

## **Staff Senate Monthly Meeting**

September 12, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.

Main Campus Student Center – Room 249

In-person attendance for Staff Senators and Alternates

Virtual attendance available through [livestream link](#)

### **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](mailto:staffsenate@ecu.edu).

#### **Roll Call**

Jenna Boardman, Staff Senate Secretary

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

Senators absent: Lindsay Arnold (Academic Affairs), Devin Fagnano (Brody School of Medicine), Tracy Smith (Administration & Finance)

Alternates present: Michelle Bone (Academic Affairs), Dominique Coleman (Academic Affairs), Patricia Earnhardt Tyndall (Chancellor's Office), Annah Howell (Student Affairs), Latoya Langford (Administration & Finance), Ronnie Woodward (Chancellor's Office)

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Jenna Boardman, Staff Senate Secretary

The August 8, 2024, meeting minutes were emailed to Staff Senate members; no corrections were received, and the minutes were approved as presented.

#### **Campus Update**

##### **Dr. Brandon Frye, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs**

Dr. Brandon Frye welcomed the group and shared the administrative report on behalf of the Chancellor's Cabinet. ECU has swiftly navigated through the fall 2024 semester, making significant strides in student engagement and success. Approximately 5,500 students moved into residential communities thanks to the efficiency of the "Stop, Drop, and Roll" volunteer team, which streamlined

the process. The university extends gratitude to all who participated in this effort. The campus grounds and buildings looked great, offering a welcoming atmosphere for students.

Following move-in, ECU hosted its signature welcome events, including Raid the Rec, Pirate Palooza, Student Welcome Picture, Fraternity Story Life Fest, and the Get a Clue organizational fair.

Participation numbers were up compared to last year, highlighting a clear connection between student engagement and success. On August 29th, nearly 700 members of the ECU community gathered at the Main Campus Student Center for the second annual University Day program, focused on student success. The Chancellor outlined the top student success goals for the academic year, which included retention, professional advising, transfer policy improvements, fundraising alignment, scholarship optimization, and on-time degree completion campaigns.

Regarding student enrollment, while final numbers await certification, ECU welcomed over 4,020 new first-year students, 1,760 new transfer students, and 1,900 new graduate students. Total headcount hovered around 27,000, with retention rates also rising to 82.7%.

On September 9th, ECU hosted a Fiscal Forum, during which Chancellor Rogers emphasized the importance of maintaining a firm fiscal foundation. Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Coger and Vice Chancellor Coleman introduced the Future Focused Resource Optimization Task Force, which will guide ECU's financial strategy.

In exciting news, ECU was recognized as a regional winner of the 2024 W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Scholarship Award. This recognition was due to the university's efforts in addressing mental health needs in rural North Carolina. ECU will now compete as a finalist for the C. Peter McGrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award.

Finally, a reminder was issued for all staff to practice self-care during the busy semester and to utilize the Employee Assistance Program if needed. Dr. Frye thanked all staff for their volunteer efforts and acknowledged the additional workload taken on to support the campus community.

## **Faculty Senate Update**

### **Dr. Anne Ticknor, Faculty Senate Chair and Professor in the College of Education**

Dr. Anne Ticknor provided an update on behalf of the faculty. She began by expressing gratitude to everyone involved in supporting the university. She emphasized the critical contributions made by each individual, noting that the university could not function without their efforts.

She acknowledged the chaos that accompanies the start of the academic year, especially for faculty returning from the summer break. Ticknor highlighted that while nine-month faculty may have had some time away during the summer, 12-month faculty continued working to ensure a smooth transition into the fall semester. She thanked everyone for their dedication during this time.

Dr. Ticknor announced the launch of a new Faculty Senate newsletter, encouraging staff to join the mailing list if interested. The newsletter will feature updates on new initiatives, budget considerations, and other essential matters. She also mentioned that the Faculty Senate website has been updated to provide clearer information.

Regarding budget concerns, Ticknor mentioned her involvement in the academic-focused group working on resource optimization. She invited feedback from faculty on potential issues or ideas to bring to the group, stressing the importance of collective input in addressing financial strategies.

