A MOTION
To amend the Standing Rules of the Senate to define and clarify the Public Comment period.

Primary Sponsors: Senator Beeson and Senator Casale

First Reading: 10/20/2014
Referred to: Rules and Judiciary
Second Reading: 10/27/2014

Be it enacted by the Undergraduate Senate of the East Carolina University Student Government Association,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE.

WHEREAS, the public comment period is a new addition to the agenda of the Undergraduate Senate; and,

WHEREAS, this period had never been present nor attempted in recent years; and,

WHEREAS, the intent of the public comment period when added by the Senate to the agenda was to create a time for members of the student body to comment on legislation before the Senate; and,

WHEREAS, the public comment period should not be a time for the communication of ideas and initiatives from the student body (which should take place outside of formal Senate meetings) but rather a time for students to voice their concerns, opposition, or support surrounding the business being brought before the Senate by Senators; and,

WHEREAS, the public comment period is not the proper time or place for concerns and questions regarding the executive branch to be addressed; and,

WHEREAS, the atmosphere during the public comment period has often been hostile and unprofessional; and,

WHEREAS, the length of the public comment period was not defined as it was not foreseen by the Senate that this period would go on for such lengths of time as it has at recent meetings; and,
WHEREAS, Senators must follow procedures in order to be recognized to speak; and,

WHEREAS, many of the comments made during this period are repetitive; now, therefore, be it,

ENACTED, The following shall be added as an amendment to the Standing Rules as a new rule, Rule VI: Public Comments:

I. The public comment period shall be open to any student of East Carolina University.

II. Students wishing to speak during the public comment period shall sign up for a speaking slot at the beginning of the Senate meeting, signing their name, organization and student email address.

III. The public comment period will be open to ten (10) individuals each meeting. The first six (6) speakers will be guaranteed speaking time. The remaining four (4) individuals shall be able to speak in order if the first six (6) have not used the full thirty (30) minutes allotted for public comments. No more than two (2) individuals may speak on behalf of the same organization in order to allow for multiple groups to be represented. Each individual shall have up to five (5) minutes to speak, but may neither reserve the balance of their time in order to speak again nor yield the remainder of their time to another individual. The public comment period may not exceed thirty (30) minutes during the Senate meeting and may be shorter than this if individuals do not speak for their full five (5) minutes.

IV. Individuals speaking during the public comment period should be reminded to direct their comments towards the business of the Senate and to speak with deference to decorum and respect. If individuals are felt to be violating the decorum of the Senate, Senators may rise and ask that the Speaker instruct the individual to either mind their speech or to cease their comments. Senators may compel the Speaker to take such action if he/she refuses by a majority vote.

V. Individuals speaking during the public comment period will use appropriate and respectful speech and refrain from obscenities while addressing the Senate.

VI. Individuals speaking during the public comment period will adhere to Article III Section 3.4 Subsection (f) of the Bylaws (proper attire).

SECTION 2. DATE EFFECTIVE.

This General Motion shall be effective upon its passage by a majority vote of the ECU SGA Undergraduate Senate.