

Staff Senate Monthly Meeting

October 17, 2023, 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 welcomed staff and guests and shared meeting best practices. Speaking is limited to senators, alternates, ex-officio members, and those who have previously been granted speaking privileges. 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.

Campus Update

Karson Nelson Hallow, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Karson Hallow provided an update on this year's state legislative session. She discussed the UNC System legislative process and explained where ECU stands post-budget. ECU is waiting on guidance as the budget becomes certified and the UNC System works with the Office of State Budget to interpret the new initiatives and changes to policy.

Ms. Hallow explained the UNC System's relationship with the NC General Assembly. Advocacy for the UNC System begins with the President of the UNC System, who is the top representative of all governing bodies. There are also several Vice Presidents as well as State and Federal Relations Officers, who serve as legislative liaisons. Karson Hallow, the Director of Strategic Initiatives, and Michelle Brooks, who is the Executive Vice Dean of the Brody School of Medicine, are the legislative liaisons for ECU. They represent ECU by assisting in the development for budget requests and policy priorities, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws, support the Chief Research and Engagement Officer in pursuing federal funding opportunities, and coordinate campus visits, presentations, and speaking engagements involving elected officials.

The UNC System Office develops and proposes the budget and policy agenda, which is reviewed and approved by the Board of Governors. The 2023 strategic plan includes access, affordability and efficiency, student success, economic impact, community engagement, and excellent and diverse institutions. The UNC System Office's budget priorities covered the switch to the performance-weighted funding model, due to changing enrollment patterns, faculty and staff compensation, high quality programs for workforce needs, critical enterprise risks, and building reserves. ECU's legislative priorities for fiscal years 2023-2025 include faculty and staff salary increases, growing the primary care workforce, Preparing Individuals in Rural Areas for Tomorrow's Economy (PIRATE) grants, and a focus on major repair and renovation projects as well as new capital projects.

- **Summary of UNC System and ECU Priorities in the State Budget for Fiscal Years 2023-2025**
 - UNC System Performance Enrollment Change
 - UNC System Repairs and Renovations
 - UNC System Faculty Realignment Program
 - UNC System Faculty Recruitment & Retention
 - NCInnovation Endowment
 - Faculty and Staff Salary Increases
 - 4% in year one, 3% in the second year for university employees
 - 10% raise for nursing faculty
 - 5.5% raise for employees that are paid based on years of service
 - ECU New Capital Projects & Named Renovations
 - \$200 million in investments going towards the new medical education building, a behavior health facility, a new medical examiners' facility, and the renovation of the Howell Science building
 - ECU Primary Care Class Size Expansion
 - Grows the class size of the medical school, the number of nursing degrees and supports clinical preceptors for the College of Nursing, the physician assistant program and supports clinical preceptors for students, and the ECU Psychological Assessment and Specialty Services (PASS) Clinic
 - ECU Dental Special Needs Planning
 - Focuses on education, research, and clinical services for patients with special needs
 - NC Care Rural Health Initiative
 - Provides patients in rural areas with access to primary and specialty care

Karson Hallow also mentioned a new state agency hiring pay and classification flexibility pilot, which allows individuals in the UNC System the option of having their application considered for future job postings at the same agency or other agencies if the individual has been identified as a qualified applicant within the same classification. It also allows institutions to classify or reclassify positions according to the UNC System and allows the UNC System to set salaries for their employees within salary ranges that are more flexible than the current Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) requirements.

Discussion: Senator Patricia Highsmith, representing the Brody School of Medicine, asked if the hiring flexibility pilot applies to all state employees.

Karson Hallow responded she would follow up with Senator Highsmith to ensure she is understanding the question correctly.

Parliamentarian Joshua Crocket asked about specific numbers related to the primary care class size expansion.

Karson Hallow replied that the Brody School of Medicine is expected to grow by 40 students. The plan is to have a class of 100 students for the next academic year and increase to 120 students by the time the new medical building is complete. The College of Nursing is looking at innovative ways to make investments in their technology that will allow them to grow their degrees, as well as providing

clinical preceptor payments, which are required for accreditation. The Health Psychology program will hire more faculty and staff for the PASS Clinic and will create a preceptor opportunity for their doctoral students.

Policies and Laws on Compelled Speech, the UNC/Harvard Admissions Ruling, and Senate Bill 364

Amanda H. Williams, Deputy General Counsel and Associate Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs

Laura N. Sloan, Associate University Attorney

Amanda Williams and Laura Sloan co-presented on legal and policy changes related to the following topics: race conscious admissions, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. UNC/Harvard*, North Carolina Senate Bill 364, and UNC Policy 300.5.1 – Political Activities of Employees.

