

September 17, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.
Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream
UNC System Office
223 S. West Street, Room 1809
Raleigh, North Carolina

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION

- A-1. Approval of the Open Session Minutes of July 24, 2025 and August 8, 2025 Alex Mitchell
- A-2. 2024-25 Committee on University Governance Annual Report Alex Mitchell
- A-3. Annual Report on Free Speech and Free Expression
Within the University of North Carolina Andrew Tripp
- A-4. Resolution on Security Clearance Requirements Alex Mitchell
- A-5. Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees Appointment Joel Ford
- A-6. Certification Reports of Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual,
Equality Within the University of North Carolina Andrew Tripp

CLOSED SESSION

- A-7. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes of May 14, 2025, and August 8, 2025 Alex Mitchell
- A-8. Legal Affairs Report Andrew Tripp

OPEN SESSION

- A-9. Adjourn

Closed Session Motion

Motion to go into closed session to:

- Prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential under Article 7 of Chapter 126 of the North Carolina General Statutes or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.
- Consult with our attorney to protect attorney-client privilege.

Pursuant to: G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1), and (3).

DRAFT MINUTES

July 24, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.

Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream

This meeting of the Committee on University Governance was presided over by Chair Alex Mitchell. The following committee members, constituting a quorum, were also present by phone: Pearl Burris-Floyd, C. Philip Byers, Joel D. Ford, Randall C. Ramsey, and Michael Williford.

Chancellors participating were Chancellor Kelli Brown, Chancellor Brian Cole, and Chancellor Todd Roberts.

Staff members present included Meredith McCullen, Andrew Tripp, and others from the UNC System Office.

1. Call to Order and Approval of OPEN Session Minutes (Item A-1)

The chair called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 24, 2025. The open session minutes from the May 14, 2025, meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

2. UNC Press Board of Governors Appointments (Item A-2)

Chair Mitchell introduced one nominee for reappointment and one nominee for appointment to the UNC Press Board of Governors. The chair then asked for a motion of approval.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Committee on University Governance approve the reappointment of Carlton Wilson and appointment of Porter Durham for terms beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2030, to the University of North Carolina Press Board of Governors.

Motion: Michael Williford

Motion carried

3. Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors Appointment (Item A-3)

Chair Mitchell then reviewed a nominee for a partial-term vacancy on the Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors. A motion of approval was then made.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Committee on University Governance approve the appointment of Sarah Soule to fill a partial-term vacancy ending January 31, 2027, on the Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors.

Motion: Randall C. Ramsey

Motion carried

4. State Building Commission Appointment (Item A-4)

Chair Mitchell reviewed a nominee for appointment to the State Building Commission. A motion to approve the nomination was made.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Committee on University Governance approve the nomination of Miriam Tripp to the State Building Commission for a term ending June 30, 2028, pending approval by the Governor.

Motion: C. Philip Byers
Motion carried

5. UNC Health Care System Board of Directors Appointments (Item A-5)

Chair Mitchell called on President Peter Hans to introduce his nominees for appointment to the UNC Health Care System Board of Directors. Once finished, a motion of approval was made.

MOTION: Resolved, that the Committee on University Governance approve the appointment of Donna Curtis McClatchey to fill a partial term for Seat 15 that ends October 31, 2028, and the appointment of Kristin Baker to fill a partial term for Seat 19 that ends October 31, 2026.

Motion: C. Philip Byers
Motion carried

There being no further business and without objection, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Michael Williford, Secretary

DRAFT MINUTES

August 8, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream

This meeting of the Committee on University Governance was presided over by Chair Alex Mitchell. The following committee members, constituting a quorum, were also present in person: Pearl Burris-Floyd, C. Philip Byers, Joel D. Ford, Randall C. Ramsey, and Michael Williford.

Staff members present included Andrew Tripp, Meredith McCullen, and others from the UNC System Office.

1. Call to Order and Approval of OPEN Session Minutes (Item A-1)

The chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, August 8, 2025.

2. Closed Session

MOTION: Resolved, that the Committee on University Governance move into closed session to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential under Article 7 of Chapter 126 of the North Carolina General Statutes, or is not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes; and to consult with our attorney to protect attorney-client privilege; pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1), and (3)

Motion: Alex Mitchell

Motion carried

THE MEETING MOVED INTO CLOSED SESSION AT 9:31 a.m.

(The complete minutes of the closed session are recorded separately.)

THE MEETING RESUMED IN OPEN SESSION AT 9:51 a.m.

There being no further business and without objection, the meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

Michael Williford, Secretary

AGENDA ITEM

A-2. 2024-25 Committee on University Governance Annual Report Alex Mitchell

Situation: Each standing committee submits an annual report of its activities to the Board of Governors.

Background: Pursuant to Section 302 E of *The Code*, “Each standing committee shall make a written report to the Board of Governors at least annually, reviewing the work of the committee during the preceding year.”

