



ECSU BOARD OF TRUSTEES FULL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 10, 2025, | 1:45pm
KE White Center
1862 Edgewood Dr.
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stephanie Johnson called June 10, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting to order at 1:45p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR

Chair Johnson expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Board Chair, noting it has been a true honor. Reflecting on the past eight months in this role and three years on the Board, she highlighted key milestones, including new building openings and student-centered events that exemplify the spirit of ECSU.

Graduation ceremonies were noted as particularly meaningful, serving as a reminder of the core mission of the university—student success.

Despite challenges, including times when in-person meetings weren't possible, the Board's work continued. The Chair shared that she had the privilege of serving under three Chancellors, each of whom contributed uniquely to the university. To my fellow board members, thank you for your support and the diverse expertise you bring. And to Felicia, Melanie, Natalie, Seth, and so many others, thank you for your dedication behind the scenes. As I wrap up my term, I leave proud and optimistic. ECSU is in good hands, and I know great things are ahead.

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

The Board moved and seconded approval of the March 11, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The Board moved and seconded approval of the consent agenda which included:

- A. Tuition & Fees Refund Policy for Students Serving in the Military or in Case of National Emergency or Catastrophic Event Policy 400.3.3.4 (Amendment)
- B. 2025-2026 Audit Plan
- C. Student Health Services Billing Policy 500.5.2 (Repeal)
- D. Naming of Building
- E. 2025 Promotion, Tenure and Reappointments

Committee on Academic Excellence and Strategic Growth

Peer List Recommendations – Dr. Farrah J. Ward

Dr. Ward provided a formal update confirming that the peer institution list, which received feedback during the March Board meeting, has been officially approved by the UNC Board of Governors. This list will serve as ECSU's official benchmark for institutional comparisons over the next five years.

Accreditation Updates – Dr. Farrah J. Ward Dr. Ward also gave a comprehensive update on accreditation changes impacting ECSU and all UNC institutions. She explained recent legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly, mandating that no UNC institution or North Carolina community college may be accredited by the same accrediting agency for two consecutive cycles. ECSU is currently accredited by SACSCOC through 2031. To comply with the law, ECSU must transition to a new accreditor after that cycle ends.

In the interim, ECSU is required to submit a Fifth-Year Interim Report to SACSCOC, which is due on March 1, 2027. ECSU recently completed the second year of the current three-year reporting cycle, with one year remaining.

To prepare for the required transition, the UNC System and NC Community College System contacted the five available accrediting bodies to determine willingness to accept multiple institutions simultaneously. Of those, only the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education agreed to accept institutions.

After evaluating both options, ECSU has chosen to pursue accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Key factors influencing this decision included the clarity of the transition process and significantly lower associated costs. ECSU will be required to maintain dual accreditation during the transition, paying fees to both SACSCOC and HLC.

Performance Metrics Update- Dr. Farrah J. Ward

first reminding attendees that performance metrics data lags by one year. ECSU is evaluated on six core metrics used across all UNC campuses, along with one institution-specific metric, which for ECSU is Adult Learner Enrollment.

The first metric highlighted was the four-year graduation rate. Dr. Ward explained how to interpret the performance graphs:

- The blue line represents ECSU's actual performance.
- The solid red line indicates the threshold level set by the UNC System.

She noted that ECSU's performance is trending positively in several areas and that the university continues working toward improving outcomes across all metrics in alignment with system-wide goals.

Enrollment Update- Dr. Farrah J. Ward

Choose NC Pilot Impact

- Choose NC pilot program (UNC System initiative) contributed significantly to application spikes:
 - o UNC Chapel Hill sent ECSU ~4,000 denied applicants.
 - o ECSU admitted 4,122 students from that group, denied 27.
 - o Only 16 confirmations so far; average GPA = 4.06.
- ECSU plans to continue participating next year, with NC State joining the initiative.