In addition, she touched on the new equality training being conducted, which addresses the repeal and replacement of the University of North Carolina System Office's diversity and inclusion policy. Ticknor noted the significant changes, including the abolishment of numerous DEI positions across the state and the redirection of funds toward student success initiatives.

Dr. Ticknor reflected on the importance of staff and faculty sharing their perspectives. She emphasized that while they may not always be asked, their voices are crucial in ensuring varied viewpoints are considered in decision-making.

Dr. Ticknor confirmed that Angela Lampson, from the REDE Office, was the key figure behind the university's community engagement efforts, particularly those related to service learning. Ticknor thanked everyone for their continued efforts.

### **How Can Staff Support Pirate Athletics? Jon Gilbert, Director of Athletic Director**

Athletic Director John Gilbert addressed the group. He began by expressing his appreciation for their ongoing contributions, emphasizing the critical role each individual plays in the functioning of the university. Drawing from his 30 years of experience on various college campuses, he highlighted the importance of positive relationships within the university community in keeping operations smooth and efficient.

Gilbert shared several updates from the athletics department, starting with academic achievements. He noted that student-athletes achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.2, the highest ever for the department. He also provided updates on ongoing and upcoming projects, including the Isley Indoor Performance Center, an indoor facility for all sports teams, and the Dickens-Sarah Bennett Baseball expansion, both expected to proceed to the Board of Governors for approval. He also mentioned the recently completed Harold Varner Golf Complex and upcoming LED lighting installations at the softball and soccer/lacrosse fields.

Gilbert discussed the evolving landscape of college athletics, touching on the impact of name, image, and likeness (NIL) agreements that allow student-athletes to be compensated. He highlighted the significant changes in the last two years and noted how these changes affect the day-to-day business of athletics. Gilbert also addressed the risks associated with legalized sports gambling in North Carolina,

warning of its potential impact on student-athletes and advising caution to those who engage in such activities.

Lastly, Gilbert encouraged staff to attend athletic events, pointing out that many events, such as softball, soccer, volleyball, and lacrosse, are free to attend. He highlighted faculty and staff discount days for ticketed sports like football and basketball. Gilbert concluded by noting important upcoming games, including a women's soccer match against Temple and a highly anticipated football game against Appalachian State, which would be nationally televised on ESPNU.

In response to Senator Patricia Earnhardt Tyndall's question regarding broader discounts for athletic events, Gilbert acknowledged the existing discount days and expressed his willingness to explore additional opportunities with the marketing department. He also responded to Senator Dana Lopez's question regarding using the new indoor facility in her department, Campus Recreation and Wellness. He stated that he supports collaboration and would work to find opportunities for club sports and intramural teams to use the space. Gilbert closed his remarks by thanking the staff and encouraging them to support the Pirates.

### **Student Government Association Update**

Emily Bronson, SGA Attorney General

Attorney General of the Student Government Association (SGA), Miss Emily Bronson, provided an update on SGA activities. She noted that the ninth session of the student assembly has been busy. One of the key initiatives being launched is "Pirate Kits," wellness kits aimed at helping students during flu season. These kits, which will include tea bags, cough drops, and honey sticks, are intended to provide temporary relief for students experiencing minor illnesses, particularly if experiencing long wait times at student health services.

Bronson also mentioned the adoption of a waterway trash collector through Sound Rivers, a nonprofit focused on environmental protection. The SGA has committed to participating in this initiative for September, with executive cabinet members scheduled to assist with cleaning the Tar River.

Additionally, the SGA has introduced a school supply collection and trade program. Students can donate items such as graphing calculators, lab materials, and expensive manuals to benefit other students. The Environmental and Sustainability Committee, led by Lauren Garcia, launched this program.

Bronson concluded by mentioning the upcoming UNC Association of Student Governments (ASG) event, where she and other student leaders will travel to Winston-Salem to exchange ideas and initiatives with peers from across the University of North Carolina system.

