

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

March 6, 2026 | 9:00 a.m.
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

TRUSTEES PRESENT

*Denotes voting Trustee

*Graydon Pleasants, Chair
*John Wigodsky, Vice Chair
*Nia Patterson, Secretary (virtual)
*Jonah Bokaer
*Eric Flow (virtual)
*Jerri Irby (virtual)
*Peter Juran
*Trey Mazza, Student Body President
*John McConnell
*Ches McDowell (virtual)
*David Neill
*Kyle Petty
*John Michael Schert (virtual)

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Tom Kenan, *emeritus*
Sandi Macdonald, *ex officio*
The Honorable Pam Cashwell, *ex officio*

OTHERS PRESENT

Dara Folan, Foundation Board
Representative

STAFF PRESENT

Brian Cole, Chancellor
Patrick Sims, Ex. Vice Chancellor and
Provost
Jim DeCristo, VC and Chief of Staff
Laura Dean, VC and General Counsel
Lissy Garrison, VC for Advancement
Amanda Balwah, AVC and University
Secretary
Anthony Hromada, IT Audio Visual Support
Steve LaCosse, Faculty Council Chair
Laurel Donley, Assistant Dean of Student

Affairs
Kory Kelly, Vice Chancellor for Strategic
Communications
Ginger Caston, Ex. Assistant to the Chief
of Staff
Michael Kelley, Dean of Design &
Production
Rich Whittington, AVC for Advancement
Krystyna Puc, Interim Dean of Division of
Liberal Arts
Angela Mahoney, Associate Vice
Chancellor and Chief Human Resources

Officer
Saxton Rose, Dean of Music
David Sigman, Vice Provost for Enrollment
Management
Cindy Liberty, Executive Director of the
UNCSA Foundation
Sarah Emery, Director of Development
Wendy Emerson, Vice Chancellor for
Finance and Administration
Deborah LaVine, Dean of Filmmaking
April Horton, Director of Development
Tamar Pandi, Chief Information Officer

Melanie Nuckols, AVC for Finance
B. Afeni McNeely Cobham, AVC and Vice
Provost of Institutional Engagement
Latonya Wright, Staff Council Chair
Kevin Bitterman, Ex. Director of the Kenan
Institute for the Arts
Katherine Johnson, AVC for Strategic
Communications
John Langs, Dean of Drama
Shannon Wright, Senior Director of
Development, Annual & Family Giving

STAFF PRESENT VIA ZOOM

Marla Carpenter, Senior Communications Manager

CONVENE OPEN SESSION

Chair Graydon Pleasants convened the March 6, 2026 meeting of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Board of Trustees at 9:13 a.m. A quorum was confirmed. Chair Pleasants reminded all members of the Board of their duty under the State Government Ethics Act to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict as required by this act.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The open session minutes from the December 5, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting were made public. There were no objections or edits and the minutes were approved.

REPORT FROM CHANCELLOR COLE

Chancellor Cole welcomed the Trustees to the third meeting of the 2025-2026 academic year and noted that this is an exciting time of year for the institution, marking a meaningful inflection point at the midpoint of the semester. The report highlighted key institutional priorities, recent accomplishments, and upcoming initiatives.

UNCSA's Reaccreditation

Chancellor Cole shared the successful outcome of the recent Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) review. The visiting committee found UNCSA in compliance with all 73 standards and will recommend full reaccreditation for the next 10-years at the SACSCOC board meeting in December 2026. This achievement reflects the institution's strength, quality, and commitment to continuous improvement.

This milestone coincides with UNCSA's 60th anniversary, underscoring a period of stability and continued investment in providing a high-quality arts education. Chancellor Cole expressed appreciation for the collaborative effort across campus in preparation for the review. More than 60 faculty and staff contributed to the reports. Special recognition was given to Elizabeth Davis and Sarah Iler from Institutional Research, as well as Provost Sims for coordinating these efforts. The visiting committee also noted the highly collaborative and dynamic environment among students, faculty, and staff during their campus visit.

