

## MINUTES

January 29, 2026

Via Videoconference and PBS North Carolina Livestream

### Call to Order

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors met on January 29, 2026, at the UNC System Office in Raleigh, North Carolina. Chair Wendy Murphy called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

### Invocation

Chair Murphy called on Mr. Terry Hutchens to give the invocation.

### Roll Call

Secretary Meredith McCullen called the roll. The members present, constituting a quorum, were:

Dr. Lee Barnes	Reginald Ronald Holley
Kellie Hunt Blue	Mark Holton
Kirk J. Bradley	Terry Hutchens
Harry Brown	Javier Limon
Pearl Burris-Floyd	J. Alex Mitchell
C. Philip Byers	Wendy Floyd Murphy
Jimmy D. Clark	Sonja Phillips Nichols
Carolyn Coward	Art Pope
Gene Davis	Randy Ramsey
Joel Ford	Woody White
John Fraley	Michael Williford
Kathryn Crisp Greeley	

The following members were absent:

Swadesh Chatterjee

### State Ethics Act

Chair Murphy stated that under the State Ethics Act, members have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts and asked if anyone had a potential conflict. There were none.

### Chair's Report

Chair Murphy's report focused on student success. She hopes the Board will look at student success more broadly, from childhood to adulthood. She reported that work is underway to improve math education in the state. Over the past several months, UNC System faculty — in collaboration with deans, K–5 teachers, math education experts, and state education leaders — have built a UNC System framework that will improve and coordinate math instruction across our education schools. The framework will be finalized this spring and aims to strengthen understanding of difficult math concepts and better prepare teachers to support their students. Chair Murphy thanked Dr. Ashton Clemmons, associate vice president, and the many individuals driving this project. Chair Murphy stressed the important work of continuing to improve student mental health and address the impacts of

achievement culture. Finally, Chair Murphy announced that this year, the UNC System will release its first study that takes a data-driven look at how graduates use their degrees to meet state workforce needs. The study will also explore how employers leverage and evaluate credentials to meet their job needs. She concluded her report by stating that the work of this Board affects students' journeys from beginning to end, not just a moment in time.

### **Consent Agenda Items**

Chair Murphy referred to the consent agenda items listed as item four on the day's agenda. She entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda items. The motion was properly seconded, and the motion carried.

#### Minutes

- a. Minutes (Open) of November 16, 2025

#### Committee on Budget and Finance

- b. Sale of Special Obligation Bonds — East Carolina University APPENDIX A
- c. Capital Improvement Projects APPENDIX B
- d. Authorization of Associated Entity Project —  
University of North Carolina Asheville APPENDIX C

#### Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs

- e. Winston-Salem State University Mission Statement APPENDIX D

#### Committee on University Personnel

- f. Section 300.2.22 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Leave Programs for Faculty and Staff Exempt from the North Carolina Human Resources Act* (amend) (approved November 19, 2025) APPENDIX E
- g. Section 300.2.14 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Non-Salary and Deferred Compensation* (amend) (approved November 19, 2025) APPENDIX F

### **Report of the Committee on Budget and Finance**

Mr. Bradley, chair of the committee, called on Mr. Pope, who wished to correct the record from the previous day's committee meeting regarding incorrect information he referenced using an outdated UNC Policy Manual. Mr. Bradley reported that the committee received a presentation and discussed the 2026-27 Tuition and Fees proposals submitted by the UNC System institutions. The full details of institutions' proposals are available on BoardEffect. The committee also received an overview of student housing, which was for information only. Next, the committee considered and approved amendments to Section 700.1.3 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Nonresident Undergraduate Enrollment*, and revisions to Section 1400.1, of the UNC Policy Manual, *Policy on Information Technology*, including the repeal of current IT policies. Both policies will come to the full Board through the consent agenda at the next meeting. The committee also reviewed and approved three transactional items that were included on the consent agenda that the Board approved. The committee received an update from Chancellor Kimberly van Noort on UNC Asheville's Millennial Campus Development Advisory Committee, which is charged with making recommendations for the future development of UNC Asheville's Millennial Campus and is expected to conclude its work no later than May 2026. The committee's additional materials included the UNC Quarterly Capital Projects Report for January 1, 2026, and are available on BoardEffect.

Chair Murphy thanked the committee and called on Mr. Hutchens for the report from the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs.

### **Report of the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs**

Mr. Hutchens, chair of the committee, stated that the committee received an academic affairs update from Dr. David English, senior vice president. Mr. Dan Harrison, senior advisor, presented the faculty report, which included the faculty workload report and the post-tenure review annual report. The director of North Carolina Teaching Fellows, Dr. Bennett Jones, presented the program's annual report. Lastly, the committee reviewed the Winston-Salem State University's request to update its mission statement according to Section 400.2.3[R] of the UNC System Policy Manual, *Regulation on Mission Statements*. The changes were presented and approved by the full Board through the consent agenda.

### **Report of the Committee on University Governance**

Mr. Mitchell, chair of the committee, stated the Committee on University Governance voted on six appointments to be approved by the full Board. Biographical information for each candidate is in BoardEffect.

