

ECU Staff Senate Minutes

Date: December 10, 2020

Time: 3:00pm to 5:00pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

**Call to Order:** Senator Todd Inman

**Roll Call:** Kristin Wooten

**Robert’s Rule of Order:**

**Darius Alexander-** During each meeting, senators must wait to be acknowledged by the Senate Chair or another member of the Executive Committee. Upon speaking, senators are asked to introduce themselves and state their division. For any votes, Senators will use the raise their hand feature in Teams to maintain order. Darius will remind everyone of these rules and can answer any questions senators may have.

**Guest Speakers:**

**Interim Chancellor Ron Mitchelson & Vice Chancellor Sara Thorndike**– Dr. Mitchelson’s last day as an employee is June 30, 2021. He has served 43 years with ECU. A new Chancellor will be named soon. The Board of Governor’s meet on December 17, 2020 at 12pm and employees are encouraged to view the live stream. Staff Senate will provide the link to the meeting.

There is good news for the university. Everyone is encouraged to view the homepage of our website in which we proudly showcase our Treasured Pirates and their work here at ECU. Athletics is now back up and running, we just had two successful football games and basketball season has started. As of now, we have 18, 085 complete applications for admissions which is 200 more than last year, a new record. The health of the institution is driven by enrollment and it is great news to see an increase in applications.

COVID-19 remains a concern as we have seen a surge in the number of cases. Pirates must remain vigilant and protect themselves as much as possible. As previously mentioned, students will return to campus in the spring and we must work hard to maintain a low number of cases on campus. Telework is highly encouraged if feasible to reduce density on campus and will remain in place until deemed no longer necessary.

Vice Chancellor Thorndike is leaving ECU mid-January and will be headed to Penn State. In terms of budget, ECU is being very wise and conservative with spending and planning for future budget deficits. There are shortfalls that will need to be covered during lack of revenues and we are uncertain of the state budget for this upcoming fiscal year. Although there is much optimism, we are encouraged to be vigilant and use resources wisely. The Chancellor has asked that we reduce operating budgets by 10% which does not include salaries. We were asked to give back $4 million which will be used to cover any COVID costs. The university has been asked to model 10% cuts in case cuts are required by UNC General Assembly and the Legislature. Current Vice Chancellors will work with the new incoming Chancellor to continue working on strategic budget plans. Budget priorities for next year include enrollment funding, repair and maintenance funding, raises for employees are also being discussed at the state level.

**Justin Yeaman** – UNC Employee Engagement Survey

The 2020 UNC System Employee Engagement Survey is a 5-year project that was initiated by the UNC Board of Governors to help achieve the goal of the UNC Strategic Plan. Survey background information:

* Recognize and address areas of success as well as challenges.
* Useful in UNC System’s advocation for HR policies at the state level.
* First survey was conducted in 2018, the next survey is scheduled for February 2022.

The survey was administered online and all employees with UNC System received the survey. ECU had a 51% response rate which is a 13% increase from the previous survey. ECU also had the third highest response rate increase within UNC System. Questions were aimed to collect data on benefit satisfaction, university culture and climate, items liked most/needed improvement and open-ended questions for general comments and concerns. There was an increase in response rate across the board meaning employees ranging from SAAO to SHRA increased participation. Survey results were consistent with 2018 results, there were slight increases of satisfaction such as senior leadership and fairness. Out of all statement, the highest-ranking statement was “I understand how my job contributes to this institution’s mission” which demonstrates that employees are aware of the importance of their role at the ECU. A few things employees would like to see is, stability in leadership, transparent communication, and reflection of achievements. Overall, employees appreciate the university’s commitment to student success and community impact, commitment to vision from senior leadership, and the university’s resiliency. To view survey results visit employee-engagement.ecu.edu, for questions contact Justin Yeaman at [yeamanj16@ecu.ecu](mailto:yeamanj16@ecu.ecu) or (252) 328-9896

