



Staff Senate Monthly Meeting

January 11, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.
East Carolina Heart Institute Auditorium (ECHI)
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 wished everyone a happy new year and shared meeting best practices with staff, guests, and those who attended virtually. 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 would like to speak at future meetings can notify Staff Senate by emailing staffsenate@ecu.edu.

Chair Lopez reminded senators and alternates that they are expected to attend monthly meetings. The secretary should be contacted if senators or alternates are unable to attend, and it is the staff member's responsibility to notify their alternate to vote in their place. Staff senators and alternates are also expected to keep their respective divisions informed by using listservs, announcements during staff meetings, and other means of division communications to ensure that information reaches everyone.

Roll Call

Dr. Lauren Thorn, Staff Senate Vice-Chair

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

Senators absent: Lindsay Arnold (Academic Affairs), Michelle Bone (Academic Affairs), Maggie Bryant (Brody School of Medicine), Chad Carwein (Administration and Finance), Jennifer Cook (Brody School of Medicine), Margaret Dodson (Brody School of Medicine), Laura Beth Fanning (Administration and Finance), Sammy Jo Fly (Academic Affairs), Patricia Highsmith (Brody School of Medicine), Jennifer Jones (Administration and Finance), Ophelia Madden (University Advancement), Gary Martin (Administration and Finance), Margaret Moody (Brody School of Medicine), Joseph Moore (Brody School of Medicine), Christiana Shoopman (Academic Affairs), John Southworth (Administration and Finance), Carla Williams (Brody School of Medicine), and Kristin Wooten (Brody School of Medicine)

Alternates present: Jenna Boardman (University Advancement), Holly Buck (Academic Affairs), Summer Edwards (Academic Affairs), Kelley Evans (Administration and Finance), Kimrey Miko (Chancellor's Office), Kristina Page (Student Affairs), and Deidra Williams Morrissey (Chancellor's Office)

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Lauren Thorn, Staff Senate Vice-Chair

The minutes from the December 14, 2023 meeting were emailed to members of the Staff Senate and no corrections were received. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Campus Update

Dr. Brandon Frye, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

Vice Chancellor Frye greeted the staff and stated he hoped everyone had a restful winter break and is ready to continue to execute ECU's strategic plan this spring. Student success is a focal point of ECU's priorities, and recruitment and retention are key components around that strategic effort. Last September, Vice Chancellor Frye spoke to the Staff Senate about the important role that everyone has in welcoming new students and supporting returning students at ECU. Throughout the semester, the experiences and services we provide for our students creates a relationship-rich education. He provided the following examples of how staff help with this initiative, such as composing press releases, keeping the grounds beautiful and well-maintained, fielding calls to assist a parent or student, and conducting health and safety inspections to ensure the facilities are safe. All of these actions matter and create an ecosystem that supports the students at ECU and their success. As ECU recruits for the fall 2024 semester, Vice Chancellor Frye stressed the importance of engaging with prospective students and their families and providing a positive experience on campus.

ECU continues to prioritize access and affordability for ECU students. In December of 2023, the administration proposed, and the BOT supported, only a few tuition increases for select graduate programs. This was the eighth consecutive year with no undergraduate resident tuition increases. ECU proposed no tuition increase for non-resident undergraduate students in 2024 – 2025, no broad graduate tuition increases, and no increase in mandatory fees.

Vice Chancellor Frye discussed the positive information related to the UNC System student Return on Investment (ROI) survey. Specifically at ECU, 98% of undergraduate programs had a positive ROI for students. For graduate programs, 97% had a positive ROI for students, and at least 90% of low-income students experienced upward economic mobility after obtaining an ECU degree. He stated these numbers are outstanding, and we should all consider these points of pride for ECU.

In closing, Vice Chancellor Frye stated that he and Provost Coger are leading an effort to design and communicate a student success agenda for the campus. More information will be shared over the next month. He added that as we use our time and talents to serve others, to not forget to take care of ourselves, and urged staff to review resources available on the [Work-Life & Wellness page](#) offered through Human Resources.

Discussion: Past Chair Aisha Powell, from Academic Affairs, brought up the memo sent by Chancellor Rogers about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commission and asked what plans are for integrating the recommendations from the Student Access and Success group.

