

Meeting Minutes, Faculty Senate, full meeting, February 3, 2026

Due to inclement weather, the meeting was held on Tuesday, February 3 instead of Tuesday, January 27.

In attendance:

Yaser Ahmed, Jeffrey Alston (S), Shyam Aravamudhan (A), Leticia Nuñez-Argote (S), Ayanna Armstrong (S), Jose Azucena (A), Trevor Brothers (S), Dewayne Brown (S), Chantel Simpson Carroll (S), Subrata Chakrabarty (S), Arvind Chandrasekaran (S), Seho Cho (S), Lisa Clough, Mike Cundall (S), James Daniels (S), Sherrie Drye (A), Robert L Ferguson (S), Yvonne R. Ford (S), Sherell Fuller, Joseph Graves Jr. (A), Melissa Hodge-Penn, Brittany Ingram (S), AKM Kamrul Islam (A), Floyd James, Felicia Jefferson, Stephanie Kelly (S), Joy Kennedy (S), Md Arif Khan (A), Yu-Tung Kuo (A), Roland Leak (S), Laura Marshall, Blessing Masasi (A), Lauren Mayo (S), Adam L. McClain (S), Nicole R. McCoy, Ahmed Megri (S), Ram Mohan (S), Hyosoo Moon (A), Hamidreza Moradi (S), Jean Marie Mwiza, Cephas Naanwab (A), Phoebe Ajibade, Xiuli Qu (S), David Rachlin (S), Ginger Redd, Kristen L. Rhinehardt (S), Craig Rhodes, Flourice W. Richardson (A), George S. Robinson, Jr., Jennifer Ross (A), Mashooq Salehin (S), Amy Schwartzott (S), Musibau Shofoluwe (S), Nichole Smith, Adreinne Smith, Natasha Spellman (S), Kate Stepaniuc (S), Ayesha Monique Coleman Swinton (S), John Teleha (S), John Paul Ward (S), Jenora Waterman, Tammy T. Webb (S), Nakeshia Williams, Charlotte Wood (S), Binbin Yang (A), Alex Yin

(S): Senator

(A): Alternate

A call to order was done by Dr. Scott Harrison at 3:03 pm. A roll call was taken, overseen by Professor Daniels. The agenda was presented. A motion was made by Dr. Cundall and seconded by John Teleha for the agenda to be approved. The motion passed unanimously. Prior meeting minutes were then presented, and presented for approval. A motion was made by David Rachlin and seconded by Dr. McClain for the minutes to be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Several brief announcements were made, including the upcoming Installation of Chancellor James. R. Martin II on the 135th Founders Day (Monday, March 9th, 10 am, at Harrison Auditorium) and a note about a newer approach to e-mail communications coming from the Provost's Office indicated as the "Weekly Five".

Drs. Ajibade, Ford, Harrison, McCoy, and Rhinehardt were then recognized to offer updates on the UNC System and Faculty Assembly across three major areas: Accreditation, Academic Freedom, and Syllabi. It was explained that a new accrediting body was being put together and was supported by six state university systems. Current concerns have related to whether or not this newer accrediting body has been sufficiently developed. Discussion from the floor included comments that the standards of the new accrediting body seemed simplistic, underdeveloped, and a thinly veiled move towards stifling creativity and academic freedom without intellectual justification. Dr. Harrison encouraged members of the Faculty Senate to read the standards and share their conclusions with delegates of the Faculty Assembly to share at the Assembly meetings. A proposed definition for academic freedom being considered within the UNC System was then discussed. An initially proposed definition for academic freedom that had been voted upon by the UNC System Faculty Assembly has since been reformulated

