

UNC Faculty Assembly Meeting
September 16, 2011

Orientation for New Delegates

Faculty Assembly Chair Sandie Gravett (ASU), Vice Chair Raymond Burt (UNCW), and Chair Elect Catherine Rigsby (ECU) gave a 30 minute orientation session and discussed the charge of the Faculty Assembly and its role in shared governance.

President's Remarks

Tom Ross, President, University of North Carolina

Pres. Ross introduced new V.P. for Academic Affairs, Dr. Suzanne Ortega. She came to UNCGA from the University of New Mexico and has been here two months.

Pres. Ross stated that one fact that we cannot ignore is that we have experienced the worst economic recession in our lifetimes. We are in recovery right now, but what kind of recovery are we in? In his view we are in a “square root” recovery that has flattened out recently. He said that others believe we are in a “W” recovery, and we are missing the last section of the “W” right now. We are lining in a time of great economic uncertainty. Most economists believe we are not going to see a sharp recovery. Most people believe the global economy is stagnant or even declining. Unemployment is over 9.5% nationally and over 10% in NC. We will not see anything better than 7–7.5% in the near future.

We do not know what will happen to state revenues. First quarter collections are close to predictions. We have a problem with Medicaid expenses. Hurricane Irene has created more expenses for the state. Are we at the “new normal,” or we see new growth. We are living in a different world than we were in 2007. Pres. Ross is not convinced that we will return to the way things were. He does not believe all the budget cuts we have received are about us. They are about society in general. We are being asked to sacrifice just as others are. Often, we have been given a greater sacrifice than others.

Pres. Ross said that he wishes that we could know what our situation would be in the future, but we do not know that. We are not likely to see any substantial new state appropriations. We are going to be shifting priorities to meet new needs and new demands. He cannot promise new enrollment dollars or anything. He knows that this state has been blessed to have the best (remaining) public university systems in the world. This can be our competitive advantage. We have to convince others of the fact that the University is critical to our future. Our state is changing rapidly. Many people are moving to NC from other states and are not familiar with our University system. We have to adjust our thinking around who our competition is. We are competing with Mumbai, Singapore, Malaysia, and other places around the world.

Pres. Ross stated that at the UNC General Administration (UNCGA), they do not believe things will return to the way they were. UNCGA is considering new finance models. We know that we have to think about academic excellence. We have to be accountable for our use of resources. He worries about too much reliance on retention and graduation rates. Too many factors are beyond our control (e.g. lack of financial resources). We should be held accountable for academic

performance. We need to be attentive to enrollment growth funding. There were questions in the BOG meeting about whether we should even ask for enrollment growth funding. We decided that we needed to ask for what we need to perform our mission. We asked for enrollment growth funding and received it. We are concerned about financial aid funding. Many in Washington feel that the Pell Grant funding is not sustainable. We asked for \$190 million in state FA funding and received \$120 million. Last year we spent \$165 million.

Probably our biggest challenge is retaining employees when we have gone four years without compensation increases. This is a risk to us because we are challenged to retain faculty and to reward our hardworking faculty and staff. We are looking at a variety of different options. GA is operating payroll for several campuses as a shared service to cut costs.

We cannot keep doing things the same way academically, either. We need your (faculty) help more than ever. We want to be a better institution that acts as an economic driver. He did not come to his position by a traditional route, and he needs our input more than ever. The Academics First initiative is going to make a difference. Here are a few questions to consider:

- Are there current policies that should be the same across campuses?
- How do we respond to the idea that faculty should teach more?
- How do we attract, retain, and reward faculty that will make a difference on our campus?
- How do we enhance the focus on teaching excellence?
- How do we do this without devaluing research?
- How do we keep a focus on rigor and writing? If we demand more, we will get more. Raising admission and progress standards is going to be important.
- How do we assess student learning and faculty success?
- Are there places where we can streamline administration?
- How do we change compensation packages to reward our fulltime faculty?
- How do we change perceptions about faculty productivity?
- How can we make a seamless path from community colleges to the university?
- How do we better serve changing student populations?
- How do we better work with public and private schools to better prepare students?
- How do we expand the use of technology?
- How do we develop collaborations and consortia to better preserve and expand our course offerings and reduce costs? We have to cooperate more as a system to expand offerings rather than reduce them.

There are a lot of questions, and we do not have all the answers. We are going to have to work together to figure this out. We have to know what we are able to do to better paint a picture of our university.

Questions for Pres. Ross

Q: The red tape is very frustrating. We have regulations about purchasing and paying graduate students that are causing us to spend more money. We need to be more entrepreneurial about the way we spend money.