Vice Chancellor Frye replied that once all unit plans are received, the Office of Institution Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR) will map out the information, which will then allow the Chancellor's Cabinet to review and identify if gaps exist. If there are gaps, the plans will be returned to the respective vice chancellors for revisions. VC Frye and Provost Coger will review the suggestions related to the student success plan and how to integrate those into the unit strategic plans that are being approved.

Past Chair Aisha Powell, from Academic Affairs, asked a follow-up question about the other subcommittees, such as the Culture, Climate, and Communication Committee and the Employment Retention and Recruitment Committee, who were unable to provide suggestions through a report, and how that would be addressed.

Vice Chancellor Frye stated at this time the information from the DEI Commission will be presented to the Chancellor to determine how to proceed. Dr. Frye added that Student Affairs will incorporate information received from the committee.

Black Student Success Summit

Aisha Powell, Past Staff Senate Chair and Assistant Director of Undergraduate Advising & Peer Mentoring in the College of Business

Past Chair Aisha Powell provided information on the Black Student Success Summit. This is a student-led summit that began last year and is hosted by the Black Student Union. Past Chair Powell serves as the advisor for the Black Student Success Summit. This summit provides students with academic and leadership strategies, and fosters connections between faculty, staff, alumni, and allies on campus. Three student co-chairs, Trey Joyner, Iyaira Williams, and Darius Wingfield II, lead this program which was awarded the Outstanding Diversity and Equity Program of the Year in 2023. Dr. Turner provided the keynote address and Dean Akintunde provided greetings from the administration. Students who attended the event obtained a full conference experience, with support from the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center (LWCC), a sponsored breakfast, a lunchtime address, and afternoon sessions by alumni, faculty, and staff on campus.

This year's Black Student Success Summit is themed "Better Together: Cultivating a Culture of Care" and will be held on Saturday, February 10, 2024, from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm at the Main Campus Student Center. This is a free event and registration is through the Pirate Experience by February 1, 2024. Past Chair Powell stated this will be a great opportunity to engage with students. The keynote speaker will be Terrell Williams, who graduated from ECU in 1998, is in his sixth season with the Titans and is in his first year as the assistant head coach. Over 250 people have registered, and their goal is to have four hundred participants. Past Chair Powell urged staff to share information regarding this event.

The following sponsors have graciously supported this initiative: the Student Government Association, the Office for Equity and Diversity, the Ledonia Wright Cultural Center, the Honor's College, the College of Business, College of Nursing, the College of Nursing Culture, Engagement, and Professional Development Office, the Black Alumni Chapter, the Organization of Black Staff, and the Black Faculty Organization. Anyone interested in volunteering, such as helping with check in, serving at the welcome desk, or assisting with the sessions, can reach out to Past Chair Powell.

Discussion: Ex-officio member Toya Jacobs, from the Office for Equity and Diversity, made a comment related to the summit.

Past Chair Aisha Powell added that 263 individuals have registered and noted that Toya Jacobs is also an advisor who helps students with the planning for this summit.

Student Success Conference

Dr. Lauren Thorn, Staff Senate Vice-Chair and Director of the Center for Student Success

Dr. Lauren Thorn discussed the Student Success Conference, which is in its eleventh year, and is hosted by ECU's Office of Student Transitions. It will be held on January 26, 2024, from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm at the Main Campus Student Center. This year's theme is focused on recognizing each individual on campus, our role in student success, and helping to support our students. The tagline is, "Every student, every person, every day. Student success starts with you." Registration is available through January 19, 2024, and can also be performed on-site on the day of the conference. More information can be located at <http://studentaffairs.ecu.edu/studentsuccessconference>.

Employee Well-Being

Suzanne McDonald, Senior Assistant Director of Fitness and Employee Wellbeing

Suzanne McDonald began with an activity that allowed staff to take their mind off of everything else and do something fun. She discussed the importance of doing something each day that is fulfilling and explained the five essential elements of well-being:

1. Career - Enjoy what you do.
2. Social - Surround yourself with people you enjoy spending time with.
3. Physical – Take care of your basic needs, such as, sleep, nutrition, and activity.
4. Community - Engage with groups where you live.
5. Financial - Have the resources to live within your chosen means.

