



AGENDA  
Committee on Strategy and Innovation  
April 11, 2024

- I. Approval of Minutes, February 15, 2024  
Tom Furr  
Committee Chair
  
- II. Expanding Our Education Reach: ECU on the  
Project Kitty Hawk Platform  
Dr. Robin Coger  
Provost and Senior VC  
for Academic Affairs



**AGENDA ITEM**

- I. Approval of Minutes – February 15, 2024 ..... Tom Furr  
Committee Chair

**Situation:** Approval of the minutes from the joint meeting of the University Affairs Committee and the Committee on Strategy and Innovation on February 15, 2024 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 15, 2024 – Main Campus Student Center and Online Meeting**

The **JOINT MEETING of the Committee on Strategy & Innovation and the University Affairs Committee** of the ECU Board of Trustees met in person on Thursday, February 15, 2024.

Committee members present from the Committee on Strategy and Innovation:

Van Isley	Vanessa Workman	Carl Rogers
Javier Limon	Tom Furr (joining virtually)	
Jeffrey Roberts	Scott Shook (joining virtually)	

Committee members present from the University Affairs Committee:

Javier Limon	Vince Smith
Jeffrey Roberts	Vanessa Workman
Jim Segrave	Tom Furr (joining virtually)

Other Board members present:

Jason Poole	Cassie Burt
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Guest:

Andrew Kelly, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy, UNC System Office  
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Trustee Jeff Roberts, Vice-Chair of the Committee, convened the meeting at 12:02PM. Chairman Roberts read the conflict-of-interest provisions as required by the State Government Ethics Act and asked if anyone would like to declare or report an actual or perceived conflict. None were reported.

### **I. Roll Call**

Chairman Roberts called roll and a quorum was established.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Roberts asked for the separate vote and approval of the minutes from the November 30, 2023 meetings of the Committee on Strategy & Innovation and the University Affairs committee. Each committee motioned to approve their minutes and received seconds. All were in favor.

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Action Item

The minutes from the November 30, 2023 meetings of the Committee on Strategy & Innovation and the University Affairs Committee were each approved with no changes.

**III. Operational Metrics**

Board members were encouraged to reach out to Provost Coger with any questions about the updated operational metrics for the University Affairs Committee available in board materials.

**IV. Return on Investment**

Provost Coger introduced the first informational topic for the joint meeting, a presentation on the recent Return on Investment (ROI) Study submitted by the Board of Governors to General Assembly in November 2023. Dr. Coger thanked ECU's IPAR team for their work in assisting the System Office with ECU data in the completion of this report and introduced Dr. Andrew Kelly, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Policy at the UNC System Office, who gave the committees a presentation: "ROI for ECU Graduates: Measurement, Drivers and Policy Implications."

Dr. Kelly outlined the goals of his presentation for the committees: to share the increasing concern about the value of higher education, to overview the ROI efforts of the UNC System, to take a closer look at ECU ROI, and to discuss next steps and policy implications for the system and our institution.

Dr. Kelly began by discussing the relatively recent shift in public opinion regarding the value of a college education and the reasons for that shift, including the rising student costs and incurred debt. He described the basics in measurement for the ROI study and some general findings from the study and also spent some time discussing the shift nationally toward value-based accountability, including federal regulations to be implemented in 2025 and 2026.

Dr. Kelly shared more about the legislative mandate associated with the study and its guiding principles, and informed the committee of the firms SO partnered with in the study: Deloitte, Burning Glass and rpkGroup. The results of the study are reflected in three dashboards: ROI to Student // ROI to State // Institutional Context, and today's focus in discussing ECU's outcomes from the study is on Student ROI.

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Dr. Kelly reviewed some data from ECU, noting especially that 96% of undergraduate programs and 92% of graduate programs at ECU were found to have positive ROI and noted that as a great report card.

Dr. Kelly then paused to take a few questions and spent a moment discussing limitations of the study, including a reminder that the study was based only on student completers, the inability of the data to track an individual who left the state, and the inability to account for those not working for a period of time. He also shared his thoughts on the reasons behind this study being commissioned.