A: We asked each of our campuses last year for regulations they would like to see changed. We took many to the legislature and got many changes. On the personnel side, the legislature wants less flexibility. The BOG has to pre-approve all salary increases over 10%. In some ways the legislature is open to changes and in some ways they are not. Collect ideas about changes and sent them to us.

Q: In all the discussions of the new normal, we have gotten into a reductionist mode. Visionary folks created the UNC System and RTP by not settling on the new normal. Where can we start this discussion?

A: We do need to start this discussion. We need to remake this university without new money. If we show we can be successful, we will be able to get new resources. We have a lot of work to do with policy makers today. We are all living in the assumption that we either just wait and it will come back or it is not coming back. We need to act and make changes without cutting quality.

Q: The rigors of writing are very important for our students. There has been a recent proposal to allow NC students to take the ACT (without writing) instead of the SAT. How will that affect our incoming students?

A: Some educators think the ACT is a better indicator of a HS student's overall standing because it can be used in earlier grades as a diagnostic tool.

Bruce Mallette (Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs) stated that the ACT will be required with writing, not without writing. We are investigating the predictive nature of the ACT writing section.

Q: We do need to change the way we operate. Higher education is also not the only segment of our state changing the way we do things. Sometimes we need to say no to the requests of legislators. Some legislators do not believe in public higher education. Some people do not want to have anyone who will think critically about what they want to do. We need to collaborate with our allies (parents, alumni, etc.) to provide feedback to legislators. If we cannot make the point, we can give our fiends the tools to help them to make the point.

A: There are certainly people who share those views, and some are in the legislature. Pres. Ross stated that he always tries to give examples of the local impacts of the University at public speaking engagements. One can never communicate enough. All of us have to be willing to talk about the virtues of the university and what it does for us. This legislature has not been responsive to protests. We have been very factual with the legislature and presented what we need. The legislature has not always responded to this, and many of the results we projected in our presentations have come about. We have worked with CEOs (who are members of both political parties) across the state to send letters to the legislature.

Legislative Challenges Ahead

Lyons Gray, Senior Advisor to the President

Mr. Gray How do we deal with the legislature? We can write letters and hold demonstrations. Very few of the new legislators had given any thought to the impact to the cuts to the University. In their opinion, everyone should take the same cut. That leaves us fighting other state agencies for our piece. For 18 years the state senate loved the university system, and we had two protectors. They are no longer in the Senate. We are embarking on going to see people in the districts. We are encouraging people to communicate with their legislators. We seek faculty input about what message we should use. Send them to lyonsgray@northcarolina.edu. We talk about what we think is important, and the legislators focus on how many hours we teach. We need a message for them.

RTP took 30 years to build. Today we want instant results. Every ten years we have to redraw legislative district lines and they must be approved by the DOJ. We have submitted proposed new district lines. If approved, they will be in place for ten years. We have to get our message across to people who need education. We need an executive summary. Who are we? What are we about? Why is it important? We need your help. He does not think the state is going to get any more money. There are things we can do.

Questions for Mr. Gray

Q: Several years ago FA wrote one-page summaries describing faculty activities. Would this be something we should do? Should we put together similar documents about our departments.

A: This is useful. There is an underlying cynicism among policy makers that we need to overcome. It comes down to relationships. What happens depends on whether someone is able to convince his/her colleagues that something is worthy. If you do not have a champion, you will not get what you want. We have had champions in the Senate. We do not have one in the House. One pagers are nice, but they are not the answer.

Q: Our administrations often discourage us from interacting with our legislators. Our legislature funds education, but our educators are discouraged from interacting with legislators. We need to know what we can do. There is fear about getting engaged.

A: The point you make is this. Do you know your representative or senator?

Q: Something that came up in the HMI meeting is the legislative tuition grant for NC students enrolling in private universities was created due to lack of capacity in our system. Why cannot this funds for this grant roll into financial aid?

A: This is an interesting question. The issue of financial aid is that when you mention it to a legislator, they say why not raise tuition.

Q: If we think about the legislature, there is a cynical group that is approachable. How do we start conversations with them?

A: When he was first elected to the legislature, he was a neophyte. It took a couple of terms for him to mature and reach capacity. If you are of goodwill and care about your issue, that will come across in the way you meet.

Academics First

Bruce Mallette, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
and Sandie Gravett, Chair UNC Faculty Assembly

Chair Gravett stated that last year our meeting focused on policy initiatives. These initiatives have been presented to the President, BOG, chancellors, and CAOs. We had three goals: academic progress for students, good ideas on seamlessness, maximize limited resources. We wanted to be able to reward students who were serious about progressing toward a degree.