First-Time Freshman Enrollment

- Confirmations are down by 37 students compared to last year.
- ECSU launched call campaigns, including faculty and student-led outreach, to increase confirmations.
- A significant barrier this year is the return of standardized testing requirements:
 - o Students with GPAs between 2.5–2.8 must now submit SAT/ACT scores.
 - for 2025 admits, students must meet a minimum SAT score of 930 or ACT 17.
- As of now, 541 applicants cannot be admitted due to missing test scores—a major recruitment challenge.

Transfer Students

- Slightly down by 12 students compared to last year.
- Transfer confirmations tend to double closer to enrollment; ECSU expects growth like Fall 2024's 279 transfer students.

Readmits

- Readmit population is decreasing, due to prior years' successful outreach campaigns.
- While smaller, this group is still actively being pursued.

Aviation Program Update

- Aviation program is seeing strong growth despite increased flight fees.
- Projected Fall 2025 enrollment:
 - o 288 continuing students
 - o ~500 total aviation participants, including 60 high schoolers via ECSU's grant-funded dual-enrollment initiative.
 - o 20% increase in degree-seeking aviation majors from 371 last fall to 446 projected this fall.

Adult Learner Enrollment

- Current projection: 441 total adult learners:
 - o 358 returning students
 - o 83 new confirmations
- Target: 530 total adult learners; short by 89.

Initiatives Underway:

- LinkedIn ad campaigns (49 applications generated)
- Outreach to flight schools offering credit for prior aviation licenses (100% online completion possible)
- Orientation presentations targeting parents over 25

- Promotion of tuition benefits for ECSU employees
- Hiring of ECSU's first Director of Adult Learning and Professional Studies (Michelle Moore)

Closing Note

- Overall enrollment is up by 10%.
- First-time freshman enrollment is up by 7.5%.
- ECSU is actively targeting key areas

Committee on Finance, Audit and University Advancement

Finance Updates

- Finance Action Items:
 - Vice-Chancellor for Business & Finance Robert Thibeault presented one action item:
 1. ECSU Policy 400.3.3.1 – Tuition and Fees Refund Policy for Students Serving in the Military or in Case of National Emergency of Catastrophic Event – Trustee Gailliard made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Trustee Evans. The motion carried, unanimously. Trustee Gailliard made the motion to consent to add the item to the afternoon agenda. 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: \$58,764,527, Total Expenditures and Total Revenues: \$39,356,652 (66,97%). Detailed information in Board materials. Trust & Auxiliary fund balance: \$22.5M, with \$14.6 unrestricted. An All-Funds Budget Report and an Endowment Report, both as 3/31/25, were provided. The Endowment had overall fiscal year-to-date earnings of 5.87%. An update on the FY25 Athletics Projected 6/30/25 revenues and expenses were provided with a project surplus of \$662,357.

Internal Audit Updates

- Internal Audit Action Items:
 - Chief Audit Officer Sharnita Parker presented one action item:
 1. 2025-2026 Annual Audit Plan
 2. Trustee Friedrich made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gailliard. The motions carried, unanimously. Trustee Gailliard made the motion to consent to add the item to the afternoon agenda. 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. One audit report was completed this quarter. Financial Aid Federal Disclosure Compliance, with no observations.

University Advancement Updates

- University Advancement Updates

- Vice Chancellor Kevin J. Wade shared that, as of May 27, ECSU had raised over \$213,000 through the 2025 Day of Giving—exceeding the goal by more than \$63,000 and engaging 336 unique donors. Leadership giving remained a top priority, with strong participation from board members and stakeholders. He noted the establishment of 17 new endowments this fiscal year, bringing the corpus total to over \$5.8 million. Advancement made strategic personnel investments to strengthen donor engagement, major gifts, and alumni relations. Dr. Wade also highlighted initiatives like Raise the Sails and the 10% Vendor Give Back campaign as successful efforts to expand philanthropic outreach. The relaunch of the Alumni Newsletter and new engagement programming were key tools in reconnecting alumni and cultivating new prospects
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Committee on Student Excellence

Item 1: Dr. Kevin Wade: Action Item was presented by Dr. Nichole Lewis: Student Health Services Billing Policy 500.5.2. - Item Approved. Dr. Wade introduced new hires, Unit Updates to include strategic priorities, Community of Care, student Engagement and Academic impact, Career development center; housing and residence life and transportation services; Spring 2025 Community Connection Recap; HBCU Give Back Special Initiative Update; professional development and resource development.

