

Staff Senate Monthly Meeting

July 13, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

East Carolina Heart Institute Auditorium

In-person attendance for Staff Senators and Alternates

Virtual attendance available through [livestream link](#)

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Dana Lopez, Staff Senate Chair

Chair Lopez called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. She greeted staff who were available to join in-person and others who joined the meeting via livestream. Meeting best practices were shared to include that only staff senators and alternates may speak during Staff Senate meetings, and anyone outside of the Senate that wishes to have speaking privileges should email or contact the Staff Senate prior to the meeting. When speaking, Senators should introduce themselves by stating their name and division.

Campus Update

Dr. Philip G. Rogers, Chancellor

Chancellor Rogers thanked the staff for dedicating their time to the important work of the Staff Senate. He stated he hoped everyone had some time to step away from campus to rejuvenate with family, friends, and colleagues in order to be strong and recovered to advance ECU mission, help further the strategic plan's "Culture of Care" to care for each other and ourselves, and be ready to start the upcoming academic semester.

Legislative updates:

Negotiations regarding the legislative budget are ongoing. The two public versions of the budget differ regarding the spending priorities and potential tax incentives. The Board of Governors approves a two-year budget that the UNC system takes to the General Assembly to ask to fund some of the key priorities for the university. There were six priorities that apply to the whole UNC system:

- **Faculty and Staff Compensation Increases**
The House has proposed a salary increase of 4.25% in the first year of the biennium and a 3.25% increase in the second year, for a total of 7.5% compensation over two years. This proposal also provides state employee retirees a 1% cost of living increase each year of the biennium. The Senate proposed a 2.5% increase in each year of the biennium, for a total increase of 5% over the next two years. The Senate has expressed an interest in continuing a labor market adjustment reserve (LMAR), which would be given to certain fields that are difficult to retain employees. The advocacy

approach of the UNC system is to treat university employees the same as all other state agency employees with respect to compensation increases.

- **New UNC System Performance-Based Metrics Funding Model**
ECU now receives state funding based on how we score on several metrics, such as increasing 4-year graduation rates to graduate students on-time with less debt and growing sponsored research. If ECU meets or exceeds these metrics, the state provides ECU with more funding.
- **Cyber Security**
This funding would involve investments in cyber security to support a system-wide approach to our technology infrastructure.
- **College Completion Assistance Programs**
This program would provide incentive dollars to encourage students to come back to school to complete their college degree.
- They are testing the possibility of implementing a faculty retirement incentive program.
- **Distinguished Professorship**
This would provide distinguished professorship matching funds to help recruit and retain some of the top academic minds in the country.

Other big topics being watched closely as the legislature finalizes the budget:

- **NC Innovation Funding**

The NC Innovation funding would provide a significant amount of dollars to take the research conducted at universities and translate it into commercial opportunities. For example, ECU has a faculty member in the Brody School of Medicine who has produced a series of pharmaceutical opportunities, drugs that help prevent and work against cancer. She is working to generate this into a potential business opportunity. ECU does not have the resources on campus to help guide and shape this business development. The NC Innovation funded would provide resources to the eastern region hub and three other universities to take projects from a research phase to a business phase. The House's proposal puts around \$50 million into that fund. The Senate's proposal creates an endowment with \$1.4 billion that would provide consistent resources every year.

- **NC Care**
The NC Care project would create synergy between our state's medical schools and state-supported hospital systems. This would allow more capital-related investments into facilities to provide clinical care to the patients of eastern NC. It could provide hundreds of millions of dollars to transform rural health care in eastern NC.

- Expansion of Class Size for the Brody School of Medicine
The Board of Governors approved for ECU to expand the class size of the medical school from around 85 students to 120 students. Funds will also be used to double the size of the Physician's Assistant program in a digital format. Funding will also be used to support nursing preceptors and to advance our Health Psychology program to serve the region.

Refresh of ECU's Strategic Plan

ECU has launched a refresh to the strategic plan called "Future Focused - Innovation Driven." This plan maintains the core three mission priorities of student success, public service, and regional transformation. Chancellor Rogers thanked Dr. Sharon Paynter and Dr. Ravi Paul for leading the planning process, and also thanked everyone who participated in the open forums and provided feedback through the surveys.

The strategic plan focuses on social and economic progress and workforce success, which includes a concept of a "Culture of Care" where we advance inclusion and belonging and support our staff. The plan also supports rural health and the quality of life. The ECU leadership has met with deans and other unit leaders to begin the planning process. Each respective unit will build out unit plans that will align with the broader university plan.

