

## **Staff Senate Meeting**

August 18, 2011

Conference Room, East Carolina Heart Institute

### ***Picture***

The Staff Senate took a group photo in the lobby of the ECHI at 3:00 p.m. Cliff Hollis of the ECU News Bureau took the photo.

### ***Call to Order***

President Mary Susan Williams called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m.

### ***Roll Call***

Secretary Justin Boulmay took attendance.

The following senators were in attendance: Jennifer Abbott, Marlene Anderson, Steven Asby, Cindy Reaves, Steve Ayers, Stephanie Bailey, Justin Boulmay, Richard Cherry, Jay Clark, Teri Coleman, Marianne Cox, Tarrick Cox, Jackie Daniels, Kendra Davis, Melissa Eakes, William Edwards, Leigh Fedash, Steven Foley, Pamela Fredrick, Jenny Gregory, Marsha Hall, Judy Havermann, Garrett Killian, Kristen King, Mande Lancaster, Stancil Lilley, Mike Litwin, Ernie Marshburn, Jean Merenda, Tony Miller, Jane Moore, Crystal Morgan, Lisa Ormond, Teresa Ramaglino, Kelly Rogers Dilda, Thomas Santana, Scarlett Sawyer, Derri Stormer, Luann Sullivan, Travis Taylor, Michael Tucker, Mary Susan Williams

The following senators were absent: Roxene Barrett, Shirley Bazemore, Jared Brinkley, Johnnie Eastwood, Deirdre Harris

The following senators had excused absences: Laura Bilbro-Berry, Hong Li

The following ex officio members were in attendance: Rhonda Anderson, Shawn Condon, Patti Woolard, Robyn Slocum, John Toller, Phil Hulsey

### ***Approval of Minutes***

Senator Ernie Marshburn motioned to approve the minutes, and Senator Kendra Davis seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

### ***Budget Presentation***

Dr. Rick Niswander, vice chancellor for administration and finance, gave an update on East Carolina's budget situation. The following is a non-verbatim review of his presentation.

[beginning of Niswander's presentation]

We said that East Carolina had a 16-percent budget cut. Early in the process, the situation looked a bit better because one of the houses of the legislature had a veto-proof majority. Republicans peeled off five Democrats and took that away in both houses of the GA. We went from having some hope that the House and Senate weren't going to agree, go to conference, governor would veto, it would come back, and people would have to talk to Republicans had the final say. The whole System ended up with a cut of \$423 million, or around 15.5 percent. They excluded certain things from cuts and limited cuts on other things to a lower percentage. Coastal Studies Institute, for example, has a \$2 million budget and the legislation said you can't cut that. They also said for the Outreach Activities that are agricultural extension kind of stuff, it could only be cut by a maximum of 12.3 percent. There were enough of them to cause some challenges since the cuts were distributed elsewhere. The GA was also not permitted to give everybody the same number; in years past, everybody got the same cut. Their factors for cutting included protecting smaller institutions.

Our share of that was \$49.1 million, or a little more than 16 percent. The general approach we were going to take was to address it from money we put aside, tuition increases, and half the pot would come from cuts to university units, both academic and non-academic. That had to be modified slightly because the General Administration said that you couldn't raise tuition. That tuition pot couldn't grow anymore, so that cut had to be spread to other two pots. So the chancellor said we'd take more from the savings account.

It worked out to a little more than half the cut came from non-academic and academic units. Tuition took about a quarter, and savings took more than a quarter. Cuts that went across the university were not equal everywhere. The way we approached it was, what's happened in the past? If you gave last time, you don't have as much to give this time. We had to recognize cuts over the last three years and use that to determine where the cuts would be this year. We went through long process to determine the permanent and temporary cuts and inflows/outflows.

Academic units had increases in their budget from enrollment increase money. Administration/finance had increase in their budget from new buildings coming online. Research/graduate studies had increases from additional money for graduate assistance and academic programs. The big decrease came last year with the 9-percent cut last year. We factored all of that in to our decision this time.