within the UNC System for which subsequent concerns are being discussed among faculty. Further feedback is being put forward prior to what would be voted upon by the full Board of Governors. It was then discussed on how syllabi were to be made public, although there had been legal arguments against this transition that have cited copyright and whether this leads to undue antagonism toward faculty. For how the university appeared to be utilizing Simple Syllabus as a means for collecting syllabi, concerns were expressed about this application's functionality as it has not worked for several professors and whether costs were substantial - that could be used towards other aims at the university. Dr. Harrison indicated that he would send information to the Faculty Senate regarding prior discussions surrounding Simple Syllabus. He mentioned as well that elections were soon upcoming for faculty interested to be elected as representatives for the UNC System Faculty Assembly.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Lisa Clough and Associate Vice Chancellor Dr. Melissa Hodge-Penn were then welcomed to share updates alongside a Q&A discussion about their roles in the Division of Research. Drs. Clough and Hodge-Penn each introduced themselves and their backgrounds. Dr. Clough shared her excitement for being a part of shaping the Division of Research as the university moves towards R1 status, further indicating that an effective view of success centers upon supporting faculty with respect to pursuits around research funding and PhD students they are training. Dr. Clough emphasized goals for partnership and connection with the Provost's Office, the CFO and university advancement. Dr. Hodge-Penn then added that they remain focused on building personnel in the department, moving through initial stages of establishing a research council, working to support researchers affected by buildings and research spaces that have been recently impacted, and giving specific attention to research infrastructure overall in discussion with university facilities and the CFO. In addition, there was strong focus on achieving goals around research per the central tenets of Preeminence 2030. Capacity building is an overarching consideration. A Q&A and discussion session then proceeded. Dr. Graves shared a concern about being a 21st Century research space without the facilities to match it. Dr. Graves cited examples of essential activities happening in life sciences research at many R1 universities, which have also been sought after by some of the brightest scientists at this university, yet are severely inhibited due to basic challenges with current facilities due to damaging effects of building temperatures on equipment. That the brightest scientists at this university cannot compete with other scientists who have more facilities. Dr. Clough responded by acknowledging that NC A&T has been underfunded as a land grant and "emerging research" institution for years, noting that the need for more people and facilities is important. She stated plans to visit all of the facilities and their constituents, furthermore gathering the information necessary to make a list of concerns, identifying priorities and approaches toward addressing urgent needs. Dr. Webb shared that she would like to see the graduate college and Division of Research collaborate more often so that resources were effectively allocated and graduate student researchers were more robustly supported by the university, including with respect to having a needed improvement in institutional funding support being committed to them to go beyond one year. This occurs in contrast to other universities which provide three or four years of committed support. Dr. Clough agreed and added this to the list of concerns. Dr. Mayo then shared that there is appreciation for the intended research council and the addition of personnel, but there is a general faculty worry as to when these changes, having been mentioned for a number of years, will take place. Dr. Ford followed the comments by indicating that, amidst the concerns and challenges, she appreciates the resilience of the faculty. Lastly, David Rachlin then asked if anyone from the library was on the emerging research council, to which Dr. Clough responded that Forrest Foster is.

Drs. Ford and Harrison then proceeded to discuss upcoming nominations. Dr. Ford requested that all departments check in to ensure that their senators and alternates are updated for the 2026-2027 academic school year, and that this needs to happen during the month. Dr. Ford shared that

nominations would be opening for the Faculty Senate Chair Position for the start of the 2026-2027 academic year, with Dr. Harrison completing his final term of service in this position. Several senators asked about consideration of workload and course release with respect to service as Faculty Senate Chair. Dr. Harrison acknowledged that, within his experience, there was some discussion and consideration that had helped with workload, but there was not an preset formula. Dr. Ford continued to share as well that there were two Faculty Assembly delegated and Faculty Assembly alternate positions to be filled, as well. Lastly, Dr. Ford shared that nominations for all of these positions would take place throughout the months of February and March, and that voting would take place on March 24th. If Senators had any questions, they could reach out to Dr. Ford and Dr. Harrison if they were interested in serving in any of these capacities.