Assessment: The annual report on the activities of the Committee on University Governance for fiscal year 2024-25 is ready for review and submission.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee to accept the report for submission to the Board of Governors.

DUTIES AND MEMBERSHIP

The Committee on University Governance is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations for proposed changes to the UNC Policy Manual, including *The Code*, and the delegations of duty and authority involving University governance; for nominating individuals for election to the 17 institutional boards of trustees and other University-related boards; and for authorizing the initiation and settlement of litigation and pending litigation in circumstances where that authority has not otherwise been delegated. This report summarizes the work of the committee from July 2024 through June 2025.

The committee was composed of the following Board members: Pearl Burris-Floyd, C. Philip Byers, Joel Ford, Alex Mitchell, Randall C. Ramsey, and Michael Williford. Mr. Mitchell served as chair, Mr. Ramsey served as vice chair, and Mr. Williford served as secretary.

Chancellor Brian Cole (UNC School of the Arts), Chancellor Karrie Dixon (North Carolina Central University), and Chancellor Todd Roberts (North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics) also served on the committee.

ACTIONS

Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the Committee on University Governance met in six regularly scheduled meetings and one special meeting. The major actions of the committee are summarized as follows:

Campus Liaison Assignments

Each constituent institution and selected affiliated entities were assigned a “liaison” from the Board. The 2024-25 campus liaisons were:

Mrs. Burris-Floyd	Elizabeth City State University North Carolina A&T State University UNC Greensboro
Mr. Byers	Appalachian State University UNC School of the Arts Western Carolina University
Mr. Ford	UNC Asheville UNC Charlotte Winston-Salem State University North Carolina Arboretum
Mr. Mitchell	North Carolina Central University North Carolina School of Science and Math North Carolina State University Other Appointments
Mr. Ramsey	East Carolina University UNC-Chapel Hill

	UNC Pembroke PBS North Carolina
Mr. Williford	Fayetteville State University UNC Wilmington UNC Health Care

Appointments to Boards for Affiliated Entities

Pursuant to the committee's recommendations for affiliated entities to the University, the Board of Governors made the following appointments or confirmations:

Name of Board	Member	Term Ending
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Matthew G. Price	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Debora Powell	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Taleek Harlee	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Patrick Brennan	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Joy Smith	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Malcolm Butler	June 30, 2026
North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission	Amanda Lee	June 30, 2026
North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority Board of Directors	Jim Rose	January 15, 2029
Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors	Ray Carey	January 31, 2027
Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors	Courtney Crowder <i>*resigned June 30, 2025</i>	January 31, 2027
Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors	Heather Norris	January 31, 2027
UNC Health Board of Directors	Tracy Leinbach	October 31, 2028
UNC Health Board of Directors	Deborah Murray	October 31, 2028
UNC Health Board of Directors	Ward Nye	October 31, 2028
PBS North Carolina Board of Trustees	Katheryn Burchett	June 30, 2028
North Carolina Arboretum Board of Directors	Janet Leath	June 30, 2029
North Carolina Arboretum Board of Directors	Karen LeVert	June 30, 2029
North Carolina Arboretum Board of Directors	Leah McGrath	June 30, 2029

North Carolina Arboretum Board of Directors	Rodney Swink	June 30, 2029
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Appointments to the UNC System Boards of Trustees

Pursuant to the committee's recommendations for the UNC System Boards of Trustees, the Board of Governors made the following appointments:

Name of Institution	Member Name	Term Ending
App State	Jeff Chesson	June 30, 2029
App State	Jamie Schaefer	June 30, 2029
App State	Wayne Sumner	June 30, 2029
App State	William Warren	June 30, 2029
ECU	Cassie Burt	June 30, 2029
ECU	David G. Fussell, Jr.	June 30, 2029
ECU	Matthew Crisp	June 30, 2029
ECU	Curtis Struyk	June 30, 2029
ECSU	Stephen Friedrich	June 30, 2029
ECSU	Art Hall	June 30, 2029
ECSU	Wendy Pierce	June 30, 2029
ECSU	Denauvo M. Robinson	June 30, 2029
FSU	Kimberly Jeffries Leonard	June 30, 2029
FSU	Gregory Pinnix	June 30, 2029
FSU	Brian Pearce	June 30, 2029
FSU	Al Ragland	June 30, 2029
N.C. A&T	Kathy Hairston	June 30, 2029
N.C. A&T	Latisha Hamilton-Williams	June 30, 2029
N.C. A&T	William Thomas Stanley	June 30, 2029
N.C. A&T	Sean Suggs <i>*originally appointed to a partial term and later appointed to a full term</i>	June 30, 2025 June 30, 2029
NCCU	Farad Ali	June 30, 2029
NCCU	Ryan Combs	June 30, 2029
NCCU	Courtney Crowder	June 30, 2029
NCCU	Michael Goodmon	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Warwick Arden	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Alexander Dale	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Michelle Ellwanger	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Alec D. Gallimore	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Erin Locklear	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Scott Millar	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Ursula Dudley Oglesby	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Williams A. Pizer	June 30, 2025 June 30, 2029