- **Race Conscious Admissions**

- Equal Protection Clause under the US Constitution:
Distinctions based on race are judged under the strict scrutiny test, which is the highest standard that a court uses to evaluate the constitutionality of government action. Strict scrutiny means the rule or process must be narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling governmental interest.
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act:
“No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”
- Since 1978, the Supreme Court has said there is a compelling government interest in having diversity in the educational environment and that institutions could use race in their admissions decisions. With the *Students for Fair Admissions v. UNC/Harvard* case, the Supreme Court now states this is no longer a compelling governmental interest.

- ***Students for Fair Admissions v. UNC/Harvard***

- The Supreme Court has stated racial balancing is unconstitutional and does not constitute a compelling governmental interest. An applicant’s discussion of how race has impacted their life and their character traits may be considered during the admissions process as it relates to their experiences, but their application cannot be treated differently on the basis of race.
https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199_hgdj.pdf
- ECU has received directives from the UNC System Office regarding the implementation of this decision, which includes required training for employees who work in admissions.
<https://www.northcarolina.edu/wp-content/uploads/reports-and-documents/legal/unc-system-office-directives-regarding-implementation-of-students-for-fair-admissions-decision.pdf>
 - All applications and practices must be race-blind.
 - Universities cannot have racial composition targets, such as goals to achieve racial diversity in admissions processes.
 - Race-blind alternatives such as geography, socioeconomic status, and first-generation college student status can be used and evaluated in admissions processes as long as they are not being used as a proxy for race.
 - The directives from the UNC System regarding race apply to ethnicity, too.

- The directives could affect other areas, such as scholarship programs and research.
- **North Carolina Senate Bill 364 (Session Law 2023-62)**
 - <https://ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/Senate/PDF/S364v6.pdf>
 - Prohibits State agencies, departments, and institutions from “soliciting or requiring an applicant for employment to endorse or opine about beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles regarding matters of contemporary political debate or social action as a condition of employment”
 - Prohibits State government workplaces from compelling employees to affirm or profess belief in certain concepts or including those concepts in employee training programs
- **Policy Manual 300.5.1 – Political Activities of Employees**
 - <https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/doc.php?type=pdf&id=125>
 - This policy shares similar language to Senate Bill 364, indicating “The University shall neither solicit nor require an employee or applicant for academic admission or employment to affirmatively ascribe to or opine about beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles regarding matters of contemporary political debate or social action as a condition to admission, employment, or professional advancement.”
- **What Can Be Done**
 - Applicants are free to volunteer information.
 - Avoid leading questions that imply or require confirmation with a position on a contemporary issue.
 - Questions may be directed to Amanda Williams (williamsam@ecu.edu) and Laura Sloan (sloanl21@ecu.edu).

Discussion: Senator Glenn Sheppard, from Administration and Finance, works in Facilities and handles contracts for construction. He questioned how state mandates regarding race might affect these areas.

Amanda Williams replied that this is an area where we may see other federal agencies or entities start to change policies on how they require us to do those pieces of work. We will be looking for ways to comply with both policies, meaning we may be able to have the diversity goal without being race conscious or minority conscious.

Chair Dana Lopez, from Student Affairs, asked since we can no longer capture race data at the application level, how it is suggested to capture this data after the application point.

Laura Sloan responded this will differ based on which program the student is enrolled, such as an undergraduate, graduate, or professional school program. There is nothing to prevent ECU from asking after the student has been enrolled, since the admissions decision has been made at that point. Best practices will likely depend on the nature of the specific program.

Amanda Williams added if there is a legal reason to capture this information at the admissions stage, then reach out University Counsel, first. The UNC System Office will have to agree with ECU about the discrete legal need.

Senator John Southworth, from Administration and Finance, asked if there is a specific definition for the term political debate.

Amanda Williams stated the phrase regarding matters of contemporary political debate is intended to be very broad. She recommended applying it as broadly as you can to keep yourself safe. People are still free to volunteer certain information, but we cannot ask or compel them to speak as a condition for admission, employment, or promotion.

Laura Sloan added we can ask individuals about their willingness to comply with our nondiscrimination policy.

