**FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**

**North Carolina A&T State University**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Tuesday, April 27, 2021**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Dr. Julius Harp, Chair Presiding**

**Senate Members Present:** Niroj Aryal, Narayan Bhattarai, Stephen Bollinger, Dong Yang Deng, Zachary Denton, Nicole Dobbins, Yewanda Fasina, Galen Foresman, Julius Harp, Scott Harrison, Evelyn Hoover, Karen Jackson, Yahya Kamalipour, Hyung Nam Kim, James Kribs, Yu-Tung Kuo, Minyong Lee, Ahmed Megri, Nicole McCoy, Shona Morgan, Cephas Naanwaab, Ioannis Raptis, Kaushik Roy, Dave Schall, Amy Schwartzott, Roberta Claro da Silva, Kalynda Smith, Shon Smith, Evelyn Sowells-Boone, Hong Wang, Omar Woodham, Osei Yeboah

**Departments Not Represented:**  Computational Science and Engineering; English; History and Political Science; Nanoengineering; Physics; Social Work and Sociology

The meeting was called to order by Chair Julius Harp at 3:03 pm.

**Approval of the March Faculty Senate Minutes**

It was properly moved (by Dr. Denton) to approve the March minutes and seconded by Dr. Bollinger. Senators unanimously approved the minutes.

**Nominating Committee Dr. Shon Smith**

Dr. Smith gave an update about Senate elections of officers. In the March meeting, senators voted to hold elections electronically from April 5-April 10. Unfortunately, we did not reach a quorum after the period of voting, making the election invalid. The Executive committee voted to hold elections during today’s meeting. Dr. Smith then opened the floor for all candidates on the ballot to introduce themselves and summarize their interest/fit for the positions. The candidates included:

* For Vice-Chair: Dr. Nicole Dobbins and Dr. Galen Foresman (Dr. William Randle, who was on the original ballot, withdrew himself at the last Executive Committee Meeting).
* For Secretary: Dr. Shon Smith

Dr. Newcomb Hopfer then shared a link in the zoom chat for senators to use for voting. She will monitor survey results and share with Dr. Smith later in the meeting.

**New Programs and Curricula Committee Meeting Dr. Galen Foresman**

Committee met on April 13 and reviewed packets from Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Math, Applied Engineering Technology, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Computational Data Science and Engineering, Biological Engineering, Accounting and Finance, Management, Family and Consumer Sciences, Social Work and Sociology, Kinesiology, Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, Educator Preparation, and Aerospace Studies.

There were no questions from the Senate about these curriculum proposals. The body voted unanimously to approve the curriculum changes.

**Educational Policy Committee Dr. Zachary Denton**

No report

Dr. Morgan asked if we are still waiting to hear final insight about the Office Hours Policy? Her department would like to use the new policy to develop syllabi for the Fall. Dr. Denton said that the policy is sitting on the Provost’s desk and there is no update since last meeting.

**Academic Calendar Committee Dr. Galen Foresman**

No report

**Faculty Handbook Committee Dr. Evelyn Hoover**

No report

**Constitution Committee Dr. Scott Harrison**

No report

**Faculty Welfare Committee**

Dr. Randle was not able to attend the meeting today, but sent a note summarizing the committee’s activities and plans (see below).

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Dr. Harp next initiated some discussion surrounding a resolution against racial discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Given NC A&T’s history related to diversity and inclusion, Dr. Harp opened the floor to hear perspectives from the Senate about this issue.

* Dr. Dobbins shared that the resolution created by NC A&T has been compiled with a broader statement from the Faculty Assembly. She said that this particular resolution, while specifically focused on discrimination and violence against Asian Americans, also fits in with the Assembly’s call for Board of Governors’ response to the recommendations of the Diversity and Equity Taskforce. Though there has been some hiring, the overall response has been limited and non-substantive.
* Dr. Smith provided his support to the Asian American community, condemning all violence, hate, and discrimination. As a counselor, he encouraged any colleagues of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent to seek him out to talk if needed.
* Dr. Hong Wang provided his thoughts about the NC A&T administrative response to the recent events. After the mass shooting in Atlanta, several Asian American faculty wrote an open letter to Chancellor Martin and Provost McEwen, requesting a campus response. Chancellor Martin responded immediately and sent a statement out the next day to the campus community. Dr. Wang is appreciative of the very fast response from administration. Dr. Wang said he is also not aware of any campus hate crimes and has not experienced discrimination, violence, or hate against him or any faculty he knows. Nevertheless, he considers this campus statement an important step in acknowledging current events and preventing violence on our campus before it could occur. He believes that racism and hate crimes need to be stopped through education at all levels. He is confident for the future given the quick response from the NC A&T administration.