Campus Progress

ECU is making great progress on our comprehensive campaign pursuit, Pursue Gold. This campaign will be completed by the end of December. ECU has received the largest gift in university history of \$30 million to name the most prestigious academic merit scholarship program. \$497 million has been raised to date.

Sponsored research has increased from approximately \$50 million to \$85 million.

Athletics had their highest academic progress rating (APR) in athletic history with a score of 993.

ECU is still experimenting with Kitty Hawk and is hoping to launch some programs in 2024.

ECU has also been pursuing the YouTube space with local partner, Mr. Beast, to blend different cultures in the business world with academia to support and help a local industry.

Chancellor Rogers ended by reiterating a lot of great things are happening at ECU and he looks forward to working with Staff Senate throughout this year.

Discussion:

Senator Todd Inman, from Administration and Finance, asked if the budget includes additional funds for those who make under \$75,000 per year.

Chancellor Rogers replied the current draft budget is focusing on percentage increases rather than certain salary levels.

Senator Todd Inman asked about the placement a staff member's profile on ECU's website, as staff are not highlighted as often as students and faculty.

Chancellor Rogers stated University Communications could assist with this.

Senator Chad Carwein, from Administration and Finance, asked if any guidance had been passed down from the Board of Governors on fee increases or new fees for this coming fall, as the Tuition and Fee Committee meets around September or October.

Chancellor Rogers replied he has not heard any news related to fee, yet. They usually provide detailed guidance in terms of no undergraduate in-state tuition increases are allowed. Last year they were flexible about out-of-state graduate programs. The process has been completed for fees associated with this academic year.

Senator Aisha Powell, of Academic Affairs, and Chair of the Diversity Committee, asked if the report concerning the feedback given to student success and access groups by the Commission would be made public?

Chancellor Rogers replied that the recommendations will be presented to the Executive Council for review and analysis. After review, the recommendations will be communicated with the campus.

Senator Aisha Powell added that one of the goals is to support diversity efforts. She asked Chancellor Rogers to let her know if there are any recommendations that the Staff Senate can support.

Senator Aisha Powell discussed the recent appeal of affirmation action at UNC Chapel Hill and Harvard and asked if this will impact the U.S. Department of Labor affirmation action or impact ECU HR policies.

Chancellor Rogers replied that he had not heard anything about that, yet; however, the UNC System office would be providing a directive on how institutions should be exploring and analyzing the Supreme Court ruling and what its impact might be on other parts of the university.

Senator Aisha Powell asked about the compelled speech policy and if this would impact any of the diversity offices on campus.

Chancellor Rogers replied that the Board of Governors passed an amendment to the political activities policy that focuses on the point of entry into the institution and not compelling speech in admissions essays for prospective students and for employees applying for jobs. The state legislation followed with a similar approach that they codified into state law recently, which was vetoed by the governor, and then the veto was

overridden by a vote. This legislation goes a step further than what the Board of Governors passed because it spells out specific concepts that cannot be promoted or included in training materials. Chancellor Rogers encouraged everyone to read the Board of Governors Policy first under the political activities policy which is in the policy manual, and to also read the state law that we will have to comply with as a state entity. This could impact how we think about training opportunities on campus.

Toya Jacobs, an ex-officio member of the Staff Senate and the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager at ECU, stated she is very concerned about the changes occurring in our state around diversity and inclusion and how ECU will be impacted. She has worked at ECU for 23 years, has volunteered in the diversity and inclusion space, and has been employed in Student Affairs at the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center and in the Office for Equity and Diversity.

Chancellor Rogers thanked Toya Jacobs for expressing her perspective and reiterated that ECU should be an environment where dialog can take place in a productive and collegial way to express what worries each of us. He reflected on the time when he was interviewing for the Chancellor position and was being asked similar questions. One of the things he talked about then, that he still believes strongly now, is that we have a value set at ECU. We will invest our time and attention to the strategic plan that is focused on a “Culture of Care” and belonging and inclusion. Chancellor Rogers thanked Senator Powell for taking a leadership role to help in the drafting of this. He reiterated that we all have an opportunity to impact colleagues, employees, and students through our conversations. We need to reflect on what we can control and what impact we can make. Chancellor Rogers visited the Office for Equity and Diversity a few weeks ago and had a chance to hear their views and perspectives, and he thanked Toya Jacobs again for sharing hers.

Vice Chair Lauren Thorn stated an Inside Higher Ed article was published around mid-June that talked about the political polarization of North Carolina. She asked how Staff Senate can create a culture that is able to stay protected from some of the outside influences and if there are things we can do to help support staff members who may feel the impact.

