ECU has charted a course for unprecedented prominence. We will be America’s next great national university.

Beyond the horizon, there is much to learn, there is discovery, and there is greater opportunity than can possibly be imagined. This has been the case for more than 110 years. Like the Pirates who have gone before us, those whose shoulders we stand upon, ECU seeks the greater good that lies beyond our limited vision. It is our mission.

At ECU, we believe it is our responsibility to ensure the health and well-being of the citizens of our region and beyond. This is how we define the greater good that lies out there and that we collectively seek with our teaching, with our research, and with our service.

Make no mistake, the accomplishments of our talented students, faculty, and alumni have global impact. We set high expectations for our institution, and we now stand as a model to the world for our commitments to student success, public service, and regional transformation. I am more confident than ever that ECU is America’s next great national university, a recognition that will naturally derive from our willingness and ability to solve problems.

Capture Your Horizon is our strategic plan for 2017–2022. It reflects our mission and serves as a proclamation of our commitments to the challenges set forth by the UNC system in its strategic plan, Higher Expectations. We acknowledge the metrics established by the system, and have aligned them with the values that define our university. This publication outlines our mission, commitments, and stewardship. It also emphasizes the distinctiveness of our contributions and the metrics by which we will measure the distance traveled as we move toward that horizon and the greater good that resides there.

There are no limits to where our ship can sail. The Pirates of ECU have set a heading for achieving greatness. That is where the greater good resides and that is where we are destined. Welcome aboard.

Cecil P. Staton
Chancellor
Our Mission

To be a national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation, East Carolina University:

- Uses innovative learning strategies and delivery methods to maximize access;
- Prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and values to succeed in a global, multicultural society;
- Develops tomorrow’s leaders to serve and inspire positive change;
- Discovers new knowledge and innovations to support a thriving future for eastern North Carolina and beyond;
- Transforms health care, promotes wellness, and reduces health disparities; and
- Improves quality of life through cultural enrichment, academics, the arts, and athletics.

We accomplish our mission through education, research, creative activities, and service while being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.
East Carolina University is resolute in honoring the values that have propelled its success over more than a century. As we consider our future, we focus on three commitments that we have identified as critical to our continued growth.

We pledge that ECU will be a national model for Student Success, Public Service, and Regional Transformation. Details of these three tenets follow, outlined by specific goals within each of their parameters.
FIRST COMMITMENT

Maximize Student Success

The success of our students is the ultimate measure of our university. We will support excellence, expand opportunity, and celebrate achievement.

■ We will leverage our leadership in distance education to improve accessibility for key student populations. We will establish targeted programs supporting seamless transitions to ECU for active military, veterans, and transfers. We will encourage the return of “part-way home” students to complete their degrees. We will lead the UNC system in the enrollment and graduation of students from rural counties.

■ We will improve retention and graduation rates. We will retain and graduate students at a rate that is consistently higher than our peer-average to achieve a five-year graduation rate that exceeds 67 percent.
We will be a national leader as a “best value” in undergraduate and graduate education while minimizing student debt and cultivating an institutional culture of timely graduation. We will develop programs to grow the number of enrolled and graduating low-income students and establish competency-based requirements for all degree programs. We will be a national leader in the assessment of learning outcomes and the use of innovative teaching strategies. Faculty will lead examination of general education requirements and pursue needed reforms that will be a model for others to follow.

We will reflect a global workplace and society by diversifying our faculty, staff, and students. We will increase the number of international students on our campus. We will provide 25 percent of ECU graduates with study-abroad experience and increase scholarship opportunities to improve accessibility. We will increase those with competency in a second language and leverage our success with the Global Partners in Education.

We will support the ECU Honors College and build it into one of the top programs nationally. We will leverage the impact of the Honors College by doubling its size over the next four years.

We will field athletic teams that lead in academic achievement, win conference championships, and compete on a national level.

We will foster a positive campus environment and culture that encourages a diverse, living-learning community to maximize student success.

We will expand service learning, undergraduate research, and creative activity across our entire campus.
SECOND COMMITMENT

Serve the Public

As demonstrated by our motto, Servire, service is at the heart of this university. We will inspire the next generation of leaders to carry this spirit of service into their professional lives. We will demonstrate this commitment to service to benefit communities in rural North Carolina and beyond.

- We will inspire our students to be engaged citizens and be a national model for developing the leadership of faculty, staff, and students through engaged research and service.
ECU will grow our Department of Public Health into a School of Public Health, emphasizing rural population health and research.

- **We will** refine our strengths as an “Engaged University” (as designated by the Carnegie Foundation) and as an Economic Prosperity University (as designated by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities) to benefit communities in eastern North Carolina and beyond.

