

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Sense of Senate Resolution (SSR) Number **SSR0120S**

Date of Senate Approval **03/27/2020**

EC Sense of the Senate Resolution 1

Sense of the Senate Resolution fully and unequivocally support the measures presented in the document Academic Affairs in the Age of Coronavirus

Whereas, the COVID-19 Pandemic profoundly affects our global community; and

Whereas, with diligent attention to the UNC System guidelines, our students, faculty, and staff all have risen to the challenge of transferring temporarily our face-to-face instruction and learning to remote instruction and learning in an extremely short timeframe; and

Whereas, our students, faculty, and staff should not be penalized for a situation not of their making and should have appropriate consideration; and

Whereas, Provost Garikai Campbell who in thorough consultation with Chancellor Nancy Cable, Senior Staff, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, SFI Implementation Committee, Faculty Development & Welfare Committee, Departmental Chairs & Program Directors, Deans, Registrar's Office, and other stakeholders within our UNC Asheville Community presented a comprehensive proposal to address the profoundly significant effects of Covid-19 on our Spring 2020 semester;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the UNC Asheville's Faculty Senate supports the following measures presented in the document Academic Affairs in the Age of Coronavirus and with the minor additions discussed during the Virtual Special Session of the UNC Asheville Senate:

Colleagues,

We continue to work through a truly unique situation. In addition to quickly transitioning classes to remote instruction, you each are also having to deal with this crisis in different ways--balancing parenting, some as a single parent; helping older family members; managing troubling news and concerns about how this pandemic will impact you, friends and loved ones; and more.

In the coming days, as we begin to get the results of increased testing done last week,

we expect to see numbers of positive COVID-19 cases increase, including in our own communities. And we have just been issued a stay home, stay safe declaration issued for Buncombe County, further reminding us of just how much the situation continues to evolve. Please know that we will continue to prioritize our humanity, even as we manage through the directive we have been handed to keep delivering our education. With so much social distancing, the way we are working and living can be downright weird. I am heartened to hear of how many of you are already supporting each other in incredible ways. If there is ever a way for us to be helpful, please let us know.

There are a number of issues specific to faculty and academic affairs that I want to try to address here. I will once again acknowledge that this is a very long email, but I am hoping to provide as much detail as possible.

FERPA & Boundaries:

All faculty should be aware of FERPA guidelines and be mindful as instructors about the potential for violations. I want to talk about two major points where violating FERPA could be easy and we want to caution you to avoid.

First is if one of your students gets sick and shares that information with you. Second, is in dealing with video.

Please understand that a student's medical information is not to be shared with any other students. If a student shares that they are ill, experiencing symptoms that are COVID-19-like, or relays the results of a COVID-19 test, you cannot share that information with other students. Similarly, if students share other personal information about themselves or any family members, that should be held in confidence as well. If you have any questions about this, please consult with your chair and dean.

If you are made aware of positive results or there is reasonable suspicion of a case of COVID-19, I would ask that you share that with Jay Cutspec (jcutspec@unca.edu) and with your dean so that we may determine if there is any further action to be taken.

Before recording any video that might include students, please ask for permission, or instruct students to opt out by disabling their camera before recording begins. This protocol should be followed even if you only imagine posting the recording internally. This does not apply to videos that you record that do not include students (i.e. videos of you alone).

You should also be aware of instances where you ask students to submit recorded materials to you. If you are accepting such materials and do not post, then you need not secure any other permissions, but if you intend to share or post such material, you must first secure permission. This is true even of what you might imagine to be an internal post (e.g. sharing on your Moodle site or Google Drive in such a way that other students have access).

Furthermore, I would ask that you remind other students to also not to post videos that include their classmates (e.g. to social media) without permission.

Finally, please be aware that students may now be in private spaces, and/or spaces that are not their own, but rather that of their parents, family members or friends. This may pose some challenges for some with regard to video. I would ask that you be sensitive to potential challenges in asking for video as part of participation and that you not discuss what you may see in the backgrounds of your students' spaces. Similarly, please try to be aware of the things that you may be sharing inadvertently in any videos that you share, being mindful to maintain appropriate boundaries.

Student Alerts:

This transition is not easy for all students. They too are managing this crisis in a multiplicity of ways—everything from dealing with the transition to online learners to the full range of health, financial, and emotional strains that non-students are facing. We ask that every faculty member please be sure to reach out to all students and check-in to make sure everyone who was with us before the extended spring break, is with us now.