Chancellor Rogers took a moment to thank Dr. Kelly and to share his enthusiasm for the work, noting the opportunity to improve and the many dimensions of this data and the results of the study.

Another question posed to Dr. Kelly was how we are or how we can go about communicating ROI to the public. Dr. Kelly noted this as a “next step” and acknowledged that this is a key challenge for higher education across the board, how to make the best tool for consumers to use. He mentioned seeking examples of success in this space in other states like Georgia and Texas, the investigating of relevant partnerships (CFNC, etc) or channels like existing relationships with schools/advisors. He also shared that he anticipates a longer-term strategy of shifting to a world where students don’t feel like they in fact have to choose between pursuing employment and pursuing education.

Lastly, Dr. Kelly discussed the next steps and policy implications. He reiterated that he views the study as positive and a win for the system generally, with ECU’s results in particular being a good report card. He shared that the BOG included a transmittal letter outlining the set of actions to be taken by the Board, the president and System Office, and the chancellors of each constituent university in response to the report’s findings. Those actions include an immediate review by chancellors and other university leaders of low-ROI programs, the provision of machine-readable program-level datasets, a review of academic policies related to program approval and review, and development of data-sharing agreements with state and federal agencies. Dr. Kelly reviewed key questions for institutional leaders and how ECU (and the system office) should be moving forward.

Committee members had a few more questions for Dr. Kelly, including whether SO takes a holistic look what employers are looking for as well as what actions besides potential removal of low ROI programs were possible. Dr. Kelly reiterated the desire not to cut programs based solely on the ROI results and the need to seek improvement of those programs, as well as SO’s commitment to review and publish data/summaries more regularly at the system level to help institutions identify areas for opportunity and noted there was “much more of the onion to peel” in terms of how the data would be reviewed and what actions would result.

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**V. Break: 1:19 – 1:31**

**VI. Advancing ECU’s Tech Transfer Deliverables via NC Innovation**

Acting CREO Dr. Sharon Paynter began by thanking her team for their behind the scenes work on the presentation shared today. She described the concept of tech transfer for anyone new to the space and noted the importance of supporting Tech Transfer at ECU in its partnership with NC Innovation. Dr. Paynter also shared a little about the history of tech transfer in higher education, and gave several specific faculty members’ examples of this work happening at ECU already and how they interface with the Office of Licensing and Commercialization at ECU, which currently manages 148 active patents and 55 active licenses.

Dr. Paynter shared the five benchmarks to measure success in tech transfer, and showed the committee a little bit of where ECU’s performance in these areas measures up to our peers. She continued by discussing the ways in which ECU can benefit and succeed as a partner with NC Innovation. She described more about the need that NC Innovation seeks to address, which is the broadening gap between incoming research dollars and the lack of commercialization activities, and mentioned a few areas needing improvement in order for ECU’s innovation success to grow.

Members of the Committee on Strategy & Innovation were adjourned from the meeting before further business was conducted by the University Affairs Committee.

**VII. Intercollegiate Athletics Report**

Trustee Roberts asked Provost Coger to present the Intercollegiate Athletics Report. Dr. Coger reminded the committees that this is an annual UNC Policy requirement and that with BOT support, ECU will submit this report to the System Office in March. The report includes a review of student-athlete course clustering and no irregularities were found in the review.

**VIII. Closed Session**

Trustee Workman made a motion that the committee go into closed session to consider personnel related matters. Motion was seconded. All in favor.

At 1:56PM the Committee went into closed session.

In closed session, the committee approved two personnel related items: the conferral of tenure for Dr. Chad Morris in the Department of Anthropology and the approval of a petition

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for political activity for Dr. Bob Edwards in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, who is seeking election to the Pitt County Commissioners. Both of these items were referred to the full board consent agenda and were approved on Friday, April 12.

