

**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
2008-2009 FACULTY SENATE**

The first regular meeting of the 2008-2009 Faculty Senate will be held on **Tuesday, September 9, 2008**, at 2:10 in the Mendenhall Student Center Great Room.

FULL AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Minutes**

April 22, 2008, and April 29, 2008, minutes
- III. Special Order of the Day**
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Announcements
 - C. Steve Ballard, Chancellor
 - D. Marilyn Sheerer, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
 - E. Janice Tovey, Chair of the Faculty
 - F. Larry Boyer, Director of Academic Library Services
Institutional Repository
 - G. Kimberly Baker-Flowers, Chief Diversity Officer
Diversity Action Plan
 - H. David Weismiller, Chair of SACS Self-Study
Assessment of Student Learning – Building a Culture of Evidence
 - I. Question Period
- IV. Unfinished Business**
- V. Report of Committees**
 - A. Educational Policies and Planning Committee
Request for Authorization to Establish PhD Program in Curriculum and Instruction
in the College of Education
 - B. Faculty Welfare Committee
Response to the UNC Tomorrow Report (attachment 1)
 - C. Unit Code Screening
Revised Department of Psychology Unit Code of Operation.
- VI. New Business**

Resolution on Transparency, David Long (attachment 2)

FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT
Response to the UNC Tomorrow Report

Impact of Enrollment Growth on Faculty Welfare

The UNC Tomorrow report mandates enrollment growth across the constituent campuses of the UNC System. In response to this report, East Carolina University is contemplating an acceleration of the enrollment growth that has marked the last two decades of its existence. Based on past experience, we know that enrollment growth has far reaching effects that touch on all aspects of university life including faculty welfare. We are further aware that the outcome of these effects, whether positive or negative, will largely be determined by external and internal allocation of resources. Can we anticipate the likely impact of enrollment growth on issues related to faculty welfare and chart a course destined to improve the welfare of the university and its faculty? A thorough understanding of the issues we face as we contemplate the effects of unprecedented enrollment growth at ECU seems prudent and a necessary antecedent to future planning.

Faculty welfare is intrinsic to the quality of the university. The issues that affect faculty welfare are broad ranging and are inextricably interwoven with issues that affect our students and the quality of education. There is a serious concern among the faculty at ECU that our long history of underfunding, particularly in terms of funds allocated per student enrolled, will be further exacerbated by increased enrollment. This single factor could have a chilling effect on faculty welfare through depletion of already scarce resources and could significantly undermine the future development of our university. The continued scarcity of financial support commensurate with university size and growth will be detrimental to the construction of offices, classrooms, laboratories and other physical facilities that are used by faculty and students. It will have adverse consequences for the recruitment, retention and professional development of faculty and it will limit the opportunity to develop programs that expand the connections between the university and the citizens and region we serve.

While a diminished financial base will impact all areas of university development, enrollment growth will affect other aspects of university life that are viewed as central to faculty welfare. Physical space is at a premium at ECU. The immediate manifestation of this lack of space is a general shortage of offices, classrooms and laboratories. The existing level of crowding at ECU is already a matter of concern and without significant investment in 'bricks and mortar' will certainly be exacerbated by projected enrollment increases. Crowding generates inevitable deterioration of indoor and outdoor environments, contributes to stress and can have adverse health consequences, all of which are issues related to faculty welfare. Consider the perennial nightmare of parking, which is a surrogate for all the problems associated with crowding. Unfortunately, ECU's past successes in garnering resources for the construction of buildings and acquisition of green space is poor, as exemplified by the serious existing level of crowding.

We are also concerned that increased enrollment will impact the student to faculty ratio in a negative way. A decline in the number of faculty per student puts added strain on faculty members who are intent on maintaining a tradition of close interaction with students. ECU has historically prided itself in its 'small university' feel, much of which derives from the commitment of faculty to a high level of interaction with students. An increasing student to faculty ratio seriously threatens our commitment to our students and will very likely create a less congenial atmosphere, one with an impersonal feel in which student-faculty relations become more distant and strained.

