

AGENDA
Joint Meeting
Committee on Strategy & Innovation and
University Affairs Committee
April 24, 2025

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| I. | Approval of Minutes – February 6, 2025 | Action |
| II. | ECU's Enrollment Management Strategy - Part III
Marketing/Branding, Scholarship Strategy, Graduate School
Enrollment, & Alternative Revenue Generating Programs | Information |



Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Joint Meeting Strategy & Innovation and
University Affairs Committees
April 24, 2025

AGENDA ITEM

- I. Approval of Minutes - February 6, 2025 Tom Furr
S & I Committee Chair

Situation: Approval of the minutes from the Joint Committee meeting on February 6, 2025, is required.

Background:

Assessment:

Action: This item requires a vote by the committee.



Minutes from the Joint Meeting of the Committee on Strategy & Innovation and the University Affairs Committee

February 6, 2025 – Main Campus Student Center and Online Meeting

The Committee on Strategy and Innovation and the University Affairs Committee of the ECU Board of Trustees met in person in joint session on Thursday, February 6, 2025.

Committee on Strategy and Innovation members present:

Tom Furr (Chair), Scott Shook (vice chair), Van Isley, Carl Rogers, Vanessa Workman, Anderson Ward

University Affairs Committee members present:

Dave Fussell (chair); Tom Furr; Anderson Ward; Vince Smith; Vanessa Workman; Jim Segrave

Other Board members present:

Board Chair Jason Poole and Cassie Burt

Trustee Tom Furr, Chair of the Committee on Strategy and Innovation, convened the joint meeting at 10:32AM. Chairman Furr read the conflict-of-interest provisions as required by the State Government Ethics Act. No actual or perceived conflicts were declared or reported.

Chairman Furr and Chairman Dave Fussell called role for each Committee and a quorum was established for both.

I. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Fussell asked for the approval of the minutes of the November 21, 2024 joint meeting of the Committee on Strategy and Innovation and the University Affairs Committee. Trustee Furr motioned and received a second. All were in favor.

Action Item

The minutes of the November 21, 2024 joint committee meeting were approved with no changes.

II. ECU's Enrollment Management Strategy – Part 2: New Student Acquisition

Chairman Fussell reminded the committee of the current series on topics in Enrollment Management Strategy in a competitive environment, including last meeting's presentation on student retention and timely graduation. The focus for Part Two is on new student acquisition, including first-time freshmen, out of state students, and transfer students.

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Chancellor Rogers thanked Trustees Furr and Fussell for guiding this effort in having strategic conversations toward enrollment management and prioritizing student success, and turned it over to Interim Provost Buddo.

Interim Provost Buddo thanked the group for their engagement at the last meeting and described the energy and commitment of the teams working on this effort. He began the presentation by reminding the group about the pending enrollment cliff and inviting members of the Academic Affairs team to describe some changes in the understanding of the national enrollment landscape and related projections. Dr. Allen Guidry, Dr. Ying Zhou and Mr. Chris Stansbury joined the presentation.

Dr. Guidry described the national enrollment landscape for the joint committee, describing factors that we must consider when driving strategy, to include the college-going rate decreasing, heavy shopping and chasing of money from students in the market now, the general understanding that all schools are turning to adult learners, the enrollment cliff affecting some areas differently than others (ie, demographic “shift” rather than cliff), and implications of recent FAFSA changes.

Mr. Stansbury spoke to the factors that come into play when students are considering whether to attend or which college to attend. These include especially student life, location, affordability, and return on investment. Dr. Zhou offered an incoming student analysis for the committee for the first-time, first-year (freshman) student funnel, and described several things that have been done over a six-year period in order to increase the number of applications coming in.

Chairman Furr briefly paused to ask generally about the acceptance rate at ECU and what the perception of ECU is in that regard, and was assured the presentation would come to that point a bit further on.

Dr. Zhou went on to describe out of state student statistics and our top competitors for new, first time, first year students. NCSU, UNC Charlotte, Appalachian State, UNC Wilmington, and UNC Chapel Hill top that competitor list, and in the same order we have historically seen.

Dr. Guidry showed the group a UNC System Market Share Comparison, to address a question that has previously come up as to why we may not be keeping up with our competitors, leading into addressing Chairman Furr’s acceptance rate question. Trends have emerged showing that other institutions in the UNC System have increased their acceptance rate over time, The test-optional policy has come into play, which are both part of a complex answer to the question of ECU’s acceptance rate. Dr. Guidry assured the committee the presentation would move into describing strategy around how to contend with the implications of this data.

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Dr. Zhou described the ECU Transfer Student Funnel, transfer feeder schools, and top competitors in this space, noting difficulties across the system in maintaining or growing the transfer population.

Mr. Stansbury stepped back up to set the stage in recruitment factors for every incoming student at ECU (first year, transfer, and out of state), including GPA/ACT scores, incoming credits held, financial need, and the demographic breakdown. Dr. Guidry then described the work we did with Carnegie on branding related to the ECU student profile, and informed the committee of the four student profiles most representative of students at ECU – the highest percentage of which is related to high academic achievement (the “studious achiever”). In each of these profiles, three common threads matter in student choice: financial interest, the degree fitting the student need, and campus life.

