Happy New Year Women’s Roundtable Members!

It’s been an exciting year for the Women’s Roundtable at East Carolina University and it would not have been possible without your support and involvement. Thank you!

Although the Women’s Roundtable was founded in 2003, 2009 was a year of re-organization to better acknowledge the contribution of women to East Carolina University’s legacy and encourage new levels of commitment by women to the university’s future. The Women’s Roundtable recognizes the impact of East Carolina’s nearly 70,000 women graduates in all walks of life and works to engage that talent and knowledge in the life of the university and its students.

Under the leadership of an active board of directors, the Roundtable is creating a culture of giving by focusing its efforts on raising funds for ECU’s Access Scholarship program; building a strong volunteer base of women committed to advancing the university; and forming a deeper pool of women to be considered for other leadership roles at ECU. The Roundtable is a unifying organization that seeks to elevate and encourage leadership and philanthropy by women.

“We now have so many commitments,” said Kay Chalk, chair, Women’s Roundtable board of directors. “They have to pick and choose where they volunteer, and we want them to pick ECU. It’s important for women to have a larger voice at the university, and that’s only going to come through their involvement.”

Women’s Roundtable board member Deborah Davis, chief operating officer at MCV Hospitals and Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center, believes that it is her responsibility to support East Carolina because of its affect on her life and the region.

“When we were growing up, there wasn’t much opportunity to go to college,” Davis said of her and her husband, Randy Davis ’84, who both grew up in eastern North Carolina. “ECU gave us both a chance to get a college education, and we’ve always felt a responsibility to give back.”

Davis appreciates the increased focus on women at East Carolina, saying that in the past her husband would get requests for support from the university, but she would not.

“The Women’s Roundtable is one of the first times that the university has reached out to women alumni,” she said. “It is the perfect opportunity to get women leaders involved in the role they can play in the leadership of ECU and the future of the university.”

For Women’s Roundtable board member Angela Allen, vice president, IBM Global Business Services, the Women’s Roundtable reinforces ECU’s motto of Servire, “to serve.”

“The Women’s Roundtable at East Carolina University brings together the collective resources and talents of ECU women, under a mission of service, leadership and philanthropy,” she said. “The Roundtable’s Access Scholarships and women’s empowerment seminars continue ECU’s legacy of giving and support. For me, this is the right service, at the right time.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

One of the ways the Women’s Roundtable provides the right service at the right time for current students at ECU is through the university’s Access Scholarship program, which provides financial assistance to a historically underserved group of ECU students that demonstrate both financial need and proven academic potential. In the 2009-2010 academic year, the Women’s Roundtable is funding two Access Scholarships.

Tabitha Reel, one of the scholarship recipients this year, is a junior at ECU with plans to attend medical school. The daughter of an ECU alumna, a graduate of North Pitt High School in Bethel, N.C., and a Greenville resident most of her life, Reel knows firsthand the effect ECU has on the region and its citizens. She has wanted to be a surgeon “forever,” works at Pitt County Memorial Hospital part-time as a physical therapy technician, and plans to apply to Brody School of Medicine and St. George’s University Medical School after graduation.

At ECU, Reel is conducting undergraduate genetic research, examining genetic mutations in flies to find the cancer gene. Before deciding to come to ECU, she applied and was accepted at UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University, and Wake Forest University, but decided to attend East Carolina because of the scholarships she received.
“Access Scholarships help students get on their feet and not worry about finances and focus in their education,” Reel said. “My parents are struggling themselves. The Access Scholarship lets me live without a whole lot of stress.” Students that receive Access Scholarships are required to complete at least 20 hours of volunteer time through ECU’s Volunteer & Service-Learning Center. Reel volunteered at Belvoir Elementary School her first year and has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity of Pitt County since then.

Alaina McMahon, the second recipient of the 2009-2010 Women’s Roundtable Access Scholarship, is in her freshman year at East Carolina. A member of ECU’s honors program, she is the youngest of three sisters that have attended East Carolina. McMahon’s older sister, Lauren, is currently pursuing a degree in elementary education at ECU, and Jessica, her eldest sister, earned a degree through the university’s distance education program.

Originally from Potters Hill, N.C., McMahon has always wanted to be a neonatal nurse and wants to work in the nursery at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, N.C. “I’ve always wanted to be a baby nurse,” she said. “I just like babies.”

She also loves animals, and spends much of her extra time with her four mules, cat, dog, and cockatiel in Potters Hill. For her volunteer requirement, McMahon plans to volunteer for the Humane Society of Eastern Carolina. McMahon chose to come to ECU in part because of a female role model, her mother, who always wanted to attend college. “I’m fulfilling her dream,” McMahon said.

And like the generations of women before them, encouraged by the example of the Women’s Roundtable, McMahon and Reel will become the leaders of tomorrow, supporting those women that come after them.

“I joined the Women’s Roundtable at East Carolina University to reconnect with the community of my past and to give to it, as I once received,” said Angela Allen. “My education was through grants, scholarships and the loving support of my family. This provided me with the ability to access an education and, ultimately my dreams.”

**NETWORKING**

There will be regional Women’s Roundtable events scheduled throughout the year to provide opportunities for you to meet other ECU women where you live. Two successful events were held in the Washington, D.C., area in December and events are being planned in New York; Arlington, Virginia; Wilmington, NC; Winston-Salem, NC, Atlantic Beach, NC; and Charleston, SC in 2010. Dates and locations will be announced soon.

**Save the Date • October 14, 2010**

*The Incredible Women Series: Investing for the Future Strategies for Sound Financial Management*

The Women’s Roundtable is planning its third major event to be held Thursday, October 14, 2010. This one-day conference will focus on women’s financial issues featuring interesting, useful and entertaining information provided through break-out sessions and keynote addresses. The day will open with an address by nationally award-winning journalist and best-selling author Jean Chatzky. Chatzky is the financial editor for NBC’s Today, a contributing editor for MORE Magazine, and a columnist for the New York Daily News. The luncheon speaker will be nationally-known humorist Jeanne Robertson, and the event will conclude with the recognition of five outstanding alumnae as Incredible ECU Women and remarks by Kelly King, CEO and chairman, BB&T. Break-out session topics are: Building Wealth...What Women Need to Know; Creating Your Lasting Legacy...Choose Your Passion; and Incredible Women in Action...The Power of Influence. More information coming soon!

**SPREAD THE WORD**

The Women’s Roundtable welcomes women from all walks of life, and affiliation in the Women’s Roundtable is not limited to ECU alumnae. Please encourage others to join the Roundtable and get involved. For more information about the Women’s Roundtable and how to become a member, visit www.ecu.edu/womensroundtable or contact Marcy Romary, director of women’s philanthropy, at 252-328-9580 or romarym@ecu.edu. This is YOUR organization and we want to hear from you! Also, join our page on Facebook!