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UNC POLICY MANUAL 300.8.5
2025 CERTIFICATION & REPORT

2025 CERTIFICATION & REPORT
EQUALITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
August 25, 2025

Peter Hans, President
University of North Carolina System
223 S. West St., Ste. 1800
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear President Hans:

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.

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 300.8.5¹.

As such, I certify the following on behalf of my constituent institution:

- I. I certify that Appalachian State University fully complies with the University's commitment to institutional neutrality and nondiscrimination required by law and Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual.
- II. My institution continues to act consistently with the actions described in our 2024 Annual Certification & Report, and the certifications contained there remain true, noting the following additional or modified actions, including additional savings reallocated towards student success, if any:

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| In its September 1, 2024, certification, Appalachian State University identified a total savings of \$1,191,611, from the elimination and realignment of employee |
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¹ The Equality Policy requires annual certification as to compliance and initially expected reports of savings derived from achieving compliance. It is likely that any savings achieved would have occurred in the first year and that succeeding annual certifications will identify fewer additional savings in succeeding years (because non-compliant programs, employment divisions, and employment positions should be addressed completely in the first year and remain addressed). However, in instances where campuses have determined—following the initial certification—that additional programs need to be brought into compliance with the Equality Policy, reallocated savings should be reported in the subsequent certification.

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positions and a series of programmatic changes, and proposed to redirect \$397,843 toward student success initiatives, and realized unspent savings of \$793,768.

In a memo to Andrew Tripp, Senior Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel for the UNC System dated Feb. 17 2025, Chancellor Heather Norris shared this savings had been directed to support student mental health, student veteran services and academic advising for the university's fastest growing programs in the colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Health Sciences.

III. To achieve further compliance, my institution has taken the following additional concrete actions towards compliance with the Equality Policy since the last Annual Certification & Report:

App State reviews and updates all job descriptions for open positions before those positions are posted for recruitment. The university created a website (appstate.edu/resources/unc-equality) to communicate information about the policy with students, faculty, staff, and the public. This site is regularly updated and includes links to communications and resources related to the policy, including the Board of Trustees' June 2023 affirmation of institutional neutrality and Freedom of Speech.

Since the September 1, 2024 certification, the university continues its review of university websites, and to date, has reviewed and removed or revised 1,270 items.

The university has reviewed every Foundation-supported fund, a total of 2,546. Eighty-five of these funds required action: of these, the university was able to make administrative adjustments and continue operating 40 of the funds under the existing donor agreements and in compliance with the Equality policy. For 41 funds, the university is pursuing modifications in collaboration with donors. Four agreements will require a statutory process to update in compliance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

As directed by the February 5, 2025 "Memorandum Regarding Federal Contracting Compliance" App State reviewed program requirements related to diversity, equity and inclusion, and submitted curricular waivers for programs in (1) social work; (2) counseling, family therapy & higher education; (3) learning, teaching & the curriculum; and (4) psychology — for which licensure and accreditation requirements mandate course credits related to these topics.

App State's Research and Innovation Office continues to monitor grants and provides regular guidance about institutional neutrality for grant applicants.

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App State has conducted institutional neutrality trainings and has actively engaged with the university's [Civic Literacy Initiative](#), which seeks to foster a nonpartisan, civically engaged, and informed campus community.

Additionally, to ensure full compliance across all divisions, senior leaders certified to Chancellor Heather Norris by August 15, 2025 that they had proactively reinforced compliance expectations with their teams, including encouraging them to seek assistance for questions or concerns regarding the Policy; reviewing university guidance and updates; and reminding them of their responsibility to the university's commitment to compliance through their words and actions.

IV. To further monitor and assess our compliance, my institution's Board of Trustees established the subcommittee identified below and held meetings on the following dates and locations to discuss our institution's Equality Policy compliance:

On Aug. 7, 2025, and Aug. 18, 2025, a compliance subcommittee (the Subcommittee) held public meetings via conference call. Members of the Subcommittee are:

Board of Trustees Chair Mark E. Ricks;
Board of Trustees Vice Chair R. Thomas Sofield;
Board of Trustees Secretary James E. Harris;
Board of Trustees member-at-large Anita Greene; and
Board of Trustees member-at-large Steven D. Wyatt

During the Aug. 7 meeting, Chancellor Norris briefed the Subcommittee about the implementation of the Equality policy at App State, including a summary of positions and offices reviewed. This briefing also included information regarding all actions listed in Section III of this report, and App State's demonstrated commitment to institutional neutrality and compliance with the Equality policy. Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Neva Specht and Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice Chancellor J.J. Brown were available to respond to questions posed by the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee then met in closed session and received a briefing on the performance of relevant campus personnel consistent with Chapter 126 and Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. The Subcommittee affirmed Chancellor Norris' work to ensure App State's commitment to equality for all persons and the emphasis on supporting all students, as well as her dedication to providing a compassionate, high-quality college experience focused on student success and upholding institutional neutrality, free expression, and academic freedom.

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At the Aug. 18 meeting, the Subcommittee received a final briefing confirming that all divisions had certified compliance with the Equality policy, and that the Subcommittee had the full information included in this Certification and Report.

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: Chancellor

Signed by:
By: Heather Norris
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Name: Heather Hulburt Norris

Date: 8/25/2025

Title: Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor

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By: [Signature]
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Name: Neva J. Specht

Date: 8/25/2025