

Meeting Minutes, Faculty Senate, full meeting, March 24, 2026

In attendance:

Osasohan Agbonlahor (A), Phoebe Ajibade, M. Alam (S), Jeffrey Alston (S), Letycia Nuñez Argote (S), Trevor Brothers (S), Chantel Carroll (S), Subrata Chakrabarty (A), Arvind Chandrasekaran (S), Eunho Cho (S), SeHo Cho (S), Gurcan Comert, James Daniels (S), Regina Williams Davis, Chastity English (A), Robert Ferguson (S), Flourice Richardson (A), Yvonne Ford (S), Sherell Fuller, Tiffany Fuller, Joseph L. Graves, Jr. (A), Scott Harrison (S), Floyd James, Hannah Javidi (A), Stephanie Kelly (S), James Kribs (S), Roland Leak (S), Blessing Masasi (A), Lauren Mayo (S), Nicole McCoy, Adam McClain (S), Ahmed Megri, Jean-Marie Mwiza, Cephas Naanwab (A), Xiuli Qu (S), David Rachlin (S), Nya Ransom, Kristen Rhinehardt (S), George S. Robinson, Jr., Jennifer Ross (A), Ryan Russell (A), Mashooq Salehin (S), Amy Schwartzott (S), Musibau Shofoluwe (S), Iyanna Sims (A), Natasha Spellman (S), Ecaterina Stepaniuc (S), Ayesha Coleman Swinton (S), Wisdom Takumah, John Teleha (S), John Paul Ward (S), Saija Washington, Tammy Webb (A), Charlotte Wood (S), Mohammad Hendijani Zadeh

(S): Senator

(A): Alternate

A call to order was made by Dr. Scott Harrison at 3:04pm, followed by a roll call overseen by Professor Daniels. The agenda was presented. A motion was made by Dr. Graves to approve the agenda and seconded by Mr. Teleha. The motion passed unanimously.

At 3:11 pm, Dr. Regina Davis, Assistant Vice Provost for Online & Extended Learning, was then invited to offer a presentation and discussion about Project Kitty Hawk and Aggie Flight Path Degree Programs. Dr. Davis opened by asking who knew about the project and programs. Dr. Davis described her own efforts toward furthering understanding, noting that she was exploring programs that could be delivered via the Project Kitty Hawk (PKH) initiative happening across the UNC System. A committee was put together to spearhead this effort and, in July 2025, there was a Master Services Agreement created to serve as an institutional commitment to the process. Involvement at this time may help our university be a formative part of the process leading toward online degree-granting and that the university was being provided with more funds to work with. Project Kitty Hawk is a third-party vendor that provides a service, having a budget model that is not based on revenue-sharing per se. This service works to specifically support the process of online degree-granting. There was an Onsite Stakeholder Meeting in August 2025 to officially set this process in motion, followed by a Master Services Agreement Signing Ceremony. After this ceremony, work began toward determining and creating courses to then be offered. The initial launch began with a small cohort of 18 students between Criminal Justice and Liberal Studies, small enough to address initial while being large enough to support data-informed decisions. Dr. Davis then further stated that the university was now offering the following programs through Project Kitty Hawk - BS in Criminal Justice, BA in Liberal Studies, and some General Education Courses – further noting that, with rollouts ranging from Fall 2026 to Spring 2027, there will be a Human Resources Management concentration of the Masters in Business Administration, a BA in Political Science degree,

a BS in Environmental Health and Safety, a BS in Elementary Education, and an MS in Data Analytics. Psychology, Biology and Cybersecurity are other current areas of interest in terms of program development. Dr. Davis states that programs are being granted \$80,000 seed money for each of the first seven programs to be launched along with one-time fringe benefits amounting to about \$105,000. This pays for those subject matter experts who would be the faculty working to help develop those courses as well as flight path program coordinators to manage these programs. Standards for the programs remain the same in terms of admissions. Dr. Davis then stated that the leadership team surrounding this project had the following projections that, by Summer session, there would be 49 students in the BS in Criminal Justice program and 52 students in the BS Liberal Studies program. Dr. Davis characterized the timing of Aggie Flight Path (how these online course offerings occur, in 8-week blocks of time), stating that there are 5 term starts—2 in the fall, 2 in the spring, and 1 in the summer. Aggie Flight Path programs are the university's designation of these specific online offerings at our university whereas Project Kitty Hawk is the vendor.