The committee returned to open session at 2:00 p.m. and the meeting was adjourned.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Madeleine Bade Griffith, Office of the Provost

**AGENDA ITEM**

II. Expanding Our Educational Reach: ECU on the Project Kitty Hawk Platform..... Robin Coger, Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior VC Academic Affairs

Dave Eby  
Chief Operating Officer, PKH

Allen Guidry, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost for Learner Operations, ECU

Jonathan “Travis” Powell  
Senior Teaching Instructor, ECU Dept of Technology Systems

+ Current ECU Student on the PKH Platform

**Situation:** This session will focus on one of the strategies ECU is using to diversify its online enrollment portfolio and revenue streams and expand learner access to high demand online degree programs.

**Background:** In 2021 the NC General Assembly appropriated \$97M to launch Project Kitty Hawk (PKH). PKH is a non-profit ed-tech start up designed to partner with UNC-System universities to serve adult learners. The partnership is designed for PKH to work with the institutions to design workforce-aligned online degree programs delivered on the PKH platform. Additionally, PKH partners in helping to attract, enroll and support learners in those programs to graduation. East Carolina University is currently one of two universities with active degree programs on the PKH platform.

**Assessment:** The decision to partner with PKH aligns with ECU’s *Future Focused. Innovation Driven* strategic agenda and is targeted at assisting the University in its goal of diversifying positive revenue streams. ECU continues to have strong in-person degree programs as well as online degree programs through ECU Online, where the latter has enabled ECU to be ranked in Newsweek’s top 10 online colleges. By partnering with PKH, ECU is further expanding its online learning portfolio to high demand programs that have the potential to scale. To ensure that we are not in competition with ourselves, a strategic subset of ECU degree programs offered on the PKH platform. This session will highlight PKH and ECU’s experience in the partnership from the University, faculty, and student perspectives.

**Action:** This item is for information only.



APRIL 11, 2024

# Project Kitty Hawk

ECU Board of Trustees  
Update



# PKH's Focus



## North Carolina's Goal

2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 with a degree or high-quality credential by 2030

THE UNC SYSTEM



## UNC System's Goal

Enroll 45,000 undergraduates over the age of 25 by 2027



## Project Kitty Hawk's Goal

Add 32,500 new UNC student starts by 2028



**Our goals are nested within statewide efforts to educate more North Carolinians.**





# 533,000

North Carolina adults (*aged 25-44*)  
with some college, no degree

# 63,000

NC adult learners attend online  
programs ...**OUT OF STATE.**



# PKH provides end-to-end services to power in-demand online programs



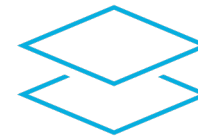
## Marketing & Admissions

Engage prospective students through multi-channel marketing and high-touch admissions advising



## Student Services & Support

Guide students from first enrollment to graduation, supporting on-time graduation



## Program Design & Development

Support quality online course development, efficient program design, and faculty recruiting & development



## Partnership Success

Manage new and ongoing programs with transparency; connective tissue between PKH and the university



# ECU's PKH-Powered Portfolio: Spring 2024

ECU and PKH introduced four workforce-focused bachelor's programs:

