

**OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

May 2, 2025 | 9:00 a.m.  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

**TRUSTEES PRESENT**

\*Denotes voting Trustee

\*Peter Juran, Chair  
\*Rhoda Griffis, Vice Chair  
\*Jonah Bokaer  
\*Eric Flow  
\*Jerri Irby  
\*Ches McDowell  
\*David Neill  
\*Nia Franklin Patterson  
\*John Wigodsky

**TRUSTEES ABSENT**

\*Jeffery Bullock  
\*Kyle Petty  
\*Graydon Pleasants  
\*Jack Sargeant, Student Body President  
Tom Kenan, *emeritus*  
The Honorable Pam Cashwell, *ex officio*  
Sandi MacDonald, *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  
David Harrison, VC and General Counsel  
Wendy Emerson, VC for Finance and  
Administration  
Lissy Garrison, VC for Advancement  
Karen Beres, Vice Provost and Dean of  
Academic Affairs

Amanda Balwah, AVC and University  
Secretary  
Endalyn Taylor Outlaw, Dean of Dance  
Ryan Bellanger, IT Audio Visual Support  
Anthony Hromada, IT Audio Visual Support  
Cliff Odle, Faculty Council Vice Chair  
Victoria Nash, Staff 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  
Heidi Mallory, Director of Budget  
Steve Martin, AVC for Facilities Management  
Tamar Pandi, Interim Chief Information Officer  
Rich Whittington, AVC for Advancement  
Katherine Johnson, Director of Media Relations and Communications  
B. Afeni McNeely Cobham, Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost of Institutional Engagement  
Patrice Goldmon, Associate General Counsel

Rachel Williams, Dean of Division of Liberal Arts  
Martin Ferrell, Headmaster and Dean of High School Academics  
Melissa Upton-Julio, Digital Content Producer  
Cameron McManus, Community and Summer Programs  
Kevin Bitterman, Executive Director of the Kenan Institute for the Arts  
Angela Mahoney, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Human Resources Officer  
Saxton Rose, Dean of Music  
David Sigman, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management  
Shannon Wright, Senior Director of Development  
Rod Isom, Chief Audit Officer

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## **CONVENE OPEN SESSION**

Chair Peter Juran convened the May 2, 2025 meeting of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Board of Trustees at 9:02 a.m. A quorum was confirmed. Chair Juran reminded all members of the Board of their duty under the State Government Ethics Act to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts as required by this act.

Chair Juran acknowledged that this is the last meeting for Rhoda Griffis, Jeffery Bullock, and Jack Sargeant. He thanked them for their service and commitment to UNCSEA.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION: John Wigodsky moved to approve the open session minutes from December 2024 and March 2025 as presented. Eric Flow seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.**

## **REPORT FROM CHANCELLOR COLE**

Chancellor Cole welcomed the Trustees to the final meeting of the 2024-2025 academic year. He noted that commencement is in two weeks and the energy on campus is palpable.

He reported on the High School expansion and new High School Residence Hall, with the first planning phase to be completed in July. Campaign planning is also underway; more information will be coming out soon.

Chancellor Cole noted that work is underway to complete UNCSEA's 10-year SACS/COC accreditation report. SACS will be on campus in February of 2026 for a site visit. There are currently 64 individuals working on the compliance report due in September. This year's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will focus on advising for student success. The pilot of this program is set to launch in Fall 2025.

Chancellor Cole provided a brief update on the Stevens Center renovation and reported that UNCSEA's Foundation closed on the old Chamber Building this past Wednesday. He thanked Ches McDowell, Eric Flow, and Cindy Liberty for all their work in securing funding and helping the school acquire the property that will allow for the construction of a new loading dock for the Stevens Center.

His report concluded with a presentation about AI and the arts, and the effects of AI on intellectual property. A task force is being developed to address institutional policies regarding AI, the development of a white paper, and the potential for an Arts & AI Conference in Fall of 2026.

## **REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Nia Patterson, Governance Committee Chair, reported that the Board of Governors approved UNCSEA's reappointments and appointments to the Board of Trustees. John McConnell and John Michael Schert, UNCSEA's two new trustees, will join the Board on July 1, 2025. The NC

Senate and NC House reappointments are in progress; notification is expected later in May.

## **REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Rhoda Griffis, Committee Chair, reported the following from Academic and Student Affairs:

Jack Sargeant, Student Body President, provided an update on the work of SGA and shared his gratitude to the committee. He had a wonderful time participating as a board member and collaborating with the committee. Mr. Sargeant went on to introduce Trey Mazza, the incoming SGA president, and shared the great work SGA has been doing alongside APIR to gather feedback and data to continue improving the student experience at UNCSA. He is excited about the accomplishments over the last two years and felt positively about the momentum to continue to make UNCSA better.

Faculty Council Chair, Jeff George, reported that Faculty Council has been working with the Faculty Senate and Faculty Assembly to collaborate and exchange information and ideas. He expressed gratitude to UNCSA administration in how they intersect and allow participation with the Board or Trustees as this is not the norm in other institutions. He went on to report that there have been advances in areas such as the faculty search process, CSI, faculty workload, peer committee reviews, and other initiatives. He encouraged UNCSA to continue to work on being proactive and less reactive. Mr. George explained there are still significant issues around workload and production scheduling. He encouraged UNCSA to continue to utilize the external reviews completed last year to evaluate and improve programs.