Thus, one of the core issues for today and tomorrow is a careful assessment of the best means to deliver high quality education, whether faculty and students are located at a distance or on campus. The question is, during a time of burgeoning technology and increasing student enrollment, how do we grow and maintain a vibrant, engaged faculty and student population who contribute to the university's goals? The issue involves effective connection with ECU's learning community as well as the quality and sustainability of that learning.

In particular, Distance Education (DE) faculty and students cannot be merely 'add-ons'. They must be intelligently incorporated into the mainstream of campus learning and campus life. Current full-time faculty need to be engaged and involved in developing a learning model that works for all students. Yet evidence of erosion in our 'small university' feel is already manifesting, particularly among faculty who participate in distance education programs. ECU has already stepped beyond its physical campus boundaries and is recognized as a major provider of online education. While 88% of the students taking only DE courses reside outside Pitt County and never come to campus, having DE only faculty who never come to campus is not the solution to the increased campus crowding associated with increasing enrollment. ECU must carefully examine the role and function of DE faculty. For example, some of our current DE faculty are physically removed from campus and therefore disassociated and, in part, disenfranchised from university life. In many cases, these faculty and others who are primarily non-tenure track are hired for reduced salaries and without benefits. They are viewed as 'filling the gap' to make up for a deficit in faculty numbers. Their lower salaries, lack of benefits and reduced level of interaction with their faculty peers, and with students, relegate them to second class citizen status. This is demoralizing for them personally and for an institution that should pride itself on fair and equitable treatment of employees.

Enrollment increases without attendant financial resources also place a burden on administrators who will be faced with decisions concerning whether to allocate limited resources to faculty salaries or benefits. We already suffer from marginal health care and retirement benefits and we have witnessed a system-wide decline in support for these programs. A further decrease in these benefits threatens to create an atmosphere of discord that is contrary to a high-quality working environment and presents risks in retention of faculty as well as increased difficulty in recruitment of new faculty. As ECU looks toward a brighter future, we can ill afford a policy of rapid enrollment growth uncoupled from a commensurate level of financial support.

NEW BUSINESS
Resolution on Transparency

To make the procedures involved in voting on the conferral of tenure, promotion in rank, and contract renewal of faculty members at ECU more transparent and consistent with due process.

WHEREAS, it has long been a tradition and procedure at ECU to conduct votes relating to the conferral of tenure, the promotion in rank of tenured and tenure-track faculty, and the contract renewal of probationary faculty, under a veil of secrecy by voting to enter into executive session; and,

WHEREAS, the purpose of going into executive session is in order to allow for an open and honest discussion of the reasons why a faculty member should or should not be conferred permanent tenure, a higher rank, or continued employment as a member of the faculty, while protecting the anonymity of the voting members of the committee especially with respect to any negative opinions they may have about the person under consideration; and,

WHEREAS, the inevitable consequence of such procedure is that committee members are shielded in the expression of attitudes that are sometimes based upon personal malice or hearsay impressions, and in some instances those expressions may constitute lies or misrepresentations of what is true; and,

WHEREAS, the conferral of permanent tenure is a property right even if it is less than fully developed during the tenure track period; and,

WHEREAS, the right to receive promotion and contract renewal as provided for by the ECU Faculty Code, and in accordance with the conditions set forth in that Code, are property rights possessed by the faculty members from the time they enter into employment contracts with the university; and,

WHEREAS, even beyond the fact that the aforementioned property rights exist, the experience of receiving a negative tenure vote, or a negative vote on promotion or contract extension, has a potentially devastating effect on the professional reputation and prospects of future employment of the affected faculty member.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the ECU Faculty Senate will undertake an in-depth and public conversation regarding the methods and procedures by which the consideration of ECU faculty members for the conferral of permanent tenure, the award of promotion in rank, and contract renewal, with the goal of creating more transparent procedures which are consistent with the constitutions of the United States and the State of North Carolina, and the operating codes of the University of North Carolina and East Carolina University. By passing this resolution the Senate also urges the Chair of the Faculty to appoint a committee to begin this process.