	<i>*originally appointed to a partial term and later appointed to a full term</i>	
NCSSM	Thomas Rhodes, Jr.	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Carl Ryden	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Tonya L. Smith Jackson	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Ray V. Spain	June 30, 2029
NCSSM	Yvonne Villanueva-Russell	June 30, 2029
NC State	Erik Dixon	June 30, 2029
NC State	David Herring	June 30, 2029
NC State	Timothy Humphrey	June 30, 2029
NC State	Robin Perkins	June 30, 2029
UNC Asheville	Kelly Davis	June 30, 2029
UNC Asheville	Stephen De May	June 30, 2029
UNC Asheville	Amy Hanks	June 30, 2029
UNC Asheville	Andrew Heath	June 30, 2027
UNC Asheville	David Meyer	June 30, 2029
UNC-Chapel Hill	Ritch Allison	June 30, 2027
UNC-Chapel Hill	Rob Bryan	June 30, 2029
UNC-Chapel Hill	Perrin Jones	June 30, 2029
UNC-Chapel Hill	Malcolm Turner	June 30, 2029
UNC-Chapel Hill	Ramsey R. White	June 30, 2029
UNC Charlotte	Henry Atkins	June 30, 2029
UNC Charlotte	David Longo	June 30, 2029
UNC Charlotte	Thomas Scrivener	June 30, 2027
UNC Charlotte	Alexander 'Sasha' Weintraub	June 30, 2029
UNC Charlotte	Dontá Lamar Wilson	June 30, 2029
UNC Greensboro	Anita H. Bachmann	June 30, 2029
UNC Greensboro	Margaret P. Benjamin	June 30, 2029
UNC Greensboro	Ernest Grant	June 30, 2029
UNC Greensboro	R. Timothy 'Tim' Rice	June 30, 2029
UNC Pembroke	Carlos Berdecia	June 30, 2029
UNC Pembroke	Sheila Cummings	June 30, 2029
UNC Pembroke	Kenneth Robinette	June 30, 2029
UNC Pembroke	Karen Sampson	June 30, 2029
UNC School of the Arts	Nia Imani Franklin	June 30, 2029
UNC School of the Arts	John D. McConnell	June 30, 2029
UNC School of the Arts	Graydon Pleasants	June 30, 2029
UNC School of the Arts	John M. Schert	June 30, 2029
UNC Wilmington	Jeffrey D. Clark	June 30, 2029
UNC Wilmington	Frances 'Perry' Trask Chappell	June 30, 2029
UNC Wilmington	Dane Scalise	June 30, 2029
UNC Wilmington	Luke Waddell	June 30, 2029
WCU	Tate Apodaca	June 30, 2029
WCU	Casey M. Cooper	June 30, 2029
WCU	Nora L. Finch	June 30, 2029

WCU	Timothy J. Robinson	June 30, 2029
WCU	Susan Strum	June 30, 2027
WSSU	Todd Collins	June 30, 2029
WSSU	Victor Holloway	June 30, 2029
WSSU	Bill Miller	June 30, 2029
WSSU	Carlos Pauling	June 30, 2029

Review of *The Code*, UNC Policy Manual (Policies, Regulations, and Guidelines)

The committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations for proposed changes to *The Code* and UNC Policy Manual, and the delegations of duty and authority involving University governance. During the 2024-25 period, the following policy items were considered or reviewed by the committee:

1. UNC Policy Manual

- a. **Adoption of Section 700.4.4.** Section 700.4.4, *Policy on Campus Gatherings & Related Student Conduct Matters*, creates certain minimum requirements for campus policies regarding mass gatherings and related student conduct.
- b. **Amendments to Chapter III, Section 301, of *The Code*.** Chapter III, Section 301, of *The Code* reflects the expansion of the UNC System's external relationships and updates on which committee is responsible for the technical work of our military-affiliated students' policies and practices. The major changes are as follows: (1) The Committee on Military and Public Affairs becomes the Committee on External Affairs, and (2) The Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs is responsible for the review of policies and practices to support military-affiliated student enrollment and success.

2. Technical Correction to the UNC Policy Manual

Section 100.2 VI.D. of the UNC Policy Manual authorizes the secretary of the University, in consultation with the senior vice president and general counsel, to make technical changes to the UNC Policy Manual. Technical changes are defined as including:

- Correction of typographical errors;
- Updates to names, titles, statutory, and regulatory references, and other designations;
- Correction of inconsistencies among policies that may result due to a more recent policy adoption, amendment, or rescission;
- Assurance that board delegations and resolutions are accurately reflected throughout *The Code* and the UNC Policy Manual; and
- Annotation of policies, regulations, and guidelines to cross-reference other provisions of the UNC Policy Manual.