*College of Engineering and Technology*



**B.S.  
Information &  
Cybersecurity  
Technology**

First cohort:  
February

*Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences*



**B.A.  
Psychology**

First cohort:  
February



**B.S. Multidisciplinary  
Studies:  
Security Studies**

First cohort:  
February



**B.S.  
Criminal Justice**

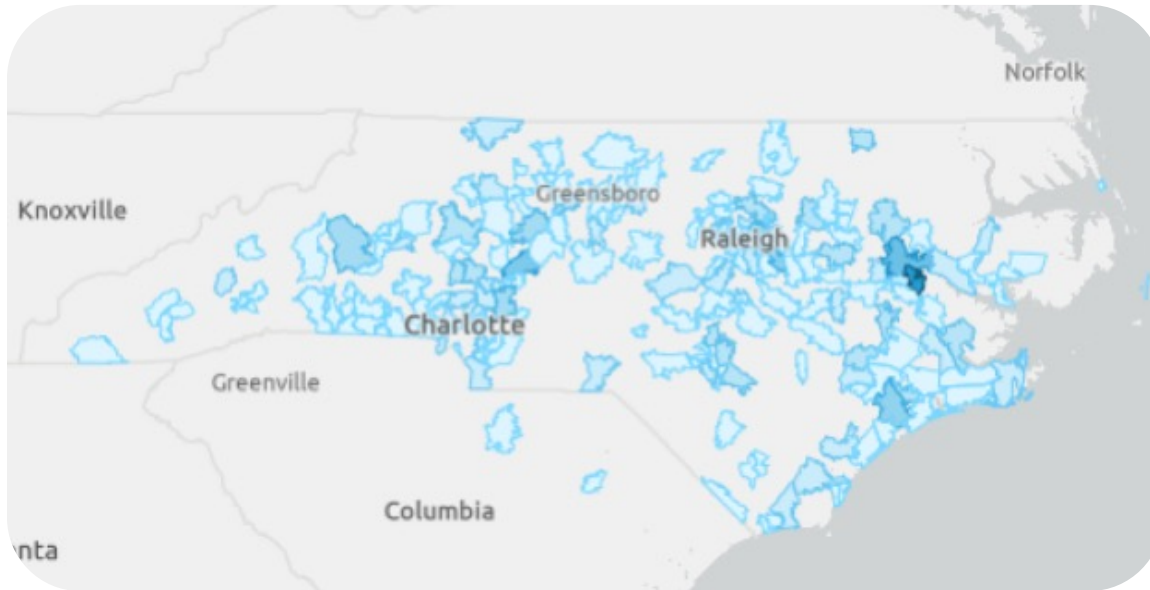
First cohort:  
June



# Programs attract a non-traditional audience

## Statewide Reach

### Applicants by Zip Code



### Applicant Demographics

- Average 32 years old
- 69% female; 63% white
- 21% African American
- 7% with military experience
- 9% previously attended ECU
- Average 1.7 previous colleges attended

## High Interest

### ECU Enrollment Funnel (Jan-Apr)

**1,782**

PROGRAM INQUIRIES

**326**

APPLICATIONS

Spring	Summer	Fall
73	198	55

**30**

NEW STUDENT STARTS  
FEBRUARY 2024



# Outreach Initiatives

PKH's outreach team builds relationships that generate qualified learner pipelines for PKH-powered programs statewide



## Workforce

Create ties to North Carolina employers that sponsor students and provide tuition assistance



## Military

Become preferred programs for military-affiliated learners (active military, veterans, and families) in North Carolina and beyond



## Community Colleges

Build bachelor's degree pathways for current North Carolina community college students and graduates