**Executive Committee Comments**

Chair – Todd Inman

* The Executive Committee met with the Chancellor last week. Key items to mention:
  + A new Chancellor will be announced soon. Chief of Staff, Chris Locklear, is heading a transition team to prepare for any media/news that may arise. The team and Chancellor-Elect will meet with the Executive Committee prior to the Chancellor’s instillation.
  + The Executive Committee will prepare a welcome letter which is in the works and will be completed prior to the Chancellor’s arrival.
  + Vice Chancellor Virginia Hardy discussed COVID-19 testing which will be provided by Student Health Services. Testing hours are 9am-5pm, Monday- Friday and Saturday and Sunday, 8am-12pm. The saliva testing is free however the swab test is $110 which may or may not be covered by insurance. Employees are permitted to receive testing while on the clock.
  + Reminder to committee chairs, add the Executive Committee to your meeting invites.

Chair Elect – Hector Molina

* The Fiscal Sustainability met and reviewed suggestions from the campus community. There were 124 suggestions which the group has reviewed. Work groups within the committee will be created to evaluate the suggestions and create an action plan. If you have not done so already, please feel free to share your comments/suggestions.

Vice Chair – Aisha Powell

* The Racial Equity Task Force met in November to hear key findings from the system-wide survey and feedback from the virtual town halls. Task Force members also discussed draft recommendations and will move to the next stage of prioritizing and identifying action steps. Garrett Killian, Staff Assembly Chair, has led this task force and we are grateful for his service. Key recommendation areas include:
  + Data and Accountability
  + Representation and Retention at all levels of the University
  + Diversity and Equity Staffing to Support Inclusion and Belonging
  + Campus Policing
  + Programs and Activities in Support of Racial Equity and Inclusion
* We would like to thank the chairs and committees for their hard work during the past 4 months of catch up during the Pandemic. We understand your commitment as Senators is an additional responsibility to your work at the University. It is great to work along aside Senators across divisions to advocate for Staff needs and to keep our issues lifted during these uncertain times and transitions in leadership. Your passion and commitment will keep the momentum going until we can return to campus. We are gearing up for a busy virtual semester in the spring and you will hear about some of those during the committee updates. We also will have a Chairs Kickstart on January 14th before the Senate meeting to make sure you have a calendar of events for the spring semester. Remember, we would like chairs to present their recommendations for the 21-22 during our last Senate meeting on May 13th.
* As we share information, please share out with your division to ensure we are meeting our overall goals which are to increase communication, awareness, and collaboration across ECU.

Treasurer- Lisa Ormond

* The treasurer’s report was sent Thursday morning, if you have questions please contact Lisa at [ormandl@ecu.edu](mailto:ormandl@ecu.edu)
* There has been little activity in the budget this year, activity should increase in the spring. We will not receive additional funds this year however, we do have $15,000 in our discretionary funds which can be used for spring events.
* Chairs should send a budget proposal for spring events to Lisa. Lisa will forward to the Executive Committee for review and the committee will make decision regarding the amount to reward.

Secretary –Kristin Wooten

* The Staff Senate has been updated to reflect current members as well as this year’s meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings. Thank you to our Communications & Marketing Committee for working on this.
* Information will be updated after the meetings, minutes must be approved first prior to posting on the website however, staff can expect to see these uploaded within a week of the staff senate meeting.
* For our staff Senators, the Teams site was updated, and we now have a channel specifically for meeting recordings. Meeting documents are available here as well.
* November minutes were approved.

Parliamentarian - Darius Alexander

* Section 3.1 of Robert’s Rule of Order provides guidelines on addressing the Senate. Only staff senators and alternates may address the senate. Staff who have questions or comments must submit a petition to the Executive Committee one week prior to the meeting. The Chair will introduce the individual during the meeting to that speak.
* In addition, subsection 1.3, explains the roles of alternate senators and guidelines for speaking during meetings. Alternates are nonvoting members unless serving in a senator’s absence or when a senator relinquishes their vote to the alternate, which at this time they will fulfill the voting duties of the senator. Voting can be done either through the chat or the raise hand function.