Last academic year, from the state we got about \$300 million. We also added to that about \$70 million in tuition and fees. So \$370 million to run the non-fee supported parts of ECU. (We have lots of pieces that are paid for by different pots. Housing, for example, is paid by student fees.) About half of what we do isn't covered by the cut discussion.

Of the \$370 million, \$270 million belongs to academics. Colleges had around 7.7 percent cut; non-academic components were less than that, having been cut more in the past. (That includes University Advancement.)

Total amount of positions we gave back was about 320. (Numbers aren't final.) About 110-120 of those were positions we had set aside a year or two ago, so about 200 or so "new" positions that we gave back. Across the entire institution, there were three RIFs.

The silver lining in this was the budget was in bad shape when it first started, and one of the options was to take the pain and spread it out over time. The other option was to do it in the first year, which is what the GA decided to do. They took 16 percent cut in year one and year two would be nothing. The advantage is, unless the economy worsens, unless things get really bad, next year won't be "too much of anything." There will probably 1-2 percent temporary

reversion at some point, but this is the “big hit” unless the economy falls “more” off the edge of the cliff.

[end of Niswander’s presentation]

A senator asked how the budget affects the growth plan over the next five to 10 years. Niswander said the university is in the final stages of the master plan. The warehouse district is an example of that. Buildings are paid for by state giving us money. The primary thing the plan does is that it says this is the next step will be and the step after that. It isn’t doing very well for us is, the question is when do we take those steps? That’s all up in the air. Niswander’s suspicion is that our number one priority for big stuff is a biotech building and the second is what we’re calling Academic Building A (Business and Education together in one building). The chances of getting money for those things in the next fiscal year isn’t good. I wouldn’t be surprised if there wasn’t another bond issue. In reality, over next 10 years, I would hope that we would have three or four buildings of some sort. The Warehouse property is toward the earlier end of the timeline.

Phil Hulseby thanked Niswander for the role he played in distributing the cuts, as well as to the chancellor for letting go of some of the savings.

No one else had questions. Niswander thanked the senators for their service and said the Senate being a voice for concerns is very important.

### *Executive Committee Comments*

#### *President*

Mary Susan Williams said there was a Staff Assembly meeting in Chapel Hill on August 1, 2011. She reviewed some of the items from that meeting.

[beginning of Williams’ presentation]

- Lions Grey, senior advisor to President Ross, met with us. He gave us information on and seeking information from us about how we could better educate our legislators on what university employees do. Changes in legislative language this year, and they don’t see the impact of what the System does for N.C. So we’re being asked for ideas to tell to the legislature. Williams asked the group to think of ideas and things you might want to address before lawmakers. Executive Committee will meet in September, so send them to us and we’ll send them to Kelly Boykin, the chair of the Staff Assembly.
- President Ross spoke with us and let us know that he was grateful for what staff employees do. Williams has met with him a couple of times and thinks he’s a real advocate for the staff. He also elaborated on the vital role that staff play in making the student experience well-received.
- Talked about budget and what can be looked for over next couple of years. He doesn’t have a crystal ball but thinks the UNC will receive some cuts again next

year, but they'll be pretty flat. Ross thinks they will be minimal next year, but he anticipates some.

- Talked about professional development at UNC campuses. Lots of questions raised about career banding. Ross feels the staff is very important and development bonds them with their respective institutions. He has agreed for us to gather information from our campus about staff development opportunities that would help all the staff on the campuses. He also agreed that he would contact the chancellors and ask them to endorse such development programs. Williams noted that ECU might be the only school in the System that has a textbook program.
- Ross also talked about morale. Staff hasn't had a raise in five years. We are lucky to have jobs, Williams said, and there are a lot of positives that came out of it. We talked about ways to increase morale.
- Senate Bill 575 (Personnel Flexibility Bill) – This is the bill put forward to move university employees under the purview of the UNC Board of Governors. Ross said they won't move forward if campuses don't support it. Williams thinks it's really advantageous to us. We could have things such as changes to vacation approval rates; pay factors in pay scales; and closings that wouldn't be governed by the state. Williams has talked to John Toller about getting someone to come in and ask questions, and we need to decide if we are in favor of SB 575. Williams said we'll talk about it and needs the feedback of senators.