Faculty and Student Achievements

Jared Reddick (School of Dance), who joined UNCSA in 2013, received the UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The Chancellor highlighted a range of creative and scholarly accomplishments, including UNCSA Media recordings and new episodes of "The Arts and Everything" podcast.

He also emphasized the continued success and influence of UNCSA alumni:

- Alumni participation in major industry events, including the Film Independent Spirit

Awards in Los Angeles.

- Five alumni were nominated for Helen Hayes Awards in Washington, D.C., a prestigious honor comparable to the Tony Awards in New York City.
- Alumni success stories include Will William Gyves, a Winston-Salem native who attended the preparatory dance program and UNCSCA high school, who won the Prix de Lausanne.

These accomplishments reflect the strength of UNCSCA's training and the value of its industry connections.

Students continue to benefit from significant professional opportunities:

- Sixteen dance students performed in Paris as part of the Dance Theatre of Harlem's revival of *The Firebird*.
- Ongoing festivals and performances, including the Chamber Music Festival (fifth season), the Improvised Music and Jazz Festival, the School of Drama's Classical Theatre Festival, and Spring Dance.

Scholarships and Philanthropy

The Chancellor highlighted the importance of scholarships in supporting student success. UNCSCA alumni continue to make significant philanthropic contributions, helping to fund scholarships and support the next generation of emerging artists.

Tuition and Financial Updates

The UNC Board of Governors has approved tuition and fee increases for the first time in nine years:

- A 3% increase for undergraduate students beginning this year.
- A \$600 across-the-board increase for High School Nonresident, Undergraduate Nonresident, Graduate Resident, and Graduate Nonresident

These adjustments will help address faculty salary compression and support institutional priorities.

Facilities and Strategic Initiatives

The Chancellor provided updates on key capital and community projects:

- The Stevens Center is advancing toward Phase II planning, with details to be shared at the end of April, including a gathering at the 411 W. Fourth Street location for dinner.
- Continued development of an arts and entertainment district along Fourth Street in downtown Winston-Salem.
- Plans for a broadcast-ready kitchen studio to support experiential learning and serve as a long-term creative asset for the downtown community.

The Chancellor concluded by reaffirming the institution's momentum and commitment to excellence across academics, the arts, and community engagement.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

David Neill, Committee Chair, reported that the Finance Committee met on March 5th and

a quorum was present. Wendy Emerson, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, discussed UNCSCA's enrollment status and noted that the Board of Governors approved 2026-2027 Tuition and Fee Proposals during their February board meeting.

Ms. Emerson reviewed the UNC System short session budget priorities and highlighted areas that would impact UNCSCA.

Steve Martin, Associate Vice Chancellor Facilities Management provided an update on UNCSCA's Capital Projects.

Mr. Neill went on to report that the Finance Committee would present one item in closed session related to designer selections for six projects.

ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD REPORT

Graydon Pleasants, Board Chair, reported that the Endowment Fund Board met on March 5, 2026 and a quorum was present.

Wendy Emerson, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, reviewed the UNC Management Company Flash Report and the UNCSCA Endowment Fund Investment Summary as of December 31, 2025. Ms. Emerson stated the UNC Management Company Report reflects an overall net return of 9.9% for the 2026 fiscal year to date. Likewise, UNCSCA's investments had an increase with an overall net return of 10% for the current fiscal year to date.

The Board approved an endowment distribution allocation of \$1,918,781.51 for 30 endowments for the upcoming 2026-2027 academic year. The funds support the University's professorships, visiting artists, and scholarships.

There was one endowment gift totaling \$500.00 added to an existing endowment in the University's endowment pool. The Board approved the acceptance of the new gift.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Jerri Irby, Committee Chair, reported that the Personnel Committee met the day prior and a quorum was present.

Dr. Angela Mahoney reported there were 4 new hires and 13 separations since the last meeting. The reduction in hiring was due to the implementation of the Personnel Cap in June 2025.