She discussed the Employee Well-Being Institute, which is an eight-week program that meets for two hours each week and will be offered in the fall of 2024. Human Resources will send a newsletter in February focused on additional Well-Being resources and events. Suzanne McDonald's office offers departmental presentations on wellness and activities, such as chair yoga. She urged staff to sign up for the habit tracker app, BetterYou, using your ECU email address. The link to BetterYou is located on their [website](#). Suzanne also explained the Campus Recreation and Wellness tiered memberships, with options of half-priced memberships for household members, weekend and summer memberships available for children and teens, and access to adventure rentals for equipment, such as kayaks. New members receive two weeks free at the recreation center.

Discussion: Treasurer Stephanie Stroud announced that staff will receive one free week at the recreation center as a part of Staff Appreciation Month in April of 2024.

Faculty Senate Update

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

Dr. Anne Ticknor has been at ECU since 2010 in the College of Education and is in her second year serving as the Chair of the Faculty Senate. She provided an update on Faculty Senate initiatives and background information related to its twenty-four committees. They have been working on curriculum updates, which includes suggested syllabus language related to artificial intelligence. They approved revisions for several parts of the ECU Faculty Manual in October of 2023, and are awaiting final approval from the Chancellor's office before implementation. One of those topics involves a revision to the Faculty Manual related to changes in the UNC System Policy Manual and Code affecting faculty and the grievance process. Faculty Senate has made an amendment in their by-laws to allow the Staff Senate Chair to serve as an ex-officio member. Chair Lopez has been attending Faculty Senate meetings. Dr. Ticknor also addressed the state budget funding of the Faculty Realignment Incentive Program (FRIP), which is an optional retirement program targeted to five UNC System institutions due to enrollment shortfalls and budget cuts. The funds allotted will be used to incentivize eligible tenured faculty who meet certain criteria, such as being fifty-five or older with ten years of service in the UNC System, to retire and receive a one-time severance payment of their base salary. Approximately three hundred eligible members were notified who had to indicate their interest last week. A vetting of eligibility and the costs savings are being reviewed. ECU could potentially lose 50% of its tenured faculty members, which would impact programs, departments, and the broader university community.

Dr. Ticknor encouraged staff to reach out to the Faculty Senate to notify their committees about items of interest, as it is helpful to have the staffs' perspective. Dr. Ticknor meets with Chair Lopez every month to discuss shared interests across faculty and staff. Meetings also take place between leadership of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and SGA.

Discussion: Chair Dana Lopez, from Academic Affairs, asked what would happen if not enough faculty are interested in FRIP.

Dr. Anne Ticknor replied there will need to be a way to account for the deficit, but those decisions lie at a higher level.

Senator Dawn Boyd-Cribari, from Administration and Finance, asked if a grant could be written that would assist with the deficit.

Dr. Anne Ticknor replied that would be a great idea. She added that the policy was approved, but the allocation of the money from the legislature is a one-time offer.

Student Government Association Update

Crystal Hildenbrand, Staff Senate Chair-Elect

Chair-Elect Crystal Hildenbrand provided the SGA update on behalf of Joshua Crockett. The Swipe Out Hunger initiative will start soon, three new directors have been confirmed, and SGA elections are upcoming.

Treasurer's Report

Stephanie Stroud, Staff Senate Treasurer

Treasurer Stephanie Stroud reported on the reservation fees for Staff Senate meetings and the administration fee for Staff Senate's institutional fund account, which is 2% of the prior year's expenses. Treasurer Stroud is still waiting on reimbursement for travel from the July and October Staff Assembly meetings from 2023. Funds will be spent for Staff Appreciation Month in April of 2024.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee

Dana Lopez, Staff Senate Chair

UNC Staff Assembly

The UNC System Staff Assembly held a special meeting to discuss revisions to the UNC Policy Manual. The full document is available on the Board of Governors website from their November 2023 meeting. The UNC System Office initiated a system-wide policy review effort. This policy update project included reviewing and proposing revisions to the UNC Policy Manual and Code. The following policy revisions that may affect staff were reviewed:

- 300.1 - Policy on Senior Academic and Administrative Officers
- 300.2.1 Policy of Employees Exempt from the NC Human Resources Act

These revisions combine Senior Academic and Administrative Officer (SAAO) Tier I, SAAO Tier II, and Institutional, Research and Information Technology (IRIT) employees into one policy (300.1.1) and eliminates the SAAO Tier II category by placing them into a new category with IRIT appointments, which will be designated as Exempt Professional Staff (EPS).

