

Remarks to the ECU Board of Trustees
Andrew T. Morehead, Jr., Chair of the Faculty
July 18, 2014

While they could not be attendance today, I would like to thank our outgoing Chair of the Faculty Mark Sprague and Secretary Cheryl McFadden for their work on behalf of the East Carolina University. My name is Andrew Morehead, and I am the new Chair of the Faculty. I am a professor in the Department of Chemistry, and my teaching and research interests are in organic chemistry.

The other new officers elected this April by the faculty senate (who I plan to introduce in person at the first fall meeting of the Board) are Vice-Chair of the Faculty John Given, who is a professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and is the Director of Classical Studies, and Secretary Kylie Dotson-Blake, a professor and Director of Counselor Education in the College of Education.

During this meeting, you have been reviewing a draft of the new ECU Strategic Plan. The faculty are absolutely committed to maximizing student success, serving the public and leading the transformation of our region. ECU has a long tradition of service to the region and its people, much of that faculty led. We advise, teach, mentor and supervise internships and research for our students, along with pushing forward aggressive research agendas. As required by our accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum lies with its faculty, and we stand ready to evaluate our current curriculum and make changes where necessary and appropriate. In addition, a priority I intend to vigorously pursue is whether we currently use the best methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness across our entire institution.

There are many promising strategies contained within the report of the University Committee on Fiscal Sustainability. In this time of shrinking state support, the faculty again stand ready to participate in the process of identifying and implementing efficiency measures and additional funding streams that support our mission of providing the best quality education to our students and serving our community. Faculty recruitment and retention are critical pieces of that discussion. The Faculty Senate will be happy to identify faculty participants with the appropriate expertise as the implementation workgroups are formed and to refer other strategies to the appropriate senate committees for their advice.

The faculty are also concerned with the shrinking graduate enrollments in some of our programs. Besides the shrinking revenue stream, graduate students play a pivotal role in faculty research programs, our economic development as a region, and not least as the teaching assistants that often provide critical instruction for our undergraduate students. Again, we are happy to help identify and implement strategies that will address this situation.

Finally, in another role, I am a member of the General Education Council of the UNC General Administration. That group is working on system wide assessments of learning in the areas of critical thinking and written communication. While this process is still in the formative stage, some preliminary student testing will occur in collaboration with the Educational Testing Service in February 2015. I have many concerns with this process: costs to students and institutions for the exam materials, the educational value of the results, and critically, how such results might be used in a performance based funding model. As this proceeds, I will keep ECU and the Board informed and will do my best to represent our position.

Thanks for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions.