

Staff Senate Monthly Meeting

August 10, 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 3:00 p.m. She greeted staff and guests and shared meeting best practices. Only staff senators and alternates may speak during Staff Senate meetings, senators should state their name and their division before speaking, and non-senators who would like to speak at future meetings can notify Staff Senate by emailing staffsenate@ecu.edu.

Campus Update

Vice Chancellor Stephanie Coleman, VC for Administration and Finance

Vice Chancellor Coleman stated she hoped everyone had been able to take some time off over the summer to recharge for the new academic year. As a reminder, be helpful and welcoming towards new students and visitors on campus.

- **Enrollment**

VC Coleman explained that the total enrollment for this academic year cannot be predicted at this time as there are a lot of factors that account for that number. It is important to understand that ECU is not funded on student headcount. Instead, ECU is funded on resident students completing their credit hours and the UNC System's performance-based metrics:

- Undergraduate 4-year graduation rate
- Undergraduate degree efficiency
- Student loan debt at graduation
- Education expenses per degree
- Research productivity

The Board of Governors increased the enrollment cap of out-of-state students from 18% to 25% for ECU, so we will see an increase in out-of-state students on campus.

- **Faculty and Staff Compensation Increases**

The state budget is not expected to get approved before September 1, 2023. Nothing has changed with respect to the proposed salary increases, which could be between a 2.5% to 4.25% increase, if approved.

- **HR-Related Activities**

VC Coleman stated Chair Lopez has shared the presentation from the UNC System on HR initiatives. Staff Senate received information at the same time as the administration, so there is no additional information at this time.

- **ECU's Mission**

A message was emailed yesterday from the Chancellor to kick off the school year and remind everyone of ECU's mission:

1. Public service
2. Regional transformation
3. Student success

In that message the Chancellor also mentioned that informal conversations with staff, faculty, and administrators will be held throughout the year. His office will formulate the logistics of how staff will be engaged in the coming months, and they will work with Staff Senate to get feedback on this process. VC Coleman stated they are always open to ideas on how to improve student engagement across campus and she encouraged staff to share their thoughts with the Staff Senate Executive Committee or to reach out to her directly.

Employee Resource Groups

Toya Jacobs, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager

Toya Jacobs is the liaison for all of the employee resource groups at ECU. Employee resource groups, also known as affinity groups, were created to provide inclusive spaces and help improve employee morale. They are a collection of individuals who share common identity characteristics and are traditionally populations that are underrepresented in the workplace. As a part of ECU's commitment to diversity in the workplace, the Office for Equity and Diversity assists in the formation and support of these employee resource groups. Toya Jacobs introduced the Organization of Black Staff, Latino Hispanic group, the Indigenous group, and the LGBTQ+ and Ally Faculty and Staff group.

Organization of Black Staff (OBS)

Cherie Speller, Vice-Chair for the Organization of Black Staff

Cherie Speller shared that the Organization of Black Staff was initially chartered more than 21 years ago to provide a supportive network for black employees and campus allies. Renita Muhammad serves as the chair of this group and Cherie Speller is the vice-chair. Their efforts focus on fostering cultural enrichment, such as Black History Month and Juneteenth celebrations, facilitating educational opportunities, such as collaborating on the Black Student Success Summit, engaging in civic initiatives, such as the Heart Walk, and sponsoring families and nonprofit organizations in the community. They also provide education for those who participate in the group. The next meeting will discuss elections and changes voters will encounter at the polls. The Organization of Black Staff is open to all ECU staff members. A membership fee of \$25 is required each academic year for those who wish to be a voting member, but no fee is required to attend the meetings. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, with the first meeting of the academic year scheduled virtually on September 20, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. A fall “Welcome Back” event is planned for September 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., in the lobby of the College of Nursing. This resource group can be reached at OBS@ecu.edu.

Comunidad Hispana/Latina grupo de recursos para empleados**Hispanic/Latino Community Employee Resource Group**

Tania Alvarez, Member of the Hispanic/Latino Community Employee Resource Group

Tania Alvarez, from the Graduate School in the Dean’s Office, spoke on behalf of the Hispanic Latino Community Employee Resource group. They currently are a group of 32 employees of both faculty and staff that meet monthly and have been an active group since 2021. Their goals are to build relationships among the Latino community, create a supportive environment, educate new staff about the diversity resources that are available, and encourage positive change through networking. If you are interested in joining, reach out to Dr. Marjorie Ringler in the College of Education at ringlerm@ecu.edu.