Elections, New Voter ID Requirements, and Pirates Vote Initiative

Alex Dennis, Senior Assistant Director, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement

Alex Dennis works in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, which is under Student Affairs. His office is located in room 208 in the Main Campus Student Center. Those interested in how to utilize their community service hours may reach out to him, as his office has many community partners. One of the initiatives that Mr. Dennis oversees is the Pirates Vote initiative, which is a non-partisan voter engagement program that urges students to register to vote and encourages civic involvement. His office also leads a program named Citizen U, which is designed to engage students to be involved in democracy. Vice-Chair Lauren Thorn has previously presented a session on civil discourse, and they have held community leadership panels.

All of the programs offered by the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement can be found on the Pirate Experience engagement platform. They have a Dinner and Discourse Series where students share a meal and discuss topics related to current events. One of the main issues our country is struggling with is being able to have civil conversations with one another. Over 40 students participated in the last Dinner and Discourse series. The next event will be held on October 18, 2023, in the Black Box Theater in the Main Campus Student Center.

ECU earned a Gold Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. ECU participates in many studies and award programs throughout the country that rank colleges and universities based on how voter-friendly they are. One study ECU participates in is with Tufts University in Boston called the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. ECU receives reports that show the voting rate of our students in general and midterm elections. Approximately 74% of ECU's student body voted in the 2020 election.

Voting for the municipal elections begins on October 19, 2023, at the Pitt County Office Complex on West Fifth Street in Greenville. Students, faculty, staff, and anyone registered to vote in Pitt County can utilize the One-Stop early voting and same-day registration site in room 125 of the Main Campus Student Center from October 30 – November 4 (weekdays 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, November 4th, from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.). ECU 1 Cards have been approved as a form of voter identification for students, faculty,

and staff. Free parking for voters is available in the A1 lot across from the student center entrance in the old FedEx lot. Information on candidates can be viewed at <https://www.voter411enc.org/>.

The Dogs for Democracy: Election Celebration Cookout will be held on November 7, 2023, from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Main Campus Student Center Lawn and Ledonia Wright Cultural Center (LWCC) patio. Alex Dennis urged staff to bring their dog, enjoy a hot dog, and hear the election results.

Alex Dennis can be reached for questions about voting at dennisa15@ecu.edu.

Approval of Minutes

Christiana Shoopman, Staff Senate Secretary

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

Executive Committee Updates

Staff Senate Executive Committee

Student Code of Conduct Revision Committee

Chair Dana Lopez, from Student Affairs, and Senator Kristy Ashley, from Athletics, are serving on the Student Code of Conduct Revision Committee. The charge meeting was held last week, and the first meeting took place on October 17, 2023. Chair Lopez will provide updates to Staff Senate as work progresses.

Chancellor's Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The steering committee for the Chancellor's Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion met last week to discuss navigating the new policies presented in today's Staff Senate meeting by university counsel. They also reviewed a request from the Culture, Climate, and Communications Subcommittee to pause their work due to uncertainties in how they may move forward based on the new policies and laws. The request to pause was agreed upon by the steering committee.

Chancellors' Cup Golf Tournament

Chair Dana Lopez, Treasurer Stephanie Stroud, and Senator John Southworth volunteered at the UNC System Staff Assembly Chancellors' Cup Golf Tournament at Bryan Park Golf Course in Greensboro, which was hosted by North Carolina A & T University on September 26, 2023. Chair Lopez thanked the volunteers and congratulated the ECU team on their performance. ECU's team consisted of Justin Waters, John Gill, Brian Mattern, and Dave Loomis. She also thanked delegates Garret Killian and Senator Todd Inman for assisting with the tournament and serving on the UNC System Staff Assembly as Parliamentarian and Member-At-Large, respectively. The funds raised at this tournament will allow the UNC System Staff Assembly to continue supporting professional development and educational goals for staff through the Janet B. Royster Memorial Scholarship. Scholarship applications closed on Saturday, September 30, 2023. An update will be shared next month regarding the amount of funds that were raised from the golf tournament.

Board of Trustees

Chair Lopez provided an update on behalf of Staff Senate to the Board of Trustees on September 29, 2023. In her remarks, she discussed the fantastic work that is being conducted and the major priorities of the Staff Senate, to include expanding staff's understanding of artificial intelligence (A.I.) through education and training with an emphasis on human/A.I. collaboration and guidance on career path support. Staff Senate will also continue to review flexible work arrangements to facilitate consistency among similar jobs, increase job satisfaction and productivity, increase communication in support of "One ECU" through events such as University Day, and proactively engage in activities that strengthen the staff and its role in ECU's shared governance.