Vice Provost of Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Beres, highlighted partnerships between academic affairs, DLA, and the registrar, which continues to support student success in many ways. She reported that the CSI project is rapidly approaching completion. This year UNCSA has implemented the first two components of CSI, collaborative days and intermission. She talked about the models that the CSI consultants provided and explained that different components from each will be considered as part of a new schedule. This summer, there will be a committee of Deans and schedulers who will work through these considerations, including part of term, cohorts, and situating DLA throughout the day. These components will make up a new schedule that will be implemented in the fall of 2026.

Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Provost for Institutional Engagement, Dr. B. Afeni McNeely Cobham, introduced Fulton McSwain, the Assistant Director for Gender Violence Prevention and Survivor Advocacy, to give a report on updates from his work at UNCSA. He explained that UNCSA is moving beyond one-time programs and is working to create a comprehensive approach to prevention. He discussed the programs and creative solutions using a student-informed approach to increase engagement across campus. These programs are comprehensive and multi-tiered, which help with skill development, education in consent and healthy relationships, and campus-wide awareness.

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Patrick Sims introduced David Sigman, the new Vice Provost for Enrollment Management. Mr. Sigman will help us evaluate how to streamline and continue to improve our enrollment processes. He introduced himself and explained he has relocated from Colorado, where he served as Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing for the Cleveland Institute of Art and Director of Admissions at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. Provost Sims then presented an update on Fall 2025 enrollment data, including trends over the last five years, acceptance and conversion rates on applications, trends on deposits, and enrollment targets.

The Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Laurel Donley, provided updates on the continued work with student wellness. She reported that occupancy rates are looking great for next year: 96% occupancy in Artist Village, 98% in high school, and 95% in center stage. Lastly, she reported on the high school expansion project. UNCSA is partnering with Rieth Jones Associates (RJA) to update the University's Housing Master Plan, with a focus on developing the project framework and implementation strategy for the upcoming High School Residence Hall and High School Expansion Project.

## **REPORT FROM THE ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

Peter Juran reported the following from the Advancement Committee in Kyle Petty's absence:

Vice Chancellor Lissy Garrison reported that Advancement will be conducting several new searches in the near future that align line with their 7-year staffing plan and will lead to the public launch of the next comprehensive campaign.

Vice Chancellor Garrison spoke about a very exciting move toward forging a renewed, strong strategic alignment with Strategic Communications. This will be crucial as UNCSA moves forward with the development of the comprehensive campaign. New staffing resources will be dedicated specifically to supporting Advancement and the campaign.

Year-to-date fundraising was reviewed. Advancement projects raising over \$18 million in gifts this fiscal year – 21% over the goal of \$15.1 million. This will be the second highest fundraising year in UNCSA's history, second only to \$20 million the year of the launch of the Powering Creativity campaign.

Advancement is seeing strength and success in EVERY level and type of fundraising. This is the result of a huge focus over the past three years on building resources, infrastructure, and best practices across the division.

Vice Chancellor Garrison, Senior Director of Development Shannon Wright, and Director of Alumni Engagement Rebecca Burkeen shared inspiring stories of engagement and giving at all levels since our last meeting.

Associate Vice Chancellor Rich Whittington provided insights into the growth in Planned Giving, which generated a robust conversation about how we count planned gifts.

Shannon Wright gave a detailed overview of this year's accomplishments in annual giving, including a celebration of all the remarkable accomplishments of this year's Days of

Giving, which brought in nearly \$400,000 from over 1,000 gifts. UNCSCA had 100% participation from both boards (Trustees and Foundation), as well as all leadership groups on campus.

Finally, Vice Chancellor Garrison provided an update on campaign planning. Work is progressing with the development of big ideas for the campaign. UNCSCA's primary campaign consultant, Jim Langley, will be back on campus in June to help hone a group of five big ideas, and in September to lead a joint workshop with the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board.

Written reports were provided by the UNCSCA Foundation, Strategic Communications, and the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts were shared in the Advancement Packet.

UNCSCA Foundation Executive Director Cindy Liberty provided brief updates about the Foundation's budgeting process, the Semans Art Fund Board, and the Foundation's deepening alignment with Advancement and Strategic Communications.

Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, Kory Kelly, spoke about an awareness-building campaign centered around congratulating alumnus Paul Tazewell for his Oscar win. He also underscored the importance of the closer alignment between his division, Advancement, and the Foundation.

Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts Executive Director Kevin Bitterman shared a brief update on efforts to provide transitional career support for alumni including upcoming support for a group of graduating UNCSCA students to present new work at the 2025 Edinburgh Festival. The concurrent development of the Institute's strategic framework and UNCSCA's institutional planning presents a timely opportunity to deepen collaboration with the Office of Advancement and the Office of Strategic Communication.