A question was posed by a representative from the Physics department. This attendee stated that the Physics Department had been contacted to create a subject path for Physics 101. Dr. Davis responded that she had not heard anything specifically about this, but that course designers were possibly creating a general education path that may include Physics 101, and was interested to follow-up further on this.

Another question was raised about the long-term sustainability of these programs and their accreditation. The attendee asked if this format had been proven to work. Dr. Davis responded stating that she was a former SACS liaison and that she was still aiding the Aggie Flight Path coordinators with the accreditation parts of the process. This included characterizing student learning outcomes in a manner expected to be stringent. She then described how the process involved having the Aggie Flight Path courses be open and ready for students 2 weeks before the first week of class. Dr. Davis also described how the program would attract students who are busy since each course is only 8 weeks long and that they have only 2 days to drop the class. Overall, growth in the distance learning environment had been more than 12% each year for the past three years, and this is even before an upcoming effort with respect to advertising and marketing. The programming overall appears to be a helpful fit for those students with substantial work and family commitments, and the outlook for sustainability seems promising.

A question was asked about course development, if teaching a course that aligned with the proposed 7 programs, how would instructors go about turning the course into the 8-week model. Dr. Davis responded by saying that the strategy is to identify entire programs that are already fully approved to be online and then reaching out to relevant course teachers from there.

Another Senator asked if all of the initial programs are set in stone. Dr. Davis responded by stating that they are still working to solidify the 7 inaugural programs, so there is a continued opportunity to submit programs if Department Chairs or individual faculty members are interested. It will be important however to ensure that the anticipated cost per credit hour for students taking Aggie Flight Path courses will result in real demand for the particular program being proposed. It was noted that, as revenue

results from these offerings, the funds come to the university without restrictions regarding subsequent expenditure. Advising and advertising are being contracted out. Overall costs are considerable for each online degree program and require processing support within the university in addition to developing and supporting a pool of online teaching faculty in a manner that does not deflect current departmental faculty from initiatives such as pursuing R1 status for the university.

Dr. Davis concluded by answering a final series of questions from the Senate. The first of these questions was whether or not the Aggie Flight Courses would have a 16-week course option. Dr. Davis indicated that the program remained focused on one course type (i.e., 8 weeks). Another question was whether or not the MBA with Human Resources Management focus would replace the current online program of study by the same name. Due to how Aggie Flight Path specializes in 8-week programs, this means it would not be replacing 16-week program versions. Further discussion, stemming from meeting attendees, ensued about how students may choose between different concentrations within the same degree program based on duration (8-weeks versus 16-weeks), and that distributed investment across promoting potentially competing programs may not be ideal.

After Dr. Davis left, prior meeting minutes were then presented to the Senate for approval at 3:47 pm. There was a motion by Dr. Rhinehardt to approve the minutes, and Mr. Teleha second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Harrison, at 3:55 pm, initiated the Nominations and Elections part of the meeting for the positions of Faculty Senate Chair as well as for positions within the UNC System Faculty Assembly. Dr. Harrison then displayed the nominations for the election of Faculty Senate Chair and positions within the UNC System Faculty Assembly. For verification of quorum and attendance, Dr. Harrison then reviewed those departments not present for voting based on those indicating attendance thus far. Attendance was then further updated to finalize those additional departments having representatives present. Dr. Harrison then opened up the floor for further comment and discussion on described voting procedures—of which there were none—before then inviting the sole nominee for Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Nicole McCoy, to share thoughts on what she would do as Chair. After her comments, the Qualtrics voting survey was then sent out to Faculty Senators. Voting took place electronically and was overseen by Dr. Yvonne Ford. Nominations then proceeded for positions in the UNC System Faculty Assembly. There were four nominees for the two positions of Faculty Assembly delegates and four nominees for the two positions of Faculty Assembly alternates. Dr. Rhinehardt motioned to close the nomination and Dr. McClain seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. Voting then commenced for the Faculty Assembly Delegates and Alternates.

