



ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

ECSU BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Minutes

March 11, 2025, | 1:10pm
KE White Center
1862 Edgewood Dr.
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stephanie Johnson called March 11, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting to order at 2:15p.m.

ROLL CALL

Trustee Phyllis Bosomworth conducted roll call. Trustees present included James Copland, Kayla Dixon, Christine Evans, Stephen Friedrich (via Zoom), Kathryn Holding, Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Dr. Tiffany Jones (via Zoom), Patricia Norman, Johnny Tillett, Paul Tine, and Justin Waddell, and James Gailliard (Absent).

REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR

Chair Johnson extended a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to today's efforts, including those working remotely. Their dedication and commitment were truly appreciated. Special appreciation was given to administrators, presenters, and trustees who continue to support the university.

Chair Johnson also announced that Trustee Patricia Norman will be sworn in as a commissioner on the Housing Political Board for Wake County tomorrow, March 12, 2025, at 12:30 PM. Congratulations were extended to Trustee Norman on this significant achievement.

STATE GOVERNMENT ETHICS ACT

Chair Stephanie Johnson read the State Government Ethics Act. No one mentioned a conflict of interest based on the materials received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made and seconded (Holding/Tillett) to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2025, Board meeting. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made and seconded (Tine/Norman) to approve the consent agenda which included updates regarding the strategic plan: International Studies & Study Abroad: Highlighting Dr. Andre Stevenson's Fulbright Scholar award and students' international experiences.

Biotechnology Partnership: Announced a collaboration with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and the biomedical program for workforce training, funded by a \$6.2 million grant.

Viking Showcase: The February 1st event was successful, with alumni helping bring students from various regions. Another Viking Showcase is planned for April 26th, with 509 RSVP'd.

Blueprint for Success: Multiple events in cities like Charlotte, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem are aimed at increasing student engagement.

Admissions Updates: Noted a slight decline in freshman applications but an increase in the number of students admitted. Strategies were discussed for improving yield and increasing retention.

Committee on Academic Excellence and Strategic Growth

Peer List Recommendations – Dr. Farrah J. Ward

- **Overview of Peer List:** The UNC System requires a review of peer institutions every five years. The current cycle runs from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2025.
- **Peer Institution Criteria:** The list includes 11 institutions, 8 of which are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). A discussion on the appeal process for adding institutions such as Delta State University and Florida Memorial was made.
- **Cluster Analysis:** The UNC System's cluster analysis was used to evaluate peer institutions. Two rounds of analysis were conducted, with adjustments to the variables considered.
- **Proposed Peer List:** The final peer list included both new institutions and those from the prior cycle, including aspirational peers such as Delta State University and the University of Maryland.
- **Feedback Request:** Dr. Ward asked for feedback from the committee before final submission to the UNC System by the April 7th deadline.

International Program Updates – Dr. Farrah J. Ward

Dr. Ward shared some updates regarding the strategic plan:

- **International Studies & Study Abroad:** Highlighting Dr. Andre Stevenson's Fulbright Scholar award and students' international experiences.
- **Biotechnology Partnership:** Announced a collaboration with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and the biomedical program for workforce training, funded by a \$6.2 million grant.

Enrollment Updates – Mrs. Karen Lucas

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Committee on Finance, Audit and University Advancement

Finance Update

Finance Action Items:

Vice-Chancellor for business & Finance Robert Thibeault presented two action items:

1. UNC System FY26 All-Funds Budget- Trustee Tine made the motion to approve the FY26 All-Funds Budget. The motion was seconded by Trustee Holding. The motion carried, unanimously.
2. Resolution Authorizing the University to Issue Debt not to Exceed \$5M-second item was to Decrease to the Virtual Orientation Rate – Trustee Tine made the motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Trustee Evans. The motion carried, unanimously.

Finance Updates

VC Thibeault gave a summary of informational items. The General Fund report to date was: Total Budget: \$57,928,526, Total Expenditures and Total Revenues: \$24,682,972 (42.61%). Detailed information in Board materials. Trust & Auxiliary fund balance: \$22.3M, with \$14.6 unrestricted. An All-Fund Budget Report and an Endowment Report, both as 12/31/24 were provided. The Endowment had over fiscal year-to-date earnings of 3.51%. The University achieved a clean University audit for the 14th consecutive year.

Internal Audit Updates

Internal Audit Action Items:

Chief Audit Officer Sharnita Parker presented two action items:

1. Internal Audit Charter
2. Audit Committee Charter

The Committee considered both items together. Trustee Friedrich made the motion to approve both items. The motion was seconded by Trustee Evans. The motion carried, unanimously.

