

Meeting Minutes, Faculty Senate, full meeting, April 25, 2023

These minutes were reviewed and approved by electronic voting following the meeting.

In attendance:

Uchenna Anele (S); Shyam Aravamudhan (A); Niroj Aryal (S); Mohammad Azad (S); Bishu Bastakoti (S); Keyona Boatick; Stephen Bollinger (S); Trevor Brothers (A); Kelvin Bryant (S); Kimberly Bunch-Crump (S); Joanie Chavis; Zachary Denton (S); Nicole Dobbins; Zahra F. Khalaf; Robert Ferguson; Marka Fleming (S); Yvonne Ford (S); Joseph Graves Jr.; Kimberly Harper (S); AKM Kamrul Islam (A); Geetika Jaiswal (S); Floyd James; Liesl Jeffers-Francis; Yahya Kamalipour (S); Stephanie Kelly; Cynthia Khanlarian (S); Lyubov Kurkalova (S); Harvey Long; Nicole McCoy; Kimberly McNeil (S); Ahmed Megri (S); Devang Mehta (S); Carmen Monico (S); Katrina Nelson; John Ng'ombe (A); Emmanuel Obeng-Gyasi (S); Venktesh Pandey (A); David Rachlin (A); Bill Randle; Kristen Rhinehardt (S); Sydney Richardson; George Robinson; Jacqueline Roebuck Sakho (S); Del Ruff; J. David Schall (S); Amy Schwartzott (S); Belinda Shipp (S); Veronica Sills; Vijay Singh (S); John Teleha; Li-Shiang Tsay (A); Jeff Wolfgang (S); James Wood (S)

(S): Senator

(A): Alternate

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by the Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Scott Harrison. The Meeting Agenda was shared by Dr. Harrison and the roll call was taken by Dr. Fuller. There was then a review of the March 28, 2023 meeting minutes. Dr. Ford motioned to accept the minutes. Dr. Mehta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Harrison then asked Dr. Joseph Graves to share some general thoughts about the activities of the UNC System Faculty Retirement Incentive Program working group and any request he may have for faculty at the meeting. Dr. Graves began by addressing the projected loss of enrollment at five of the other UNC system institutions. For those other institutions (which do not include our own university), they would be the initial locations for the implementation of the Faculty Retirement Incentive Program. The eligibility for this program would involve availability of funds, and individuals being 55 years of age or older who are full-timed tenured faculty with 10 years or more of service to the system. As the program is first implemented, availability of funds may only support a couple of faculty from each institution who would be retiring. The program is to be fully voluntary, and information would be sent to faculty for them to make their own decision regarding application. The program would not keep faculty from working somewhere else. For what is being proposed, a simple calendar-based application process would be open to all eligible faculty members, with submitted applications to be assessed at each individual institution, based on an institution-specific process. The program is not intended to be a way for enacting administrative strategic plans regarding any reformulation or dissolution of academic units such as departments. In general, the application process should be open to those individuals who are interested – with associated discussion between university leadership and the faculty at each institution about what specific criteria would be used. This program may be a template for a broader program in the future, and is overall one the Faculty Senate should be aware of. In summary, this should be a program that would allow faculty who have “put their time in” to retire early. A question was then asked of Dr. Graves: what does a retirement package under this newer program include? Current planning is for it to include a lump sum of money, with that exact amount still being determined. Dr. Harrison

thanked Dr. Graves for his vigilance and advocacy for faculty with respect to Dr. Graves' service on the working group.

The meeting proceeded further with Dr. Dobbins thanking Dr. Graves and Dr. Monico for helping to represent the university in their service. Dr. Dobbins urged everyone that, when emails are sent on these and other various topics, faculty need to pay attention. For whenever input is requested from faculty, it is helpful for everyone to respond. There are potentially a number of upcoming changes within the university system and we must keep up with them.

Dr. Monico then spoke on her having been appointed to the UNC System Faculty Workload Policy working group, with this appointment having begun back in February. This working group has seven members. Faculty workload policies have been influenced by the Delaware study that was begun many years ago. The focus has been on academic units of instruction and student hours. Other considerations being discussed, in addition, by the working group have been class size and research involvement, and the challenging constraints, including fiscal constraints, that faculty can work under. Policy actions being recommended by the working group include those that involve clarifying responsibilities and authorities regarding roles in determining faculty workload, and in aligning workload with workplan and evaluation processes. Faculty having suggestions were encouraged to e-mail Dr. Monico.

Due to recent, specific discussions within the faculty community, Dr. Harrison then yielded the floor to attending faculty of the meeting. As was then referred to in the meeting by others, there is some potential legislation that could be impacting university policies, for instance relating to tenure for new hires in 2024 and beyond, and a legislative bill to mandate a new history course offering within degree curricula at universities. There was substantial concern over these matters, and some discussion about a general need for students, alumni and faculty to address these issues together. For an action that some in the faculty community have been considering, one option may be to start a chapter of the AAUP. The AAUP was discussed in terms of its impactful advocacy regarding scholarship, to communicate and respond to challenges in higher education, and address concerns such as those involving overreach into the curricula. The discussion concluded with commentary that a challenge to the integrity of our academic institutions puts the future of democracy at stake, and that our institution is one that society will look to for leadership.

A forum with the Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Human Resources Officer, Dr. Veronica Sills, then followed. It began with an introduction from Dr. Sills and other members of her office that were in attendance. Dr. Sills shared a PowerPoint that gave information about the Human Resources Division, its structure and how each office shapes the division as a whole. The division provides a broad-ranging set of services and resources surrounding its mission for building talent and developing culture across our campus community. Regarding the benefits provided, Dr. Sills encouraged all to inquire upon and make use of benefits available to them. For instance, there can be some coverage relating to conditions such as cancer. If employees have received treatment, paperwork can be subsequently submitted for requesting this coverage, even for some period of time following initial treatment and direct payment from the employee for these medical services.

Some questions of Dr. Sills were as follows. There has been some ongoing policy at the university of summer salary caps. It had been indicated, at the university, that this was a UNC System policy. Yet,

feedback from the UNC System was that this was a policy specific to the university. It would be helpful to know where the current summer salary cap policy originates, and whether it can be further addressed. This may help address some of the overall low salaries happening for faculty in comparison to other university institutions. A related question was whether salary compression was still being discussed and whether there were ways of solving this ongoing issue. Dr. Sills indicated that further review and updating of compensation policies was needed, and that a director of compensation was to be appointed who would be addressing some of this. Another question regarded whether the university had spousal hiring support for faculty. The university does not have a specific program for this, although interested applicants for jobs at the university are encouraged to apply. It was then inquired about the recruitment of top talent from across the world into the university and challenges with the hiring timeline. Dr. Sills indicated some of the hiring process was undergoing revision in response to some of these concerns.

The agenda then proceeded back to a discussion of committee work on campus. Dr. Randle shared on work with the ad hoc university handbook revision committee. Various sections of the handbook revision have been assigned to members of the committee. A current timeline is aiming for completion of the draft in November, but March may be a better date at which to complete the draft revision.

For some concluding business of the academic year, the value of surveying faculty and communicating upon university issues was discussed, with a general objective for taking further steps toward surveys in this regard.

Dr. Harrison motioned to adjourn the meeting and that the upcoming minutes for this meeting be potentially reviewed and approved via online communications and electronic voting. Dr. Denton seconded the motions. The motions carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.