

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Sense of Senate Resolution (SSR) Number **SSR0220S**

Date of Senate Approval **04/09/2020**

Sense of the Senate Resolution 2 (from FWDC):

The members of the UNCA Faculty Senate want to recognize the multiple ways that lives are being disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will support faculty and staff during stay-at-home orders and seek to minimize potential harm or penalty to personal well-being and careers as a result.

We recognize that working while staying at home during a pandemic raises many challenges, and that the distribution of these challenges and implications—particularly for caregivers—hold potentially negative professional consequences both immediately and in the long term. Our society and institutions place unprecedented expectations on caregivers of every kind. These caregivers must respond to continuing and new needs with minimal external support while working full time to provide remote learning for our students. We, as a body representing the faculty, must acknowledge the challenges of this double shift and to make recommendations for managing expectations during this challenging time.

Immediate implications

For many faculty, staff, and students, working while staying at home during a pandemic amplifies daily demands. Further, working remotely simultaneously keeps these increased demands largely invisible from colleagues and students while making the resulting effects of those demands near impossible to hide.

Research by organizational scientists shows that multitasking in a work environment leads to employee burnout, health issues, and high turnover rates. Leaders can mitigate these negative effects of working during stay-at-home orders by maximizing their flexibility, communicating support and understanding, and reducing expectations of both availability and productivity during the weeks and months ahead. Faculty, administrators, and other supervisors can also show support by having open and honest conversations with all parties before scheduling calls, meetings, retreats, interviews and video conferences. Social distancing and/or quarantine at home should not come with the implication that all are equally available for participating in these events. We echo the Provost's encouragement for self-care and kindness towards ourselves and others.

Long term implications

In the wake of this global pandemic, we appreciate that Academic Affairs has pledged flexibility in regard to annual faculty records, reviews for tenure and promotion for this and the next academic year. We also know that research – for example on family medical leave - indicates that even when policies are offered to everyone and intended to be equitable, sometimes have unintended, inequitable impacts. We know that the pandemic has increased the impact of faculty members' individual life circumstances on their scholarly productivity, capacity to engage in service, and ability to transition to emergency remote instruction.

Therefore, we, the Faculty Senate, ask us all to continue to acknowledge and accept the challenges and hardships placed differently on all members of our campus community.

We, the Faculty Senate, also ask FWDC, the Committee of Tenured Faculty and the Post-Tenure Review Committee to work with the University administration to develop specific recommendations and strategies to ensure that current and future evaluations of faculty members are equitable and fair in light of the pandemic.