Pursuant to this policy, which requires technical corrections to be summarized and reported in writing to the chair of the Board of Governors and the Committee on University Governance, Attachment A of this report provides all the technical corrections that were completed during the 2024-25 year.

Department of Defense Classified Research

The committee passed a resolution on Clearance Requirements, which is an annual requirement related to Department of Defense contracts. The Department of Defense requires the UNC System to maintain Facility Security Clearance. Department of Defense regulations permit the exclusion from the personnel clearance requirements of certain members of the Board and other officers, provided that this action is recorded in the corporate minutes. This resolution was included on the Thursday, September 12, consent agenda.

The Department of Defense requires NC State University to maintain a Facility Security Clearance in the performance of classified contracts. In connection with this Facility Clearance, certain senior management officials, including the chancellor, must obtain an individual security clearance. The committee passed two resolutions on Clearance Requirements related to NC State University to provide security clearance coverage during the transition period between chancellors.

Litigation Requests/Settlements

The committee considered and approved a range of requests to settle and initiate legal matters and heard updates on pending disputes from its counsel.

Free Speech and Free Expression

G.S. 116-301 requires that the Board designate a standing committee to act as the Committee on Free Expression and report annually to the public, the Board, the Governor, and the General Assembly on issues related to free speech and free expression within the University. The Board has designated the Committee on University Governance to fulfill these responsibilities. As part of its duties, the committee received the annual report and hosted two presentations surrounding free speech and free expression.

1. **Annual Report.** As required by state law and Section 1300.8 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Free Speech and Free Expression Within the University of North Carolina System*, the Committee on University Governance is responsible for preparing an annual report on free speech and free expression within the University that addresses at least the following topics:
 - Any barriers to or disruptions of free expression within the University's constituent institutions;
 - The administrative handling and discipline relating to disruptions or barriers to free expression;
 - Any substantial difficulties, controversies, or successes in meeting the requirements of maintaining institutional neutrality as provided in the law and Section 1300.8 of the UNC Policy Manual; and
 - Any assessments, criticisms, or recommendations the committee sees fit to include.

This report addresses free speech and free expression at the constituent institutions for the period of time between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024. The report finds that (1) the constituent institutions remain committed to promoting and protecting free speech and free expression; (2) disruptions and interference at scheduled speaking or expressive events have been minimal over the past year; (3) the constituent institutions continue to work to provide information to various campus constituencies about rights and responsibilities associated with speech and expression on campus through policies, training, and other outreach; (4) the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which rates college and university speech policies, has awarded its highest rating ("green light") to 15 of 16 UNC System constituent higher education institutions; and (5) no constituent institutions have reported incurring meaningful additional

costs related to security surrounding speakers or expressive events on campus, likely due to the use of virtual platforms.

Report on the Implementation of Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Equality Within the University of North Carolina*

On May 23, 2024, the Board of Governors repealed and replaced Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual to reaffirm the University's commitment to nondiscrimination, equality of opportunity, institutional neutrality, academic freedom, and student success. Implementation of this policy required changes in practices across the University. On September 1, 2024, UNC System institutions submitted certifications and reports on the implementation of Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual. Those certifications were reported to the committee during the September 11, 2025, meeting.

<i>The Code/ UNC Policy Manual</i>	<i>UNC Policy Manual - Chapter</i>	<i>Policy/Regulation/Guideline</i>	<i>Section(s)</i>	<i>Technical Correction(s)</i>	<i>Effective Date (Posted to Webpage)</i>
UNC Policy Manual	Section 1300.12, <i>Policy on Insurance Coverage</i>	Policy	Policy Number	Changing the policy number from 1300.7.1, to 1300.12	8/13/2024
UNC Policy Manual	Section 700.1.1.3[R] <i>Regulation on Undergraduate Admission Guarantee for Graduates of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics</i>	Regulation	I.	Changing the sentence "established in Section 700.1.1Vi" to update the correct referred section to be Section 700.1.1VIII	3/12/2025

AGENDA ITEM

- A-3. Annual Report on Free Speech and Free Expression
Within the University of North Carolina.....Andrew Tripp

Situation:	<p>As required by state law and Section 1300.8 of the UNC Policy Manual, <i>Free Speech and Free Expression Within the University of North Carolina System</i>, the report on free speech and free expression provides information annually on the following subjects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Any barriers to or disruptions of free expression within the UNC System constituent institutions;2. The administrative handling and discipline relating to disruptions or barriers to free expression;3. Any substantial difficulties, controversies, or successes in meeting the requirements of Section 1300.8 of the UNC Policy Manual; and4. Any assessments, criticisms, commendations, or recommendations the committee sees fit to include. <p>The UNC System Office staff worked with the constituent institutions' responsible officers to compile information on the required topics and other issues related to campus speech activity.</p>
Background:	<p>G.S. 116-301 requires that the Board designate a standing committee to act as the Committee on Free Expression and report annually to the public, the Board, the Governor, and the General Assembly on issues related to free speech and free expression within the University. The Board has designated the Committee on University Governance to fulfill these responsibilities.</p>
Assessment:	<p>This report addresses free speech and free expression at the constituent institutions between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.</p>
Action:	<p>This item requires a vote by the committee.</p>