Senior Associate Vice President Bruce Mallette gave a summa of the successes of the Academics First initiative, which began at the Faculty Assembly last year. He said think of the NC family with 16 children attending each institution. Why do we do what we do? We have had five major successes associated with Academics First.

- Success 1: One of our early successes is that we have standardized FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) filing deadlines effective 2012. The priority filing date is March 1, 2012 for undergraduates.
- Success 2: When the UNC need-based aid funding disappeared this year due to budget cuts, We knew we needed an ultimate cap on aid. Two years ago a student proved the cap was enforced differently on all campuses. We removed the cap to maintain equity, and the legislature passed a bill to cap the award at nine full-time effective semesters. We were able to convince the legislature to wait until next year so we can plan for this.
- Success 3: We recommend monitoring satisfactory academic progress (SAP) every semester. Ten schools now do this. The others assess all Fs each semester. We are getting student and parent attention early.
- Success 4: There already exists a federal definition of 150% of the normal time to graduation as the limit for federal financial aid. We needed a concrete definition of this time in terms of credit hours. We agreed that this means after 180 credit hours, we will no longer award federal aid. (Caveat: students in 128 hour degree programs may be eligible for an additional semester). Should campuses develop a policy about institutional aid? That question is coming.

Q: Where does the tuition surcharge apply?

A: The tuition surcharge is a different but related matter. The surcharge excludes summer school, AP credits, and credits earned in community college while in high school. Some community college hours apply to surcharge. We can transfer only the community college hours that apply to a student's program, but this has to be step one in the process. It is important that this be done appropriately to avoid problems with the tuition surcharge and financial aid. This issue has huge implications on financial aid and the projected cost of a student's education.

- Success 5: There are federal regulations for monitoring first undergraduate degree completion and limiting the award of federal financial aid so that it is not awarded after the first undergraduate degree has been completed. Students working on double degrees may be able to postpone completion of both degrees until the final semester before graduation.

Q: How does this apply to double major vs. double degree students?

A: We are working to educate students about how they are proceeding so that they are not disadvantaged. Degree completion is not about filing for graduation but about completing requirements for degree.

Chair Gravett said that the registrars and financial aid directors were happy that the Faculty Assembly put Academics First on their agenda last year because it helped them to better communicate the issues to the Assembly and to UNCGA and to move toward solutions.

Chair Gravett added that in their retreat this summer the Executive Committee made a priority list of academic issues for the Faculty Assembly to address this year. One academic issue on the Executive Committee's priority list is setting a satisfactory academic progress standard of 2.0 on all our campuses. We are concerned about continuing to allow students to register and incur debt when they have no chance of graduating. There should be intervention (e.g. academic probation) whenever a student falls below 2.0.

Questions on Academics First

Q: What is the governance process by which this would go forward?

A: We discussed this with the CAOs. We will bring it before the Assembly today.

Q: We need a system-wide way to develop the technology that allows us to look at a student's record to develop a plan to recover his/her GPA.

A: We are looking into our options.

Q: HMI institutions typically have weaker students, and this policy may put pressure on faculty to give higher grades.

Senior Associate V.P. Bruce Mallette stated that admission standards are increasing over the next few years, and Pres. Ross is not in favor of reducing them.

Q: There must be a piece of information that we can use to form a policy across our institutions. Is there a good chance of recovery in the second semester for students with poor academic performance in their first semesters?

A: NC State reviewed all first-time freshmen with GPAs less than 2.0 after year one, and less than 17% graduated from NC State.

Chair Sandie Gravett stated that the idea is not to punish a student but to intervene and help students.

Q: HBCUs do not always get the bottom of the barrel. Many of these students have different orientations that are not traditional. We need to put the responsibility on the students to study. If we do not do that we are wasting our time.

Q: At ECU we have increased our standards to a graduated rate that brings a student to account for a poor first semester. We have students who stay in classes they are failing in order to stay full time and maintain financial aid. We also have freshmen taking too heavy a load (e.g., 19 hours).

A: We are losing up to 19,000 credit hours due to late student drops and campus repeat policies. We have to figure out ways to address these issues.

Q: Is there a sliding scale for admission standards or GPA based on core courses (like the NCAA)?

A: We have discussed this. The BOG position in 2007 was that there could be no more than 1% of the admissions by exception to limits.

Q: We have to have a process that allows our campuses to have input on this. Many of the campuses have policies that vary from the 2.0. We have many students who have never been to college before and many of our campuses have policies to bring students up to a 2.0 after several semesters.

A: We are not setting policy today. Is this something we want to investigate? Nothing is off the table at this point.

Q: There is a real problem when the academic requirements differ from the financial aid requirements.