**Open Floor**

Dr. Jackson said that she has noticed significant fatigue among her colleagues and students. Though there may be a perception that we are “past” something with the vaccine, she hopes that the Welfare Committee (or some other group) is thinking about the far-reaching impacts of COVID. Many in the campus community have lost family, experienced illnesses, and have experienced major life stresses. She believes that there are many things that we may have to address due to this. Because we are a university focused on social justice, the civil unrest and constant violence weighs on this campus community even more heavily.

* Dr. Smith said that he concurs with what Dr. Jackson shared. He said that the natural response to crisis is fight or flight. We have been fighting for the past year; once we get closer to a place of normalcy, individuals will then need to mourn and grieve losses that took place this past year. It is important that we all take care of ourselves.
* Dr. Morgan said that she hopes action can come from this discussion. She particularly appreciated that Dr. Jackson’s comments included the entire campus community. We need to make sure that we advocate for faculty. She has seen faculty in her area pivoting and trying to balance care for their families and students. We need to do something to make sure the administration understands the extent of faculty impact. She is aware of the request by the Senate to delay RPT/PTR processes. Students have been given Pass/Fail every semester during this pandemic and it is important to make sure that faculty impacts are recognized and accommodated. Just as student transcripts now have a note referencing grades earned during a pandemic, it would be a show of acknowledgement from administration if some similar statement could be place on faculty records.
  + Dr. Woodham, Dr. Jackson, and Dr. Smith agreed in the chat.
  + Dr. Jackson would like the Welfare Committee to draft a statement to share with administration and she offered to assist. She will follow up with Dr. Randle.
    - Dr. Dobbins believes that we can draft something quickly and vote on it to use in conversations during the summer.
  + Dr. Smith will be serving on the University Implementation committee through the summer and will voice faculty concerns.
  + Dr. Harp assured senators that the faculty concerns will be formally noted in the minutes and acted upon during the summer.

Dr. Fasina asked if 9-month faculty have the chance to accrue leave? She said that she is not aware of any provision and wondered if this was appropriate?

* Dr. Woodham said he thought the lack of leave was an understood part of the job, but is aware of Family/Medical Leave opportunities that can be applied for separately.
* Dr. Smith and Dr. Harp noted these concerns and said that it can be researched by the Welfare Committee.

**Presentation from the Chancellor Chancellor Martin and Provost McEwen**

Chancellor Martin came to today’s meeting to provide information about recent conversations to pursue R1 recognition. Chancellor Martin originally raised this idea during a previous Faculty Staff institute to demonstrate the transformational thinking we need to pursue in long-range institutional planning. Conversations have become more serious in recent years, fueled by recent presidential elections and the efforts from the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus, founded by Congresswoman Alma Adams, Senator Tim Scott, and former Representative Mark Walker. The caucus has created significant levels of visibility for HBCUS and has been the impetus of conversations and actions focused on funding disparity and increased support for these institutions. As the largest HBCU with a wide scope of degree programs, NC A&T has benefited significantly:

* More Title III support through funding from Congress
* Reactivation of congressional funding previously suspended
* Additional funding for Pell grants, which increases aid for our students and allows them to extend funding through the summer

During the most recent presidential election, every presidential candidate was challenged by the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus to create a commitment to HBCUs. The Biden/Harris plan is a $70 billion commitment to HBCUs, though funds have not been fully appropriated. Chancellor Martin serves on the Presidents of HBCUs advisory council and this group wants to help shape how these funds are invested. HBCUs are different based on funding, size, and Carnegie classifications, and a prescriptive strategy defined by Congress or presidential staff would not be appropriate for distribution. Some of the funds have been designated to retire federal debt accrued by some private HBCUs for construction; NC A&T has no federally funded capital projects.

Due to the efforts of the Congressional Bipartisan HBCU Caucus, three buckets of funds have been designated for HBCUs, two approved by former-President Trump and one by President Biden. These are HERF (Higher Education Relief Funds) funds that were part of the CARES act. Buckets were meant to support higher education and each bucket included additional funding to support HBCUs. Funds will be dispersed based on enrollment and Pell-eligibility. NC A&T recently received a report from Dept. of Education and from President Peter Hans that summarizes the total appropriations from each of the three buckets.

* NC A&T will receive the largest dollar amount in the UNC system - $213 million - and must use them in specific ways. Funds can support operational expenses, cover revenue losses (our institution recorded $26 million in losses accrued from tuition, housing, dining and athletics), and provide student support.
* NC A&T has not laid off faculty or cut programs. We are now in a stronger financial situation since the pandemic because we’ve taken strong cost cutting measures and strategically used CARES funding.
* The UNC system has asked NC A&T to provide a report to designate how the $213 million funds will be used over the next two years. The report will be sent in over the next two weeks. He plans to share the report with the Senate (either full body or Executive Committee), which will include ideas to utilize funds for the greatest impact.

