

October 2025 Faculty Regent Report for ECU Faculty Senate

The ECU Board of Regents met on September 17, 2025. The full agenda and associated attachments can be found at: <https://www.ecu.edu/in/committees/board-of-regents/#2025-meeting-dates>

I want to highlight a few issues of particular importance to the faculty:

Enrollment Review:

The Numbers:

- 12% decrease in first-time freshmen. (This is due to a variety of factors, including changing demographics and uncertainty surrounding Pell Grants.)
- Additional decreases in transfer students and graduate students.
- Fortunately, we have a small increase in online enrollment (4%).
- Increased retention rates (78%) provide us with an increase in continuing students (5.2%).
- Unusual increase in B-Term enrollment, including over sixty new first-time freshmen, will allow enrollment to reach near 16,000 students.

Future Actions:

- Student Affairs plans to implement a new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan which has been distributed to Deans.
- EAB, an educational consulting firm we have used before, will be optimizing financial aid/scholarships.
- ECU BookSmart Program modifications to comply with changes in federal law and decrease overall program spending.

Budget Review:

- ECU finished the 2024-25 academic year with a positive net position of \$1,532,450.
- This represents over \$9.9 million difference in position over last year.
- The initial budget numbers for 2025-26 are mixed.
- Fall tuition is down \$2.5 million, but scholarship expenses are also down \$2.7 million leaving us currently on budget/net neutral.

I will be working with Board members to closely monitor the budget. I fully understand the stress that mid-year budget cuts have caused in the past.

Master Campus Plan:

Current Status:

- The university has contracted with Lord Aeck Sargent to create a ten-year Master Campus Plan.
- This company has gathered a variety of data, including faculty and student surveys, space utilization, and in-depth review of existing facilities.
- The goal of this plan is to both re-envision/improve the physical infrastructure of the institution and to provide a roadmap for reaching these goals.

Future Actions:

- Senate and the full faculty will have opportunity to learn more about this plan in the coming months.
- Nothing has yet been decided or funded.
- Please actively participate in the process and give suggestions on how best to improve the learning and recreational spaces around campus.

Board Bylaw Change – Disqualifying Department Chairs from Regent

- After the faculty regent election in March, ECU University Counsel requested an opinion from the Kentucky Attorney General on whether Kentucky statutes allow department chairs to serve as Faculty Regent.
- The Kentucky Attorney General refused to disqualify department chairs from serving as Faculty Regent, explaining that universities may define whether chairs are faculty.
- Despite having the option to allow department chairs to serve as Faculty Regent, the ECU Board of Regents changed bylaws to disqualify future department chairs from serving in the role.
- This bylaw change will not affect my current term.

Future Board Plans

- The Board Budget Committee plans to meet in October (date TBD).
- The next Board meeting will take place on November 12, 2025.
- I will provide updates on the October meetings and hopefully can preview agenda items for the November meeting at the November Faculty Senate meeting.

As always, I am happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.



Prof. Lynnette Noblitt
ECU Faculty Regent