Item 2: Mr. James DuBose, Jr. - Mr. Dubose shared strategic plan Goal 2 Student Experience. Objective 2.5; Athletic Department initiatives; Athletic Academic Profile for student's GPAs; Welcomed Rasha Gladney Women's Volleyball Head Coach; Hilliard-Gray, Recognized as a second CIIA SWA of The Year Honor: Student Athlete (Williams) headed to the HBCU Allstar Dream Classic in Harlem NYC. New upgrades to the facilities, RL Vaughan Center Renovations (basketball court, bleachers, and lights) and lobby area.; Shared Football schedule for the Fall. September 20th for the Down East Classic. November 8th Homecoming; and Fundraising of \$610K in the last 3 years.

Item 3: Ms. Kalya Dixon: Kayla Dixon discussed highlights included Mental Health Field Day. introduced the newly elected officials for SGA including Royal Court and Campus Activities Board, Roll for Wellness held on May 2nd last event for the semester, Amazing SGA President elect Jasmine Jackson is ready for the charge; Student leaders attended NASAP, great opportunity to learn from other schools from across the country to learn best practices.

Committee On Operational Excellence

1. Infrastructure Update

VC Chip Lewin provided an update on executing upgrades and renovations of the master plan. This includes the new location of the WRVS radio tower, the rerouting of Science Dr and completing the roundabout fountain. Also, recent facility upgrades comprise of brick masonry of Dixon Hall, demolition of the old radio tower and rebuilding the chancellor's residence which will be completed early next year. The campus infrastructure is ongoing with the electrical

distribution duct bank being 90% completed, domestic water piping is 60% completed. It was conveyed that the 352-bed residence hall has a conditional occupancy inspection scheduled for mid-July as well as the 21,000 sq ft dining hall. The ribbon cutting of these buildings is pending. VC Lewin notified the board construction for the flight school beginning next month has an estimated completion date of January 2027. Additionally, the Currituck County airport hangar and educational space anticipate opening the fall of 2026. Phase 1 of the Vaughan Center design/build project has started beginning with the gym floor and stadium seating repair and renovation. Phase 2 of renovating the lobby, locker rooms and classrooms has a construction cost of 8.2 million dollars. Finally, VC Lewin talked about the Asset work Asset management software being implemented soon by the department of facility. This software will manage work orders, track assets and has a preventative maintenance planning module that facilities will utilize. The software will streamline the management and organization of facilities.

2. Information Technology Updates

Mr. Jamar Jones, CIO, reported that the Division of Information Technology participated in a network assessment facilitated by the North Carolina National Guard. The benefit of this assessment improved six areas which included access to specialized expertise, compliance support and collaboration and relationship building to name a few. In addition, Mr. Jones stated how a cybersecurity tabletop exercise simulated a real-world cyber incident and demonstrated how many days it would take ECSU to recover and operate under normal functions. The tabletop exercise focused on seven objectives to recover from a real-world cyber breach. Mr. Jones discussed the IT Management and governance framework at ECSU, and the Division of Information Technology is committed to overseeing all administrative and learning systems along with following privacy laws and future innovations. Lastly, the student virtual lab is officially live and available to all students. This platform is designed to streamline coursework, enhance productivity and reduce expenses by allowing students to access a wide range of software applications without purchasing individual licenses. This lab will serve to be a cost-effective solution for students' academic needs.