Discussion

Chair Lopez asked when the next meeting will take place.

Tania Alvarez replied meetings are typically at the beginning of the month. Dr. Ringer is currently out of the country, so a notification will be emailed to the Announce listserv with information regarding their next meeting. Many of the members are 9-month faculty, so the group has been smaller over the summer. Ms. Alvarez welcomed all to join to share their traditions and experiences.

Indigenous Employee Resource Group

Patricia Highsmith, Vice Chair of the Indigenous Employee Resource Group

Patricia Highsmith works in clinical finance and has been a state employee for five years. She joined ECU last September and is ecstatic to join the Indigenous Employee Resource Group. Ms. Highsmith presented the ECU Land Acknowledgement, which states:

We acknowledge the Tuscarora people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognize their continuing connection to the land, water, and air that Greenville consumes. We pay respect to the eight state-recognized tribes of North Carolina; Coharie, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Band of Saponi, Sappony, and Waccamaw-Siouan, all Nations, and their elders past, present, and emerging.

Patricia Highsmith's family is Waccamaw and Cherokee.

The Indigenous Employee Resource Group cultivates an inclusive community and appreciation for Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. They encourage and support the creation of university policies relating to the recruitment, hiring, retention, professional development and professional advancement of Indigenous faculty and staff, and serve as a resource for the campus and community. Membership is open to faculty and staff interested in issues and concerns affecting Indigenous people at the university and throughout eastern North Carolina. Jen Ward serves as the chair of this committee, and she can be reached at wardje17@ecu.edu. Information and events are posted on Facebook and Instagram. They meet on Microsoft Teams every third Tuesday of the month from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. This year they will be moving beyond the ECU Land Acknowledgement, to make authentic relationships and informed action, to open public consciousness of native sovereignty and culture rights.

Upcoming Events:

- August 15, 2023: Indigenous Employee Resource Group meeting
- August 20, 2023: Open House with other Employee Resource Groups at the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center (LWCC)
- October 9, 2023: Indigenous People's Day
- Every Wednesday in October: My Culture Is Not a Costume at LWCC
- Date to be determined: East Carolina Native American Organization (ECNAO) Annual Powwow

Coming Soon:

- Indigenous Space Art Installation at "The Fire Pit" at the Main Campus Student Center
- Health Sciences Indigenous Space – Medicinal Garden

Patricia Highsmith displayed a PowerPoint slide showing a few ways to say thank you in some of the tribal languages. She shared homemade fry bread and the following items: her first pair of moccasins, a necklace made by a young girl, and a handmade bag she purchased at a local powwow. She urged everyone to attend the upcoming powwow and stated it is an informative event for every culture and a great space to take your family to enjoy dancing, singing, food, and speaking with others.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Faculty and Staff Group

Aaron Lucier, Chair of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Faculty and Staff Group

Aaron Lucier is the Director of Housing Operations and serves as the current leadership of the LGBTQ+ and Ally Resource Group. Each year they sponsor a welcome event, a winter event, and a summer event. This past summer they hosted a happy hour on the porch of *The Music House*, which is the home of Dr. John O'Brien's, a faculty emeritus from ECU and strong supporter of the group. The student group will celebrate its 25th anniversary in April. Aaron Lucier has served as the advisor to this group for 24 years, and he will be retiring from ECU in February. Anyone interested in joining this group or serving in a leadership capacity can reach Aaron Lucier at luciera@ecu.edu.

Discussion

Chair Lopez urged Staff Senators to share information with their respective divisions on how employees can reach out to each of these resource groups. Information is also available on the Office for Equity and Diversity website at <https://oed.ecu.edu/>.

Approval of Minutes

Christiana Shoopman, Staff Senate Secretary

The minutes from the July 13, 2023 meeting were emailed to Staff Senate members and no corrections were received. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Executive Committee Updates

Staff Senate Executive Committee

Staff Assembly Update

Chair Dana Lopez stated the UNC Staff Assembly met in late July and received a human resources (HR) update from the UNC System office, which was emailed to senators and alternates this week. This update included questions asked of all of the 17 UNC institutions. Chair Lopez highlighted the following items and urged senators to review the document.