We have now added two new alert codes into the system. They are:

- *NR for No Response: Please use this code to alert us to students who are unresponsive. I would ask that you submit an alert **BY THE END OF THIS WEEK** if there are any students in this category. We will begin to use other means to try to connect with and understand the situation for these students.*
- *CC for COVID-19 Concerns: Please use this to let us know of any students who don't seem to be transitioning well to remote instruction. We are particularly interested in hearing from you between now and the end of next week on this.*

We ask that you please specifically look out for any issues and work with students, but do not hesitate to elevate matters by submitting an alert.

While we are particularly interested in being able to respond quickly and want you to submit this information as soon as it becomes clear, these alert codes will be available for the remainder of the term. Particularly as things with COVID-19 evolve, it will be important to use each code as appropriate if student behaviors change.

Withdrawals & Attrition:

Please be aware that the System has directed every UNC System institution to permit withdrawals from this semester up to some time after grades are posted, with no impact on any limits to course withdrawals. We have already seen some students asking about exercising this option, but we are hoping students will opt to stay engaged at this point, even if they have concerns about moving to online instruction or their ability to complete the course.

We would ask that you encourage students to at least give it a try, first and foremost because we truly believe that IF POSSIBLE, if we can help the student stay on track, this is of great benefit to the student. It is, of course, also helpful in our efforts to retain students longer term. However, we do know that each student's case is unique and there may in fact be some instances where it is indeed better for the student to withdraw from a course. The new directive from the System makes clear that this will be possible even after the posting of grades.

There may be instances where students are considering withdrawing from the institution, this semester or next. You may realize this in accounting for students in your classes or in conversations with students as their advisors. Distinct from the alerts discussed above, which we imagine being used in every instance where you have a student who is either unresponsive or seems to be having trouble in this transition, we hope that if you encounter students who look to be withdrawing from the institution and have information about the reasons they are leaving, you will share with us those reasons using the Faculty Feedback: Advising, 2020 Google Form.

Grades:

We have investigated the possibility of options for grades for students that give them some freedoms not normally afforded. We are currently proposing that students have

the option of accepting either a W or an S (for Satisfactory) in place of a letter grade.*

Faculty would submit grades as usual by May 8. Students would have the option of withdrawing and accepting a grade of W or replacing the letter grade with S. Students would need to make this decision by May 22 and would do so through the Registrar's Office. Grades of D or better would be converted to S*.*

Neither a grade of W or S would be factored into the GPA. As usual, W would not count towards earned credits and not fulfill any requirements. A grade of S* would count toward earned credit hours and count towards applicable curricular, major, minor, and graduation requirements.*

A critically important question that remains to be resolved in this scheme is what to do about the major or program requirements or prerequisites that require a grade of C or better. In some cases, like for teacher licensure, other third party licensures, or engineering courses, we do not have the authority alone to waive such requirements. We believe that it may be necessary to simply have students be advised that in instances where a grade of C or better is required, it may be best to maintain the grade and NOT opt for the S designation. However, we are still investigating this matter and comparing it to the policies of others who have similar schemes.*

We have other matters to discuss such as whether to suspend the Chancellor's and Dean's Lists for Spring 2020, and how to deal with Latin Honors. And we will want to be sure to help students think through any impact that accepting this grade designation may have for graduate school, external scholarships, or other postbaccalaureate plans. UNC Asheville will include a transcript note on all academic records indicating the extraordinary circumstances of the global pandemic during this semester. (This in part explains the S designation as opposed to the usual S; this semester is unique.)*

We note that there has been significant discussion about this at institutions across the nation, and is one of the top two or three issues asked about by students. The grading scheme described here fits with the option that most institutions seem to be going with at this time. It is currently under discussion with the Faculty Senate who is expediting the review of this, with hopes to be passed soon.

As students manage a number of issues, we hope that this will help ease some of the tension. There are a number of things to consider with this grading scheme. It is still possible that this scheme is modified slightly, but believe that this is the most likely way

in which we will proceed.

Scholarship & Other work:

We want to recognize that events have clearly been disruptive to the work that folks do. I have heard from some of you planning on doing interviews, traveling, being in a lab, working with particular collaborators and organizations, and so much more that now has to be canceled or curtailed. Some of you were planning on presenting at conferences and otherwise engaging colleagues in ways that would allow you to share results already published or on their way to being so. For some, you are able to continue the same work, working through virtual means, but for others, you are now having to rethink projects and do things quite differently. We want to acknowledge and support this shift in whatever ways we can. If you have ideas, questions or concerns that you would like to discuss, please feel free to reach out to me to see if there is anything we can do.

I know that we are all of like minds in saying that we are proud to be part of a liberal arts tradition. Part of that tradition is being able to adapt, find solutions to, and speak to a broad array of conditions and challenges. The current crisis is an opportunity to live out our liberal arts values and I want to encourage anyone for whom it makes sense, to turn your attention and your expertise toward this moment. Many may not have the latitude to do more than convert their classes to remote instruction and adjust to the new norms with their family and life demands. But, others may be looking for places to push your scholarly activity. I want to encourage you to consider asking how your scholarship might positively contribute to how we deal with this crisis.