- **We will** be a national leader in the integration of health sciences instructional, research, and clinical programs. We will expand the number of Brody School of Medicine graduates who practice as primary care physicians and we will be ranked as the nation’s top producer of family physicians. We will leverage our network of Community Service Learning Centers to benefit dental health sciences and our patients. ECU will continue to lead North Carolina in the number and the quality of nursing and allied health professional graduates.

- **We will** grow our Department of Public Health into a School of Public Health. We will emphasize rural population health and research as the principal focus of the school.

- **We will** be a portal for professional development, continuing education, and lifelong learning opportunities that support the needs of our region’s people and businesses.

- **We will** establish an innovative Lab School (pre-K through grade 5) in the West Greenville community to improve student learning outcomes through evidence-based best practices, and to provide comprehensive, community-based services.
THIRD COMMITMENT

Lead Regional Transformation

We embrace the challenges and resources of eastern North Carolina. We recognize that transformative leadership requires us to engage globally. Through partnerships and discovery, we will be a force for rural progress and growth to achieve global impact.

- **We will** grow ECU into the third-largest research institution in the UNC system by investing in our people, tools, and facilities. We will seek solutions to the challenges of our region, including health issues, coastal community resiliency, rural development, advanced manufacturing, and assisting the military.
ECU will emphasize critical workforce needs in the region and beyond, including STEM, K-12 teacher education, and healthcare.

- **We will** triple the volume of clinical trials of promising medicines, treatments, and devices and be a national leader in patient-centered outcomes research and community-based behavioral medicine.

- **We will** grow public-private partnerships through development of the East Carolina Research and Innovation Campus. ECU is “open to business.”

- **We will** enhance the campus-wide culture of innovation at ECU by leveraging our assets including the Miller School of Entrepreneurship.

- **We will** emphasize critical workforce needs in the region and beyond, including STEM, K-12 teacher education, and healthcare.

- **We will** grow innovative and market-driven graduate programs including data science, mechanical engineering, and coastal engineering.

- **We will** enrich the quality of life for our students and our region through our strengths in the arts. We will collaborate with local and regional interests to develop a performing arts center.
Our Responsibilities

We will keep these three commitments while being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

East Carolina University has a long history of achieving excellence while employing public resources in an efficient manner. We recognize and honor the UNC system’s strategic plan, Higher Expectations. We will maximize student success, serve the public, and lead regional transformation. We will concentrate our resources to fulfill these commitments. Here are ways by which we will keep our covenant:

- **We will** embrace an inclusive university community and are committed to recruiting and retaining faculty and staff with diverse backgrounds.
- **We will** launch the largest, university-wide comprehensive campaign in our history.
- **We will** control costs and diversify revenue streams.
- **We will** reward innovation and continuous improvement in processes, technology, business intelligence, and infrastructure.
- **We will** promote sustainable environments and be a leader in workplace wellness.
ECU enhances the quality of lives of eastern North Carolinians through diverse offerings of cultural enrichment, academics, the arts, and athletics.

**Areas of Distinction**

To begin an evaluation of the university as a whole and its contributions to its constituents locally and nationally, ECU has identified three Areas of Distinction that make it relatively unique in the UNC system.

These distinctions include serving as a **Cultural Champion**—enhancing the quality of lives through economic development and cultural enrichment; **Social Mobility**—being a leader in providing professional educational opportunities for students including those from distressed counties; and **Transformative Engagement**—developing and leveraging public and private partnerships to serve the region.

**Cultural Champion**

East Carolina University enhances the quality of lives of eastern North Carolinians through diverse offerings of cultural enrichment, academics, the arts, and athletics. Our School of Art and Design is the most comprehensive art school in North Carolina and one of the largest in the Southeast. People of varied ages and backgrounds come to ECU for sporting events, art exhibitions, performances, and scholarly lectures. These activities provide opportunities to discuss and share cultural experiences and educational opportunities with ECU students and other residents of North Carolina, while also boosting economic development in the community and region.

ECU further broadens its reach by encouraging students and faculty to explore global cultures via study-abroad and other experiences, while actively expanding opportunities for students from around the world to engage in an ECU education.
ECU remains committed to its role as the cultural champion of eastern North Carolina and strives to distinguish itself as a gateway to the world.

By 2022, East Carolina University aspires to:
- design and construct a visual and performing arts center in collaboration with local and regional interests;
- establish and build opportunities for sending 25 percent of ECU students on study-abroad or global experiences;
- provide opportunities for student athletes to excel in the classroom and develop life skills through participation on the fields of competition (e.g., GPA, service learning, championships).

Social Mobility
East Carolina University graduates more students from distressed counties (tier one and tier two) than any other constituent UNC-system institution. ECU distinguishes itself in providing professional educational opportunities for North Carolinians through leadership in the development of teachers, business leaders, engineers, dentists, family physicians, nurses, and allied-health professionals. ECU accomplishes this through purposeful implementation of high-impact educational practices. We plan to build upon these successes through the establishment of the Miller School of Entrepreneurship, the accreditation of the School of Public Health, and the expansion of innovative inter-professional education. Creating opportunities for improving social mobility through the success of our students is an area of distinction for ECU.