Senate Bill 364

Senate Bill 364 regarding nondiscrimination and dignity in state work applies to state employees. Any policy or programmatic changes will be established by the Office of State Human Resources and the State Human Resources Commission. Legal Affairs is reviewing the policy and statutory language and will provide guidance to campus.

Proposal for New SHRA Pay Ranges

The proposal for new SHRA pay ranges is currently under review by the UNC System HR and will be shared with the institutional HR offices for review and comment. Pay range changes are not across-the-board increases to the existing ranges. Current market data has been reviewed to establish new ranges by classification. Once the ranges are approved, each institutional HR will establish a review process for assessing the alignment of employee salaries with the new pay ranges and determine how to proceed. It is important to remember that the new pay ranges do not come with funding for salary increases; however, HR is hopeful that the state budget will include a labor market adjustment reserve (LMAR), as it did last year.

Michelle Morris, the Director of Employment for the Human Resources Office, was present at the meeting to answer questions. No questions were asked.

ECU Board of Trustees (BOT) Update

The Board of Trustees elected two new officers, Chairperson Jason Poole and Vice Chair Vince Smith. Trustee Cassie Burt continues to hold the secretary position. Three new members were sworn in: Javier Limon, as ECU's SGA President, Vanessa Workman and Carl Rogers. The BOT voted to approve the EHRA performance bonus policy that was presented by Vice Chancellor Coleman. The proposed PRR is located on the Board of Trustees' website, which is listed under the August 10, 2023 [meeting materials and action items](#).

UNC Staff Assembly Survey

Chair-Elect Crystal Hildenbrand provided information regarding a survey that was conducted of all the 17 UNC System institutions at the Staff Assembly. This survey was emailed to all senators and alternates earlier in the week. The following questions were asked on the survey:

- Does your Staff Senate Chair, or any other officer receive a stipend?
Some universities do offer stipends, but ECU does not.
- Does your Staff Senate have a budget?
Yes, ECU's Staff Senate has a budget. Staff Senate receives state funds, discretionary funds, scholarship funds, and some priority funds. ECU's Faculty Senate has a budget, as well.

- Does the Staff Senate Chair or any other departments receive addition funds to hire temps? The Executive Committee has recently learned funds are available to hire a student or temporary employee to help with administrative duties. Chair Lopez is working with Vice Chancellor Coleman on this matter.
- Does the Faculty Senate Chair or any other officer's department receive additional funds? As far as we know, they do not receive any additional funds.
- Does the Staff Senate Chair and members of Staff Senate have work release? At ECU, supervisors allow staff to participate in Staff Senate.

Chancellor's Cup Golf Tournament

Vice-Chair Lauren Thorn provided an update on the Chancellor's Cup Golf Tournament, which will be held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at Bryan Park Golf Course in Browns Summit, NC, which is outside of Greensboro. This has typically been a system-wide staff event. ECU has registered a team of the following individuals:

- Justin Waters, Campus Recreation and Wellness
- John Gill, Facilities Ground Services
- Dave Loomis, College of Business
- Joe Bland, Mathematics Department, or Brian Mattern, Student Affairs Business Office

Staff Senate needs 3-4 volunteers to assist with this tournament to meet and greet participants at the hole that ECU's staff is sponsoring. Anyone interested in volunteering should reach out to Treasurer Stephanie Stroud. Check-in starts at 7:00 a.m. and the tournament begins at 9:00 a.m. Staff Senate will pay hotel accommodations for the night before the tournament.

Discussion

Senator Michelle Bone, from Academic Affairs, stated this team was a great group last year and she wants to see them win it this year.

Logistics for ECU's Home Football Game vs. Southern Methodist University (SMU)

The Executive Committee met with the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet last week. During that meeting, Dr. Locklear provided a reminder regarding ECU hosting a Thursday night football game against SMU on October 12, 2023. A memo will be sent to campus before classes begin related to operational planning for this game so that faculty, staff, and students can prepare. The campus will not close, but ECU encourages flexibility and operational adjustments due to safety with many of the visitors that come into town and onto campus, particularly noting that parking is usually impacted. The administration recommends considering alternate assignments for classes and alternative working options for staff.

Communication Strategies

Secretary Christiana Shoopman provided an update regarding communication strategies for August and the remainder of the semester.

Reminder notifications for the School Supplies Drive benefiting the ECU Community School will be emailed once a week until the August 30, 2023 deadline. She thanked the Marketing and Communication Committee for their work creating the flier, and the Human Resources Committee for planning this donation event to help students.