Five policies have been added to UNCSCA's Annual Policy Review for faculty and staff:

- Protection of Minors on Campus Regulation
- Conflict of Interest (Employee) Policy
- Hazing Regulation
- High School Faculty and Staff Regulation
- UNC Equality within North Carolina Policy

HR successfully implemented the full-professor salary compression adjustments authorized by Chancellor Cole. These payments were issued in January 2026 with retroactive application to December 2025.

The University hosted its first Leadership Symposium on March 3, 2026. The symposium was designed to strengthen leadership capacity across the institution.

The program featured external facilitators and senior leaders who provided their expertise. Representatives consist of individuals from the UNC System, Ellucian, High Point University, and the Center for Creative Leadership.

A big thank you to Dr. Mahoney and the HR team for their leadership and execution of this successful event.

UNCSA signed an agreement with the UNC System Office to begin providing benefits support for faculty and staff, effective February 1, 2026. All benefits and leave programs will be managed by the Benefits Service Center, except for vacation and sick leave, voluntary shared leave, and Workers' Compensation, which will continue to be managed here on campus.

Staff Council Chair, Latonya Wright, reported that there is a greater focus on expanding departmental representation and strengthening collaboration with leadership. Staff Council continues to strengthen the foundations of past achievements in staff engagement and recognition while introducing new initiatives that improve the lives of staff members and the campus community.

REPORT FROM THE ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Kyle Petty, Committee Chair, reported that the Advancement Committee met on March 5, 2026 and a quorum was present.

Vice Chancellor Lissy Garrison and her team shared exciting updates about alumni engagement, including recent alumni events in London and Paris, and updates about events, including the upcoming "UNCSA in DC" trip in April.

She informed us that we are on track to meet this year's fundraising goal of \$20 Million, with nearly \$16 Million already raised so far. This will be the university's second-highest fundraising year ever, second only to the launch of the previous campaign.

Fundraising to date in the planning and silent phase of the campaign has reached \$64 Million, which compares very favorably to the \$75M total raised in our last campaign.

Vice Chancellor Garrison provided an update on the development of transformational ideas that will power this campaign, and she invited us to stay involved with the development of these ideas.

Shannon Wright, Senior Director of Annual & Family Giving, shared our Annual Giving strategy and impressive results so far this year. This year's Days of Giving will take place on March 25 & 26.

All Board members are encouraged to make their gifts early and to consider a challenge gift of \$1,000 or more in support of one of the 40+ featured projects and funds.

Our annual board participation challenge is underway! For the first time last year, both the Board of Trustees and the Foundation Board achieved 100% participation in Days of Giving. Let's keep the momentum moving forward this year!

Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts Executive Director Kevin Bitterman provided an update on priorities and many exciting initiatives.

His remarks highlighted progress across the Institute's four strategic areas of focus, a recent brand refresh—including a new website launching this month—and several industry partnerships and creative projects developed at the intersection of UNCSCA and the broader creative sector over the past three years.

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Peter Juran, Committee Chair, reported that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee met the day prior and a quorum was present.

Student Body President Trey Mazza reported on SGA leadership involvement on campus, including participation in staff enrichment sessions, the DLA Dean search committee, and career readiness focus groups. He also provided updates from the University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments and from the current SGA 'Think Tank' themes and ideas.

Faculty Council Chair Steve LaCosse reported that Faculty Council is working with the Office of the Provost on the new syllabus policy for the upcoming year. He explained that he attended a presentation by Simple Syllabus, a software that will help us implement the new syllabus policy. A new policy on Academic Freedom was passed by the BOG with a lot of input from the Faculty Assembly. Faculty Counsel is grateful to the Provost for the additional funds for reassigned time.

Provost Sims reported updates to UNC Regulation 400.1.6, reaffirming the University's commitment to transparency as a state agency and explaining that this policy will define syllabus content. This policy update requires each constituent institution to develop a publicly available online platform to house syllabi for each course. He also provided updates about the TLC budget management process and what positive impacts it has had on the University.

Vice Provost of Student Affairs, Laurel Donley, reported that student affairs provides the foundational infrastructure that supports student belonging, well-being, engagement, and persistence. Campus life and high school life operate as integrated components and are designed to meet the distinct developmental needs of our student populations. She outlined that campus life supports students through residential life education, student activities, clubs and organizations, and the fitness center programming and operation. She highlighted programs for each student population and the impact they are having on our students.