By 2022, East Carolina University aspires to:
- consistently rank in the nation’s top producers of family physicians (based on AAPF calculation) and other health professionals;
- continued expansion of engineering to solve global challenges, including recognized excellence in coastal engineering (e.g., number of coastal scientists and engineers, volume of sponsored programs);
- increase the number of our nationally ranked professional programs;
- become a top 5 percent “Best Value” college (Educate to Career, Social Mobility Index); and
- continue to lead the UNC system in the graduation of students from tier one and tier two counties, as designated by the NC Department of Commerce.

Transformative Engagement
East Carolina University is one of 40 institutions classified as both a Community Engagement Institution by the Carnegie Foundation and as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) University by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). In 2012, East Carolina University received the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Award from APLU. In 2016, East Carolina University also received the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Award.

ECU has a rich history of developing public and private partnerships with its larger community to serve the region. We leverage these relationships to create new ways of understanding complex issues, develop and operate innovative solutions, and drive change for people and organizations in our region and beyond. This transformative engagement, based on our unique collection of assets within the UNC system and a holistic approach to the global challenges of rural development, is an area of distinction for ECU.

By 2022, East Carolina University aspires to:
- increase extramural funding for sponsored programs to $120 million annually;
- improve student learning outcomes of students attending ECU Lab School (PK-5) through evidence-based best practices (e.g., DPI outcome measures);
- expand ECU’s network of partnerships in advanced manufacturing, military, community health, and coastal environments; and
- develop the East Carolina Research and Innovation Campus (e.g., volume of corporate partners).
Metrics

The University of North Carolina system has identified a set of metrics, which it identifies as “shared goals—a set of promises to the people of North Carolina.” These metrics give each of the 17 constituent institutions in the system a uniform group of goals through which to identify strengths, measure progress, and identify areas where improvement is needed—and to take action in all of those areas over the next five years.

The nine metrics outlined by the General Administration include low-income enrollments, rural enrollments, low-income completions, rural completions, five-year graduation rate, undergraduate degree efficiency, achievement gaps in undergraduate degree efficiency, critical workforces, and research productivity.

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<td><strong>Low-income enrollments:</strong> Increase enrollment of low-income students to reduce the existing participation gap</td>
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<td><strong>Rural enrollments:</strong> Increase enrollment of students from Tier 1* and Tier 2 counties to reduce the participation gap</td>
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<td><strong>Low-income completions:</strong> Encourage natural growth rate projections by increasing the number of low-income graduates</td>
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<td><strong>Rural completions:</strong> Increase the number of graduates from Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties</td>
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<td><strong>Five-year graduation rate:</strong> Increase the proportion of first-time, full-time freshmen who graduate with a bachelor’s degree from any accredited institution within five years</td>
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<td><strong>Undergraduate degree efficiency:</strong> Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded per 100 students</td>
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<td><strong>Achievement gaps in undergraduate degree efficiency:</strong> Improve timely degree completion for all and be a national leader in degree completion by groups with disproportionate achievement gaps</td>
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<td><strong>Critical workforces:</strong> Increase the number of high-quality credentials awarded in health sciences, STEM, K-12 education, and other emerging regional workforce needs</td>
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<td><strong>Research productivity:</strong> Strive for continuous improvement in research and scholarship, collaboration with UNC institutions and outside entities, and effective commercialization of technologies</td>
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*Information and definitions from University of North Carolina Strategic Plan Definitions, Goals, Metrics, and Targets, January 2017.*

*2017 County Tier Designations*

- Tier 1 (40 most distressed counties)
- Tier 2 (40 next most distressed counties)
- Tier 3 (20 least distressed counties)

North Carolina Department of Commerce
Framework

The University of North Carolina General Administration tasked each institution with creating a unique, customized plan by organizing the nine metrics into the categories of “Prioritize,” “Improve,” or “Sustain.” Each institution was charged with identifying two of the metrics in the “Prioritize” category and assigning them the highest importance and urgency.

This framework serves as a tangible measuring tool for the achievement of the University of North Carolina system’s shared goals, communicating specific success in meeting the needs of the region and state to state leaders and the public. It will also show North Carolinians that ECU and other system schools are committed to keeping the promise of a high-quality university education system in the state.

East Carolina University’s plan is based on key priorities that align with its mission of service. ECU placed five metrics in the “Prioritize” category, including the top-tier priorities of research productivity and five-year graduation rate. See the chart at right for ECU’s organization of the UNC system’s nine metrics.

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—Chancellor Staton