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

2024-2025 Report on Free Speech and Free Expression Within the University

September 17, 2025

**University of North Carolina System
Raleigh, North Carolina**

UNC Board of Governors

Committee on University Governance, acting as the designated Board Committee on Free Expression 2024- 25 Report on Free Speech and Free Expression Within the University

I. Executive Summary

This report addresses free speech and free expression at the constituent institutions¹ of the University of North Carolina System (“UNC System” or “the University”) for the period of time between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, as required by the [Restore/Preserve Campus Free Speech Act](#) (“the Act”). In preparing and publishing this report, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors Committee on University Governance (“committee”), as the designated Committee on Free Expression,³ was guided primarily by the elements required by the Act.⁴

With the requirements of the Act in mind, this report provides background on and context for free speech and free expression at UNC System constituent institutions.

Specifically, as will be further detailed in this report, the committee found that:

1. The constituent institutions remain committed to promoting and protecting free speech and free expression;
2. Disruptions and interference at scheduled expressive events have been minimal;
3. Constituent institutions have developed and utilized mechanisms for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints regarding alleged free expression policy violations;
4. The constituent institutions are regularly providing information to campus constituencies about rights and responsibilities associated with expression on campus through policies, training, and other outreach;
5. The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which rates college and university speech policies, has awarded its highest rating to 14 out of 16 UNC System higher education constituent institutions.
6. No reporting constituent institutions have incurred undue financial costs related to security surrounding speakers or expressive events on campus; and
7. Constituent institutions continue to accept the recommendations for improvement contained in last year’s report.

¹ Because of the additional protections afforded to K-12 institutions under the First Amendment, the North Carolina School of Science and Math, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for its high school students, and any lab schools operated by a constituent institution are not included within the scope of the report. Even so, these institutions are expected to comply with Article 36 of Chapter 116 to the extent there is not a conflict with relevant First Amendment jurisprudence applicable to K-12 institutions.

² The Restore/Preserve Campus Free Speech Act was enacted in 2017 as [S.L. 2017-196](#) and is codified in the North Carolina General Statutes as Article 36 of Chapter 116.

³ The Act requires the Board of Governors to establish a Committee on Free Expression. [N.C. Gen. Stat. § 116-301](#) (hereinafter G.S.). Section 10.3 of [S.L. 2018-5](#) (“Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2018”) amended G.S. 116- 301 to allow the chair of the Board of Governors to designate a standing or special committee of the Board as the Committee on Free Expression.

⁴ [G.S. 116-301\(c\)](#) articulates specific information to be provided in the annual report. See Section IV. for more information.

In addition to work happening on each individual campus, the UNC System Office continues to maintain and update a webpage dedicated to providing information and resources related to free speech and free expression within the University.

Finally, it is important to note that Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Equality Within the University of North Carolina*, was adopted in May 2024 and its implementation is ongoing. Annual campus certifications required by that policy—most recently received as of September 1, 2025—are viewable on the northcarolina.edu website linked [here](#).

II. Background

A. *University Commitment to Free Speech and Free Expression*

As the nation's first public university, the University of North Carolina System affirms its long-standing commitment to free speech and free expression for its students, faculty members, staff employees, and visitors under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article 1, Section 14, of the North Carolina Constitution. The University and its constituent institutions protect and promote these freedoms, consistent with First Amendment jurisprudence.⁵ Through its policies, the University has expressly established that no employment decision or academic decision shall be based on the exercise of these constitutional rights.⁶

B. *Restore/Preserve Campus Free Speech Act*

Through statute, the North Carolina General Assembly affirmed that the primary function of the University of North Carolina System and each of its constituent institutions is the discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge by means of research, teaching, discussion, and debate. To fulfill this function, each constituent institution must strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression. According to G.S. 116-300(2), "it is not the proper role of any constituent institution to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment, including, without limitation, ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive."

The General Assembly has also established several requirements for the Board of Governors, the University of North Carolina System, and its constituent institutions regarding free expression. In response, the Board of Governors has designated a Committee on Free Expression and adopted a University-wide free expression policy which, among other elements, maintains institutional neutrality. A copy of the policy is linked [here](#). Additionally, the University meets its statutory obligations by providing periodic training for institutional officers and administrators charged with responsibilities for compliance with the Act and coordinating campus-based training ("Responsible Officers") and publishing this annual report. A list of current Responsible Officers is available at this [link](#).

⁵ See, e.g., Sections 601, 604, and 608 of *The Code of the University of North Carolina* ("The Code"). See also Sections 101.3.1, 300.1.1., 300.2.1, 700.4.2, and 1300.8 of the UNC Policy Manual.

