I bring greetings from the faculty! I would like to highlight some examples of the hard work and commitment of the ECU faculty.

The first example is our faculty manual. In August 2009 Chancellor Ballard and Board of Trustees Chair David Brody charged the faculty to review and revise the Faculty Manual. Over the last four years we have reviewed, revised, and reorganized the entire manual. We completed the final section this spring. Our revised Faculty Manual is a best-practices document containing our policies on academic matters, tenure, promotion, research and creative activity, and our appellate process. The Faculty Manual is more than just a collection of policies, though. It contains narratives to provide historical context and describe the relevance of various sections as well as procedures we use to conduct business.

As you are aware, our SACS on-site review occurred in March, and the visit was very positive. The reviewers were impressed with our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Write Where You Belong. The QEP is a required element in the accreditation review. The faculty has been involved in every aspect of the QEP from the selection of the plan to the writing and now to the implementation.

The SACS review covered every aspect of the university, from curriculum to financial matters. A team of faculty compiled reports on faculty matters such as faculty responsibility for the curriculum, academic freedom, faculty evaluation, and faculty governance. Not one of the reports from the faculty category was even questioned by a reviewer. Our faculty policies are not only "best practice," but they are also compliant with the standards of our accrediting body.

We do have some work to do to address the recommendations of the SACS team. There are always recommendations. We have to improve our academic program assessment. Many of our programs have developed top-notch assessment procedures that truly lead to enhancements, but we have some programs that have not done it as well. Our task is to use the programs with outstanding assessment procedures as examples and bring the other programs up to the standard. The faculty is up to this task.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the looming budget crisis. The budget cuts in recent budget plans would have a devastating effect on the faculty, our programs, and our university. Sudden, drastic cuts cannot be applied strategically. There is a process for the reduction of programs that allows careful consideration as well as an opportunity for students in the programs to finish. Sudden, drastic cuts would not be able to be applied in this way forcing us to reduce faculty across campus and resulting in fewer course sections and fewer students graduating. I do not believe that this is in anyone’s interest.
On a personal note, this is my last opportunity to address the Board as Chair of the Faculty. I have decided not to run for reelection so I can focus on my research and on our academic programs in the Department of Physics. I know that the next Chair will be a strong advocate for the faculty issues. I have enjoyed our interactions over the last year. Please keep advocating for ECU. We need you more than ever.