. JED Foundation leadership visited campus and met with university

FACULTY SENATE

leadership. The campus team reported completing 74 of 78 goals established through the initiative. The Provost thanked members of the university community for their work and stated that NC State intends to establish processes that sustain this work beyond the initial four-year period.

5. Large Class Teaching and Assessments - *Miriam Ferzli, Teaching Professor, Biological Sciences; Anna Howard, Teaching Professor, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Whitney Jones, Associate Teaching Professor, Biological Sciences*

Chair Robinson introduced a panel focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with large-class instruction. Panelists included Kirsti Cole, Professor of English and Co-Director of the Campus Writing and Speaking Program; Miriam Ferzli, Teaching Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences; Anna Howard, Teaching Professor in Mechanical and Aerospace

Engineering; and Whitney Jones, Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Director of the Undergraduate Program in Genetics.

Panelists discussed active learning, classroom design, testing capacity, artificial intelligence, teaching and learning technologies, assessment, faculty workload, teaching assistants, undergraduate learning assistants and the increasing size of high-enrollment courses.

The discussion highlighted the importance of technology in maintaining student engagement in large courses. Faculty described using tools such as Top Hat, Wooclap and Gradescope to support active learning, assessment and student participation. Panelists emphasized that large classes still require opportunities for students to interact with course material, receive feedback and participate actively in the learning process.

Testing emerged as a major concern. Faculty described capacity limitations within Academic Testing Services that have required some instructors to return to paper-based examinations. This change creates additional challenges related to proctoring, academic integrity, grading and examination administration. Participants also discussed the difficulty of managing makeup examinations in courses enrolling hundreds of students.

Panelists discussed artificial intelligence and its implications for teaching and assessment. Cole emphasized the importance of AI literacy and the need for faculty to develop clear positions regarding appropriate AI use and communicate those expectations to students. Faculty also discussed the potential for AI-supported instructional tools built around course-specific materials to provide students with timely academic support.

FACULTY SENATE

Faculty workload was another significant concern. Participants noted that large courses often count the same toward teaching load as substantially smaller courses despite the additional work associated with communication, grading, assessment, coordination and student support.

The discussion also addressed the concentration of large-course teaching among professional-track faculty and the need to consider equitable workload and compensation practices.

Teaching assistants and undergraduate learning assistants were identified as essential resources. Faculty described using graduate teaching assistants in laboratories and recitation sections and undergraduate learning assistants to support active learning, grading and student engagement. Participants noted that recruiting, hiring, training and supervising undergraduate assistants adds significant administrative work for faculty.

Several participants supported developing centralized training for undergraduate learning assistants. Such training could address university-wide requirements and responsibilities,

including student privacy and disability accommodations, while allowing individual faculty members to focus their training on course-specific responsibilities. Participants also discussed the value of pedagogical training for graduate teaching assistants.

Classroom and laboratory capacity received significant attention. Faculty reported that lecture enrollment has grown beyond the capacity of associated laboratories in some disciplines, forcing students to take laboratory courses one or more semesters after the corresponding lecture. Concerns were raised about using late-night laboratories to increase capacity because of safety issues for teaching assistants and students. The faculty also emphasized the importance of including instructors in the design of new and renovated teaching spaces.

Participants discussed the number of major technology changes faculty are managing simultaneously, including digital accessibility requirements, the transition from Moodle to Canvas and the move from Top Hat to Wooclap. The faculty asked for greater communication, support and faculty involvement when instructional technologies changed. University representatives explained that the Top Hat transition is connected to cost, usage and future Canvas integration and acknowledged the workload created by multiple simultaneous changes.

Campus Wi-Fi infrastructure was also identified as a concern, particularly for large courses using online assessments, student response systems or hybrid instruction. Participants reported connectivity problems that interfere with examinations and student participation.

Chair Robinson summarized several areas for further consideration, including investments in faculty and instructional support, teaching and learning technology, AI-related resources,

FACULTY SENATE

physical classroom infrastructure, Wi-Fi infrastructure and testing capacity. He encouraged faculty with specific recommendations to share them with the Academic Policy Committee. The committee will use the discussion and Faculty Senate survey results as it develops recommendations for consideration by the full Senate.

6. Old and New Business*a. Ashley Arya, Staff Senate Chair*

Staff Senate Chair Ashley Arya introduced herself and provided an overview of Staff Senate activities. She reported that she began her term as chair on July 1 and is the first Staff Senate chair serving a two-year term. She also serves as a delegate to the UNC Staff Assembly and as chair of the College of Sciences Staff Advisory Council.

Arya reported on the annual Staff Senate Summit Retreat, held at the Plant Sciences Building. The theme for the year is “Brick by Brick,” focused on how individual contributions across the university build a lasting institutional legacy.

Staff Senate meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon in the Governance Chambers at Talley Student Union, and meetings are open to the university community. Upcoming meeting topics include employee benefits and open enrollment, the university employee engagement survey, and campus safety.

Arya announced that nominations for the Staff Senate Cornerstone Award would open the following day and remain open through mid-October. The award recognizes staff members whose work and service are essential to their units.

She also described several Staff Senate initiatives and committees, including digital access, community-building efforts, resources and environment, external affairs and community service. The Staff Senate recently completed a backpack drive that provided 125 backpacks with supplies to lower-income university employees. The group will next support its annual Toys for Tots drive.

Chair Robinson suggested that the Governance, Communications and Recruitment Committee consider developing a Faculty Senate retreat for the next session and consult with the Staff Senate about its retreat structure and experience.

7. Adjourn

With no additional issues or concerns raised, Chair Robinson thanked the panelists and senators for the discussion and adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:39 p.m.