Chancellor Rogers replied he was speaking with someone recently who said they had been paying more attention to what bills are being enacted by the state legislature more this year than in the past and that person felt there are a lot of external forces distracting ECU from doing the work that we want to do with students. Chancellor Rogers stated we are seeing this in all of society, beyond higher education. He stated we need to think about what we can control, which is keeping the three core components of our mission at the front of our decision making. We should stay connected to our values and let our vision and mission priorities guide who we are and what we do. The most successful colleges and universities are those who focus on their mission and are bold about pursuing it, and they do not let pressures detract them from achieving their mission.

Chancellor Rogers spoke about an Inside Higher Ed article published this week that focused on public confidence in higher education, the public value of a higher education degree, and the return on investment a college degree is to the taxpayers. The results of that

poll found that the country has seen a 20-percentage point drop in confidence that American people have in US higher education. This is scary because in order to bring new students into the university, we have to have the trust and confidence of the public. He reiterated the importance of serving the public good through mission-aligned strategies and a vision that allows us to continue to reinvent ourselves when the world changes around us. Chancellor Rogers encouraged everyone to build confidence of our stakeholders and constituencies. Help provide directions to a family who looks lost on campus during orientation. Recognize a young person who might be struggling with a mental health challenge and get them to the right place so they can get help. Build confidence and trust with people to stay aligned on ECU's mission.

Approval of Minutes

Christiana Shoopman, Staff Senate Secretary

The minutes from the June 8, 2023 meeting were emailed to Staff Senate members. It was stated during the June meeting that Staff Senate would be collecting items for the annual coat drive. It has since been clarified that the Staff Senate will not be involved with the coat drive this year but will be gathering items for the Ronald McDonald House and school supplies to support the ECU Community School. The minutes were updated to reflect that correction and the revised minutes were approved as presented.

Executive Committee Updates

Staff Senate Executive Committee

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez stated Human Resources has announced a new flexible work arrangement website that offers a centralized location for information, resources, guidance, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) for all flexible working arrangements issues. It also includes information regarding remote work and flexible work schedules and training and forms to assist university employees. Questions can be submitted to employeerelations@ecu.edu.

Crystal Hildenbrand, Chair-Elect

Chair-Elect Hildenbrand stated she along with Chair Dana Lopez, Past-Chair Aisha Powell, Senator Todd Inman, and Garrett Kilian of the Staff Assembly Executive Committee will be attending the next Staff Assembly meeting on July 24-25 in Winston-Salem, NC. The UNC Board of Governors will meet on July 20th in Chapel Hill. That meeting will be live-streamed, and the link will be posted in the Staff Senate Microsoft Team's chat.

Lauren Thorn, Vice-Chair

Vice-Chair Thorn stated the Executive Committee had a good discussion with Chancellor Rogers and his Cabinet regarding Senate Bill 364 and the Supreme Court's ruling on affirmation action, which has already been discussed by Chancellor Rogers today. Those regulations will affect a small segment of higher education institutions. Institutions like ECU usually do not have to take a structured approach in crafting their incoming first year class. Staff Senate members have stated it would be helpful for this information to be

shared to clarify and explain how affirmative action is used at various levels of higher education. It is expected that the Board of Governors will provide further guidelines over the next few months to clarify how this will impact higher education institutions.

Christiana Shoopman, Secretary

Secretary Shoopman stated when the Executive Committee met with the Chancellor and his Cabinet, that Dr. Locklear, the Chief of Staff, emphasized the importance of communication and a “Culture of Care” across ECU. With respect to employee engagement and feedback, he has recommended having an event where employees can gather and be engaged in communication with one another as an opportunity to meet other members across campus. This would also provide for an opportunity for staff to spread the word about Staff Senate and discuss available volunteer opportunities.

Stephanie Stroud, Treasurer

Treasurer Stroud provided an update regarding the Treasurer’s Report. The majority of the spending in June paid for the Staff Appreciation events. Committees should submit requests for funds to her or to staffsenate@ecu.edu. Name tags and polo shirts are available for any senators and alternates who have not yet received them. More information will be known about the Staff Senate’s budget for this year once the legislative budget is approved.

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez stated the Parliamentarian, Josh Crocket, who is from the Student Government Association (SGA), was absent from the meeting and will provide updates at our next meeting.

Committee Updates

By-Laws Committee

Senator John Southworth, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, stated the committee’s goals for the upcoming year are to review the by-laws for any inconsistencies and provide updates, establish a formal integration between Staff Senate and the SGA, and to review the language listed for the Parliamentarian position to see if the role needs to be clarified. Surveys will be disseminated later this year as a way to receive feedback.