Internal Audit Updates

Chief Audit Officer Sharnita Parker gave a summary of informational items. Two audit reports were completed this quarter. Admission Operations, with no observation and an Asset Management (Motor Fleet) with three observations.

University Advancement Updates

Interim Vice Chancellor Kevin Wade reported significant progress in FY25 fundraising, with \$102,700 raised for the Viking Elevate: Sound & Spirit campaign, exceeding the 100,000 goal. The funds will support the Essence of Praise Gospel Choir, Jazz Band, University Choir, and Athletics Resource Fund. Additionally, \$8,000 in NAA gap funding helped retain 22 students for the Spring 2025 semester. The Founders Day Scholarship Gala XVIII is scheduled for March 15, 2025, with tickets and sponsorship available. Mrs. Mone't Earle was introduced as the new

Director for Alumni Relations & Engagement. Key upcoming events include Viking Fest on April 25-26, 2025, and the Day of Giving on April 24, 2025.

Committee on Student Excellence

Dr. Kevin Wade: Provided unit updates on new Hires and appointments; Unit Updates from Dr. Nichole Lewis on Community of CARE, Student Health Services and NC Step; Dr. Wade concluded with Career Development Center, Housing and Residence Life, 2025 Viking Fest, Spring 2025 Community Connections Line-up and Resource Development to include Z. Smith Reynolds Funding \$80K and the submission of the pre application for BCBS application. He also shared Student Affairs and University Advancement Cross Collaboration and the benefits of the Merge, saving approximately \$575K in personnel savings.

Mr. James DuBose, Jr. – Remotely - Provided updates new staffing to include, the Strategic Plan 2.5 Update; Athletics Dept. Initiatives; Student Academic updates (Cumulative GPA of 3.02); Darrius Satterfield and appointment to National SAAC Representative and Strategic planning and Finance Committee; Highlights from the CIAA Tournament and the 2024-25 Defensive Player of the Year, Dericko Williams; Facilities Enhancements and an update on Athletics Giving; in conclusion, shared the 2025 ECSU Football Schedule.

Ms. Kalya Dixon: Provided an update on the ASG at NC A&T; Chancellors Search Listening Session; SGA and CAB Events; Spirit Week, February 10-14th Power in Action “A Demonstration for Justice”; and Valentine’s Week of Events. All programs were well attended, and students feedback was good.

Committee On Operational Excellence

Infrastructure Updates

VC Chip Lewin provided an update on the current and ongoing facility upgrades such as the MD Thorpe parking lot, the demolition of the chancellor’s residence and the relocation of the radio tower. Impending projects is the completion of the roundabout with the installation of a fountain, welcome green walking paths, the upgrade of Dixon Hall exterior with new brick masonry and start building the new chancellor’s residence. The university intended to have the ribbon cutting of the UAS classroom located on Weeksville Road, however, the building is operational. The residence and dining hall is making strides of progress of completion is both are on schedule to open during the summer of 2025. The Impending groundbreaking for the Flight School is scheduled for April 23rd. The 57,000 sq ft bldg. has a completion date of January 2027. In addition, the groundbreaking for the Currituck County Hanger will be held in a few weeks, March 26th. This building will have 4,100 sq ft of educational space, 6,550 sq ft of hanger space and 6,600 sq ft of much needed hanger storage space. VC Lewin stated that software upgrades were needed such as NorthStar. This premiere 24-hour emergency and disaster response system offers a one-stop turnkey service that will customize Standard Operating Procedures and training certification among other services. The facility department has outgrown the current software to streamline their department. Asset software was investigated to be a much-needed upgrade with options such as space allocation portal, managing work orders and prioritizing the maintenance planning for the campus. Lastly, campus mapping has traditionally has been done by ECSU, however Concept 3D is a campus mapping software that will streamline old and future campus buildings. A motion made for the approval for the construction of a 5,000 sq ft facilities building which will be located near the new location of the radio tower; Trustee Johnny Tillet made the motion and Trustee

Patricia Norman seconded. A motion was made to approval of design-build for Vaughn Center renovations. Three firms were interviewed (1) Muter Construction/CRA Architects (2) TA Loving/CRA Architects (3) CT Wilson/HH Architects. Trustee Johnny Tillet made the motion to approve, and Trustee Patricia Norman seconded. Lastly, the motion was made to approval of Right of Way for Piedmont Natural Gas to install the new gas line for the dining hall. Trustee Johnny Tillet made the motion to approve, and Trustee Patricia Norman seconded.