Requests for the promotion of Staff Senate events or information should be sent to the Communications and Marketing Committee. The process for requests has been streamlined and can be submitted on the Staff Senate webpage at <https://staffsenate.ecu.edu> by following these steps: Select “Committees” at the top of the page, choose “Communications and Marketing Committee,” and then select the button “Submit a marketing request.” Additional time will be needed to submit fliers to Creative Services for logo review, therefore, send requests as early as possible. Also, share information with staffsenate@ecu.edu in order for Staff Senate to help communicate messages across campus.

The Staff Senate and Pirate Perks website has recently changed to <https://staffsenate.ecu.edu> and <https://staffsenate.ecu.edu/pirateperks>, respectively, so senators should review the links in their signature and update them, if needed.

Secretary Shoopman urged senators to share updates received at Staff Senate meetings with their respective units. Also, as students return to campus and classes resume, she encouraged everyone to reach out and speak with people they might not normally contact, which could be students, staff in other units, and faculty. It is also important to keep in touch with staff who work remotely to make sure that they are aware of certain events and volunteer opportunities available across campus.

Legislative Budget

Treasurer Stephanie Stroud reiterated VC Coleman’s remarks that the state budget has not yet passed, but we are hopeful that will be passed by the end of the month. The budget for Staff Senate is not expected to change much from last year. Additional funds have been requested, but more will be known once the Legislative budget has passed. Requests for funds should be sent to Treasurer Stroud at webbers@ecu.edu or to staffsenate@ecu.edu for any upcoming events. Staff Senate name tags and polo shirts are available for pick-up after the meeting.

Discussion

Chair Lopez stated the Parliamentarian, Josh Crocket, who is from the Student Government Association (SGA), was absent from the meeting due to resident assistant (RA) training and spoke on his behalf that SGA has no updates at this time.

Committee Updates

By-Laws Committee

Senator John Southworth, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, stated this committee recently met to discuss corrections to the by-laws and begin documenting contradictions, duplications, and inconsistencies. They have also discussed whether or not to make any changes to the by-laws with respect to the parliamentary position and any integration with the SGA. The Staff Senate by-laws mentions the Faculty Senate, but the relationship with SGA has not been formalized. Thoughts and suggestions can be shared with Senator Southworth for the committee to discuss. He will send a survey later in the year as a way to obtain feedback.

Communication and Marketing Committee

Senator Chad Carwein, Chair of the Communication and Marketing Committee, who is also the Sustainability Manager for ECU, began with an environmentally-themed joke.

Senator Carwein stated this committee has added two slides about Staff Senate in the New Employee Orientation presentation. They have also created the flyer for the School Supplies Drive and listed the drop off locations on the Staff Senate webpage. They are planning to update the Staff Senate webpage with professional photos of all senators and alternates. Photos will be taken at the Main Campus Student Center prior to the September meeting and a link for a sign-up sheet will be shared.

Senator Carwein thanked Chair Lopez for creating the smart sheet that is now used for marketing requests. Another committee goal for the year is to set up a social media scheduling platform like Hootsuite. They are reviewing different platforms, costs, and capabilities. Senator Carwein displayed the staff senate webpage and showed how to make a marketing request.

Discussion

Chair Lopez added there is a leadership change in Creative Services which has created a few delays with respect to logo review, and she emphasized the importance of submitting requests early.

Diversity Committee

Chair Lopez provided the update for the Diversity Committee in Senator Aisha Powell's absence. She welcomed new committee members Kathryn Kunzmann, from Brody, and Bri Wood, from Athletics. The Diversity Committee accomplished one of their goals today by raising awareness of the Employee Resource Groups (ERG), their mission, and how they help with the retention and recruitment of staff. They will continue to keep the Staff Senate informed of any upcoming ERG events as they are shared with the campus community. Their committee will meet with the Director of the Women and Gender Office, Chelsie Hargrove, in September for the planning of the 3rd Annual Women's Leaders panel at ECU and how Staff Senate can support the Day of

Remembrance for pregnancy and infant loss in October. If anyone is involved in DEI Committees or organizations that have upcoming university events, please contact Senator Powell to see how Staff Senate can help support those events.