In response to a question from Senator Dana Lopez from Student Affairs, Bronson confirmed that SGA is continuing to pursue the wellness days initiative. Daniel Walker, the new representative, will take over from former Vice President Matthew Blount to advance the effort.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Jennifer Jones, Staff Senate Treasurer

Treasurer Jennifer Jones presented the Treasurer's Report, beginning with the state funds allocated for the UNC Staff Assembly, noting that Chair Hildenbrand and former Chair Lopez traveled to a Staff Assembly meeting in August, and we are waiting for reimbursements. There will also be an additional expense for Chair Hildenbrand's hotel, which will be reflected in next month's report.

Regarding the Chancellor's Cup Golf Tournament, a few people are traveling for the event, and those expenses will also be accounted for.

Senator Jones highlighted that the discretionary funds for the year were approved, with a university allocation of \$35,293. The original request was for \$37,500, leaving a remaining balance of \$2,207.14.

The Children of SHRA Scholarship received distributed funds totaling \$2,114.81; two scholarships were paid out. The Gail Jordan Memorial Scholarship Fund was awarded \$1,421.38, with four scholarship payments made.

No activity was reported for the Priority Fund at this time.

## **Cornerstone Equality Training**

Toya Jacobs, Manager for Well-Being and Engagement Programs  
Department for People Operations, Success, and Opportunity

Miss Toya Jacobs introduced the training session, which the Office of University Counsel developed. Jacobs explained that the training covers concepts related to equality within the University of North Carolina system, particularly addressing recent policy changes. These changes focus on nondiscrimination, institutional neutrality, compelled speech, and prohibited concepts. By the end of the training, participants would gain a clearer understanding of these guidelines.

The Office of University Counsel created the training, which was narrated by Rob Weatherly, Director of Learning and Organizational Development. Jacobs informed participants that questions following the session should be directed to their immediate supervisors, who can consult with leadership if necessary. Vice Chancellors, Deans, and department leaders can also consult with the Office of University Counsel for further clarification.

Jacobs then initiated the training, ensuring attendees would be marked as completed in Cornerstone afterward.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Executive Committee**

Chair-Elect Bri Wood reported that the university has just kicked off its next steps in reviewing and advancing ECU's fiscal health by creating the Future Focused Research Optimization Task Force. Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Robin Coger and Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance Stephanie Coleman will lead the task force. The task force is made up of two working groups: 1. The Operational and Fiscal Health Working Group and 2. the Academic and Fiscal Health Working Group. A campus survey will be out the week of September 23. The two working groups hope to have their reports to the Oversight Committee by early November, and implementation plans to happen in January 2025.

Thank you to everyone who came and participated in University Day. If you could not attend, the Chancellor will send a link to the presentation later in the month in his monthly address.

### **By-Laws Committee**

Senator Lauren Arp, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, presented proposed amendments to the bylaws. These changes included updates based on state and university system policy changes, especially regarding the dissolution of the Diversity Committee. The changes also included updated wording for the Membership Committee, reflecting new titles such as "Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief People Officer or Designee." A redundancy in the Human Resources Committee advisor listing was also addressed—a call for a vote on updated bylaws during New Business.

### **Communication and Marketing Committee**

Senator Erin Gray, Communication and Marketing Committee Chair provided several updates. She thanked Kimrey Miko for arranging the headshots and the group photo and Michelle Bone for taking the headshots. Once the headshots are ready, they will be emailed to everyone for selection and posted on the website. Senator Gray also mentioned that a social media post highlighting the executive committee would go out soon. A different committee will be highlighted each month on Staff Senate socials, starting with the scholarship committee in October. They are working in reverse alphabetical order to time the highlights when they are most beneficial to each committee. The scholarship committee was asked to consider the information they'd like to include, with more details to follow in the next two weeks.

### **Human Resources Committee**

Senator Gary Martin provided several updates. The committee successfully conducted the ECU Community School supply drive, thanking volunteers and the Communications and Marketing committee for their support. The school expressed gratitude, and photos were posted on the Staff Senate Facebook page. The committee is also working on the wording for the Qualtrics survey and nomination letters for the staff emeritus program, with nominations running from the beginning of October through the end of November. Additionally, they announced an upcoming volunteer event at the food bank in November, with details to follow.