[end of Williams' presentation]

#### *Chair-elect*

Mandee Lancaster talked more about SB 575. She said it was purposefully vague, but President Ross said he did not put forward a detailed plan before having that authority. He didn't want legislators changing it. Forums on the issue might be in the future, but they're not on the schedule yet.

John Toller said we would definitely have campus-wide forums. He also said Ross was administrator of the courts and was in charge of employees who are legislatively exempt from state regulation. He understands what that means and he wants to be open about the process.

Lancaster also said that Ross mentioned a compensation study. A three-year study has been funded to bring staff to at least the mid-point of their salary range. It is in the works and can only be good news.

#### *Treasurer*

Kristen King said our balances have started over. In state account, we have \$2,500.00 and no expenditures there. The chancellor's discretionary fund was \$1,600.00 and the Staff Senate shirts cost \$806.25, leaving the balance at \$793.75. The total fund balance is \$3,293.75.

#### *Secretary*

Justin Boulmay had no comments at this time.

## *Committee Reports*

### *Communications and Marketing*

Senator Jenny Gregory gave the report for the committee. They met the week before the meeting. She said some of the goals are to update and maintain the website. A second big goal is, come January, there will be new ECU website templates, so they'd like to transition the site into one of those. Another goal of last year, of which they fell short, is to release four issues of the newsletter; last year, we only released three. Another goal is to try and get more businesses and people that we personally know to be part of our Pirate Perk program. They need to talk to auditors about rules for soliciting business.

The Pirate Perk program is a program in which staff members receive discounts from participating businesses. Staff Senate promotes their business to our employees. Another goal is to actually drawing up criteria and guidelines so when businesses apply for the Perks, we can say yes or no as to why we support this company.

Another goal is to work with Rewards and Recognition. Capital Ford in Wilmington has a program in which staff members get a really good deal. ECU is in the process of contacting Haystings Ford about discounts for employees here.

The committee voted and named Senator Steven Foley as the chair-elect. They are also excited to have a bigger team this year.

### *Diversity*

Senator Leigh Fedash said the committee met in July and is planning to meet again soon. Had a good conversation with Amy Waters in the EO about goals for this year. They also discussed the possibility of doing a community-service project for our sub-committee. They'll review those ideas in our next meeting.

### *Human Resources*

Senator Garrett Killian said they had their first meeting on August 3. He said they talked about some of the goals for this year. Their goals include get feedback from them and to them as they relate to benefit changes; researching changes about SB 575; might look at private universities to see how they do things with their staff; and do some work with Rewards and Marketing committees to improve staff morale.

One of their last goals is to work with HR to see if they can move forward with multi-source feedback, to see if they can help them participate in pilot project and see how that initiative works.

From the meeting in August, they talked about Staff Senate's Suggestions box. With it being anonymous, there's no way for the committee to give the person any kind of response. They're looking into an idea to post an official response through Staff Senate website or offer the option of making it non-anonymous.

From the Staff Assembly meeting, Senator Kendra Davis said there was a change starting August 1 in which state employees have to work for 10 years instead of five to be vested in retirement system. That's for new employees. That's different than other piece to where you

have to have 20 years of service, depending on your cut off date, to be vested in the State Health Plan. Ex-officio member John Toller said that the motivation for the change to share money, but he thinks that there are a lot of holes in TSERS. One of them was not keeping the five-year vesting period. That will hurt retention. Some legislators think people might stay longer, but Toller doesn't see that happening without pay increases. The biggest problem for the retirement system wasn't vesting period but the system being manipulated in the last few years by people who got larger benefits than was ever intended.

Williams said not every politician has a university in their area so they might not think this is important. ECU represents 27 counties. Universities are spread across the state. Lancaster said that doesn't even account for the outreach and projects and community engagement and economic development that ECU performs. The university also has dots in almost every single county in North Carolina. Lancaster said her office was asked by the chancellor to prepare engagement materials for each county to give legislators an idea of what we do.

Senator Jay Clark asked if employees could make changes to the retirement system in regard to SB 575. Toller said for TSERS they couldn't, but it was a possibility for the optional retirement plan. Clark said his last job in the private sector was three years vesting period. Toller said doing this and not focusing on other problems shows that special interests affected the outcome.