Communication and Marketing Committee

Senator Chad Carwein, Chair of the Communication and Marketing Committee, stated the committee’s goals are to streamline submission requests by having a ticketing system to create fliers and social media postings for events and fundraisers, post a schedule or a calendar-of-events on the committee website, identify and train a backup for updating the website content on WordPress, and update the membership directory with photographs of all staff senators. Senator Kimrey Miko has scheduled a photo session prior to the September Staff Senate meeting.

Discussion:

Senator Aisha Powell, of Academic Affairs, asked if Committee photos can also be taken.

Senator Chad Carwein replied yes, and that Michelle Bone has donated her time and talent to help take these photos.

Diversity Committee

The Chair of the Diversity Committee, Aisha Powell, stated the committee's Chair-Elect is Coleman Hinson and the secretary is Lisa Dozier, both from the Brody School of Medicine. Their goals include raising awareness of the Employee Resource Groups, their mission, and how they help with the retention and recruitment of staff. These groups have been invited to speak at the August meeting. Additional goals are to plan the 3rd Annual Women In Leadership panel to share lessons and leadership from ECU staff and, to partner with Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) to share staff diversity information. During their first meeting, they were able to look at some Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR) data and will share this information later in the term. Their last goal is to collaborate and foster communication between the various campus diversity organizations, councils, and committees.

Human Resources Committee

Senator Michelle Smith, from Academic Affairs, provided the update for the Human Resources Committee. Their committee goals include the Staff Emeritus package ideas to improve the prestige for Staff Emeritus Award and outreach opportunities to support the ECU Community School, collecting items for the Ronald McDonald House – which may include working with one of the sororities on campus to have staff and student interaction, volunteer opportunities with Mr. Beast in April during the Staff Appreciation celebrations, and proctoring in Pitt County schools.

Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Vice Chair Thorn, the liaison for the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, stated their goals are to successfully plan and host the Ballard's Annual Lessons in Leadership (BALL) event, with the speaker committed by January, partner with the Director of Learning and Organizational Leadership to present twice to the Staff Senate to provide updates and resources relevant to leadership and professional development, and to outline the process of partnership with the Marketing and Communications committee to advertise the BALL event and other events on campus. This committee has had some great discussions regarding possible speakers for the BALL event.

Recognition and Rewards Committee

Treasurer Stroud, the liaison for the Recognition and Rewards Committee, provided information regarding the Wellness Walk that will take place on October 19, 2023, during lunchtime at Lake Laupus. The rain date is October 26th. For this event, Staff Senate brings in vendors from Pitt County who are health and wellness-focused. This committee will also verify companies who offer Pirate Perk discounts and they will add new companies to the list. Additionally, they will determine a process to present information about Staff Senate and Pirate Perks during New Staff Orientation.

Membership Committee

The Chair of the Membership Committee, Joseph Moore, stated this committee has been busy trying to fill Staff Senate membership positions. The Chair-Elect is Laura Fanning and Christopher Cooper is the Secretary. A few senator positions are vacant due to employees

leaving the university. Senator Moore urged everyone to encourage colleagues to join Staff Senate.

Vacant positions:

Athletics – two alternates

Brody School of Medicine – two senator positions, two alternates

University Advancement – one alternate

Scholarship Committee

The Chair of the Scholarship Committee, Michelle Bone, stated this committee's goals are to increase fundraising efforts by 10%. Last year they raised \$3,200. They will focus their efforts on the online auction because it was a huge success in its first year. The auction may be conducted around the November to encourage people may bid on items for presents. Staff Senate stopped working the concessions during COVID and they will no longer sponsor Spirit Nights because they were not generating much revenue for the effort. They are looking forward to building on the efforts of raising money with the online auction.

The second goal of this committee is to increase the dollars provided for scholarships. Last year, \$7,200 were awarded across eight different scholarships. Lastly, the committee intends to update the rubric used for scholarship selection.

New Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez asked if there was any new business.

Discussion:

Senator Aisha Powell made a motion to change the October Staff Senate monthly meeting to the second Tuesday of the month, October 10th, at 3:00 p.m. to avoid having the meeting on the same day that ECU is hosting a home football game.

Chair Lopez stated this motion would need to be tabled to the next meeting since there is not a quorum present to vote on the motion.

New Business

Dana Lopez, Staff Senate Chair

There was no new business.

Announcements

Dana Lopez, Staff Senate Chair

The next Staff Senate meeting will be held on August 10, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. at the East Carolina Heart Institute Auditorium.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Meeting minutes were taken and prepared by Staff Senate Secretary, Christiana Shoopman.

Minutes approved 8/10/2023