

Staff Senate Monthly Meeting

August 8, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.
Held via Microsoft Teams due to Inclement Weather

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

Chair Hildenbrand called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. She shared meeting best practices with staff, guests, and those who attended virtually and welcomed the new senators who will serve during the 2024-2025 year. Speaking is limited to senators, alternates, ex-officio members, and individuals who have been granted speaking privileges before the meeting. Senators should state their name and their division before speaking. Non-senators who want to speak at future meetings can notify Staff Senate by emailing staffsenate@ecu.edu.

Roll Call

Kristina Page, Staff Senate Vice Chair

A roll call was conducted to determine if a quorum was present.

Senators absent: Kristy Ashley (Athletics), Demetric Brown Clark (Academic Affairs), Devin Fagnano (Brody School of Medicine), Katrina Harper (Brody School of Medicine), Patricia Highsmith (Brody School of Medicine), Gary Martin (Admin & Finance), Moses McDaniel (Brody School of Medicine), Kimrey Miko (Chancellor's Office), Kristin Wooten (Brody School of Medicine)

Alternates present: Anthony Bechtel (Student Affairs), Michelle Bone (Academic Affairs), Dominique Coleman (Academic Affairs), Stephanie Fields (University Advancement), Jeremy Perry (University Advancement), Michelle Smith (Admin & Finance), Ronnie Woodward (Chancellor's Office)

Approval of Minutes

Kristina Page, Staff Senate Vice Chair

The minutes from the July 11, 2024, meeting were emailed to Staff Senate members, and some corrections were received. The updated minutes, which incorporated these corrections, were sent out yesterday and were approved as presented.

“Why Should We Listen to You?”

Dr. Pamela Hopkins, Director, ECU Center for Communication Excellence

Dr. Pamela Hawkins presented “Why Should We Listen to You?”.

Treasurer's Report

Jennifer Jones, Staff Senate Treasurer

Treasurer Jennifer Jones reported that the UNC System has reimbursed last year's travel expenses, and those funds have been received. This month's report also includes Garrett Killian's expenses for attending the UNC System meeting in July.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee

Chair-Elect Bri Wood provided updates from the July Staff Assembly meeting. Representatives from Aetna joined the meeting virtually to present an overview of the new state health plan, as Aetna will take over as the state health insurance provider starting January 1st, 2025. Open enrollment will run from September 30th to October 25th, 2024, with minimal changes expected to the plans, which will continue to offer 80/20 and 70/30 options. The FSA maximum will increase to \$3,200. Beginning August 22nd, Aetna will conduct a bus/van tour across the state and host telephone town halls to provide more information about the transition from Blue Cross Blue Shield to Aetna. An email with the schedule of events was sent to the campus community, and employees are encouraged to attend if possible. Additionally, dental rates are expected to increase by 2% in 2025, unrelated to the Aetna switch.

The 3% salary increase went into effect on July 1st. It was reflected retroactively in paychecks on July 31st, although there is no word on additional funds for state employees during the current legislative session. UNC System President Peter Hans, along with General Counsel Andrew Tripp and Special Advisor Thomas Walker, discussed the UNC system's new equality policy, which focuses on student success and employee well-being, with a compliance deadline of September 1st for all campuses.

Lastly, the ECU Board of Trustees met on August 1st at the Outer Banks Campus, where Jason Poole was re-elected chair, Cassie Burt was elected vice chair, and Dave Fussell was elected secretary. Anderson Ward, the SGA President, was sworn in as an ex officio board member.

By-Laws Committee

Senator Lauren Arp, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, provided several updates. The committee reviewed proposed wording changes for the Diversity Committee and is collaborating with the Executive Committee to determine the next steps for ECU's compliance with UNC system policy. Additionally, the committee is reviewing the bylaws compared to UNC Charlotte's to explore potential alignment or propose necessary changes.

Communication and Marketing Committee

Senator Erin Gray, Chair of the Communication and Marketing Committee, provided several updates. Due to inclement weather, headshots and group photos have been rescheduled to take place before the September 12th meeting. Senators can sign up for timeslots via a new Excel sheet that will be added to Teams and are asked to wear their ECU Staff Senate polo. Senator Jenny Gregory attended the last committee meeting and shared tips and best practices for working with logo review. The meeting was recorded for future reference. The Staff Senate's "Events" website has been updated to include a direct link

to "GivePulse," the University's volunteer management platform. While the site currently focuses on volunteering opportunities, the committee is working on adding more specific events, such as the Wellness Walk. Senator Chad Carwein suggested adding Staff Senate events to the main ECU calendar, embedding a shortcut to the homepage, and including event flyers. Lastly, the Staff Senate's social media will feature a specific committee each month.