The R1 conversation came from Congress and other organizations. Due to social justice concerns, there is growing interest to collaborate with HBCUs. The American Association of Research Universities (AAU) convened a session to partner with R2 HBCUs, to determine how they can congressionally advocate for funding support to move the 11 R2 HBCUs that are capable of moving to R1. In addition, Biden/Harris has committed an investment of billions of dollars in infrastructure, science, climate control and other initiatives aimed at improving our nation’s infrastructure. Research HBCUs should get an appropriate share to establish programs and develop research centers to address these issues. If you consider HBCUs, NC A&T is among the top two institutions capable of moving to R1.

Chancellor Martin believes that as an institution we must prepare ourselves. He has already had preliminary conversations with the Board of Trustees, Cabinet, and UNC System President Peter Hans. There are no conclusions that we are moving to R1; however, we are having open and frank discussions and conducting further fact-finding. We must know the criteria and who will ultimately decide; the decision is vested in the President of the UNC System and Board of Governors, irrespective of what we or Congress wants to do. It will be necessary that we get state appropriations as an R1 institution. At President Hans’ recommendation, Chancellor Martin will submit a report to share with UNC System.

Chancellor Martin believes that the entire NC A&T community must consider all potential benefits and growth opportunities that could follow this R1 process – financial, visibility, and reputation, to name a few. Recognition as an R1 institution would equate to multiple hundreds of millions of dollars in funding over the next 5-8 years. He is not willing to ignore the potential opportunity and has planned to pull together a small fact-finding group, which will include faculty representation, to gather facts and share a report with the campus community. He then plans to move into a more formal planning session with students, faculty, BOT members, and representation from other campus constituencies. Chancellor Martin is at the meeting today to get some preliminary faculty feedback and answer questions. He turned the floor back over to Dr. Harp to field questions.

Questions posed were as follows:

* Dr. Dobbins asked, in the chat, what are the parameters of using the funds around supporting faculty? As we plan for the fall semester and course offerings, F2F and online, does this mean funding will be available to support the hiring of additional tenure and NTTF Faculty?
* Dr. Jackson asked, in the chat, how will our internal system capacity be built up to support the operations and expectations of a R1 institution? DORED, travel, and other ancillary offices need support, training, new ways of doing business in general to support that level of research.
* Dr. Naanwaab asked, in the chat, if we have the required number of graduate programs to meet R1 status?
* Dr. Smith asked, in the chat, as we discuss this vision of R1 and building an infrastructure for it to happen, will we be developing a research and funding support team in each college to support colleges, faculty and students in developing research, searching for, applying for and obtaining grant funding from multiple sources? This would be in addition to current structures established in research areas.
* Dr. Dobbins added her concerns about managing grant projects as well

Chancellor Martin did not respond to all questions but did address some of the concerns raised specifically by Dr. Smith and Dr. Jackson. He said that the Provost, Vice Chancellor Pompey, and members of Cabinet have had significant discussion surrounding infrastructure. They recognize that additional staff is needed in DORED and HR. There are several areas, in addition to those discussed previously, through which we anticipate additional funding – including enrollment growth dollars (which we have not received for the past 7 years) and funds that the institution never received when it moved from masters to doctoral level. We asked for $10 million recurring and received $2.5 million 3 years ago. The remaining $7.5 million was part of last year’s budget which was vetoed by the Governor. The university is advocating for recurring financial support to support personnel and infrastructure growth; Chancellor Martin has had conversations with Governor Cooper, asking for the &7.5 million funds and matching land grant funds ($3-5 million) to be included in the budget. While the $213 million in funding is a considerable infusion of funds, we are specifically requesting recurring state appropriations. It will be important to use funds strategically and the Chancellor believes we need to build out infrastructure first. We have had many discussions, reimagining DORED and HR. He encourages more discussion from faculty to make sure that we spend these funds in places to improve efficiencies and reduce stress for those individuals writing proposals and working on funded projects. He plans for regular faculty updates and opportunities for faculty to provide feedback. He looks forward to more conversations and feedback in the future.

Chancellor Martin closed by stating that as lots of opportunities open for our university, it is important to vet them and ensure that we pursue those that are most meaningful and impactful. We must ensure that we are graduating students well-prepared to fill future needs.

**Interstate Passport Dr. Jason DePolo**

Dr. DePolo, Chair of the NC A&T General Education Council, joined us to talk about Interstate Passport. NC A&T accepts many transfer students and would like to make this process better for all involved; we currently have a lot of issues with General Education transfer to NC A&T. The NC Community College articulation agreements have mitigated some issues and Interstate Passport is another possibility to mitigate others.