The first two appointments before the Board were for Dr. Michael Waldrum to be reappointed for a five-year term to fill Seat 2 on the East Carolina University Health Medical Center Board of Trustees, and for Mr. Vern Davenport to be reappointed for a five-year term to fill Seat 18 on that same Board, beginning March 1, 2026, and ending February 28, 2031. (See APPENDIX G).

**Motion:** Resolved, that on behalf of the Committee on University Governance, I move to approve the nomination of Dr. Michael Waldrum and Mr. Vern Davenport to the ECU Health Medical Center Board of Trustees to fill an additional five-year term that ends on February 28, 2031.

**Motion:** Mr. Mitchell

**Motion carried**

Next, the committee voted on four reappointments to the Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors. The appointments before the full Board were for Ms. Susan Cates, Mr. John Comly, Chancellor Karrie Dixon, and Chancellor Philip Rogers to serve additional two-year terms beginning February 1, 2026, and ending January 31, 2028. (See APPENDIX H).

**Motion:** Resolved, that on behalf of the Committee on University Governance, I move to approve the nominations of Ms. Susan Cates, Mr. John Comly, Chancellor Karrie Dixon, and Chancellor Philip Rogers to the Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors for a term that ends on January 31, 2028.

**Motion:** Mr. Mitchell

**Motion carried**

Finally, the committee reviewed the proposed amendments to Section VI of *The Code, Academic Freedom and Tenure*. Mr. Andrew Tripp, senior vice president, led the committee in a discussion of this important topic, and outlined the proposed revisions to *The Code* that offer a practical working definition of academic freedom to guide faculty, staff, and students in their efforts to advance the University's mission. The committee voted to approve the amendments, and these changes will come before the Board at the next meeting through the consent agenda.

Chair Murphy thanked Mr. Mitchell and called on Mr. Ford for the report of the Committee on Strategic Initiatives.

### **Report of the Committee on Strategic Initiatives**

Mr. Ford, chair of the committee, stated the committee met to continue their work on understanding achievement culture and the role of the UNC System. First, the committee received an update on NC College Connect from Ms. Patti Harris, senior director of student success initiatives, and Dr. Shun Robertson, senior vice president. The committee learned how Phase II of this initiative, launched in fall 2025, is helping to reduce barriers in the college

application process by offering qualified North Carolina public high school seniors direct admission to participating institutions. In partnership with a broad coalition of education stakeholders across the state, this program allows students to bypass the traditional application process and make enrollment decisions earlier. During its first large-scale rollout, more than 70,000 eligible seniors were notified of their direct admission opportunities. As of January, NC College Connect has received 88,000 applications, with 56,000 of those applications going to a UNC System institution. Next, the committee heard from Chancellors Karrie Dixon of North Carolina Central University and Sharon Gaber of University of North Carolina at Charlotte on strategies their institutions use to recruit and support high-achieving students. As competition for North Carolina’s top students continues to intensify — particularly from neighboring states — the committee discussed how our institutions leverage their distinctive strengths to attract and retain these students. The chancellors highlighted approaches including robust honors programs, responsive degree offerings, and other initiatives designed to provide a personalized and high-quality academic experience. Overall, the discussion advanced the shared understanding of how System-level initiatives and institutional strategies work together to support student achievement while promoting healthy, sustainable expectations for success.

Chair Murphy indicated her interest in learning more about the NC College Connect program and how it can benefit all students.

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Chair Murphy offered the following motion:

**Motion:** Resolved, that the Board go into closed session pursuant to N.C. General Statutes §143-748 and §143-318.11(a)(1), (2), (3), and (6), for the purposes stated in the written motion that was included in the meeting materials, which have been publicly noticed (APPENDIX I). The motion was properly seconded.

**Motion:** Mr. Brown

**Motion carried**

The Board went into closed session at 10:26 a.m. and returned to open session at 11:12 a.m.

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There being no further business and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 11:14 a.m. The next meeting of the Board of Governors is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2026, at the UNC System Office in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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Pearl Burris-Floyd, *Secretary*

## APPENDICES

The Appendices are part of the official record of the meeting and are posted on the UNC System website at:  
<http://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/bog/index.php>

APPENDIX A	Sale of Special Obligation Bonds — East Carolina University
APPENDIX B	Capital Improvement Projects
APPENDIX C	Authorization of Associated Entity Project — University of North Carolina Asheville
APPENDIX D	Winston-Salem State University Mission Statement
APPENDIX E	Section 300.2.22 of the UNC Policy Manual, <i>Leave Programs for Faculty and Staff Exempt from the North Carolina Human Resources Act</i> (amend) (approved November 19, 2025)
APPENDIX F	Section 300.2.14 of the UNC Policy Manual, <i>Policy on Non-Salary and Deferred Compensation</i> (amend) (approved November 19, 2025)
APPENDIX G	ECU Health Medical Center Board of Trustees Appointments
APPENDIX H	Project Kitty Hawk Board of Directors Appointments
APPENDIX I	Full Board Closed Motion