⁶ See Sections 601, 604, and 608 of *The Code*. See also Sections 101.3.1, 300.1.1, 300.2.1, 700.4.2 of the UNC Policy Manual.

III. Discussion of Free Speech and Free Expression at the University During the 2024-25 Academic Year and Committee Findings

Pursuant to the Act, the University's policy, and the Board's interest in a broad review of free expression across the University, the committee received information from responding constituent institutions in nine areas. The questions and summaries of the institutional responses are provided in the following table.

[REMAINDER OF PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK]

QUESTIONS SENT TO THE CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS	SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
(1) A description of any barriers to or disruptions of free expression within the constituent institution, including specific incidents and/or particularized complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No constituent institution reported material institutional barriers or disruption of free expression during the academic year. • Notwithstanding the foregoing, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC Asheville, UNC Charlotte reported student and outsider gatherings of varying size that resulted in some level of campus protest activities that in a few instances escalated and consequently arrests ensued. All experiences were reported in the news.
(2) A description of the administrative handling and discipline relating to disruption or barriers identified in response to (1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In UNC Charlotte’s example, disrupting persons left freely upon request. One trespass warning was issued in the first of two instances. • At UNC-Chapel Hill, Chancellor Roberts spoke publicly on the matter, and one arrest was made related to the events of September 19, 2024. Separately, in response to an impending “Week of Rage,” UNC-Chapel Hill increased its security measures. • The remaining campuses reported referrals to Student Conduct process, criminal charges, or both.
(3) Identification and description of any difficulties, controversies, and successes in maintaining a posture of administrative and institutional neutrality about political or social issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The responding institutions reported consistently that the work of free expression went on. • The responding institutions consistently reported steady and regular efforts to foster a culture of free expression. • UNC Charlotte’s handling of the “Triggered” event is likely a case study on positive approaches to maintaining institutional neutrality. • UNC-Chapel Hill is currently in litigation over its response to the April 2024 protests and violence on campus. • WSSU reported taking appropriate steps to address concerns raised over institutional neutrality in the context of public comments made by WSSU employees. • ECU shared some detailed feedback on how it fielded institutional neutrality concerns raised periodically by campus community members. • WCU noted its well-publicized experience with Accuracy in Media and notes that the recorded now former employee misstated the reality of WCU’s commitment to institutional neutrality.

QUESTIONS SENT TO THE CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS	SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
(4) Any assessments, criticisms, commendations, or recommendation the constituent institution would like the committee to consider in preparing the annual report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One campus recommended additional training to ensure Free Speech Responsible Officers are able to maintain their credibility as a resource on campus.
(5) Confirmation of whether the institution fulfilled the University policy requirements to disseminate information about institutional policies during the 2024-25 academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All responding institutions indicated that they had disseminated information as required by policy.
(6) Identification of representative institutional policies that reinforce commitment to free speech and free expression (e.g., academic freedom, tenure regulations, facilities use, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many institutions reported amending or adopting policies, including facilities use policies, student codes of conduct, and student organization policies or referenced back to having previously undertaken those efforts in prior years. The Board of Governors adopted Section 700.4.4 of the UNC Policy Manual, <i>Policy on Campus Gathering & Related Student Conduct Matters</i>, and many campuses followed suit. That policy is most representative of the proactive steps that the University continues to take to avoid undermining the freedom of expression by confusing expression with violence.

QUESTIONS SENT TO THE CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS	SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
(7) Examples of speakers or other events that have been held at the institution during the 2024-25 academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The campuses have provided a voluminous and detailed report of events spanning the State of North Carolina and topics both controversial and not. A detailed list is available on request—however we note examples below. • Representative examples from UNC-Chapel Hill: On August 27, 2024, Congressman Maxwell Frost spoke to UNC Young Democrats. On October 1, 2024, the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics department sponsored the Abbey Speaker Series, in which Richard Ebeling and Michael Meeropol discussed threats to liberal democracy. On October 21, 2024, Charlie Kirk and Vivek Ramaswamy came to UNC-Chapel Hill for a stop on their “You’re Being Brainwashed” Tour, sponsored by Turning Point USA. On October 31, 2024, a student organization, Sunrise UNC, held a rally on the steps of South Building, demanding that UNC-Chapel Hill end its use of coal-powered electricity. On April 14, 2025, this same group hosted a march down Cameron Avenue ending at the UNC-Chapel Hill Cogeneration facility to protest the use of coal. On February 12, 2025, the College Republicans hosted North Carolina Senator Ted Alexander. The Campus Y hosted several speech-focused events, including “Democracy and Dialogue: Political Partisanship and Free Thinking” and “Light or Liberty: The Cost of Free Speech at UNC.” • Representatives examples from NC State: December 2024 Commencement Ceremony - Rashida Hodge (Corporate Vice President, Data and AI Customer Success, Microsoft); May 2025 Commencement Ceremony - Admiral Daryl L. Caudle (United States Fleet Forces Command); Institute for Emerging Issues Forum - Kendal Bowman (State President, Duke Energy North Carolina); Christopher Chung (CEO, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina); Phaedra Boinodiris (Global Leader for Responsible AI, IBM); Charles Yang (Executive Director, Center for Industrial Strategy); Shelton Leadership Forum - Lindsey Pollak (author, workplace and career expert)
(8) Identification of communications, trainings, or other educational outreach regarding free speech and free expression that have been provided during the 2024-25 academic year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All institutions identified free expression communications, trainings, or outreach that had taken place during the academic year.