David Sigman, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, provided updates on enrollment for Spring 2026, the year-to-date application review, fall 2026 enrollment goals, new initiatives and partnerships, and updates from financial aid and the registrar's office.

Vice Chancellor and Provost, Patrick Sims, provided an update on the DLA Dean search and next steps involved in that process. He went on to celebrate that UNCSCA was informed that the onsite Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) committee is making a reaffirmation recommendation for UNCSCA to be reaccruited for the next decade. Although the official vote by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will not take place until December, the committee shared that we were compliant with all 72 standards and it has zero recommendations. This positive outcome is a recognition of our community of amazing people and the hard work that everyone does to support and realize our mission.

REPORT FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EQUALITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Subcommittee Chair John Wigodsky reported that the Subcommittee on Equality within the University of North Carolina met on March 5, 2026 and has three items to report:

Chancellor Cole noted that UNCSCA is in full compliance with the System policy and that monitoring of activities is continuing.

Chancellor Cole also noted UNCSCA added the Equality Within the University of North Carolina policy to the annual policy review for faculty and staff. The review kicked off in February and will close in March.

If any subcommittee members or Trustees have additional information they would like to receive, or future topics they would like to discuss, they are to contact Chancellor Cole directly.

REPORT FROM THE AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

John Wigodsky, Committee Chair, reported that the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee met on March 5th and a quorum was present.

Wendy Emerson, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, provided updates on risk mitigation initiatives for two of the university's top ERM risks: Employee Compensation and Performance Funding and Enrollment. She shared an update on external challenges affecting university efforts regarding performance funding and enrollment growth and its impact on the budget.

Tamar Pandi, Chief Information Officer, reported that the 2025 Cybersecurity Tabletop was conducted. He revealed that UNCSCA's technical teams were cohesive, effective, organized, and collaborative cross-departmentally, all of which are crucial in incident response. The exercise also uncovered some areas that could benefit from improvement.

To strengthen the university's cybersecurity posture, IT conducted NIST Cybersecurity Framework assessment. UNCSCA's score suggests strong cybersecurity governance and good documentation.

UNCSCA has been awarded \$100k from a non-recurring legislative allocation designated for the support and development of cybersecurity policies, systems, assessments, and testing across the UNC System.

Ms. Emerson reported that the NC Office of the State Auditor (OSA) completed the University's financial statement audit for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. The results of all three audits were an unqualified opinion (clean audit), with no findings or issues to report. She also reported that in December 2025, UNCSCA was recognized by OSA with a newly created Award of Excellence. The 2024 award was for state entities that met strict eligibility criteria in preparing financial statements and federal compliance audits.

Rod Isom, Chief Audit Officer and Cory Billings, Audit Manager, provided updates on Internal Audit (IA) work. The *University Culture* review was completed. While IA did not identify any reportable observations, opportunities for improvement were provided to management.

IA will be commencing the annual risk assessment process this quarter, in collaboration with ERM, that allows the unit to assess the current risk landscape and update the audit plan which will be presented to the ARCC for review and approval next quarter.

MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

John McConnel moved that the board go into closed session under Chapter 143 of North Carolina General Statutes for the following reasons that were stated in the publicly available written motion:

Prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 01, Chapter 30, Subchapter D – Designer Selection.

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.

Prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize, or similar award.

Consult with our attorney to protect attorney-client privilege

John Wigodsky seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION

Chair Pleasants reported that the Board went into Closed Session to consider designer selections, a personnel matter, and to consult with the University's General Counsel.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Pleasants reminded all Trustees that the Statement of Economic Interest, or No Change Form, must be submitted to the NC State Ethics Commission by April 15th.

CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT

Chair Pleasants reminded the board that the last meeting of the academic year will take place on April 30th and May 1st.

With no further business to discuss, the March 6, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amanda G. Balwah

Associate Vice Chancellor and Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trustees