Faculty and Staff Senate Social

Chair-Elect Hildenbrand discussed the successful Faculty and Staff Senate Social that was held on September 21, 2023 at the Angus Grill on Jarvis Street in Greenville. She thanked the senators who attended and mentioned the good dialog that took place with faculty. A surprise visit was made by Chancellor Rogers. Chair-Elect Hildenbrand urged staff to attend the next social, which will take place during the spring semester.

University Day

Vice-Chair Lauren Thorn provided an update on University Day, which was held on September 20, 2023. She emphasized it was a great seeing students, faculty, staff, and administrators come together across the university. During the event, a video was shared that introduces the refresh of ECU's strategic plan, *Future focused - innovation driven*. The next steps in the process include departments identifying metrics that fit within the mission and vision outlined by the strategic plan to ensure it represents the university as a whole. The video created by University Communications is located on ECU's website under [News Services](#).

Treasurer's Report

Secretary Christiana Shoopman provided the Treasurer's Report in Stephanie Stroud's absence. The report documented the fee associated with the use of the Main Campus Student Center for the September Staff Senate meeting. Any requests for funds for upcoming events can be emailed to Treasurer Stroud at webers@ecu.edu or to staffsenate@ecu.edu.

Student Government Association (SGA)

Parliamentarian Joshua Crockett stated that he, along with SGA President Javier Limon, and two SGA directors, recently attended the NC Association of Student Governments. They learned and discussed many ideas that they hope to implement at ECU. Parliamentarian Crockett spoke with liaisons from other universities about shared governance.

A Swipe Out Hunger Day of Giving is planned for Friday, October 18, 2023. The SGA is also working to engage more students in the Elections Commission to prepare for upcoming spring elections. They have funded \$4,325 for students to attend the Super Bowl through the Sports Management Department, since that department is unable to fund this event for students this year due to budget cuts.

Committee Updates

Recognition and Rewards Committee

Senator Amy Eason, the Chair of the Recognition and Rewards Committee, reminded everyone of the Wellness Walk that will be held on Thursday, October 19, 2023, from 11:30 am – 1:30 p.m. at Lake Laupus. A Staff Senate t-shirt will be provided to participants who complete their punch card by visiting the various businesses at the event. A food truck will also be on-site. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign-up on the Excel sheet in the Staff Senate Microsoft Teams' chat.

Senator Eason was honored to present the ECU gift basket to the first-year student who won the drawing from the Staff Senate table during Summer Melt. She thanked everyone who donated items for that basket. The student was very excited to receive this gift.

Lastly, Senator Eason shared that Academy Sports is providing ECU an additional opportunity to shop with a 20% off coupon that can be used in-store or online due to the impressive participation from the previous savings event. This coupon will be available during the weekend of December 8-10, 2023.

By-Laws Committee

Senator John Southworth, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, displayed a survey that has been created to receive feedback regarding Staff Senate's relationship with SGA and the Parliamentarian role. The anonymous survey will be emailed to senators after the meeting. Senator Southworth explained the history behind having a member of the SGA serve as the Parliamentarian, listed different options and methods that can be used to involve the SGA in the Staff Senate, and showed the free text box where ideas and feedback can be provided. The purpose of the survey is to determine the level of approval on whether the by-laws should remain the same or be updated with respect to the relationship with SGA and the Parliamentarian role.

Communication and Marketing Committee

Senator Chad Carwein, the Chair of the Communication and Marketing Committee, shared that the Staff Senate group photo has been added to the website, and they will also be updating the website to include the headshots taken of the senators and alternates. The ticketing system is working well, and Senator Carwein thanked Chair Lopez for creating the smart form to streamline the process. Other updates include the purchase of CanvaPro, and Alternate Senator Deidra Williams, from the Chancellor's Division, has been invited to the next committee meeting to discuss promotions for the Staff Senate Online Auction.

Discussion: Chair Lopez asked if a clearer group photograph can be used for the website.

Senator Carwein replied the photograph placed on the website was the best fit of the three that were received. He will reach out to photographer Rhett Butler to see if there is another format or version that can be used.

Diversity Committee

Past-Chair Powell, the Chair of the Diversity Committee, provided an update on the Women Leaders at ECU Panel. They are partnering with the Women's and Gender Office for this event and have received over 28 nominees for panelists. This year's theme is Advancing Opportunities Through Care and Belonging and

will be held in March of 2024. A Qualtrics survey will be emailed for the senate to vote on panel participants. The survey will close on November 3, 2023.

