Chancellor’s Commission on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Steering Committee Meeting
October 1, 2021, 8:30 – 10:00 am
Main Campus Student Center

Members Present:

Allison Danell (Committee Co-Chair)
Vince Smith (Committee Co-Chair)
Irma Corral
LaKesha Alston Forbes
Scott Francis
Grant Hayes
Jeannine Hutson
Erik Kneubuehl
Chris Locklear
Purificación Martinez
Hector Molina
Sharon Paynter
Cindy Reaves
Rachel Rodriguez
Chandler Ward
Kitty Wetherington
Ying Zhou

Other Attendees Present:
Chancellor Rogers

Recorder: Cindy Reaves

Welcome & Introductions:
The committee took a moment to go around the room and introduce themselves.

Dean Danell thanked Chancellor Rogers for appointing her to this role and for charging this commission. She is an active partner with the Office for Equity & Diversity on outreach and engagement efforts including student recruitment from HBCUs and the Emerging Scholars Program. She has built a portfolio of sustained efforts and individual impacts as a faculty member through focused advising and through fostering enriching career development. In this role, she looks forward to start what she knows will be hard, thoughtful work with this group in bringing real change.

Trustee Smith thanked Chancellor Rogers for his appointment to the committee. He has enjoyed his time on the Board of Trustees for the last four years and discussed how
ECU is part of his family. He encouraged the committee to think about the questions – Why do people attend ECU? What do we do right? How can we do better? — and use these questions as a starting point in focusing on our work.

**Chancellor’s Charge:**
Chancellor Rogers thanked everyone for being there as we kick off the first Steering Committee for the Chancellor’s Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He expressed his appreciation for Dean Danell’s and Trustee Smith’s willingness to serve as co-chairs for this important work, and to the rest of the committee for their service as we guide a dialogue with campus and community constituencies to develop recommendations for systemic change in creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive United ECU. Over the next 12 months several subcommittees will form. While the plan will be to start with student access and success, we will also closely examine our institutional climate and culture and the recruitment and retention of our people – faculty and staff.

We operate with our mission and our people at the center as we examine the significance of DEI in fulfilling our mission and upholding our values:

- maximizing student success for ALL, with all students succeeding across differences,
- remaining committed to public service, especially for the underserved
- facilitating regional transformation by addressing disparities throughout the region, and
- intentionally cultivating a diverse and fully engaged faculty and staff.

Our mission is intrinsically linked with diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly as we seek to be a national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation.

While engaging in the work of the Commission and moving forward with forming subcommittees, Chancellor Rogers asks that the committee:

1. Take a deep dive into ECU’s data and identify areas of opportunity to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive campus community. Review ECU’s equity gaps and consider evidence based and promising practices to address the disparities. Indeed, we are an access university, committed to student success. Yet, we have a significant percentage of students with great financial need. Additionally, we have significant equity gaps in graduation rates across racial/ethnic and gender differences. How can we enhance our success strategies and eliminate all achievement gaps like Georgia State University accomplished through their Student Success Programs and Initiatives?
2. Consider ECU’s historical and contemporary landscape and its significance in our campus climate and impact on belonging for all campus members, with a special emphasis on the experiences of those with minoritized and marginalized identities. According to recent UNC system and ECU climate surveys, there are
persisting lower levels of belonging and inclusion among Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, LGBTQ and Indigenous populations. East Carolina University’s commitment to “cultivate an inclusive, respectful working, living and learning environment” can only be realized through a holistic approach that seeks to nurture and empower everyone within its community. We will continue to uphold that commitment and support recommendations for continued improvement.

3. Seek to examine our institutional ecosystems (i.e., our policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes) for our most mission-critical pillars – student success, employee recruitment and retention, community engagement, and campus culture and climate – and make recommendations for systemic changes. Rather than recommending isolated initiatives, Chancellor Rogers asks that the committee apply systems-thinking approaches when charging the subcommittees. We are seeking transformative recommendations which will involve cross-functional, multidisciplinary, and cross-divisional collaboration.

Finally, Chancellor Rogers asks that the committee oversee the development of a set of achievable, yet bold, aspirational, and measurable goals. Ensure we have recommendations that are equity-minded and will inform the university’s next strategic plan, commitments, and priorities.

DEI are imperatives for ECU and for the eastern North Carolina region.

Committee Work:
The timeline for the steering committee work aims to be handled on the following layout:

- **Fall 2021**
  - EAB Presentation – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education
  - ECU DEI Student Access and Success Data
  - Meet monthly
  - Student Access and Success Subcommittee kickoff that will meet regularly throughout the remainder of the academic year. This committee will engage with the community and get suggestions and what is on people’s minds
  - Help 1st subcommittee identify issues
  - Gather feedback from different mechanisms such as the website, feedback webforms, email, dialogues, surveys, etc.
  - Look at social media platforms to get the message out and give student transparency.

- **Spring 2022**
  - Culture, Climate, and Communication Subcommittee kickoff

- **Fall 2022**
  - Employee Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee kickoff

Meeting Adjournment.