

Chair of the Faculty Remarks to the ECU Board of Trustees  
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I bring greetings from the faculty! Today I am going to address three important topics: jobs, education, and strategic planning. There has been a lot of discussion lately about funding for our universities. Some have suggested that funding should be limited to programs that lead to jobs for our graduates. I disagree. While I am in favor of employment for our graduates, I must say that our programs are much more than simply job training. We educate our students, teaching them critical thinking skills, an appreciation for the arts, an understanding of human society, an introduction to mathematics and basic science, and much more!

At ECU we have terrific programs that prepare students for such careers as nurses, teachers, accountants, and engineers. These students learn so much more than basic job skills. They learn to interact, to work in teams, to write, to be creative, to think, to integrate knowledge from many different disciplines, to experience diverse cultures, and to serve their communities.

We live in a rapidly changing world. Our economy, our society, and our environment are thoroughly different than they were 20, 10, or even five years ago, and they are constantly changing. Our country is in economic competition with China, India, and Europe. If we want to reduce our university to a job-training program, we will have jobs in the future – working for China, India, and Europe. If we want to remain competitive, we must invest in our greatest asset, our people. We must educate them in higher-level skills and prepare them to for leadership. Our competition is investing in higher education to do just that!

The faculty is excited about preparing the next generation of North Carolinians at ECU. We are committed to educating our students. Our programs are designed to produce skilled graduates who think and lead. We will implement the new UNC Strategic Plan to move our university forward. We are developing strategies to improve retention and graduation rates and procedures for more efficient transfer of students from community colleges and other institutions. We are also committed to quality. We take our responsibility for the curriculum seriously, producing and delivering quality courses and programs, and we will not sacrifice quality for retention and graduation rates. If we did, everyone would be worse off.

We may not know what will come in the future, but I believe that our faculty, our university, and our graduates will be up to the challenge!