- 300.2.22 Leave Programs for Faculty and Staff Exempt from the NC Human Resources Act

This revision is being proposed for July 1, 2024, and would affect new EPS employees, new SAAOs, and new 12-month faculty positions. These employees would receive twenty-six calendar days of personal leave instead of twenty-four calendar days; however only four weeks of leave could be carried forward instead of six weeks. Any excess leave is forfeited and is not paid out if the employee leaves the university. Employees would carry forward sick leave separately.

Chair Lopez reiterated that this policy has not been approved, but it is expected to be voted on during the January Board of Governors meeting. This only affects new employees. Current employees are grandfathered into the leave program but will have the option to opt into this new policy.

The Staff Assembly asked the System Office why staff were not involved during the open comment period related to these revisions. The System Office responded that it was an oversight on their part.

Discussion: Chair-Elect Hildenbrand commented that if you were to leave your position at ECU and take a position at another UNC institution, you will automatically be placed into the new leave plan.

Chair Lopez clarified that if you transfer positions within ECU, your status will not change. If you transfer from ECU to another UNC System University, you will be placed into the new leave program. This new leave policy may challenge our recruitment efforts.

By-Laws Committee

Senator Kristy Ashely provided the update for the By-Laws Committee, and stated they are finalizing comprehensive wording for the SGA representative and Parliamentary role. The By-Laws Committee will continue to review the by-laws of other UNC System universities as well as the Staff Assembly to see how those governing bodies may differ from ECU's Staff Senate.

Communication and Marketing Committee

There were no updates from the Communication and Marketing Committee.

Diversity Committee

Senator Aisha Powell, Chair of the Diversity Committee, announced that the Labor Acknowledgement, which has passed in the Faculty and Staff Senate, will be voted on soon by the SGA. Dean Danell will not be able to serve as a panelist for the Annual Women's Leaders at ECU Panel. Dr. Bhibha Das, an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology, will serve in her place. This event will be held on March 28th at 3:00 pm at the Main Campus Student Center and an invitation will be emailed soon.

The following events will take place on campus and in the community:

- January 15, 2024 (7:30 am – 9:00 am): Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce Community Unity Breakfast at the ECU Murphy Center with keynote speaker Pastor Eve Rogers
- January 15, 2024 (9:00 am – 2:00 pm): MLK Day of Service through the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement; Service opportunities are listed on ECU's GivePulse website.
- January 16, 2024 (4:00 pm – 6:00 pm): MLK: A Celebration of Racial Healing at the Main Campus Student Center ballrooms, which will include a resource fair from 4:00 – 5:00 pm, and a dinner and keynote speaker, Dr. Kristal Brent Zook, from 5:00 – 6:00 pm
- January 18, 2024 (7:00 pm): Laurie Hernandez, the 2016 U.S. Olympic gold and silver medalists in gymnastics, will speak at the ECU Voyages of Discovery Series hosted by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences. This event is free for staff.
- January 20, 2024 (6:00 pm): The Student National Medical Association will host the 40th Annual Andrew Best, MD Senior Recognition Banquet at the East Carolina Heart Institute. Tickets can be purchased through Eventbrite.
- February 9, 2024: The Latino Medical Student Association will host its 1st Annual Gala.

Human Resources Committee

Senator Jennifer Muir, Chair for the HR Committee, reported they have reviewed the nominees for the Staff Emeritus awards. These awards will be presented at the Chancellor's Horizon Awards on April 8, 2024, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Mendenhall Student Center ballrooms.

A volunteer service event with Mr. Beast will be scheduled for April 23, 2024.

Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Vice-Chair Lauren Thorn provided an update from the Leadership and Professional Development Committee. They are finalizing the timeline for the Ballard's Annual Lessons in Leadership (B.A.L.L.) event and will be working with Rob Weatherly to finalize a date and time for a professional development opportunity that will be offered during Staff Appreciation Month.