# Thank You.

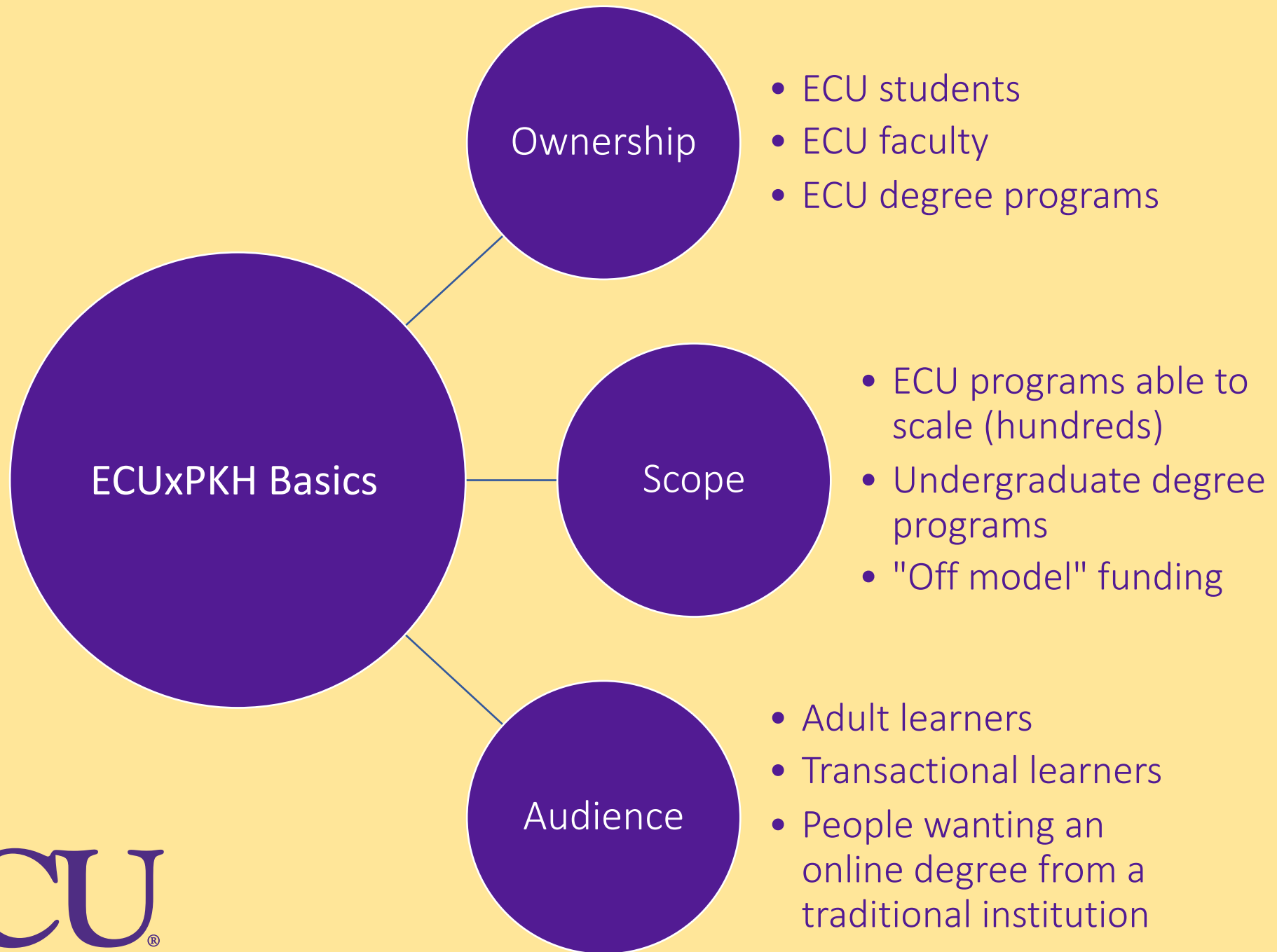




# ECU Powered By PKH

Why ECUxPKH?  
What does it look like?