Interstate Passport started in the Western United States and is expanding nationally. So far over 38,000 passports have been awarded to students. Essentially, the Interstate Passport is a giant articulation agreement that uses blocks of learning outcomes rather than specific courses to map. This reduces our reliance on one-to-one course transfers. There are 9 knowledge and skill areas that align well with our current SLOs. Within these 9 areas, there are 63 Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) embedded. These are vetted by AACU (LEAP initiative).

Dr Martin signed off for NC A&T to participate in the Passport program for a trial period in July 2020. We are now in process of mapping our Gen Ed courses to Passport. It is a giant articulation agreement that uses blocks of learning outcomes rather than specific courses to map. This reduces our reliance on one-to-one course transfers. There are 9 knowledge and skill areas that align well with our current SLOs. Within these 9 areas, there are 63 Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) embedded. These are vetted by AACU (LEAP initiative).

Our participation in the Interstate Passport has benefits to students and the institution, including: avoiding unnecessary course repetition, expediting degree progress, improving retention, recruiting students, and providing faculty curricular flexibility. The Passport will be recorded on the student’s transcripts, indicating that all general education and Passport requirements have been achieved – similar to how Associate’s degrees are noted. If an A&T student transfers elsewhere, they can take the Passport designation with them. If an incoming student took more than our required number of hours, they could use extra credits for electives. If they took less, then no additional general education will be required.

Questions from the body:

* Dr. Amankwatia asked in the chat if this will help with prior learning credit from the military?
  + Dr. Depolo said it will not unless the credit came from military institution that is part of Passport program.
* Dr. Foresman asked if we can do the block learning outcome approach to general education transfers without participating in the Passport program?
  + Dr. Depolo said yes, if we hired a lot more people in Transfer Articulation. The fee that we will pay for Passport is nominal considering the potential benefit of having a broad agreement across national institutions.
* Dr. Foresman asked if this originated with faculty or administration?
  + Dr. Depolo is unsure. It initially came across his desk last summer and came up again recently. He and Dr. Luster-Teasley have been working with the Gen-Ed council and will soon send information to the New Programs and Curricula Committee. Once the trial period is over, a decision about NC A&T’s continued participation will be made.
* Dr. Morgan asked when the trial begins? Will this affect advising?
  + Mapping will be complete in May and will move to Academic Affairs to be implemented in Fall 2021. Dr. Depolo said that the notation will be on transcript and they will work to incorporate into DegreeWorks. Advisors should not have to do anything except look for the designation on transfer student transcripts.
* Dr. Harp asked how many UNC schools are part of Passport or plan to be?
  + Dr. Depolo said we are the first institution to trial it in NC, but he believes that more growth is expected.
* Dr. Harp asked how many research-intensive universities are part of the passport?
  + Dr. Depolo is unsure but can find that out.
* Dr. Kamalipuour asked in the chat about the status of DegreeWorks?
  + Dr. Depolo said there have been no steps taken to integrate DegreeWorks with Passport yet. DegreeWorks is working, however, and general education and department courses are populated in the program.

**Statement from the Chair Dr. Julius Harp**

Dr. Harp thanked all senators and the Executive Committee members for our service. We may have differing opinions, but we are all striving to better faculty and students. We have made progress in the area of shared governance, including the Office Hours Policy and potential syllabus revisions. Administration (through Dr. Luster Teasley) is working with Welfare, Educational Policy, and New Programs and Curricula committees. Dr. Smith is serving as the Senate representative on the Fall 2021 Implementation Committee and there has been movement on NTTF designation and resolutions against racial discrimination.

**Faculty Assembly Report Dr. Nicole Dobbins**

The major push next year will be shared governance. Our work this summer will be supported by the Assembly. The next big issue is the follow-up from the recommendations made by the Racial Equity Taskforce and response of Dr. Bass. As the year ends, we have to encourage faculty participation. There is a lot of work to do, and we have to be involved. We need to be strategic with our time and try to plan time next year to be involved in committees (whether we are senators or not) and in Senate work.

**Election Results**

Dr. Newcomb Hopfer shared the results of the Senate Officer Elections. A total of 29 departments voted, with the following results:

* Vice-Chair: Dr. Galen Foresman was elected Vice-Chair with a total of 15 votes; Dr. Nicole Dobbins received 14 votes.
* Secretary: Dr. Shon Smith was elected Secretary with a total of 29 votes.

Dr. Dobbins moved to adjourn meeting. Dr. McCoy seconded. Adjourned at 5:25PM.

It has been a pleasure to serve,

Dr. Elizabeth Newcomb Hopfer

Secretary