



Academic Affairs Committee

April 1, 2025

Draft Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dean Priddy (Chair); David Brown; Mae Douglas; Tim Rice

MEMBERS ABSENT WITH NOTICE: George Hoyle, Linda Sloan

OTHERS PRESENT: Chancellor Franklin Gilliam; Provost Alan Boyette; Waiyi Tse, Chief of Staff; Kelly Harris, Assistant Secretary to the Board; and other members of the administration, faculty, staff, student body, and public.

PROCEEDINGS:

Chair Priddy called the meeting to order at 1:45pm. He read the Conflict-of-Interest Statement reminding board members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest. None were identified.

The roll call was read, and a quorum was confirmed.

Minutes of the February 4, 2025 Academic Affairs Committee meeting were approved without additions or corrections.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

AAC-1 Academic Affairs Update

Provost Boyette updated the committee on actions taken to achieve compliance with federal Executive Orders and UNC System policy guidance around curricular and research adjustments.

In response to a February 2025 System Office memorandum requiring suspension of general education and major-specific requirements related to DEI, the university removed “Diversity and Equity” as one of the 11 required competencies in the general education program. Students were instructed on how to withdraw without penalty, and the Faculty Senate voted to replace that competency beginning Fall 2025 with a new competency labeled “Civics and Community,” which will include the System’s required Foundations of American Democracy content.

The university also implemented a three-step process to identify courses required for each major and evaluate them for compliance. It was recognized that some of these courses with DEI content must continue to be offered due to accreditation requirements or their centrality to the subject matter of the associated major. The Chancellor will ultimately determine which of these courses meet these criteria and therefore require a waiver from the System Office prohibition. The

Chancellor's waiver requests will be submitted to the President and reviewed by the Board of Governors in May. This complex process involved associate deans and deans from every school and college as well as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, senior staff in the Office of Institutional Integrity and General Counsel, the Provost, and the Chancellor.

In terms of research compliance, uncertainty around federal directives remains. UNCG has had one grant terminated on which we were the prime awardee and received two "Stop-DEI work orders" on grants for which we were sub-award recipients. We were also sub-award recipients on three other awards that were terminated at other institutions.

Provost Boyette also provided updates on the status of the ongoing dean searches. For the Bryan School of Business and Economics, Interim Dean Joy Bhadury was selected to serve as the permanent dean, effective April 1, 2025.

The search for a new dean for the College of Arts & Sciences is also progressing with Isaacson Miller's support. Four final candidates have visited campus, and a decision will be made soon, with a July or August start date.

The search for a new dean of the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering (JSNN) is being conducted with the firm Witt-Kieffer. Four finalists were selected to visit campus, with one of them being in Greensboro today. A decision will be made in late April, with a July or August start date.

AAC-2 School of Health & Human Sciences Leadership Program

The committee heard a presentation on a pilot leadership program launched this year in the School of Health and Human Sciences. The program is aimed at preparing undergraduate students for post-graduation success through building confidence to navigate professional settings and developing communication, project management and collaboration skills. Integration with the campus community and fostering a sense of connectedness are key components. The program aims to expand its reach and impact by empowering students to lead initiatives and mentor others.

Three student participants shared their experiences with the program, discussing what they have learned and how they have been impacted by the opportunities.

AAC – 3 Update on Research and Engagement

Vice Chancellor Sherine Obare gave an update on developments in research and engagement. As of the end of February, funded awards were up by 8.8%, with funding for submissions up by 49%. Due to several changes in the federal funding landscape for research funding, we have seen the lowest amounts in the last two months since 2018. Given these changes, Sherine's team projects that we will end at a performance for FY 2025 similar to that in FY 2022.

Vice Chancellor Obare also reported on recent modifications and terminations in awarded grants as well as the various support mechanisms being provided to faculty, whose career trajectories are heavily dependent upon research and publishing.

We also learned that Sherine and Juan Pleitez, Director of External Affairs, traveled to Washington, D.C. recently to speak with representatives from our area about the innovative work that will be done at the new COMMAND and BRIGHT institutes. BRIGHT just launched in early March, and the focus on critical materials and increasing mineral production puts us ahead of new initiatives and positions us to receive federal funding.

AAC-4 UNCG 120-Hour Exemptions

The committee also heard from Dr. Jodi Pettazzoni, who presented four undergraduate teacher education programs that require more than 120-hour credit hours for completion. Each of the programs requires students to have competency in the field and prepares them to qualify for licensure exams. The Committee voted to grant credit hour exceptions for each program and is recommending approval this morning via the consent agenda.

AAC-5 Selection of New National Peer Institutions

Provost Boyette reviewed the Chancellor's recommended set of national peer institutions effective July 1 for a five-year period. The System Office uses the peer list to benchmark performance on a set of metrics such as tuition, faculty workload, retention and graduation rates, and degree production.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Harris
Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees