FIRST INSIDE ECU A ROUSING SUCCESS

The first *Inside ECU with the Women’s Roundtable* was held April 8-9, 2011. More than 40 people participated in this two-day event that featured in-depth tours of Joyner Library, the College of Nursing and the College of Allied Health Sciences.

The group was treated to hors d’oeuvres and a wine pairing demonstration/tasting by Hospitality Management students and student performances by the Phi Mu Alpha Music Fraternity and a string quartet. They joined Chancellor and Mrs. Ballard for breakfast at the Chancellor’s residence and attended a presentation from world-renowned cardiac psychologist, Dr. Samuel Sears. ECU Athletic Director Terry Holland welcomed them for a behind-the-scenes tour of athletics, complete with a tour of the strength and conditioning center, equipment room, football locker room and baseball stadium. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the Women’s Roundtable plans to host this event annually.

Inside ECU attendees get an inside look at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Drs. Sylvia Brown and Steve Thomas give attendees a tour of ECU’s Health Sciences building.

Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn (middle) with ECU students Jaclyn Zeigler (left) and Lauren Williams.

Drs. Sylvia Brown and Steve Thomas give attendees a tour of ECU’s Health Sciences building.

Dr. Robert O’Halloran at the Golden Corral Culinary Center.

Dr. Sam Sears discusses his research in the psychological care and quality of life outcomes of implantable cardioverter defibrillator patients.

Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship recipient Tabitha Reel.

Breakfast at the Chancellor’s residence

Touring the strength and conditioning facilities at the Murphy Center.

Valeria Lassiter, Beverly Cox and Margaret O’Connor

Allison Peel and Carolyn Breedlove
The philanthropic purpose of the Women’s Roundtable is to provide financial support to students at East Carolina. For the past two years, the Roundtable has provided funding to support two Access Scholarships. These scholarships are awarded to students with high academic potential but who have great financial need. These $25,000 awards provide a $5,000 per year scholarship for four years to qualified students who maintain the scholarship’s eligibility requirements.

The Women’s Roundtable board of directors’ goal has been to fully endow an Access Scholarship and the Roundtable is extremely proud to announce this goal has been reached with the creation of two new endowed Access Scholarships: The Kathy A. Taft Memorial Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship and the Kay Chalk Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship.

Earlier this year, the Women’s Roundtable Board of Directors unanimously voted to establish the Kathy A. Taft Memorial Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship in memory of Kathy Taft who was a founding member of the Women’s Roundtable at East Carolina University. Kathy was a strong advocate for education serving as a member of the Pitt County Board of Education and the Board of Education for the state of North Carolina for many years. Kathy was recognized by the Women’s Roundtable at East Carolina University in 2007 as one of 100 Incredible ECU Women.

The Roundtable board of directors made a $125,000 pledge to fully endow this scholarship in Kathy’s memory. With a generous matching gift the scholarship will be awarded this fall.

The Women’s Roundtable thanks founding member and chair from 2005-2010, Kay Chalk, for pledging to create the second $125,000 fully endowed fund. Through Kay’s generosity the Kay Chalk Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship Fund has been established. With a generous matching gift this scholarship is also being awarded to a student this fall.

Kay is a tireless advocate for the Women’s Roundtable and ECU. She led the Women’s Roundtable for five years and under her leadership the organization has grown to be a vehicle by which alumnas and friends reconnect with ECU, attend educational programming and help raise funds for student scholarships and support.

### ECU Students Visit with Women’s Roundtable Members

2010-2011 ECU Student Body President Tremayne Smith visited with Women’s Roundtable Chair-Elect Valeria Lassiter in Washington, D.C., in April. Lassiter is mentoring Smith and organized several networking opportunities for him while in D.C. Smith will intern with Senator Kay Hagan’s office this summer.

EC Scholars Karen Ackiss, Jeffrey Coleman, Kristen Everett, Kelsey Hicks, Jonathan Lee, Danielle Martin and Elizabeth Richard received a special tour of the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., from Beverly Cox, Women’s Roundtable board member and gallery director of exhibitions and collections management. EC Scholars were accompanied by Interim Dean Dr. Richard Eakin, Associate Dean Kevin Baxter and Dr. Katie O’Connor, interim director of the EC Scholars Program.

