

UNC Faculty Assembly Areas of Priority
February 17, 2006

1) Shared Governance

- The tradition of faculty sharing in the decision making process has, over the years, received a lot of lip service but not much beyond that.
- The Assembly Chair has been limited in his or her access to the highest levels of policy making. While the Chancellors and staff members of the Office of the President are experienced and wise, their views do not necessarily represent the faculty's interests due to their significant separation from the classroom and scholarly forum.
- On individual campuses, too many decisions are made without consulting faculty, which leads to problems that could have been prevented, not to mention the resulting loss of faculty morale.
- The campus Boards of Trustees often have little or no access to faculty leaders, which helps the Chancellors control the agenda, but does not necessarily present an accurate view of the campus situation.
- Our relationship with the President in the past has been passive, rather than active.
- We would like to be a better partner in shared governance, at all levels: the president and the BOG.
- We have a limited amount of time with minimal monetary support for what we need to do.
- Many of our consultations have been post-hoc. It is difficult to be effective partners with quarterly, one day meetings.
- We are beginning the process of self-study to improve our efficiency as an assembly, and it involves engagement with you. How can we together improve the effectiveness of faculty assembly?

2) Recruitment and Retention of Faculty

- Faculty (and Staff) salaries have not kept up with the cost-of-living. This results in declining motivation and the loss of faculty to other schools. Offers extended to new faculty are becoming uncompetitive. Universities are extensively using adjunct/contract hires to fill-in instead of "full-service" tenure-track lines.
- Health care benefits are being curtailed due to increasing co-payments and deductibles. Family coverage is totally optional (costs fully borne by the individual), and has become inaccessible for many junior faculty (as well as staff). This also deters hiring new faculty.
- We are hoping to receive more support for and recognition of faculty professional development.
- We recommend encouragement and support for inter-campus collaboration and exchange of faculty development ideas and initiatives.
- We would welcome seed money for traditional and scholarship of teaching research grants that helps foster innovation in the classroom and the community.

3) Faculty Workload

- Workload issues are different from campus to campus, and from discipline to discipline.
- To be quality teachers and scholars, experts in our fields, we must spend considerable time reading, conferring with colleagues, and developing courses and research designs. Due to workload issues, many of us have to postpone that work until the summer, if we get to do it at all.
- The current system for funding enrollment growth creates a scenario in which the burden is placed on the backs of the professors until the funding kicks in.

4) Academic Freedom

- State and National Challenges to Academic Freedom. Universities are undergoing numerous assaults on academic freedom – both here in North Carolina and nationwide. The UNC Faculty Assembly is committed to countering those assaults with open dialogue and education, whether it is the Academic Bill of Rights or other legislative efforts to limit free inquiry and critical thinking – the hallmarks of great universities.
- Technology, Intellectual Property, and Curriculum Development. The UNC Faculty Assembly is dedicated to examining the complex intersections between academic freedom and technology. As one example, the opportunities in distance education coincide with concerns about intellectual property rights, quality control and standards, scholarship, and faculty/student interaction. Finding affordable ways to provide course content, course materials and even textbooks, needs to be balanced with providing quality and innovation.

5) HMIs

- Faculty salary equity at HMIs has traditionally been lower than our sister traditionally white universities.
- Implementation of the Minimum Standards on Shared Governance document has not been clearly endorsed by the GA nor was any directive issued from GA to campuses.
 - The governance documents and faculty governance bylaws which have been approved by the institution, approved by the BoT and BoG should now be a contractual agreement between the Chancellor and the Faculty on how they will do business.
 - The Faculty in the HMIs have been active in trying to establish shared governance but the “unique administrative culture” of HMIs necessitates GA to set the tone of shared governance on these campuses.
 - The HMIs are already putting together an all day symposium exploring the culture of shared governance on our campuses. We would like the support of the GA for this symposium.
- HMIs have historically been under funded and/or have suffered from administrative diversion of funds (e.g., library, facilities, laboratory equipment, faculty development/research leave, secretarial & teaching support, etc.) for purposes other than academic support hence our faculty are doing more with a lot less.
- Even more than on the other campuses, the growth of the student population has outgrown our facilities, library resources, laboratory equipment, and housing for students which impact the quality of education for our students on our campuses.