Human Resources Committee

Senator Jennifer Muir, Chair of the HR Committee, thanked the Communications Committee and Chair Lopez for their support with the School Supplies Drive. The supplies will be delivered to Principal Cole at the ECU Community School the week after Labor Day, and they would like for others to participate in the dropping off of supplies. The State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC) also had a supply drive promotion event this year. The HR Committee has contacted SEANC to partner with them for next year.

The HR Committee is also working to partner with a sorority to help with the Ronald McDonald House and will continue to work on coordinating proctoring events with Pitt County Schools for end-of-grade testing.

The Staff Emeritus nominations will be open soon with a deadline at the end of November. They are adding items to the Staff Emeritus Award package to recognize and support employees who receive this honor.

Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Senator Jennifer Jones, Chair of the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, stated this committee met on July 31, 2023. They are working on securing a speaker for the Ballard's Annual Lessons in Leadership (BALL) event. Rob Weatherly, with HR, will be speaking at the monthly Staff Senate meetings in November and February. He will also provide a stand-alone training in April and a team-building activity next summer.

Membership Committee

The Chair of the Membership Committee, Joseph Moore, stated this committee met a few weeks ago and formalized their goals. The committee will continue to recruit in the underserved areas of Staff Senate, which are the Brody School of Medicine, Administration and Finance, and Athletics. They will help with promotional materials and will share information with the Communications Committee. This committee will work to increase the number of voters and/or nominations by 3% from the previous year. Let Senator Moore know if you have contacts in Brody and Athletics, and he will reach out to them to see if they are interested in joining Staff Senate.

Recognition and Rewards Committee

Senator Amy Eason, the Chair of the Recognition and Rewards Committee, discussed the Wellness Walk that will take place on Thursday, October 19, 2023, from 11:30 am – 1:30 p.m. The rain date is scheduled for October 26, 2023. A sign-up sheet to volunteer at the Staff Senate table will be posted. Vendors will be present that represent the five dimensions of wellness related to career,

social, financial, physical, and community well-being. She encouraged Staff Senators to reach out to vendors or inform her of local companies who may be interested in having a table at the Wellness Walk to promote their company.

Senator Eason thanked all of the senators who helped volunteer in Joyner Library during the ten Summer Melt orientation sessions. She is collecting items for the student give-away gift basket. If your department has swag that you would like to donate, please let Senator Eason know.

Students will begin moving on campus next week. Staff Senate will volunteer at the Cotton Resident Hall on August 17, 2023, which is located across from the fountain on Main Campus. Nine staff members have already registered to volunteer. Lunch for volunteers will be provided at noon at the West End Dining Hall. Senator Eason will email information to volunteers with more information related to parking. Senator Eason stated t-shirts for move-in are available for pick up after the meeting.

Discussion

Chair Lopez asked Senator Eason to include a parking pass in the gift basket.

Senator Eason replied she would reach out to Josh Puckett.

Scholarship Committee

The Chair of the Scholarship Committee, Michelle Bone, stated this committee will host the online auction closer to the holidays to encourage people to bid on items for presents. She encouraged all senators to donate items or reach out to a business for donations. Senator Bone has drafted a letter that can be used to ask businesses if they would like to donate to Staff Senate. A Google document has been created to list the businesses who have been contacted to avoid duplication of efforts.

Old Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez stated that during the July Staff Senate meeting Senator Aisha Powell made a motion to move the date of the October monthly meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 12, 2023, due to a home football game. Senator Amy Eason, from Academic Affairs, made a second to open the topic for discussion.

Discussion

Chair Lopez stated that Tuesday, October 17th, appears to be the best date to move the October meeting based on room availability. There was no discussion on the floor. A voice vote was conducted. The motion carried with all in favor to move the Thursday, October 12, 2023 meeting to Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. The location of this meeting will be determined and emailed to everyone soon.

New Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez stated the Treasured Pirate Award nominations have been extended to August 25, 2023. The award recipients are presented with a trophy and \$500 award at the annual awards ceremony, which will take place in 2024.

Senator Jennifer Jones added the application deadline for the Staff International Service Award is September 15, 2023. Winners will be recognized at ECU's 7th Annual International Award Ceremony to be held in November of 2023.

Chair Lopez emphasized the importance of nominating colleagues for the staff awards. She understands nominating someone takes time and effort, but is a great way for deserving individuals to be recognized for their work.

In closing, Chair Lopez announced the next Staff Senate meeting will be held on September 14, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in room 249 of the Main Campus Student Center.

The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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

Minutes approved 9/14/2023