STEAM Studio is going to begin designing and manufacturing face masks, both hard material and cloth masks, to help address local shortages of protective equipment. Some of you may already be writing poetry that finds and elevates something that we can celebrate about this moment, and others of you might develop models to make sense of particular aspects of the spread in this local region. I can imagine that many of you are thinking about the situation through your political, sociological, artistic, economic or other disciplinary lens. I deeply value the scholarship that you as a faculty do, always, but certainly now and simply want to recognize those whose work is speaking to this unique moment. If you are engaging in such work, I will invite you to

share that with me soon.

Reappointment, Tenure, & Promotion:

Many who are going through or nearing the reappointment, tenure and promotion process have asked about the impact of this on their schedule. We are proposing the following. We are still working through this proposal, and so it is still subject to some modification, but this represents the current thinking:

- *Those in process: Will continue with decisions expected to be made by the close of this year.*
- *All others: We are proposing that all non-tenured faculty have the option to delay one year. In particular, we are proposing to adjust the mandatory review dates of all non-tenured faculty for reappointment and tenure by one additional year and to ask that faculty indicate if they are opting NOT to exercise this optional one-year delay in the usual time. (Angie Irvin will share a detailed calendar in the next couple of weeks.) Once a faculty member goes through reappointment, the date for the mandatory review for tenure will be three years from reappointment. In particular, we are proposing that one cannot accept the one year delay for tenure review, but not for reappointment.*

One aspect of reviews is peer review of classes. In some cases, faculty were expecting to conduct those peer reviews between spring break and the end of the term. Any faculty wishing to have another faculty member sit in on their class is of course welcome to do so, even in this virtual setting. However, there will be no requirement to do so. All peer reviews can be completed once we return to face to face instruction, presumably in the fall.

Post-tenure Review:

For those going through post-tenure review, we are proposing that faculty who are to be reviewed next year be given the option to submit materials in Fall 2020 or January 2021. For those who submit materials in the Fall, the review schedule would be as

usual. For those who submit materials in January, reviews would be expected to be completed by May 2021. For faculty going through post-tenure reviews in academic year 2021-2022 and beyond, we would expect their reviews to occur as usual. We will certainly expect faculty in these reviews to speak to and for review committees to understand and take into account the disruption that this pandemic will have imposed, and so believe that we can maintain the schedule for PTRs.

As above, any peer reviews that need to be completed for the purposes of PTR can be done once we return to face to face instruction if need be.

SFIs:

The SFI Implementation Committee met to discuss collecting feedback from students using the usual SFI form. They felt that the current form would not be appropriate for our current situation, but fully recognize the need and importance on the part of the students to provide feedback, and the faculty to receive feedback. They have proposed that we develop a brief (approximately 4-6 question) survey that can highlight feedback regarding the transition to remote instruction.

Results from this survey will be provided only to individual faculty members. It will not be shared with Chairs, Program Directors, Deans, the Provost, or any other administrators. These results will be exempt from consideration from annual reviews or reappointment and tenure decisions.

For development of this survey, the SFI Implementation committee will craft a list of 10-12 possible items and then get feedback from faculty and administrators quickly next week (April 1-2). Given the tight deadline for developing this new set of questions, faculty will not be able to customize or add questions to the final version of the form for gathering feedback. However, faculty are certainly welcome to collect additional information from students through their own means (e.g., Moodle quizzes, reflection papers).

IREP will aggregate and provide summary data to the Provost expressly for the purposes of helping the institution as a whole learn and grow from this moment. At no point will IREP share course level or instructor level data.

Annual Reviews:

We will relax what we do with annual reviews this year to some extent. We will seek to identify truly problematic issues. This would be to ensure that we provide feedback that we think is critical to provide as early as possible. We will share details of how we might go about identifying those cases most in need of receiving some guidance for improvement as soon as possible. (This has typically been only one or two faculty in any given year.)

Particularly given that due to the budget impasse, we have not had the opportunity this year to apply the merit raises determined last year, we would roll those merit assessments from last year forward to be applied this year should it be the case that there is a budget that allows for such raises. I say this understanding that we are working through what could be a very challenging financial condition. But, this information is not to be lost, but simply rolled forward. This year will be flat for all but those few, if any, cases which require serious attention.