3. Communications and Marketing Updates

Mr. Robert Boone, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications, reported that Mr. Joel Sutton, ECSU's official photographer, has joined the newly renovated CAM office. Also, the 2025 UNC System communication conference highlighted today's fractured media environment and how enrollment trends affect communications. Mr. Boone reported that the increased number of followers on outlets such as Facebook and Instagram have continued to tell ECSU's stories such as the Spring commencement guest speaker, Mr. Kirk Franklin in addition to the announcement of Chancellor-Elect Dr. S. Keith Hargrove, Sr. The announcement of Dr. Hargrove, Sr. as Chancellor-Elect generated increased reactions and views from ECSU's media outlets. Lastly, an invitation was given to the Board of Trustees to join the campus community for a farewell luncheon of Interim Chancellor, Dr. Catherine Edmonds on June 11, 2025. An invitation was extended to BOT members as the campus community officially welcomes Chancellor S. Keith Hargrove, Sr. on June 16, 2025

Committee on Regional Development

Regional Development Update

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 Buildings

Closed Session

Chair Johnson called for a motion to go into closed session at 1:17pm. To preserve the attorney-client privilege, Trustee Holding made the motion to go into closed session so the Committee can discuss confidential matters pertaining to the University. The motion was seconded by Trustee Tillett. The motion carried unanimously. The Committee went into closed session at 1:26 and returned to open session at XXX pm. There was no action taken on the closed session matter.

Committee on University Governance

Closed Session

Attorney Rudisill informed the Committee that there were several items for action during closed session and she then requested the committee go into closed session. Chair Johnson called for a motion to go into closed session. In order to preserve the attorney-client privilege, Trustee Tillette 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 Copeland. The motion carried unanimously. The Committee went into closed session at 1:26 p.m. and returned to open session at 1:29 p.m.

Chancellor's Report

Interim Chancellor Edmonds opened by thanking Chair Johnson, the Board of Trustees, and ECSU colleagues. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Interim Chancellor and shared her excitement for the university's continued growth under incoming Chancellor S. Keith Hargrove, Sr.

Spring 2025 Commencement Recap

- Graduates: 212 students graduated in Spring 2025, following a record 242 in December 2024.
- Commencement Speaker: Kirk Franklin delivered a powerful and uplifting address, thanks to the support of Foundation Board member Dr. Carter.
- New Tradition: A Chancellor & President's Graduation Brunch was introduced, offering graduates a relaxed celebration before rehearsal. The event was well-received by students and highlighted the importance of community and connection.

Graduate Exit Survey Highlights

141 graduates responded to the spring exit survey. Thanks to Dr. Wade and his team for their efforts in increasing participation.

- Knowledge Rate: ~65%

- Full-Time Employment: 33%
 - Still Deciding: 30%
 - Participation in Student Life: 90%
- (Note: Some students selected multiple responses.)

Enrollment and Performance Metrics

- A new real-time enrollment dashboard is up and running to help track projections.
- FY25 enrollment goals are on track, with Aviation Science showing the most growth.
- Increased course flexibility is allowing students to finish the remaining credits in the fall, which may slightly shift conferral timing but supports on-time completion.

Aviation and Capital Projects

ECSU's aviation program is experiencing notable momentum with the following developments:

- Groundbreakings for the Aviation Science Building (manned flight) and Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center (with rental revenue potential).
- Launch of the Currituck Flight Training Center, which includes hangars and classrooms.
- Development of partnerships with local high schools and economic development groups.
- Trustee Freeman and Chancellor Hargrove have been actively involved in promoting aviation growth.
- Special thanks to Dr. Wade's team for their support in marketing and outreach efforts.

Strategic Plan Update

- The University is in Phase 2 of the strategic planning process, focusing on goal setting and gathering stakeholder input.
- A draft plan will be presented to the Board in the fall.
- Board members' involvement and feedback have been vital throughout the process.

Closing Thanks and Recognitions

- Appreciation was extended to the National Alumni Association and all who supported summer events and outreach.
- Special recognition was given to the following outgoing Trustees for their leadership and service:
 - Trustee Bosomworth
 - Chair Johnson
 - Trustee Jones
 - Trustee Tine

Final thanks were shared with ECSU and community partners for their continued commitment to the mission and future of the institution.

There being no other business, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 2:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalie Jones