(9) Information about security and other costs associated with protecting and affirming free expression on campus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most Institutions report either no or minimal additional security costs associated with expressive events. • Notwithstanding the foregoing, UNC-Chapel Hill reports spending over \$52,000 in additional costs beyond standard staffing. • To their credit other campuses within the UNC System provided law enforcement support to UNC-Chapel Hill without billing for their services.
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As a result of the information gathered, it appears again this year that (1) the constituent institutions remain committed to promoting and protecting free speech and free expression; (2) disruptions and interference at scheduled speaking or expressive events have been minimal; and (3) the constituent institutions continue to work to provide information to various campus constituencies about rights and responsibilities associated with speech and expression on campus through policies, training, and other outreach; (4) the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which rates college and university speech policies, has awarded its highest rating (“green light”) to 14 of 16 UNC System constituent higher education institutions; and (5) with high profile exceptions, no constituent institutions have reported incurring meaningful additional costs related to security surrounding speakers or expressive events on campus.

IV. Implementation of Past Report Recommendations

Constituent institutions reported a variety of processes and resources that have been introduced or improved to implement prior recommendations.

V. New Initiatives & Committee Recommendations

The committee recognizes that there are always opportunities for improving the University’s commitment to free speech and free expression.

This annual report provides a welcome opportunity to consider options that will demonstrate our Systemwide leadership and action in support of free speech and free expression. The committee therefore offers these recommendations for consideration for implementation by the UNC System Office:

1. Continue to foster opportunities for free speech and free expression among campus communities.
2. Continue to provide training to constituent institution administrators who have transitioned into the Responsible Officer title.
3. Continue to foster a culture of conversation among all stakeholders about the importance of free expression. High repetition of low intensity reminders pays dividends in the way that all campus stakeholders consider the importance of free expression in their daily lives.
4. Seek universal “green” status across the UNC System from FIRE.
5. Monitor implementation of University Policy and answer to the best of our ability specific, concrete questions as they arise in consultation with the Division of Legal Affairs.

V. Conclusion

The committee continues to support the UNC System Office's and the constituent institutions' work and efforts in promoting and protecting free speech and free expression and taking action, when needed, to prevent substantial disruption or interference in scheduled events.

The annual obligations that produce this report effect a culture of periodic "well visits" checking into the health of free expression on our campuses. This report confirms that the transparency and accountability required by the originating legislation are having their desired effect, and the content of this report remains consistent generally year over year.

Accepted by the UNC System Board of Governors Committee on University Governance, the designated Board Committee on Free Expression on September 17, 2025.

AGENDA ITEM

A-4. Resolution on Security Clearance Requirements..... Alex Mitchell

Situation: A resolution is required annually of the Board of Governors by the United States Department of Defense.

Background: The Department of Defense requires the UNC System to maintain a Facility Security Clearance in the performance of classified contracts. In connection with this Facility Clearance, certain senior management officials must obtain an individual security clearance. This resolution is required to exempt members of the Board of Governors and senior officers of the UNC System from the requirement to obtain individual security clearances.

Assessment: This is an annual resolution to be adopted by the Board of Governors.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee, with a vote by the full Board of Governors through the consent agenda.



**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AUTHORIZING SECURITY CLEARANCE**

WHEREAS, current Department of Defense Regulations contain a provision making it mandatory that the chair of the Board and principal officers meet the personnel clearance requirements established for a contractor's facility clearance; and

WHEREAS, said Department of Defense Regulations permit the exclusion from the personnel clearance requirements of certain members of the Board of Governors and other officers, provided that this action is recorded in the corporate minutes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DECLARED that the chair of the Board, the president of the University of North Carolina, Insider Threat Program Senior Official, and the University's Facility Security Officer at the present time do possess, or will be processed for, the required security clearance; and

BE IT RESOLVED that in the future, when any individual enters upon any duties as chair of the Board, the president of the University of North Carolina, Insider Threat Program Senior Official, or as the University's Facility Security Officer, such individual shall immediately make application for the required security clearance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following members of the Board of Governors and other officers shall not require, shall not have, and can be effectively excluded from access to **CLASSIFIED** information in the possession of the corporation and do not occupy positions that would enable them to affect adversely corporate policies or practices in the performance of classified contracts for the Department of Defense or the User Agencies of its Industrial Security Program.