## **REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

John Wigodsky reported in Graydon Pleasants' absence. The Finance Committee met the day prior. Wendy Emerson, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, presented the FY 2025-2026 All-Funds Budget. The Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve the All-Funds Budget and brought that approval to the full board in the form of a motion.

**MOTION: The Finance Committee moved to approve the FY 2025-2026 All-Funds Budget as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Ms. Emerson reviewed the 2023 Facilities Inventory and Utilization Study which includes information on UNCSCA's utilization of instructional space, and the age and condition of our buildings.

Steve Martin, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities provided an update on the Capital Projects, which provides a snapshot of the status of major and minor projects.

## **REPORT FROM THE ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD**

Peter Juran reported that the Endowment Fund Board met the day prior 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 February 28, 2025. Ms. Emerson stated the UNC Management Company Report reflects an overall net return of 5.9% for the 2025 fiscal year to date. Likewise, UNCSCA's investments had an increase with an overall net return of 6% for the current fiscal year.

During the 2025 fiscal year to date, there was one endowment gift totaling \$500.00 added to the University's endowment pool, adding to an existing endowment. The Board approved the acceptance of the new gift received during fiscal year 2025 to date.

## **REPORT FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Jerri Irby reported the following from the Personnel Committee in Jeffery Bullock's absence:

Angela Mahoney, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Human Resources Officer, reported 7 new hires since the last meeting - 3 Exempt Professional Staff (EPS) and 4 SHRA. There were 4 separations.

In accordance with UNCSCA policy #608, Dr. Mahoney reported that during the 2024-2025 academic year, there was only one nepotism certificate issued to a department to complete, and there were no hires or realignment of supervision that raised concerns of nepotism. The policy and corresponding certification have been updated to align with the destinations established by the UNC System Office.

Dr. Mahoney shared two new potential policies:

**Performance Bonuses for Permanent Faculty and Exempt Professional (EPS) Employees Policy** – This policy sets forth specific definitions and procedures for the payment of performance bonuses to permanent Faculty and Exempt Professional Staff (EPS) employees of UNCSCA. These bonuses are awarded only for an employee's extraordinary achievements in the course and scope of their university employment.

**Sign-On and Retention Bonuses for Permanent Employees Policy** - This policy establishes specific definitions and procedures to enhance the university's flexibility in attracting, retaining, and rewarding a talented workforce by providing sign-on and retention bonuses to permanent (benefits-eligible) employees of The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSCA)

**MOTION: The Personnel Committee moved to approve the Performance Bonuses for Permanent Faculty and Exempt Professional (EPS) Employees Policy and the Sign-On and Retention Bonuses for Permanent Employees Policy as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Dr. Mahoney went on to report that the Chancellors received a memorandum indicating

that beginning January 1, 2025, permanent SHRA and EHRA positions that are not currently filled and have been vacant for more than twelve months and are not under active recruitment, should be abolished. UNCSCA HR Department received accolades from the System Office regarding this initiative.

Staff Council Chair, Victoria Nash, reported on the *Standing Ovations* initiative, which continues to lift morale and celebrate excellence by recognizing outstanding staff members. It was also reported that there is an increased focus on expanding department 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 AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

John Wigodsky, Committee Chair, reported that Jim DeCristo, Vice Chancellor for Economic Development and Chief of Staff, provided an Enterprise Risk Management update. He reviewed the ERM Risk Priorities for 2024 – 2026. Each year, UNCSCA must submit BOT approved priorities to the UNC System Office for the next fiscal year. There have been no changes since last year. The risk priorities were reviewed and approved in committee. The top 5 risk priorities are:

- Performance Funding and Enrollment
- Scholarships
- Employee Compensation
- Student Health and Wellness
- Cybersecurity

**MOTION: The Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee moved to approve the 2024-2025 Enterprise Risk Management Risk Priorities as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Wigodsky reported that Rod Isom, Chief Audit Officer, and Cory Billings, Audit Manager, provided internal audit updates. Four projects are in progress and two of those projects are in the reporting process. The top risks from IA's annual risk assessment and the updated internal audit plan for fiscal year 26 were presented. The audit plan was reviewed and approved by the committee.

## **MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION**

**Jonah Bokaer moved that the board go into closed session:**

**To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, or condition of appointment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee;**

**To prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize, or similar award; and**

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

**David Neill seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.**

## **REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION**

Chair Juran reported that the Board went into closed session to hear updates regarding faculty rank and to consider an emeritus status, a naming opportunity, and a designer selection.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Juran called David Harrison forward and thanked him again for his dedicated service to UNCSEA over the past ten years. He then announced that in Closed Session the Board of Trustees unanimously approved Emeritus Status for Mr. Harrison, and presented him with a proclamation, thanking him for his service.

Chair Juran also thanked Rhoda Griffis for her dedication to the Board and for serving as Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee. She was presented with a gift from the school.

Chancellor Cole thanked Chair Juran for his leadership and celebrated his final meeting as Chair. Mr. Juran will continue to serve as a Trustee.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Juran reminded all Trustees that the next meeting is a virtual meeting scheduled for July 16<sup>th</sup>.

With no further business to discuss, the May 2, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amanda G. Balwah

Associate Vice Chancellor and Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trustees