Committee on Regional Development

VC Chip Lewin updated the committee on the meeting held with the UNC system regarding a millennial campus and ECSU's options. The possibility exists that a request for BOT approval for a campus designation will be requested at one of the next three BOT meetings scheduled between June and September. It was also reported that ECSU has requested funds from the Completion Assistance Grant from Escheats funds in the amount of 5 million dollars. This funding will accommodate the aviation program growth. Other specific funding requests include projects such as the Sky Bridge project, flight school, and the replacement of the library. Forthcoming capital projects include the Vaughn Center renovation and repairs and the Johnson Hall HVAC and dehumidification installation. VC Lewin stated that the Regional Development committee continues to work towards Objective 6.3 of the strategic plan. There are scheduled community experience and involvement events planned with community partners to extend ECSU's engagement.

Committee on Naming of Buildings

Closed Session:

Chair Johnson called for a motion to go into closed session. Trustee Kathryn Holding made a motion to go into closed session so the Committee can discuss confidential matters pertaining to the University. The motion was seconded by Trustee Tine. The motion carried unanimously. The Committee went into closed session at 12:15 p.m. and returned to open session at 12:47p.m. There was no action taken on the closed session matter.

Committee on University Governance

Closed Session:

Attorney Rudisill informed the Committee that there were 2 items for action during the closed session and she then requested to go into closed session. Chair Johnson called for a motion to go into closed session. In order to preserve the attorney-client privilege, Trustee Paul Tine made a motion to go into closed session so the Committee can discuss confidential matters pertaining to the University. The motion was seconded by Trustee Johnny Tillet. The motion carried unanimously. The Committee went into closed session at 12:55 p.m. and returned to open session at 1:40 p.m. Action taken on the closed session matters will be handled during the full Board meeting immediately following lunch.

Chancellor's Report

Interim Chancellor Catherine Edmonds shared updates with the Board of Trustees on several key areas, including enrollment and graduation trends, progress on the strategic plan, and an overview of shared benefit services.

Elizabeth City State Universities Event Updates and Highlights:

Enrollment & Graduation Updates

- Fall 2024: 242 graduates (226 undergraduate, 16 graduate).
 - 95% of graduates are employed, enlisted, or pursuing further education.
- Spring 2025 Enrollment:
 - 1,991 students enrolled (7% increase from Spring 2024).
 - 120 transfer students (70% increase from Spring 2024).

Strategic Plan Update

- Environmental scan phase in progress, gathering feedback from faculty, staff, and community stakeholders.
- Timeline adjustments made to align with the chancellor search.

Embry-Riddle Partnership

- Proposed 4+1 program: Earn a bachelor's degree at ECSU and a master's degree at Embry-Riddle within five years.
- Collaboration opportunities in research and aircraft acquisition.
- **Progress Timeline:**

October 2024: Key discussions initiated with Embry-Riddle stakeholders.

November 2024: Agreement reached on 4+1 curriculum structure and shared course offerings.

March 2025: MOU under review, ECSU visit to Embry-Riddle scheduled for late March.

April 2025: MOU finalization expected.

August 2025: Enrollment of eligible students begins.

- Special acknowledgment to Trustees Friedrich and Waddell for their role in facilitating key connections.
- Dr. Wade confirmed six course developments, with three to four integrals to the partnership.

Human Resources: Benefit Shared Services Overview

- Introduction: Interim Chief of Human Resources, Mr. Darryl Bass.

- UNC System Benefit Shared Services Model:

Enhances efficiency and reduces costs.

Provides timely benefits consulting, call center support, and new hire orientation.

Ensures a 24-hour response time for employee inquiries.

Expected cost savings: \$60,000 in the first year, with system-wide savings of \$250,000 annually.

ECSU has voluntarily opted in, aligning with strategic staffing priorities.

NC Collegiate Hunger Challenge Recognition

- ECSU placed first in the UNC System sector.
- Special recognition to Dr. Wade and his team for addressing student food insecurity.

ECSU Rankings & Community Engagement

- 2025 Smart Asset Rankings:

#1 in North Carolina for college tuition affordability.

#2 Best Value College in North Carolina.

- **Recent Engagements:**

CIAA Events: Strong ECSU alumni presence and strategic networking opportunities.

Mayor's Leadership Summit: Collaborations to position Elizabeth City as an aviation hub.

Coast Guard Marathon & Community Outreach: Strengthened regional partnerships.

Blueprint Events (Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem): Focused on ECSU outreach and student engagement.

Upcoming ECSU Takeover on Sport Shop Radio (March 21, 2025): Two-hour segment highlighting ECSU achievements with faculty and student leaders.

Founders Day Convocation & Upcoming Events

- 134th Founders Day Convocation: March 14, 2025, featuring keynote speaker Judge Cole.
 - Additional key event dates to be shared with board members.
- Chancellor Search Update
- The search process remains on track, with consistent progress by the search committee.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30pm

**Respectfully Submitted,
Natalie Jones**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.