The question then becomes why do students not come to ECU? Dr. Guidry shared a 2019-20 study that examined areas in which ECU “lost” to other institutions, which followed the same themes as above: money matters, location matters, and academic reputation matters. He described especially a window of academic achievement (just under the top GPA category) in which ECU has a lot of opportunity to focus on.

After the thorough description of context, Dr. Guidry moved into sharing the strategy behind addressing the factors from the first half of the presentation, sharing primary targets of new student acquisition at ECU: high ability learners, adult learners (includes PKH), the out of state market (including international), recruiting events, pipeline efficiency, and the value of the ECU Degree (ROI). He told the committee what is working well at ECU in the spaces of traditional students, transfer students, and out of state students: engagement of both urban and rural student populations with events, generation of interest at the top of the pipeline, high quality campus recruiting events, and using data to target engagement with students most likely to enroll. He also reminded the committee of places we need to improve in each student population: yielding admitted students, the cost of attendance, onboarding practices, raising the academic reputation, communicating the value of the ECU degree, on site engagement with transfer students, credit transfer and processes, and speed in assistance for the transfer population.

Dr. Guidry also discussed scholarships specifically, as they are a very important tool for recruiting and “money matters” is a clear common thread for all students seeking higher education in the current landscape.

Mr. Stansbury closed the presentation by describing the student life driven factors affecting sustained enrollment, and how engagement and the creation of communities that students want to be a part of drives both enrollment and retention. To that point, he shared some data as it relates to Fraternity and Sorority life, with a clear connection between participation in that community and increased retention and four year graduation rates.

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Dr. Buddo thanked the group for the informative presentation and invited the committee members to ask questions.

Trustee Rogers expressed appreciation for the presentation and concern over competitor UNC Charlotte in particular, and the challenges ECU is facing in that regard.

Trustee Workman had a question related to out of state students, whether we are prepared to target student populations that do want to come to the southeast and how other regions may also be targeting those populations.

Trustee Ward also asked about what we are doing with regard to tuition and it was discussed that the System Office controls policy that affects those decisions. Chancellor Rogers shared a little about a legislative priority that will be described in one of the other committee meetings today, that may help in this space.

Trustee Rogers also mentioned concern over the number of applicants we have as compared to other schools and Dr. Guidry spoke a little about how we learn of and treat serious inquiries.

Trustee Isley asked about ways we can invest in or partner with athletics in order to amplify recruitment efforts, and also had a clarifying question about the data for students who are 'undecided.'

Trustee Smith mentioned student interest in the national capitol area and how we might target populations typically interested in rural schools.

Trustee Ward asked what could we do about sustaining Greek Life numbers and interest at ECU. Trustee Isley also brought up affordability with respect to joining a fraternity or sorority and asked about avenues to financially assist these students.

Chairman Furr thanked the team for the great presentation and conversation and was pleased especially to hear that we have some strong footing to address our academic reputation.

With no further business before the committee, they were adjourned at 12:16PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine Bade Griffith, Office of the Provost

AGENDA ITEM

- II. ECU's Enrollment Management Strategy – Part III.....Chris Buddo
Marketing/Branding, Scholarship Strategy, Graduate School Interim Provost
Enrollment, & Alternative Revenue Generating Programs

Allen Guidry
Assoc. Provost for
Learning Operations

Situation: The UNC BOG Committee on Strategic Initiatives is focused this academic year on understanding enrollment trends and the related fiscal outlook. The ECU Board of Trustees is similarly focused and continues a three-part series on this topic.

With the arrival of the enrollment cliff, increased competition, changing student mix, and evolving workforce needs, it is important institutions have a multi-pronged strategy for new student acquisition, student success, and fiscal health.

Background: Multiple factors influence enrollment outcomes so an understanding of the overall landscape, trends, and forecasts along with ECU's market position, informs the priorities and practices to best position ECU in this competitive environment.

Assessment: The committees will receive a three-part series on the enrollment landscape and the factors and drivers of ECU's strategic enrollment management strategy.

The first session was held in November 2024 and focused on retention of current students, phase two of the UNC System Performance Metrics and the linkages to ECU's student success agenda.

The second session was held in February 2025 with a focus on new student acquisition and ECU's strategic action plans and related discussion across three key markets: freshmen, out-of-state, and transfers.

This third session will extend the dialogue on four related aspects: marketing & branding efforts, scholarship strategy, graduate enrollments, and alternative revenue generating programs.

Action: This item is for information only.

As part of the Carnegie branding work, four distinct student personas were identified in our current and prospective student populations. These personas are:

1. Studious Achiever
2. Playful Friend
3. Spirited Leader
4. Expressive Imaginator

Using data in our student recruitment CRM, we are able to target individual students with messaging that resonates with their specific persona. The following four videos were produced for that purpose and are currently in use for online and connected TV campaigns.

Studious Achiever

https://youtu.be/83OURJnWRTE?si=J4cneDbImbR2hGX_

Playful Friend

https://youtu.be/2yvX1R1H2jl?si=P_-8R5o6i8GOCeDr

Spirited Leader

https://youtu.be/C_Tt6qwjXd8?si=76QbGVX_P6rZWRGc

Expressive Imaginator

https://youtu.be/Jzo6Wg0w9_M?si=tngxzDFRl6cCp7Td