Senator Thomas Santana asked about the relation between the BOG and the General Assembly. Toller said members of the GA are appointed by the House, Senate, and the governor.

Toller also predicted that in five years, longevity pay will disappear.

#### *Rewards and Recognitions*

Senator Melissa Eakes said the committee's goals were to grow the committee to increase rewards since the computer loan program was lost. They want to do the fitness walk and Employee Appreciation Week. We want to grow that event since we had so many positive comments and gave away 100 prizes. Another goal is to work with HR and Marketing committee in regards to improving employee morale.

#### *By-laws*

Senator Johnnie Eastwood is the chair. Senator Judy Havermann said the committee met in July and their goals for the year are to continue to review and revise the by-laws that was started last year. As concerns the by-laws, they want to establish a record of amendments and when they were approved, so there's a good track of how the by-laws developed over the years. Also, they want to ensure that there's an approved version of the by-laws that's available to the constituents. One of the other goals is, the by-laws committee doesn't appear on the Staff Senate website, so we'd like to get that accomplished. Another goal is to develop a procedure manual with the focus of on-boarding and exists as staff senator. There's a little bit of confusion of what you're supposed to do and when. So we'd like to develop a manual as well as a cheat sheet. Also, we'd like to do some sort of development of a basic operating procedures manual for committees.

Senator Tony Miller said there are three SharePoint sites for executive, diversity, and action committee. There is no Staff Senate SharePoint site. Having a stand-alone site that has information from a business perspective, plus all of the committees and any future committees, that's a goal. Miller is working with administrator to figure out the skeletons.

### *Old Business*

Williams added an item, the adverse weather policy. There's been some work done on that over the last six months to a year. We gathered information. Bill Cook reported back today. The adverse weather policy is now in the attorney's office for review and is waiting for comments. The final step to put it into PR format, which is the policy rules and regulations format, and it goes to the executive council on August 29. The main reason that the policy was looked at was due to questions about the essential/non-essential personnel.

Lancaster said her charge to committees was to come up with a community service project. She said she is available to help with committees figuring those out. Williams said the Staff Senate typically does Have a Heart and the Food Drive. The Senate also participates in a blood drive. We are trying to have more community involvement, as it is part of ECU's mission.

Toller said the holiday schedule for this winter includes being closed for 10 days, four of which are weekend days. We have to come up with coverage for six days. It requires people making the choice between vacation/bonus leave, or comp leave. Or take it as unpaid leave. He hasn't sent out a note yet because he wanted to check with the executive council.

Another piece that's related to that is, they want to put together schedule for 2012–2013. We need to get feedback in terms of whether it was worth it. People have mostly responded positively to this. The 2012–2013 schedule goes to executive council in October. Both 2012 and 2013 are 12-day holiday years.

Senator Melissa Eakes asked about having to use two days in December since they don't have flex schedule in her department and some people have been allowed to have comp time. Could that be something broadcasted across campus so anyone could use that? Toller said when anyone's talked to folks about HR, we've let them know that's a possibility. But he doesn't want to see people who can't earn comp time earning overtime.

Some of the senators talked about problems with getting supervisors to agree to allowing flexible schedules for their employees. Davis said it seemed that there were more departments that didn't observe it; Williams said it seemed like there were.

### *New Business*

Williams and Lancaster passed out notecards. Williams said she's happy with everything she hears, because what she hears is simultaneous with her goals, including staff development, engaging the staff, and improving morale. The card is for ideas and suggestions. She wanted people to write down "I can be more engaged if my university would allow <add answer>" on one side of the card. On the other side, "I would feel more engaged if <add answer> were to happen". Every committee seems to have hit on that. That would help us this year, and I'll pass these back to the Staff Assembly.

### *Announcements*

There were no announcements by senators. Williams said the next meeting is scheduled at September 15, 2011, in the same location. The room is reserved from 2:00–5:00 p.m.

### *Adjournment*

Senator Derri Stormer motioned to end the meeting and Kendra Davis seconded. Motion passed.