Together with FWDC, we have been working through a new annual faculty record form. This year provides us with an opportunity for faculty to transition to this new online form to collect information in a way that will not impact salaries this year. We will be as interested in whether the form works well as in the information in the form, though we also wanted to provide an opportunity for faculty who did great work this year to share that with us. The new form attempts to improve collecting information in a more standard way about the many areas of work in which we engage, and we talk about being important to us here at UNC Asheville.

We anticipate writing a report based on the data we receive that tries to, among other things, communicate matters of

Summer:

Right now, we do not yet have any idea how long we will be impacted by the current conditions. In particular, we are not yet able to say whether we will be in a position to teach summer classes in person or will have the same mandate to teach those courses remotely. And so, we will be looking to develop three categories of courses.

- *Online: courses designed to be taught online and have no intention of ever being taught in person.*
- *In-person with Online backup: courses which we would prefer to teach in-person*

if that option is available, but could be taught online if necessary.

- *In-person or not at all: courses that will be taught in person if we are able to do so, and would be cancelled otherwise.*

It is our hope to find faculty who are willing to teach in at least the first two categories. This could mean simply identifying which of our existing summer course offerings could fit into these categories, or it could mean adding and removing some courses. If there are faculty who want to teach courses in the third category, that will certainly be possible, but given the level of uncertainty we see currently, it will be important for the University to identify a pool of faculty willing to teach courses that fall in the first two categories.

For those engaged in advising now and receiving questions about summer courses, please make students aware that we will be working hard over the next couple of weeks to ensure that the offerings students see advertised are as accurate as possible and that there is clarity around what mode the course will or may be offered in. We will be reaching out to faculty already signed on to teach summer courses and others to ensure that we get these courses appropriately identified.

We will work with Lynne and others over the next couple of days to develop a timeline as best we can for making the call on when courses will be decided as either online or in-person for those that could be offered as such. We are working with budgeting and finance to determine important factors such as pay and minimum enrollment requirements. We expect to be able to say more about this by next week.

Contingency Plans:

What do we do if illness begins to impact our community at a much greater scale? There is the potential for things to impact both faculty and students in some greater ways if illness begins to impact us, friends and families more extensively and directly. We should begin to think now about how we handle such scenarios:

- *Who would take over chair duties? What are those chair duties that are absolutely essential in this moment and which can be deferred to a different time?*
- *How would various classes be handled if the person teaching them were sick ... for a week? Can we begin to imagine an asynchronous set of materials and*

- assignments that might make it easy for someone to bridge a short term gap?*
- *What happens if that time extends to longer... two weeks? for the remainder of the term?*
 - *What do we do if universally or even just in some specific classes, there are a number of students dealing with issues in some way? How do we help them stay on track--not withdraw, but perhaps take incompletes if need be?*
 - *What about other questions related to major disruptions that we have yet to face, beyond those we are already enduring?*

We ask that you begin having these conversations in your departments, at your next department meetings and ideally by Tuesday. Understanding just how much you are having to manage right now, we do not expect a written plan; we simply want to ensure that you are thinking ahead about the anticipated consequences. We do want chairs to have conversations with their dean so that we can be aware of the issues as you see them.

Academic Calendar & Commencement:

As you all know, we will be postponing commencement. We still don't know exactly what that will look like, but we are exploring both virtual ceremonies and the potential to have something in person later in the summer. Students have already voiced a strong preference as we understand it to have an in-person ceremony later in the summer if at all possible. We absolutely want to be able to deliver on such an important milestone, but also need to be prepared for multiple possible scenarios.

For now, we anticipate that the last day of classes will remain the same, but we have some things to check on that. We do have to account for the "lost week" due to the extended spring break. In particular, SACS requires us to essentially ensure that we are meeting our existing learning objectives. We have to seek permission from the Department of Education given our shorter time. That is something we are currently investigating. We do not yet know if the System Office will have any mandates. So, for now we are proceeding as if we will end at the usual time.

This was a tremendous amount of information in one email, but I do hope that it has all been useful and helpful. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Stay well.

Best,

Kai

Having worked with: Chancellor Cable, Senior Staff, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, SFI Implementation Committee, FWDC, Department Chairs & Program Directors, Deans, Registrar's Office, and many others

Garikai Campbell

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Professor of Mathematics

UNC Asheville

Minor Additions from the March 27, 2020 Virtual Special Session of the UNC Asheville discussion :

1. In section **Grades**: Grade change decisions made by students will be kept confidential between students and the Registrar's office.
2. In section **Reappointment, Tenure, & Promotion**: The language "opt-out" is not intended as a recommended course of action. Faculty may "opt-in" in submitting their reappointment, tenure, or promotional applications without delay.
3. In section **SFI's**: IREP will not maintain records of department, course, and instructor level information for Spring 2020.
4. In section **SFI's**: A faculty member may elect to share SFI's for consideration in reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion applications.