



Minutes of the Meeting of the UNC System Faculty Assembly

October 15, 2021, via Zoom

Meeting Attendees:

ASU Louis Gallien; Michael Hambourger; Emily Dakin
ECU Purificación Martinez; Jeff Popke; George Bailey; Ralph Scott
ECSU Hirendranath Banerjee; Jennifer Brown, Malcolm Dcosta
FSU Chet Dilday; Robert Taber
NCA&T Galen Foresman; Nicole Dobbins
NCCU Ralph Barrett; Russell Robinson; Sean Colbert-Lewis, Sr.; Tracie Locklear
NCSSM Keethan Kleiner; Floyd Bullard
NCSU Jade Berry-James; Richard Spontak; David Berube; Darby Orcutt; Juliana Mukuchi Nfah-Abbenyi
UNCA Marietta Cameron; Melodie Galloway; Aubri Rote; Lisa Sellers
UNC-CH Mimi Chapman; Eileen Dewitya; Chaitra Powell; Jan Hannig; Anthony Hackney
UNCC Susan Harden; Karen Ford-Eickhoff; Joel Avrin
UNCG Sarah Daynes; Wade Maki; Spoma Jovanovic; Laurie Kennedy-Malone; Joyce Clapp
UNCP Reneè Lamphere; Cherry Beasley; Jennifer Wells
UNCSA Elizabeth Klaimon; Ellen Rosenberg
UNCW Jason Fleming; Jill Waity
WCU Laura Wright; Vicki Szabo; Bill Yang; Beth Wall-Bassett
WSSU Jack Monell; Hamdy Radwan
UNC System Office David English; Jim Ptaszynski; Darryl Bass; Rondall Rice; Jennifer Gerz-Escandon; Kelley Gregory
UNC System Board of Governors Sonja Phillips Nichols

9:00 – 9:05 AM Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the September 10, 2021 meeting – Dr. Timothy J. Ives

Comments from the Chair

Dr. Ives gave a brief update on budget proceedings in the General Assembly. The minutes of the September 10 meeting were approved.

Darryl Bass, Senior Associate Vice President for Equity, Engagement & Employee Relations, UNC System

Dr. Ives introduced Vice President Bass who reported on the work he’s been doing since his appointment. He participated in Adult Mental Health First Aid training with Kelley Ann Gregory and Norma Houston. He is working with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council that has produced the first update from the final report of the Racial Equity Task Force. He is also learning about what each campus is doing to get Ombuds programs on each campus and is learning about what each campus is doing.

Sonja Phillips Nichols, UNC System Board of Governors

Dr. Ives also introduced Governor Nichols. She has visited every campus and reports her recognition and understanding of the uniqueness of each campus. She plans to visit each campus again and hopes to meet some of us in person. She thanked the Assembly for all the good work being done in the classroom.

Panel Discussion on Tenure and Promotion Policies

In introducing the panelists, Dr. Ives reported on changes to the tenure and promotion processes across the UNC System. The Board of Governors have moved most of the oversight back to the campuses and their respective Boards of Trustees. The four speakers to address issues of tenure and promotion were:

- **Steven Mintz, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin – has established best practices for the tenure process,**
- **Ronald P. Strauss, D.M.D., Ph.D., UNC-Chapel Hill - led a revision of the tenure process on the Chapel Hill campus,**
- **Geleana D. Alston, Ph.D., North Carolina A & T State University - has focused on the mentoring process and training for chairs and deans, and**
- **David A. Green, J.D., L.L.M., North Carolina Central University – has expertise in discrimination and has addressed the legal areas of the tenure process.**

Dr. Strauss talked about the long process during 2019-2020 in looking at their practices to determine if they were really using contemporary practices. They moved the 49 recommendations through each facet of the university approval process, which resulted in a very positive and healthy experience. The new policies have created transparency and have created more harmony between the fixed term faculty and tenure track faculty. They have seen a remarkable increase in the fixed term faculty on campus, primarily in the Health Affairs schools. They were able to identify the issues facing fixed term faculty. They looked at ways to reward these faculty, such as, track change issues, creating guidelines for “*meeting the mark*”, a measure that allowed them to estimate the right time for promotion.

One of the biggest changes was the **variable track**, a new track that is advertised as such in position descriptions. Variable track is not switching but starting on the variable track. This includes a decision with both the individual and the school or department. The number of years between variable track and making a choice to move to either one is not a determined amount. The entities are encouraged to sit down together and talk through the individual's aspirations. This allows flexibility in determining whether the new faculty could be tenure track or fixed term. The Health Affairs schools fully embraced this idea. This also gives a measure of time before the track is determined, and this also eliminates the need for a second search. It's been a very positive move on the Chapel Hill campus.

Another successful move is about the tenure decision. The faculty wanted a pathway for going up for tenure when they're ready, not having to wait six years. This has caused them to reconsider the criteria for tenure - what it takes to be promotable. Clear guidance was drawn up to create transparency for both the candidate and the review committees.

Dr. Alston has had the opportunity to be involved in Faculty Handbook work and promotion processes by developing policies for fixed term faculty. She avoids use of the term **non-tenured**, as it is a way of “othering” the faculty. She has facilitated training for faculty in tenure and served in a faculty position/instructor at a previous institution. When doing workshops, she starts with agricultural images because NCA&T has a 400-acre farm. This metaphor helps to develop applications for promotion and to help faculty think about the areas in which they work: teaching, research, service. Everyone is not a good mentor, and we need to keep working to meet people where they are in their careers.

Dr. Mintz observed that other interferences, gross inequities, all come at us in the tenure process. Barriers include bias, fuzziness in expectations, unwelcoming climate, etc. To eliminate these barriers, institutions need to provide clarity in expectations, combat bias, and provide equal opportunities. We also need to modify job requirements for family needs, create a rubric, strengthen accountability and oversight, use surveys and focus groups to identify positive and negative aspects of department culture. We need to support junior faculty development. His list of best practices includes:

- Ensure every candidate for tenure is well-informed about expectations.
- Assist junior faculty to create a personal development plan.
- Implement flexible work policies to provide equal opportunities.
- Review all tenure-related documents to ensure clarity.
- Require training about potential bias for all faculty.
- Consider establishing an office for faculty development.
- Make someone accountable for catching procedural areas for mistakes.

Dr. Green agreed with the comments of Dr. Alston. His work in workforce discrimination puts him up close and personal in these issues. Do we have expertise in how you evaluate the scholarship of an individual? Sometimes the expertise may not be on your campus. We need to stay true to what the process is and continue to provide clarity to that process. Sometimes practices aren't fair. Sometimes the person drafting an evaluation will show it to an inappropriate person. This can make a favorable situation come back as a negative resulting recommendation. It also can be the culture to allow incorrect procedures to occur. We must ensure that the policy has integrity. People oppose tenure and look for ways to interfere. We need to make sure policies are clear, candidates need to know expectations. Dr. Green agreed that some people are horrible mentors.

The discussion that followed the panel by the body covered issues of retention, fair practices in tenure/promotion, and ways to change the culture to have clear expectations and equity.

Dr. Ives appreciated everyone's comments and questions. This discussion will continue at the campus level as it is a very important and growing area of concern for faculty.

Dr. Ives encouraged the committees to continue their work between now and the next Faculty Assembly meeting.

The next UNC System Faculty Assembly meeting will be on Friday, December 3.

The meeting adjourned with no objections at 11:41 AM.