### Women’s Roundtable Partners with ECU Honors College

The Women’s Roundtable board of directors voted at their April 7, 2011, board meeting to support the new Honors College at East Carolina by:

- Encouraging and facilitating the linking of Women’s Roundtable members with students through a mentoring relationship, making presentations to classes or small groups of students and in other ways yet to be developed
- Providing one $10,000 leadership and service grant in the 2011-2012 academic year to be used for enrichment activities identified in connection with the Honors College.
With a love for her native Pitt County and a drive to give back to the area that means so much to her, Mary Plybon’s dedication to eastern North Carolina and East Carolina University is contagious. After spending part of her childhood and graduating from high school in Raleigh, Plybon, ’71 had no doubt that she would return to her Greenville roots to attend ECU. She attributes her family’s love of eastern North Carolina to the strong bonds they have with the people in the area and the legacy of Pirates in her family—both of Plybon’s parents attended ECU.

“My dad attended [ECU] when it was known as East Carolina Teachers College,” said Plybon. “He grew up near Tarboro on a tobacco farm and was the first boy in his family to attend college.”

Plybon studied social work and said she was attracted to this field of work because of her childhood during the 1960s.

“I grew up with John F. Kennedy and the mentality of, ‘ask what you can do for your country,’” she said, “I’m drawn to people who need a hand up not a hand out, and when you’ve been given a lot, you should give back.”

Plybon watched a monumental event in ECU’s history play out during her freshman year. In 1967, ECU was known as East Carolina College and was seeking university status, and there was a tense debate about whether East Carolina College would become East Carolina University. Plybon remembers the commotion surrounding the issue.

“I was one of the students at Chancellor Jenkins’ house, just watching and waiting for the approval from the N.C. Legislature,” she said.

Plybon witnessed that historic approval and has since marveled at ECU’s impressive growth over her lifetime. She is excited about the new medical, dental and engineering schools that ECU boasts, but most of all, she admires ECU’s commitment to provide opportunities to all.

“I like that ECU has continued to give people a chance. ECU offers access and honor scholarships, and I hope it always keeps that in balance,” she said. “ECU wants the best of the best, but it also gives people the opportunity to reach that potential.”

After graduating in 1971, Plybon’s first job was a position with Carteret Co. Department of Social Services. Her job focused on helping older adults “keep afloat” so they did not have to be institutionalized.

“It was a hard job emotionally and I had to learn to leave it at work,” Plybon said. “I had to try to find a balance in life, like anything else.”

Plybon was also part of a group who pioneered an adult day-care program. It was a novel program for its time and it was a hard concept for many to accept, but her team pushed through.

Plybon and her husband have become involved with many areas across ECU, from athletics to academics. She has served on the Board of Visitors and her husband, Bob, serves on the ECU Foundation board of directors. The Plybons are passionate about philanthropy and are grateful they have the opportunity to give back. Mary Plybon is now beginning her duties in her new position as the Women’s Roundtable chair.

Since its inception, the Women’s Roundtable has hosted several events that have raised thousands of dollars raised for scholarships. Plybon is grateful that she has been able to witness the evolution of the organization first-hand.

“We didn’t foresee what the Women’s Roundtable was going to evolve into, but we recognized the talent and commitment of ECU women graduates; we knew they wanted and deserved to have an active role in the university. The Women’s Roundtable was an excellent way to get the process started,” Plybon said.

She is excited about her new title and is ready to continue the Women’s Roundtable mission and wants to help “identify women in a variety of fields that are doing really good work.” She wants to reconnect with more former ECU graduates in all walks of life, emphasizing young graduates.

“We want them to know that there is a place for them at the table and in the Pirate community.”

Plybon also strongly believes that taking the time to ask people is the key to creating authentic involvement.

“Everyone gets caught up in their day-to-day lives,” she said. “Unless someone gives you a call you’re not as likely to join something until there is personal involvement.”

Plybon encourages former Pirates to never lose sight of what they learned at ECU and to always remember the sense of community they feel when they walk onto campus.

“Obviously, all ECU graduates do not stay in eastern North Carolina, or even in North Carolina,” Plybon said, “but I guarantee you they take what they learned at ECU and make wherever they land a better place.”

--Lauren Williams ’11
JOINING THE WOMEN’S ROUNDTABLE

The Women’s Roundtable acknowledges the contribution of women to ECU’s legacy and encourages new levels of commitment by women to the university’s future. Through its network of women graduates and friends of the university, the Women’s Roundtable is creating a culture of giving at ECU, building a strong volunteer base of women committed to advancing the university and forming a deeper pool of women to be considered for leadership roles at ECU. By joining the Women’s Roundtable at ECU, you not only encourage the development of leadership and philanthropy at ECU, but you also make a real difference in the lives of students at ECU now and for many years to come.

To join the Women’s Roundtable, visit www.ecu.edu/womensroundtable or contact Marcy Romary, director of women’s philanthropy, at 252-328-9580 or romarym@ecu.edu. Find us on Facebook!

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