NAME	TITLE
Andrea Russo Poole	Chief of Staff
John Michael Vollmer	Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Jennifer Healy Haygood	Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer
David Judson English	Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer
Thashundray Robertson Edmonds	Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy
Andrew Patrick Kelly	Senior Advisor to the President and CEO of Project Kitty Hawk
Scott Bartley Goodson	Senior Vice President of Government Affairs

NAME	TITLE
Ivy Ruth Taylor	Senior Advisor to the President
Andrew Tillman Tripp	Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Marvin Lee Barnes Jr.	Member
Kellie Hunt Blue	Member
Kirk Jackson Bradley	Member
Harry Coolidge Brown	Member
Pearl Burris-Floyd	Member
Charles Philip Byers	Member
Swadesh Chatterjee	Member
Jimmy Dean Clark	Member
Carolyn Lloyd Coward	Member
Rodney Gene Davis Jr.	Member
Joel Douglas McClure Ford	Member
John Alfred Fraley	Member
Kathryn Crisp Greeley	Member
Martin Luther Holton III	Member
Reginald Ronald Holley	Member
Hilton Terry Hutchens	Member
Javier Alexander Limon	Member, <i>Ex Officio</i>
John Alexander Mitchell	Member
Sonja Phillips Nichols	Member
James Arthur Pope	Member
Randall Clark Ramsey	Member
Haywood Edwin White, Jr.	Member
Michael Leighton Williford	Member

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Governors at a regular meeting of the Board on the 18th day of September 2025.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF WAKE)

SS:

SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATE
OF AUTHORIZATION

I, Meredith R. McCullen, associate vice president and secretary of the University of North Carolina, *DO HEREBY CERTIFY* that (1) the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the approving resolution adopted by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina at its regular meeting on September 14, 2023, and appearing in the minutes of such meeting; (2) notice of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina held on September 14, 2023, was sent to each member of the Board; and (3) a quorum was present at the meeting on September 14, 2023, at which time the foregoing resolution was adopted.

WITNESS, my hand and the seal of the University of North Carolina this 18th day of September 2025.

[SEAL]

Meredith R. McCullen
Associate Vice President and Secretary
The University of North Carolina

AGENDA ITEM

A-5. Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees AppointmentJoel Ford

Situation: Matthew Cullinan submitted his resignation from the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees effective September 18, 2025, creating a vacancy on the board of trustees.

Background: The partial term vacancy is from September 19, 2025, to June 30, 2027.

Assessment: Julia Townsend is nominated to fill the vacancy as a result of Matthew Cullinan's resignation. The partial term ends June 30, 2027. Biographical information is below.

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee and a vote by the full Board of Governors.

Julia Townsend

Julia Townsend currently serves as president and board member at Kayser-Roth Corporation. She brings vast experience to the position from previous roles at Kayser-Roth, Lamour Group, Fruit of the Loom Inc., 101 Solutions Consulting, and Renfro Corporation.

Townsend is a dynamic and visionary leader with 30 years of experience building great teams and driving growth and return on investment. She has an outstanding track record of taking brands and companies to the next level with thoughtful strategy and by empowering teams to engage and implement with excellence. Her leadership has taken multiple companies through cultural and business transformation, reversing declines and creating dynamic multi-brand, multi-category growth.

Her community engagement and service activities include the REACH Women's Network (founder and co-president), YMCA Northwest North Carolina (board member), Wake Forest University Face to Face Speaker Series (Board of Advisors member), and Family Services Foundation and Twin City Foundation (Board of Directors).

Townsend is based in Winston-Salem and holds a Master of Business Administration in marketing/marketing management from Thunderbird School of Global Management and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Hollins University.

AGENDA ITEM

A-6. Certification Reports of Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual,
Equality Within the University of North CarolinaAndrew Tripp

Situation: The 2025 Equality Policy certifications are presented to the committee to reaffirm each institution's commitment to principled neutrality, academic freedom, and student success. The 2025 certifications further include any additional actions or modifications made to the actions expressed in the 2024 certifications and reports. These additional actions include changes to curriculum, awards and scholarships, employee training, or further savings reallocated toward student success.

Background: The University of North Carolina Board of Governors adopted Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Equality Within the University of North Carolina*, on May 23, 2024, to reaffirm the University's longstanding commitment to equality, nondiscrimination, and institutional neutrality. The operative language of the policy directs campus administrations to abstain from the political and social fray. As such, the chancellor and director of student affairs (or equivalent officer) of each constituent institution must certify and report annually on his or her constituent institution's initial and continued compliance with Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual.

This year, to further monitor and assess campus compliance, each institution's board of trustees established a subcommittee and held meetings to discuss and inform the institution's compliance with Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual.

Assessment: A detailed presentation of institutional certifications and reports will be discussed, and can be accessed [here](#).

Action: This item is for discussion only.