MEMORANDUM

TO: ECU Faculty

FROM: Virginia D. Hardy PhD, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
       Purificación Martínez, PhD, Faculty Senate Chair
       Sarah Williams Executive Director, Office for Faculty Excellence

SUBJECT: ONE ECU - COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

As we begin another academic year, I think many of us hoped for a “return to normal.” A normal routine as we navigate our classrooms and offices. A normal view as we walk across campus and see our students socializing, studying, spending time together. A normal fall as we welcome more than 4,200 first year students and introduce them to Pirate traditions.

But as we know now, just a couple of weeks before classes resume, this fall will not be quite the “return to normal” we had planned. We continue to put public health and safety measures in place, cope with the trials of the past 18 months, and prepare for students who have been impacted broadly by the pandemic.

As colleagues, we recognize the challenges that you face and the uncertainty of the coming year. In our preparation for this academic season, we have had conversations about how we can best utilize the resources we have at ECU—our specialized departments, offices with strategic focuses and missions, and knowledgeable faculty and staff.

To highlight key pathways for student engagement in and out of the classroom the four themes of Student Affairs Student Success Continuum will be visible across campus in the form of banners and educational materials tied to division programs and services. While special interest will be placed on the first year experience, the four themes (CONNECT-INVEST-MOTIVATE-FINISH STRONG) are being applied to programs and services for all undergraduate students.

Student Affairs educators are applying this thematic framework to purposefully and creatively build foundations that support undergraduate student success. You can assist in highlighting these themes as you interact with students.

We often hear frustrations of siloed approaches to student support and engagement, but we have also learned important lessons from the last year and a half—we are stronger as Pirates when we take on challenges together as “One ECU.”

It is with this united approach that we share our plan for “One ECU,” focused on student success, tapping into our own campus experts, and coordinating our efforts of support. We have created opportunities for faculty and staff to come together and address the most pressing concerns of the upcoming year. Student Affairs, Office of Faculty Excellence and Faculty Senate are excited to announce an initiative to provide additional access to resources through proactive means.

We will continue to build on the success of our “HOiST: Helping Our Students Thrive” series with intentional programming that will update faculty and staff on crucial topics. The six sessions planned for this fall will emphasize areas of critical importance while working with our students. Whether it be creating inclusive environments, addressing academic integrity, or brainstorming how to work through classroom challenges, our programs will provide support and guidance for the fall semester.

Our campus experts will offer “office hours” for additional follow-up to answer those questions...
that might be better in a smaller setting.

We have created a resource page that will be continually updated, incorporating campus departments, updated policies and procedures, and upcoming events on campus. And we will even begin this message of “One ECU” at our Faculty Convocation, with tabling and opportunities to connect with on-campus departments before and after the event.

It may not be the return to normal that we wished for; however, we do see this as an opportunity to create a “new normal” together—for the benefit of our students, for the mission of the university, and for the promise of “One ECU.”