

Chancellor Steve Ballard
Office of the Chancellor
East Carolina University
Spilman Building
Greenville, NC 27858

March 30, 2009

Dear Chancellor Ballard,

The ECU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) supports your efforts to help ECU through these difficult financial times. However, we are concerned about the wisdom of your planned layoffs and vertical cuts and your willingness (as stated to the Board of Governors on March 19th) to declare financial exigency at ECU. The long-term effects of such actions could be detrimental to ECU, Greenville, and the surrounding communities.

The UNC system, and ECU in particular, is facing an immediate situation in which filled faculty and staff positions are being slated for elimination. This is occurring even though Governor Beverly Perdue has explicitly recommended funding 98% of all UNC positions (a reasonably accurate reflection of the fact that a number of UNC system positions remain unfilled year-to-year). Although we are aware that many of the cuts in Governor Perdue's budget are yet to come, it is clear that the Governor's proposed budget, subject to debate and revision in the legislature, contains the salary dollars necessary to avoid eliminating filled positions. Hence, ECU-AAUP would like to express its concern about ECU's plan to eliminate 147 faculty and staff positions. This is a reduction to a position count well below 98% of the 2008-09 level. Such actions by ECU would measurably raise unemployment levels in Pitt County, which already suffers from a 22% poverty rate. It is important to avoid using the nationwide economic problems to justify extraordinary *internal* cost cutting and job eliminating measures without sufficiently consulting with ECU faculty and staff, providing them with adequate information about the financial condition of the institution, and taking into account progressive and transparent alternative measures for addressing the real financial challenges our institution faces.

Vertical cuts of entire programs or departments could result in the termination of tenured faculty positions. Any such terminations require faculty support for extraordinary measures, per ECU Faculty Manual Appendix D, Section VII. A declaration of financial exigency requires that the survival of the entire institution, not just a part of it, must be at stake; that the exigency is genuine and verifiable; and that the crisis cannot be alleviated by less drastic means than the termination of faculty appointments. AAUP policies (for example, AAUP's *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, Regulation 4c; *On Institutional Problems Resulting from Financial Exigency: Some Operating Guidelines*; and *The Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters*), which are considered best practices, make specific provisions for the involvement of faculty in decision making and for the rights of faculty when an institution declares financial exigency. We urge you to use these best practices at ECU.

Hence, ECU-AAUP's preliminary position regarding your proposals is as follows:

1. It is premature to consider a declaration of financial exigency. There should be no declaration of financial exigency until ECU has exhausted *all* other cost saving options, including the institution of a complete hiring

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freeze, elimination of administrative stipends, rebalancing of the salaries of faculty who were previously employed in administrative positions, and complete implementation of the PACE initiatives.

2. There should be no declaration of financial exigency without full cooperation and consultation with ECU faculty, especially the Faculty Senate and its Budget and Educational Policies and Planning committees.
3. There should be no terminations of tenured faculty without following the guidelines set out for such terminations in Appendix D of the ECU Faculty Manual (as approved by UNC President Erskine Bowles on January 9, 2007), including open and honest consultations with faculty regarding the specific programs and faculty lines to be terminated.

Further, if faculty and/or staff furloughs are permitted/required by the legislature and GA, and if campuses are given flexibility in their use, ECU-AAUP recommends the following:

4. There should be no furloughs for faculty or staff earning less than \$50,000 per year.
5. For faculty, there should be no furlough on research without an equal furlough on teaching. To do otherwise would devalue both the research that is expected of faculty for promotion, tenure, and merit evaluations and the research mission of our university.
6. Furloughs should be progressively applied to all employees, with higher percentages on those with higher incomes.
7. Full medical and retirement benefits must accrue to employees during any period of furlough.

We would welcome a meeting with you to discuss any of the points in this letter, which will be distributed to the faculty tomorrow (Tuesday, March 31) prior to the Faculty Senate meeting. It is critical that the university as a community come together to consider a balanced solution to the funding issues facing ECU.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ECU-AAUP Executive Board:

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cc: Erskine Bowles, UNC President
Janice Tovey, ECU Chair of the Faculty
Judith Wegner, UNC Faculty Assembly Chair
ECU-AAUP Archives