

2025 CERTIFICATION & REPORT
EQUALITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

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, each constituent institution's chancellor and director of student affairs (or equivalent officer) 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 **North Carolina Agricultural and Technical 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 extra savings reallocated towards student success, if any:

Since submission of the 2024 Certification & Report, the University has expanded training for faculty and staff on institutional neutrality and nondiscrimination, conducted reviews of University positions and programs, including offices such as

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.

cultural and identity-based centers, to ensure alignment with the Equality Policy, and undertaken systematic reviews of websites, communications, and contracts for compliance. Position responsibilities were clarified to focus on student success support rather than advocacy on political or social issues. The operational savings achieved through these consolidations and reviews have been reallocated to employee engagement and success initiatives, including the launch of the Office of Engagement and Success*, established to ensure that every member of our workforce, including student employees, feels empowered, valued, and aligned with the university's mission. These actions reinforce the University's commitment to neutrality, equality of opportunity, and continuous improvement in support of the student success focus of each of our employees.

*<https://www.ncat.edu/about/hr/employee-success/index.php>

- 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:

After submission of its 2024 Certification and Report, N.C. A&T developed a robust plan of action to ensure ongoing compliance with the Equality Policy. This included, but was not limited to:

1. Ongoing audits of all official university webpages, ensuring that statements, policies, and programming align with the Equality Policy and institutional neutrality. This has resulted in the review and update of over five-hundred (500) weblinks and on-line documents.
2. Ongoing review and update employment and admissions pages to reflect compliance with state and federal nondiscrimination laws without violating institutional neutrality.
3. Modified training and orientation webpages to remove references to compelled speech or other content that could conflict with institutional neutrality.
4. Revised HR training programs to educate hiring managers and search committees on avoiding compelled viewpoints in interviews and ensuring nondiscrimination

- in employment as per Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, ADA, ADEA, and other state and/or federal laws.
5. Ongoing review and evaluation of programs designed to enhance student retention and academic success across diverse backgrounds to ensure programming remains neutral in social and political messaging and focused on measurable educational outcomes.
 6. Ongoing review and evaluation of university communications to ensure they remain neutral and do not take institutional positions on political or social issues.
 7. Ongoing contract review to ensure that any third-party consultants or trainers hired by the university do not engage in prohibited advocacy. This includes, but is not limited to, a new template contract provision required for new or amended procurement agreements.
 8. Regular review of UNC System updates for potential policy modifications or additional guidance.

Training Resources

In addition, the University's Office of Legal Affairs provided training for key groups, including administration, faculty, student affairs, staff, and others, to ensure a shared understanding of policy requirements and compliance responsibilities. We also launched a dedicated website with a Frequently Asked Questions section focused on free speech, institutional neutrality, and the Equality Policy. To further reinforce awareness, the Equality Policy is now included in the University's annual policy notification to all students, faculty, and staff. [<https://www.ncat.edu/legal/free-speech-equality/index.php>].

Additional Ongoing Compliance Efforts

The university will continue specific student success programs and initiatives, like the Intercultural Center, that have demonstrated value in supporting retention, engagement, and completion. These programs remain critical to advancing equitable outcomes and fostering a supportive learning environment.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of continuous review and adjustment. Moving forward, these initiatives will place greater emphasis on student-led programming and services that are accessible to all students. This shift ensures that offerings remain compliant with policy, inclusive in design, and responsive to the needs and leadership of the student body.

As part of our compliance efforts, the University also had to make difficult decisions to protect institutional neutrality. In one case, we declined to accept a student success

grant because the agreement's terms required conditions inconsistent with the Equality Policy. While rejecting funding is never easy, doing so reinforced N.C. A&T's commitment to the law, demonstrated integrity in practice, and set a clear precedent that compliance takes priority over external resources.

- 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:

Under the directive the UNC Board of Governors issued on June 17, 2025, the N.C. A&T Board of Trustees established a five-member subcommittee to oversee and verify the University's compliance with Section 300.8.5, *"Equality Within the University of North Carolina."* The subcommittee, approved by President Hans on July 30, 2025, is responsible for reviewing this year's institutional certification, engaging with university leadership in public and closed sessions, and ultimately signing off on our September 1 submission to the System Office. Our subcommittee is composed of the Board of Trustees' Risk Management, Audit, and Compliance (RMAC) Committee membership, which provides N.C. A&T with the opportunity to revisit the compliance obligations mandated by the Equality Policy as a regular part of the Board and committee's work. The RMAC/equality policy subcommittee membership includes Trustees Mark Copeland, Latisha Hamilton-Williams, Gina Loftin, Thomas Stanley, and Sean Suggs.

On August 18, 2025, the subcommittee met virtually with university leadership in public and closed sessions to discuss the components of the University's 2025 certification. The subcommittee received a presentation from the Vice Chancellor and General Counsel summarizing NC A&T's compliance with recent federal and UNC System policy changes. The briefing began with the Supreme Court's *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA)* decision, highlighting that the University's admissions processes have long been race-neutral and required only minor adjustments following the SFFA

decision. Similarly, the presentation discussed pre-SFFA efforts to revise scholarship agreements to eliminate race- or gender-based provisions, with limited to no resistance from donors, and historical scholarship agreements were modified to comply with the law.

The subcommittee was provided with a comprehensive review of the campus-wide audit of positions, programs, and communications to ensure compliance with the Equality Policy (Policy 300.8.5), which requires institutional neutrality and annual certification. As a result, the University eliminated the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and the Chief Diversity Officer role, removed or revised more than 1,000 webpages and materials to ensure neutral language. It redirected approximately \$190,000 in savings to establish a new Office of Employee Engagement and Success.

The presentation also detailed adjustments to academic programs in response to federal executive orders and UNC directives suspending DEI-related course requirements. New and pending degree programs were reviewed, with DEI-related courses removed unless required by accreditation or licensure. In teacher preparation, nursing, and social work cases, the University secured narrowly tailored waivers to preserve accreditation standards while remaining compliant with neutrality requirements.

The subcommittee was updated on A&T's ongoing compliance framework, which includes quarterly audits of websites and communications, revisions to HR training and hiring practices, and continuous monitoring of student-success programs to ensure neutrality. Procurement and vendor relationships are now screened for compliance. The subcommittee reviewed documentation of these actions and recommended proceeding with the September 2025 certification submission, endorsing the compliance measures taken and the new plan for continuous oversight through quarterly reporting and developing a certification checklist to help departments ensure they are covering all required elements.

Finally, in closed session, the subcommittee received a limited closed session briefing on the performance of relevant campus personnel consistent with Chapter 126 and Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, regarding the performance of personnel whose responsibilities were realigned pursuant to the Equality Policy.

**[INSERT YOUR CONSTITUENT
INSTITUTION'S NAME]**

Title: Chancellor

Title: Director of Student Affairs

By: James R. Martin II, Ph.D.

By: Christopher C. Catching, Ed.D.

Name: 

Name: 

Date: 9/1/2025

Date: 9/1/2025