Dr. Marshall was then welcomed to discuss New Programs and Curricula. Dr. Marshall requested that Faculty Senators track University Communications regarding announcements concerning university-level curriculum proposals and to review these curriculum change proposals using the link that she provided, followed by a Qualtrics Survey. Dr. Marshall then demonstrated on how to do this. Dr. Marshall requested that Senators communicate with her any comments, suggestions or concerns as she is New Programs and Curriculum Committee (NP&C) Chair. She named that this work is part of the process of giving the faculty senate ownership again of curriculum changes and approval process so that curriculum can once again fall under the shared governance that has been considered by many to be an urgently needed development. Lastly, Dr. Marshall shared that she and others working within the current university-level curriculum review process are aiming to identify how the NP&C Committee activities and the Faculty Senate monthly meeting schedule interoperate during current happenings.

The involvements of Drs. Kurkalova, Qu, Rhinehardt, Richardson, and Harrison were then indicated as regards their work within an Academic Technology Working Group, which was pursuing an initiative toward developing an Academic Technology Council (ATC). They cited February 24th as the date for the release of a drafted governing document for the ATC, and March 24th as the date for nominations for ATC to occur with respect to interested faculty. April 28 would be the date for the presentation of the ATC to the Faculty Senate.

Drs. McCoy, Harrison, Fuller, and Ajibade were then welcomed to discuss updates from Faculty Senate committees. Dr. McCoy updated the Faculty Senate on behalf of the Academic Calendar Committee, stating that they were working through UNC System calendar policies, ensuring that calendar adjustments and planning remain in accordance with each regular term of the academic year and the ninety days of summer. The Academic Calendar Committee is seeking involvement from those who are interested in supporting the committee. This is essential with respect to major work surrounding planning for an upcoming five-year period: Fall 2028 - Spring 2034. Dr. McCoy further indicated the upcoming meeting schedule for the committee surrounding this work. Dr. Harrison then spoke on behalf of the Education Policy Committee, referring to discussions about Academic Program Review and Dr. Yin's involvement with the THRIVES initiative. Dr. Harrison mentioned some concerning changes elsewhere in the UNC System regarding changes to academic programs, and further noted that a goal should be to determine how we can sustain the integrity of a robust range of essential and specific disciplines. He then gave an update on the new wellness days stating that: 1) there have been relatively few request from students thus far; 2) the wellness days remain optional in terms of whether instructors implement them within each of their courses; 3) there may be implications to the calendar; and 4) the committee needs feedback from faculty on their experiences as well as on the policy and language that should be pursued with the Student Health Center so that students can be better provided with wellness they may be needing. Dr. Harrison then made mention of the Student Course Feedback Survey

instrument, noting that he heard from Dr. Yin, Dr. Fuller, and Dr. Denith about this being updated. Lastly, Dr. Harrison made mention the midterm review for accreditation upcoming in 2027, noting that Dr. Yin is looking for volunteers to ensure this goes well. Dr. Fuller then spoke about the Handbook and Constitution committee. She stated that they had completed a faculty handbook revision recently, and that Dr. Fuller would be a point of contact along with Dr. Harrison, if there were any questions, comments, or concerns. Additionally, Dr. Fuller said that they would send out these revisions to the full Senate as they've been raising this to the attention of university leadership. Lastly, Dr. Ajibade spoke on behalf of the Faculty Welfare committee, making note of the Faculty Commons Opening Ceremony occurring February 24th. Dr. Ajibade then explained that parking would be spoken about at future meetings with a follow up stemming from the next Faculty Senate meeting and that there would be further conversation, too, about reinstating faculty-centered approaches to campus decisions such as a faculty dining hall, faculty writing and research training, supporting the instructional work of faculty, the climate of integrity for student test-taking, and much more.

Dr. Chandrasekaran was then welcomed to discuss new business, which consisted namely of brief conversation to consider opportunities for service and connection, and leaving further questions and comments for the next meeting.

The meeting then fully concluded with a motion to adjourn by Dr. Marshall that was then seconded by Dr. Armstrong. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 4:59 pm.