

Board of Trustees Remarks
Marianna Walker, Chair of the Faculty
April 15, 2011

For the last time in our academic year (2010-2011), I bring you greetings from the faculty and the Faculty Senate. This has been a quite a year and yes, glad to say that it has been productive!

This year, and the previous year as Chair of the Faculty, has been about our team, and there have been many individuals who have contributed to the success of our university shared governance, especially in these particularly challenging times.

Without these individuals and groups of individuals, we would not have been as productive as we have been, nor would we have the support and collaboration between the faculty and administration.

Keys to our success – communication and collaboration

- Communication – from small working groups to bringing multiple committees together – has been my focus in the past two years, where faculty, administrators, staff, and students all work together.
- New groups have been formed; old ideas are reshaped into contemporary practices.
- Traditional process is observed and respected - All voices are heard. Consensus is reached. Action occurs and work is completed.

Can't think of another university where shared governance is as strong as it is than at ECU.

So, today I would like to express my gratitude for these individuals and groups who have contributed to the respect of the faculty, administration, and Faculty Senate, in addressing university missions and initiatives.

Two of the faculty officers are here today – Dr. Mark Sprague – Vice Chair and Associate Professor of Physics – Thanks Mark for all your support and efforts especially with overall faculty governance, academic standards, and graduate school matters. Dr. Brenda Killingsworth, Parliamentarian, Associate Professor of Business, thanks for all your help in parliamentary procedures, helping to answer the myriad of questions I may have during the week, and your advice relative to program prioritization. You are truly an information management specialist! Your wisdom all shines through! Hunt McKinnon, our architect, has been awesome as our secretary and has been an advocate for master planning and faculty involvement, university environment matters, and the library.

Thanks to the faculty and Faculty Senate for all their work this year. We are truly a community of scholars and I continue to be in awe of the excellence we have in our faculty. We need to use these minds to assist in solving our challenges and plan for our future.

Thanks to the Chancellor for all your support and listening to my ideas and allowing the faculty to have a true voice in university affairs and in advocating for the faculty. Also thanks to the senior administration, including Provost Marilyn Sheerer, Vice Chancellor Phyllis Horns, and Vice Chancellor Deirdre Mageean for all your support and advocacy. I really appreciate how many times you and Chancellor Ballard attended crucial committee meetings to engage in dialogue with the faculty and university committees. You have had faith in our process and have advocated that we must have shared governance, as exemplified by your participation and representation on our Faculty Senate committees. You have seen and overtly acknowledge the productivity of the faculty and Faculty Senate. We truly have mutual respect and open discourse. Thanks to others, Deans and other VC's, especially Vice Chancellor Rick Niswander who has worked closely with the Faculty Senate this year.

Now to provide a brief update on our efforts in the revision of the Faculty Manual. I can't believe how much work has been done in the past two years, especially considering that we have had debates, edits, omissions, additions, vetting, questions, and deliberations over the content. But believe it or not, we have successfully completed 56% of the Faculty Manual and pending recommendations by the Senate next week, and approval by the Chancellor. 73% will be completed at the end of the academic year. It is not finished yet, but we have made significant gains and will work next year to finalize it and then reorganize it. We will make it!

I want to thank each of the outgoing Board of Trustee members for all you have done for our university. We truly appreciate your dedication and preservation of the academic core during times of budget crisis. I appreciate your support and sensitivity in relating to the faculty. You always have the best interest of the university in mind.

Mr. Brody, I appreciate your efforts in support of the Faculty Manual and the process used to revise it. I continue to use your quote, or a "father's quote" "The process must be better than the person". Thank you for your sincerity and dedication.

Mr. Grezchan – Thank you for your advocacy and for coming to serve on the Faculty Manual Steering Committee and getting "down in the weeds" with us. We appreciate how you engaged with our Faculty Manual Steering committee and in addressing wording and new considerations for the Faculty Manual.

Mr. Redwine – we certainly appreciate your dedication and interest in our university. Thank you for your service. We look forward to your continued advocacy.

Mr. Bodenheimer – Thank you for your sensitivity and acknowledgment of the good work that of our faculty and for all your overt support.

Tremayne – thanks for your enthusiasm and for always wanting to work with the faculty. You will always be a leader.

To each of you, I appreciate your recognition of the relationship that we have established with the administration and how the relationship have served to provide a consistent and productive model of shared governance on our campus. We work together, solve problems, and laugh! My hope is that this relationship will continue and that we all will work together for our university and the education of our students who will be the future of our state and nation!

Acknowledge, just as Bob Grezchan did last night, that we have many challenges in the new academic year and beyond.

Hope is that the productive relationship between the BOT, faculty, and administration will continue even though we may be facing new challenges.

The administration and faculty leadership, including the work of Educational Policies and Planning Committee (EPPC) and the University Budget Committee, has been preparing the faculty, staff, and students in understanding the budget situation, the university, and what a budget cut would do to the university. As charged by the Chancellor, EPPC has been exploring criteria for program prioritization and efficiency, especially considering administrative costs.

The faculty are concerned that we use this time to be strategic in planning for possible budget cuts, which may affect degree programs and loss of faculty. They remain concerned about the increasing class size and reducing numbers of sections to save costs. These are two examples of how this budget situation may affect retention of our students and graduation rates. They remain concerned about travel, since such university travel relates to scholarship and being known in their discipline. They also remained concern about the retention of our faculty in the face of severe budget crisis.

But we have a team of VC's, and a faculty friendly Chancellor, who has gone to each college with a budget forum, to inform and engage in a conversation about potential effects of budget cuts to the university. We will continue to inform, throughout the summer, the facts about the budget and effects on our campus.

So, in closing, while we are worried, we have confidence in our leadership, including the BOT, that all will be done to protect and preserve our university and the excellence academic programs. We will be involved in open, honest, and interactive discourse, about potential problems, and will assist in providing solutions. We are, by nature, scholars, researchers, clinicians, teachers, volunteers, and civic-minded citizens. We are academicians and part of the greatest university in North Carolina.

I thank all of you for being part of this institution and look forward to our future collaboration.