Membership Committee

Chair-Elect Crystal Hildenbrand provided the update for the Membership Committee. Nominations are being received through January 17, 2024, and senators were encouraged to submit nominations. Currently twelve nominations have been received from Academic Affairs, seven from Administration and Finance, one from the Chancellor's Division, six from the Brody School of Medicine, six from Student Affairs, and one from University Advancement. The Communications and Marketing Committee were thanked for assisting with the flyers and communications through social media. Senators whose terms are ending have been notified and may nominate themselves if they would like to be considered during elections.

Recognition and Rewards Committee

Senator Amy Eason, the Chair of the Recognition and Rewards Committee, stated Staff Appreciation Month will be held in April of 2024 and will contain multiple events across campus. The B.A.L.L. event will be held on April 10, 2024, and Rob Weatherly will provide a presentation on Servant Leadership during the week of April 22, 2024. A week-long Silent Auction will also be scheduled in April. Staff Appreciation will begin with Spirit Week and one free week will be offered at the Campus Recreation Center on Main Campus and Health Sciences Campus.

Two home baseball games will be held on Friday evenings in April, and Staff Senate is working with athletics to receive discounted tickets for staff members to enjoy a baseball game with their family. Meal vouchers for Main Campus and the cookout at Health Sciences Campus will also take place. A virtual resources panel will be presented, and the Outstanding Staff Awards Ceremony will be held on April 24, 2024, at the Faulkner Gallery in Joyner Library from 3:00 – 4:00 pm. Nominations for the staff awards will go out later on in the spring. Family Day will be held on a Saturday in April at the North Recreational Complex. Additional events and programs can be sent to Senator Eason to ensure they are placed on the calendar for staff to attend.

Discussion: Chair Dana Lopez stated she does not know the number of staff that start their shift at 3:00 p.m. on the Health Sciences Campus, but would like to see how we can accommodate anyone who is not able to attend the cookout.

Senator Amy Eason replied they will discuss different options during their next meeting.

Treasurer Stephanie Stroud added that Staff Senate will also provide funds to the Community Service Learning Centers that are a part of the dental school to provide lunch for those who are unable to come to campus.

A member of the Staff Senate asked if it is possible to have the Main Campus lunch at a location other than the dining hall.

Treasurer Stroud replied that the meal voucher is loaded onto the ECU 1 Card in order to keep track of the billing. If you work on Main Campus, you are welcome to attend the cookout on Health Sciences Campus instead of eating at the dining hall.

Past Chair Aisha Powell suggested helping the housekeepers and Facilities staff register for the free lunch event.

A member of the Staff Senate added that technically there are other options for places to eat on campus other than the dining hall, but the staff member would need to pay the difference for that meal, and that does not equate to what Staff Senate is trying to do to show appreciation through this meal voucher.

Scholarship Committee

Chair-Elect Crystal Hildenbrand provided the update on behalf of the Scholarship Committee and announced that the Gail Jordan Memorial Scholarship and the Children of SHRA Employees Scholarship are open for applications until January 15, 2024.

Old Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

300.4.1 – Policy on Interpersonal Relationships among Faculty, Staff, and Students

Chair Dana Lopez discussed the proposed language changes in this policy. If approved, “Related persons” will be used in place of “Related by blood, law, or marriage.” This change includes domestic partners and more gender-neutral language. This proposed update also further defines employment decisions and procedures, remedies, and reporting.

Additional Announcements

Chair-Elect Crystal Hildenbrand announced that the UNC Staff Assembly is looking for a venue to hold the Chancellors’ Cup Golf Tournament in September of 2024. Garrett Killian is the Co-Chair of the committee that is planning this event. Ideas, information, and contacts at local golf courses can be sent to Staff Senate by January 31, 2024.

In closing, Chair Dana Lopez announced the next Staff Senate meeting will be held on February 8, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at the East Carolina Heart Institute (ECHI) Auditorium.

The meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Meeting minutes were taken by Staff Senate Vice-Chair, Dr. Lauren Thorn, and prepared by Staff Senate Secretary, Christiana Shoopman.



Minutes approved 2/8/2024