Diversity Committee

Senator Bret Wilson, Chair of the Diversity Committee, provided several updates. The committee recently met to discuss their goals in more detail and is awaiting feedback from campus partners regarding the reading of the Indigenous land acknowledgment at monthly meetings. They also discussed plans for the 4th Annual Women's Leaders at ECU event, which will take place in Spring 2025. This fall, the committee will research staff well-being trends within the UNC system and higher education nationally. Senators are encouraged to share any relevant resources, topics, or concerns with Bret or other members of the Diversity Committee. Additionally, Summer Edwards has been named chair-elect of the committee.

Human Resources Committee

Senator Michelle Smith, Chair of the Human Resources Committee, provided several updates. The committee received an email from Felicia Wilson, Assistant Principal at Ridgewood Elementary School, expressing gratitude to the Staff Senate for supporting the school during EEG testing. The Staff Senate successfully secured many of the needed proctors, and the school is eager to develop an ongoing partnership to continue providing support during testing seasons. Additionally, donation boxes for the annual school supply drive have been delivered to collection sites. Senators are encouraged to share this information with their divisions. The donated items will be delivered to the ECU Community School on September 4th, 2024. More details on needed items and drop-off locations will be shared to Announce Listserv.

Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Senator Joani Zary, Chair of the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, provided several updates. The committee met on July 29th, and last month's "Survivor" training was successful. They plan to organize a similar event each year. Additionally, they hope to have Rob Weatherly and his team present on a different topic at the November or December Staff Senate meeting. The committee also discussed potential speakers for the B.A.L.L. event in April 2025.

Membership Committee

Senator Anthony Bechtel, a member of the Membership Committee, provided several updates. The committee recently met and reviewed Staff Senates' membership structures at other UNC System schools. Further discussions on this matter are planned for next month, after which the committee will make recommendations to the Executive Committee. Additionally, there are open Senator seats available: 1 Senator and 1 Alternate for the Brody School of Medicine, 2 Alternates for Athletics, and 1 Alternate for Student Affairs.

Recognition and Rewards Committee

Senator Dana Lopez, Chair of the Recognition and Rewards Committee, provided several updates. The committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month, with the next meeting scheduled for next week. One of the upcoming events is the Staff Senate Wellness Walk, scheduled for October 17th from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at Laupus Lake on the Health Sciences campus, with a rain date set for October 24th. The

committee is working on gathering vendors for the event, using a list created by Senator Woodward based on last year's participants. They are contacting vendors and encouraging anyone who knows potential participants or small business owners to share the vendor letter and help recruit more vendors. Last year, the vendors lined a section of the lake, but the committee hopes to have more participation this year to fill the area around the lake. Additionally, the committee has drafted a detailed timeline for future members, outlining key dates and tasks related to the Wellness Walk, Staff Appreciation Month, and the Outstanding Staff Awards. This blueprint will help ensure continuity and organization for the committee in the coming years. Thank you to Senator Eason, who has been organizing this for several years.

Scholarship Committee

Senator Michelle Bone, Secretary of the Scholarship Committee, provided several updates. The Scholarship Committee will focus on selecting a new chair and finalizing that decision this month. Once the leadership is in place, the committee will begin planning how to move forward with fundraising efforts, aiming to incorporate the Senators' preferences. To ensure full participation, we plan to create a poll to gather input on fundraising ideas. Our primary goal is to tackle this first and engage everyone in the process.

Old Business

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

Senator Dana Lopez shared that The Janet B. Royster Scholarship application period will open from August 15th to September 30th. Last year, ECU received an impressive number of applications, resulting in our school being awarded two scholarships, while other UNC system schools received only one each. This was a significant achievement, and we aim to maintain this momentum. The scholarship is available to all UNC system schools, and we encourage everyone to promote it within their divisions. The application details will be sent out closer to the opening date so that individuals can begin applying.

Announcements

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

Senator Jennifer Jones announced that polos are back-ordered. If you need an updated nametag, please let Jennifer know immediately.

Chair Hildenbrand announced that the Treasured Pirate Awards nominations are open until August 31st. These awards will be presented at the Annual Service Award ceremony, with recipients receiving a trophy, a \$500 award, and recognition on the university's website. Nomination details are available on the ECU website.

Additionally, the Janet B. Royster Scholarship is funded by the Chancellor Cup golf tournament, which will take place on Wednesday, September 25th, at Finley Golf Club in Chapel Hill. If anyone is interested in volunteering at the tournament, please contact me for more information. ECU currently has three volunteers and a team participating, but more volunteers are welcome.

In closing, Chair Crystal Hildenbrand announced that the next Staff Senate meeting will be held on September 12, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Main Campus Student Center, Room 249.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Meeting minutes were taken and prepared by Staff Senate Secretary Jenna Boardman.