Human Resources Committee

Senator Jennifer Muir, the Chair of the HR Committee, reported on the nomination period for Staff Emeritus awards and an upcoming community service project with the Food Bank. Several people did not receive the announcement for the Staff Emeritus nominations that were sent to the ECU Official Staff list serv on October 5, 2023. Another announcement will be emailed to campus utilizing the Announce list serv in order to reach as many people as possible. Senator Muir stated it may be helpful to include a link to the nomination form on the Staff Senate's website. Nominations will close on November 30, 2023. They are working to secure donations, such as athletic tickets, theater tickets, and campus dining vouchers for the Staff Emeritus award.

Staff Senate is partnering with the Food Bank of Greater Eastern North Carolina on November 15, 2023, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet will be located on Teams for those who wish to volunteer. Currently 15 spots are available, and Senator Muir will open additional slots on another day if all 15 slots are filled.

Discussion: Chair Lopez reminded everyone that community service leave hours can be used to volunteer for the food bank service project.

Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Senator Jennifer Jones, Chair of the Leadership and Professional Development Committee, announced that the Ballard's Annual Lessons in Leadership (B.A.L.L.) event will be held on April 10, 2024, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Guest speaker Dr. Jason Higginson, who is the Executive Dean of the Brody School of Medicine, will present on "Learning to Lead." They will begin advertising this event in early 2024.

Membership Committee

Senator Joseph Moore, the Chair of the of the Membership Committee, provided an update that they are still trying to fill a few vacant Staff Senate seats that represent the Brody School of Medicine, Athletics, and University Advancement. He thanked those who have submitted nominations to help with this initiative. They have reviewed a report to determine if staff are adequately represented across campus and are trying to think of creative ways to fill seats in areas where staff are unable to participate due to job type and responsibilities that create challenges for attendance. They are continuing to gather promotional materials to showcase the benefits of Staff Senate to encourage others to join. He requested for those who have participated in Staff Senate for several years to send materials of past events that Staff Senate has sponsored.

Scholarship Committee

Alternate Senator Selena Barrow, from Student Affairs, provided the update for the Scholarship Committee. The online auction has been postponed until the spring of 2024 and will be held during Staff Appreciation month. She added that Senator Bone has asked for staff to continue to request donations. Items can be given to the Scholarship Committee. Their committee will begin discussing criteria and creating a rubric for the staff scholarship selection process.

Old Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

During the April 2023 monthly meeting, the Staff Senate passed the Labor Acknowledgement which reads:

“We acknowledge the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants to the economic development and success of Pitt County, our region, and the State of North Carolina. We are indebted to those who labored to support the foundation and ongoing mission of East Carolina University.”

The proposed change was taken to a vote:

“We acknowledge the labor of enslaved African people and their descendants to the economic development and success of Pitt County, our region, and the State of North Carolina. We are indebted to those who labored to support the foundation and ongoing mission of East Carolina University.”

A voice vote was conducted, and the motion was carried with all in favor to incorporate the proposed change into the Labor Acknowledgment. Chair Lopez stated the Labor Acknowledgement will be read at the November Staff Senate meeting.

New Business

Dana Lopez, Chair

Chair Lopez has received requests for staff representation on the following campus committees:

- The Director of University Benefits has requested 3 volunteers to serve on the University Benefits Committee. This committee is charged with meeting the provisions of NC General Statute 58-31-60 and reviews fringe benefit program opportunities that promote the welfare of university faculty and staff. They are responsible for making policy recommendations for current and new programs, and review products to ensure they best meet the needs of employees of ECU.
 - Senators Michelle Smith and John Southworth volunteered.
- The Copyright Committee requests 3 volunteers from Staff Senate to hear reports and make changes related to ECU’s copyright regulation. They will consider whether new projects are needed, such as refreshing the copyright webpage, modules on copyright for distance education professors, and handouts for students regarding copyright.
 - Secretary Christiana Shoopman volunteered.
- The Parking Citation Appeals Committee has requested 2 volunteers to serve to adjudicate appeals, promote a process that attempts to modify the behavior of chronic offenders, and develop recommendations to address necessary clarifications or improvements.
 - Senators Kristy Ashely and Jennifer Jones volunteered.

Anyone else who wishes to volunteer for these committees should contact Chair Lopez by Friday, October 20, 2023.

Past-Chair Aisha Powell announced the Leadership Development Academy Open House will be held on October 24, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the Main Campus Student Center.

Senator Jennifer Muir added that the University Benefits Committee, which was previously discussed, meets on an as-needed basis and is a 3-year commitment.

In closing, Chair Lopez announced the next Staff Senate meeting will be held on November 9, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. in room 249 at the Main Campus Student Center.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

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

Minutes approved 11/09/2023