The results of the Faculty Senate Chair election were then shared. Dr. Nicole McCoy was unanimously voted as the next Faculty Senate Chair. Dr. Harrison was then thanked and applauded by those in attendance for his two-term service as Faculty Senate Chair.

Updates were then provided about developments with a prospective Academic Technology Council (ATC). Dr. Harrison gave thanks to those who had been working in meetings with Lizbeth Johnson and stated that they had come to a final description for the council. Dr. Harrison stated that the ATC would be meeting with faculty multiple times each year and would likely have subcommittees. Dr. Rhinehardt described the application form and process for faculty interested in serving on the Academic Technology Council. Dr. Harrison opened the floor to comments, but there were none.

The Senate then invited Dr. Tommy Patterson to the floor to talk about the Cyber-infrastructure Survey at 4:31pm. Dr. Patterson introduced himself as the faculty librarian within Bluford Library, noting that he has held this position for two years and is in a department committee that focuses on cyber-infrastructure—the infrastructure needed to do anything online (networks, wifi, email, human support). He stated that he is trying to develop a library-based perspective on approaching these topics. Dr. Patterson presented a Qualtrics survey for the faculty to take in order to get better feedback, noting that it was the library's initial attempt at a "user needs assessment". Dr. Patterson then shared a flyer along with links to both the survey and focus groups that faculty can participate in. Dr. Patterson concluded his presentation by stating that survey participation is anonymous.

Dr. Harrison and Dr. Ajibade were then welcomed to present information on two topics from last meeting's New Business discussion—Post-tenure Review and General Education. In regards to Post-Tenure Review, it was recommended to identify and follow the correct standards. Those going up for review should record the year of their next review as early as possible, create their strategic plan by identifying review policies, and begin creating folders for documentation. It was also suggested that faculty produce hard copies of annual evaluations signed by their department chairs. Lastly, it was suggested that folks present annually at regional and national conferences. Discussion then ensued about how there was too much credence in the post-tenure review policy that is presently posted as surrounds one group of individuals—College Deans. It was also mentioned that the Faculty Handbook being updated would be a part of the push for more shared governance, and that post-tenure review policies may better be situated within the Faculty Handbook as opposed to split off from it. Discussion on the Faculty Handbook revision then ensued. The Faculty Handbook revision had been submitted in May 2025. The procedure involves it receiving Board of Trustees approval and the pending status of the Faculty Handbook revision has been mentioned repeatedly to university leadership over the past year. At this juncture, further developments may await the new Provost who is starting with the university in May. One of the critical updates within the proposed Faculty Handbook revision is to provide representation for teaching faculty.

Dr. Ford was then called to the floor to share the Faculty Assembly delegates and alternates at 4:49 pm. The elected Faculty Assembly delegates were Dr. Lauren Mayo and Dr. Phoebe Ajibade, and the elected alternates were Dr. Ginger Redd and Dr. Mashooq Salehin.

At 4:52pm Dr. Harrison then returned to the floor to finish the New Business discussion around General Education. Dr. Harrison noted that there were listening sessions, but it was difficult to determine what was out for concrete review and discussion. It was mentioned that the first year college success course

may be moving from 1 credit to 2 credits, which many Senators noted would be difficult since adjusting 1 single credit hour in a 120-hour program would be complicated.

Drs Ajibade, Ford, Harrison, McCoy, and Rhinehardt were then welcomed to shared about the UNC Faculty Assembly meeting. They shared the the new definition of Academic Freedom was finally put into place by the Board of Governors. The general consensus amongst Senators was that faculty should be able to—and, per this new definition, ideally would be able to—speak their minds in their research and service without being subject to influence. The group concluded with some remarks about syllabus sharing that is still awaiting further conversation at the university.

The floor was then opened for New Business to be discussed at the next Faculty Senate meeting, to which a Senator shared that Mileage and Per Diem rates have gone up nationally for travel while these rates have remained the same at the university.

There was a motion put forth by Dr. Webb to conclude the meeting and seconded by Dr. Mayo. The motion was carried unanimously.