**Committee Updates**

* Bylaws (*Susan Thomas*)- established committee goals and begin planning for the year. Goals are ensuring bylaws are consistent and review for accuracy, become familiar with bylaws in case issues arise, and create a history for the staff senate website and new member orientation.
* Communication & Marketing (*Andrew Grace*)- follow Staff Senate on facebook.com/ecustaffsenate and twitter.com/ecustaffsenate. If you have purple or ECU themed Christmas decorations you would like to share, please post to Facebook and tag ECU Staff Senate using #piratesholidayecu. The committee will increase utilization of social media. Several goals were set for this year. The first is to increase social media outreach, a plan was created for committee/senate members to submit information for the committee to review and post. Second goal is to update the Staff Senate website and ensure meeting information is uploaded in a timely manner. The last goal is to increase collaboration with other committees.
* Diversity Committee (*Lajuana Carter*)- reviewed goals one of which is to coordinate a roundtable with ECU staff. The roundtable will be held and February, currently looking for a presenter within the ECU community to speak as well as topics to discuss and will be finalized at the January meeting. Possibly in February or March, Lakeisha Forbes will provide staff diversity data such as staff by sex, staff by tenure, staff by rank, etc. The Black Faculty Organization and Organization of African American Staff is requesting nominations of African American staff, faculty, and students to recognize an individual for outstanding diversity contributions. Please contact Keith Keene at [keenek@ecu.edu](mailto:keenek@ecu.edu) if you have any questions.
* Human Resources Committee (*Emily Waters*)- Staff Emeritus deadline has been extended to December 11. Working with the Bylaws to address senate terms for senators that were furloughed. The proposal is to extend senator terms for senators who were furloughed for six months or more. The term will be extended for one year upon return.
* Leadership & Professional Development (Patrick Mitchell)- Planning to host the B.A.L.L. event late February/early March. Currently looking for a speaker for the event and will then solidify a date and budget. Discussed having presenters for staff senate meetings and possibly create a leadership blog that can be added to the senate website.
* Membership (*Robin Mayo*)- Filled current vacancies and would like to welcome new senators. The current membership has been updated on website. Still looking to fill a vacancy in Health Sciences, please send suggestions to Robin Mayo. The nomination timeline for new senators will be Jan 4-Jan 19 and elections will be in late February/early March. Current senators have been notified of ending terms and can nominate themselves in the election process.
* Rewards & Recognition (*Alex Dennis*)- Will set a week in April for Staff Appreciation Week, would like to schedule the week around homecoming. Plan to have virtual events and gifts for staff that week but are still discussing plans. Collaborating with HR Committee to update and market the PiratePerks. Will also work with the Communications & Marketing Committee to discuss ideas for recognizing staff.
* Scholarship (*Amy Eason*)- The application for scholarships is still open and is due January 15th. Anyone who is working on a degree or has a child who is working on a degree is encouraged to apply through Academic Works. Working on different avenues to raise money for scholarships due to the lack of basketball concessions this fiscal year. Members of the committee are on Academic Works and will review all applications as soon as the deadline ends to select winners.

**Open Discussion:**

* Alex Dennis would like to encourage everyone to participate in the letter writing campaign which is sent to the Pitt County Board of Elections. The letter expresses interest in keeping the Student Center and the Willis Building as voting sites for future elections. If interested, please email Alex at dennisa15@ecu.edu
* HR committee would like to propose voting on staff senate term extensions. Lisa has advised HR Committee to send their proposal to the Bylaws Committee. Once Bylaws reviews the proposal and creates the verbiage, it will be brought to the senate body for a vote. Aisha suggests including medical leave into their verbiage to cover all involuntary absences for senators.
* Darius will work with Bylaws committee to create an outline that shows the process for changes to the bylaws.
* Staff Senate Executive Committee would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday!

**Announcements: Next Meeting – January 14, 2021 3pm-5pm via Microsoft Teams**

**Meeting Link:** <https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/c1b64ea5-0547-4164-ac38-974b6cf8a87a>