ECU Online



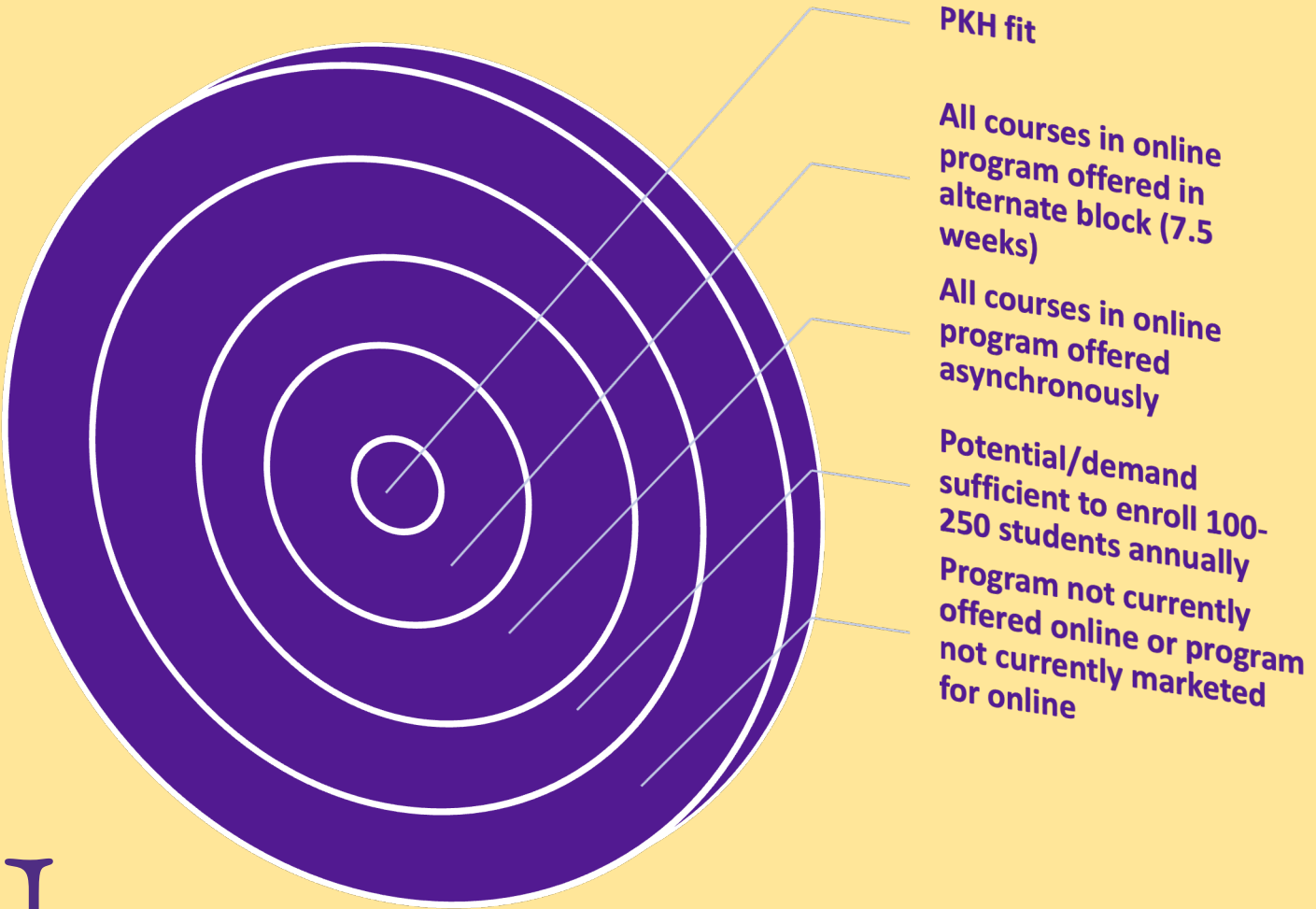
## Why did we consider ECUxPKH?

- ✓ Expand our online learning portfolio by bringing high demand programs not currently online to market quickly with the resources to support start up
- ✓ Enhance our reputation as a leader in online learning
- ✓ Provide some financial relief to allow us to deploy resources strategically while maintaining our quality and mission
- ✓ Opportunity to learn new techniques for providing quality service and support to online, adult learners



*"First to Four"*

# How did we determine a good fit?







# ECUxPKH and instruction

- These are ECU programs with content developed/controlled by ECU program faculty
- ECU faculty design the course content and PKH provides instructional design support
- Courses are asynchronous AND on a 7.5-week block schedule
- There are 5 term starts: 2 fall, 2 spring, and 1 summer
- Courses are currently being taught by existing ECU faculty but as we grow we will be hiring full-time and part-time instructors
- We control hiring, onboarding, evaluation and performance review processes of faculty – they are OUR faculty
- Students apply specifically to the ECUxPKH program and are shepherded through the process by an admissions coach. They are admitted using ECU admission criteria.



# ECUxPKH By the Numbers

	Total Leads (Sp2 and Summer)	Total Apps (Sp2 and Summer)	Total Admits (Sp 2 & Summer)	Spring 2 registered	Total courses designed or in design
BA Psychology	923	117	83	23	8
BS Information and Cybersecurity Technology	602	63	33	6	2
BS Multidisciplinary Studies: Security Studies	331	8	2	1	4
BS Criminal Justice	391	27	10	N/A	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2247</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17</b>

# What are the benefits we've seen?



**ECU Powered By PKH**

Student and Faculty  
Perspectives

A Discussion

**ECU Online**