A: There are currently dual SAPs: one for financial aid and one for campus academic progress. The question is whether this is an area of interest to the Assembly.

We will distribute information about the other items and perhaps make the November meeting focused on some of these items.

Q: We would like to ask GA to obtain data about graduation rates for students who fall below 2.0.

A: We are investigating this as well as some other data.

Q: What percent of students have to make it for us to say we give students the opportunity to succeed.

Lunch Discussions

The Faculty Assembly delegates broke into small groups led by members of the Executive Committee to discuss two recent papers critical of faculty productivity in the classroom. Each discussion group included an administrator from UNCGA. The discussion groups gave brief reports about their discussions when the Assembly reconvened.

One conclusion from the that we need to do a better job understanding and communicating with our legislators and the public (families, alumni, etc).

One discussion group offered the following analogy:

Preachers do not only work one hour a day. News anchors do not just work when they are on the air. Lawyers do not only work in the courtroom. Professors do not only work in the classroom.

Updates

Faculty Workload Study

At the August Board of Governors (BOG) meeting the Educational Planning Committee asked for a subcommittee to study faculty workload. The subcommittee was appointed at the September BOG meeting. It will include BOG members, UNCGA staff, and Faculty Assembly Chair Sandie Gravett. This will be a workload study, not a teaching load study. The BOG wants the subcommittee to demonstrate clearly what faculty do. They want this study to help campuses have a good assessment of our resources. The first meeting of the subcommittee will be in Greensboro prior to President Ross' inauguration ceremony. We have talked to campuses who have undergone this process. At this point a Summer 2012 timeline is envisioned for reporting.

Unnecessary Program Duplication

Chancellor Emeritus Woodward gave a report in the September BOG meeting about unnecessary program duplication. His final report is due in November. At the BOG meeting Woodard announced his preliminary conclusion is that unnecessary duplication is not a major issue at the University of North Carolina and stated that we already do a good job thinking through what is no longer needed at the University.

Chancellor Woodard told the BOG that we have a problem with new program approval backing up so that we are not able to respond to emerging needs and priorities. He said the new program approval system should be revised accordingly. A new committee has been formed by the BOG to study this issue.

Woodard told the BOG that productivity review works well, but we can improve the process. He said that these decisions should be made on the campuses.

Woodard also told the BOG that we need to do a better job clearly determining the purposes of online education and the processes involved in this should be reported.

Other Business

Grievance Video Training Resources

Raymond Burt (UNCW, Vice Chair of the Faculty Assembly)

Prof. Burt asked what the Faculty Assembly could do to help increase the interactions of the Assembly with the various campuses? One issue where the Faculty Assembly could help is to produce a video on response to faculty to grievance issues. Prof. Burt asked the Assembly if this was a worthwhile and useful venture? The videos would cover the UNC code and could present an overview of best practices. The delegates were in agreement that this would be useful to the campuses, even if they were the only training on the grievance process on some campuses.

Shared Governance Project/Training

Catherine Rigsby (ECU, Chair-Elect of the Faculty Assembly)

Prof. Rigsby asked what the body would like to do about shared governance? We could consolidate some of the best practices. We could have monthly videoconferences with faculty leaders. We could put up an Active Collab site on the UNCGA server on the issue.

We could we have a workshop on shared governance at an Assembly meeting. The workshop could either be held the evening before the Faculty Assembly meeting or during the meeting.

Process for Conducting Chancellor Searches

Western Carolina recently conducted a closed chancellor search. A WCU faculty member composed a letter opposing closed chancellor searches and discussing the advantages of open searches. The BOG strongly recommends closed searches on the premise that open searches reduce the quality of the applicant pool. One consideration is what are the policies at other university systems on chancellor searches. We will do more research on this and report back at a later date.

HMI Committee

The HMI Committee reported that they identified and discussed the following critical issues: shared governance, lack of training for leadership (chairs), workload, retention standards, and financial aid.

Proposed UNC Faculty Assembly Charter and Bylaw Change

The Assembly discussed a proposal to change the Faculty Assembly Charter and Bylaws. The proposed changes would reduce the number of Assembly delegates from all campuses to two and would change the way faculty chairs would interact with the Faculty Assembly. Arguments for these changes were that they would result in a body that was more nimble and that a smaller body would reduce the costs of holding meetings (travel and meals) The discussion indicated that the delegates were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal. Delegates indicated that larger delegations from the larger campuses were necessary to represent the diversity and complexity of the larger universities. The delegates said that an inclusive Faculty Assembly was a necessary budgetary expense because it is essential to provide faculty input to the General Administration. The proposal to change the Charter and Bylaws was withdrawn.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Sprague
ECU Delegate