### **Leadership and Professional Development Committee**

Senator Joani Zary, Chair of the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, provided several updates. The committee met on Monday, September 26th, and, along with Rob Weatherly, discussed a potential presentation to the Staff Senate during the December 12th meeting. They are also planning to sponsor a PREP (Pirate Readiness Enhancement Program) course during Staff Appreciation Month. Additionally, they are still considering possible speakers for the upcoming ball event.

**Membership Committee**

Senator Laura Beth Fanning, Chair of the Membership Committee, provided several updates. The committee recently met to review absences and reminded members to email Staff Senate to avoid being marked unexcused if they cannot attend a meeting. They discussed open seats, including two alternate positions in Athletics, one seat and two alternates in Brody School of Medicine, and one alternate in University Advancement. Senator Jennifer Cook will distribute membership flyers at Brody to help recruitment efforts. The committee is also exploring whether Brody staff has a separate orientation from main campus and if Staff Senate documentation is provided to new employees. They plan to meet with Dr. Jason Higginson for further insights on recruitment at Brody.

**Recognition and Rewards Committee**

Senator Dana Lopez, Chair of the Recognition and Rewards Committee, announced the upcoming Wellness Walk on October 17th from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM, with a rain date of October 24th. They have secured around 20 vendors for the event and a food truck with music for entertainment. A bus will transport attendees from main campus to Brody and Lake Laupus. The committee is also working to secure a date for the Outstanding Staff Awards in April but is facing challenges with facility availability.

**Scholarship Committee**

The Scholarship Committee, co-chaired by LaToya Langford and Jenny Gregory, is down to four members and welcomes new participants. They are brainstorming fundraising ideas and have set two main goals: to explore new fundraising ideas and host one significant event with 1-2 passive events, aiming for at least 75% participation from all staff senators. Fundraising ideas include a mason jar change drive, spirit nights, disc golf or pickleball tournaments, 50/50 raffles, Chick-fil-A sandwich sales, and Valentine's Candy Grams. They are also exploring the sale of ECU calendars, holiday gift-wrapping services, and possibly running basketball concessions. An email will be sent to gather further ideas.

**Old Business**

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

Senator Maggie Bryant motioned to disband the Staff Senate Diversity Committee permanently. The motion was seconded, and a vote was held after a call for discussion. The majority voted in favor of disbanding the committee.

Senator Summer Edwards motioned to approve the presented changes to the Staff Senate Bylaws. The motion was seconded, and a vote was held after a call for discussion. The majority voted and, with no opposition, approved the changes.

Senator Bret Wilson made a motion to convene a special ad hoc committee charged with contributing to the welfare of university staff and fostering the interaction, integration, perspective, representation, and overall well-being of ECU Staff, to be referred to as the Well-Being Committee. The motion was seconded, and a vote was held after a call for discussion. The majority voted in favor. Chair Hildenbrand appointed Maggie Bryant, Bret Wilson, Katrina Harper, Summer Edwards, Moses McDaniel, and ex-officio Toya Jacobs to the new Well-Being Committee.

### **Announcements**

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair

Chair Hildenbrand reminded the Senate about the sponsored Blood Drive on October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Main Campus Student Center.

Chair Hildenbrand announced that the Treasured Pirate Awards nominations are extended through Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. 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.

The UNC Staff Assembly Janet B. Royster Memorial Scholarship applications remain open until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally, the next session of the Employee Wellbeing Institute will begin on Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, and run until November 12<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are scheduled every Tuesday from 10 AM to 12 PM in the Air Annex, room 283. Registration is available in Cornerstone until Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>.

In closing, Chair Crystal Hildenbrand announced that the next Staff Senate meeting will be held on October 10, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in the Main Campus Student Center, Room 249.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

### **Staff Senate Group Photo**

Steven Mantilla, ECU Creative Services

A new group photo was taken.

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