Given the professional isolation that most of the faculty has felt for the last eight months, involving a lack of personal contact with both colleagues and students, as well as with staff and the offices that seem to be so much of our academic world, it would appear that there is little to report, especially since much of the time since the last report saw an academic hiatus to protect the campus. And, as the semester begins, a large proportion of the faculty has elected to teach remotely, not necessarily from personal preference, but also because some (certainly not all) students prefer this even as they elect to return to campus, and there is a faculty concern that a return to all-remote might conceivably occur at some time. In both cases, faculty do not want to prepare two separate curricula for each course.

And yet, a great deal has been going on since last November. One thing I want to point to is the virtual Commencement, which you can watch on the university website. My appointment to be video-recorded giving the Honorary Degree citation as Chair of the Faculty in a dark chaotic studio in Park Shops, guided by a very pleasant and efficient crew, hardly made up for absence of the ceremonial procession I have enjoyed leading five times, even though I was pictured, at my insistence, with the University Mace at my side. The Commencement itself, a video that showcased our graduates and their families without some of the normal commencement comments, and without the Board of Trustees all berobed, was, as one of my colleagues put it, "strangely moving." Strange, because everything we are doing seems strange; moving because we are doing it anyway, as best we can, with flexibility and professionalism. I hope that my last commencement as Chair will be in the arena. And because the Board of Trustees is a big part of awarding these honorary degrees, I want to thank you on behalf of the faculty.

After the General Faculty meeting on October 13, discussing the medical and planning aspects of the pandemic here at State, the Senate took up its normal business.
On October 27, Louis Hunt, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, spoke to the Senate about the impact of the pandemic on fall and spring enrollments, as well as what course mode was preferred and how many will live on campus. The faculty will miss Hunt's experience and openness when he retires this summer.

The Faculty Senate met (the 6th meeting of its 67 session) on 10 November and heard the Employee Engagement Committee survey results from HR and the Office of Institutional Strategy and Analysis. The gist of the survey was positive, and interestingly the non-tenure-track faculty (now called professional faculty) were a bit more content than the tenure-track. The higher the rank, the lower the satisfaction. At the same meeting, we heard from the Dean of the Graduate School and the Director of International Services, reporting on the graduate enrollments, particularly overseas enrollments, and their financial impact.

The first meeting of 2021 saw three important issues discussed in a Webinar format that had 90 odd participants. First, the Chancellor explained, as best he could legally, the situation with a staff member who has been charged with improper behavior online. The discussion was moderated by Professor Sannes, Associate Chair of the Faculty, who fielded the questions in the chat box, and posed them in a focused way. This discussion continued after the Chancellor had to leave and involved Allison Newhart (General Counsel) and Sheri Schwab, (Diversity and Inclusion.) Next, the Provost and Senior Associate Provost Marjorie Overton led a discussion of the new Strategic Plan, part of their efforts to enlist all groups in the university in the process. Finally, Paola Sztajn, Faculty Fellow, spoke about her project and asked the Senate for input.

The 603 matter involving the revocation of tenure -- most important for faculty governance -- has been resolved. Although relatively rare, I am happy to note, this case reminds us all of the importance of due process and faculty participation in momentous professional decisions. We should all strive to make the process less onerous and full of delays, even in times of remote contact.

The UNC Faculty Assembly meets 3 times a semester, and in its fall meeting concerned itself with outreach. The ongoing worry has been that not only the public, but also important bodies like the legislature and the Board of Governors have no access to the basic information that faculty can provide about the actual, day-to-day work of the
university. A legislator and a governor attended the meeting and encouraged faculty personally to engage with state government and the Board, which, they stated, is eager for input from different groups. The most recent Assembly meeting was half spent in caucuses of the institutions by size (as they are represented in the Assembly). As a member of the 5 representative caucus, (including Chapel Hill and ECU) I would say that we saw the problems basically the same way. Hearing from the smaller schools and the minority schools, however, was an invigorating experience with faculty who have very different perspectives. Learning from these individual faculty leaders has been the most important part of my years of service on the Assembly.

The Faculty Chairs, a group that has been active and effective under the leadership of Barbara Howard (App State), and Anthony Chow (Greensboro), continued its exchange of local information about their campuses and problems. One issue of concern was the change of language last fall in the hiring letters to non-tenure track faculty, language allowing dismissal during the term of a contract. This matter, Rule 610, went unnoticed on some campuses, but applies to all new contracts. Local changes will need to be made and are being explored. And we chairs continue to support the placement of the Chair of the Faculty at each institution on the Board of Trustees as a non-voting, informational member (as is the case at three UNC institutions).

The Chair of the Faculty represents the Faculty on a number of committees and groups, standing and ad hoc. These include the University Budget Advisory Committee, which meets monthly, University Council, Academic Leadership Committee, the Honorary Degree Committee, Occupational Health and Safety, Lifelong Faculty Involvement, and a few others -- since last report. And college and departmental meetings, and a class English 221. Since last summer, however, he has met weekly with the Chancellor and Staff Chair for open exchanges of information. He also sits on the Executive Briefing group, which meets weekly for brief reports on the status of things in health, emergency management, facilities, finance, athletics, enrollment, among others. These meetings and the inclusion of faculty and staff leadership are a response to the Covid environment are unprecedented in my experience and I hope they will be seen as routine in the future by future administrations.