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21 April 2020

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

Each day I am grateful for the incredible people that make up our Tiger Team—you—each of you has continued working and studying to the best of your abilities. We know that the disruption challenged us in different ways. Thank you to those who transitioned to remote work and virtual instruction. Thank you to those who maintained a presence on campus every day because your work makes all the other work possible. Again, we are blessed to have great people doing their jobs every single day.

In the midst of this disruption we have many positive things to focus on. Students are our focus whether we are together or meeting virtually. We continue to celebrate our students' successes. Each year the University selects its top senior, the George Nigh Award winner. The five finalists—Hannah Anderson, Cullen Edens, Carly Heitland, Allison Maurer, and Abbie Winchester—were to have a recognition luncheon this week. Instead, we will be announcing the winner by email and social media on April 23. If you know these students, please congratulate them on being named finalists. In addition to having a high GPA, these students are also dedicated to the public good. They are civic-minded and seek to help all of us in their future endeavors.

## **Students**

### *Graduation Fee*

We are waiving the graduation fee for May 2020 graduates. The fee for a certificate-only candidate is \$25, a bachelor's degree is \$50, and a master's degree is \$75. Students who are scheduled to graduate in May who have already paid the fee will receive a refund. Students may still receive their regalia through the ECU Bookstore ([www.ecubookstore.com](http://www.ecubookstore.com)). You will order your cap and gown, go through the checkout process, but not supply any payment information. The ECU Bookstore will mail your regalia to the address you provide.

### *Commencement*

We have reviewed the survey results for commencement options for our spring graduates. The top category was to attend a ceremony in December. We will be holding a special ceremony just for spring 2020 ECU graduates on December 12. More information will be forthcoming.

### *Summer Course Schedule*

May intersession and summer 2020 classes will be online. We continue to monitor the effects of the virus and will determine at a later date if we can add in-person classes to the second 4-week session of the summer schedule. We will update you as the summer session draws nearer.

### *Housing and Food Service*

The residence halls will remain closed with the exception of the few who are not able to find alternative housing through the summer. At this time, we plan to open the residence halls to students in August for the start of the fall semester. Food service will continue through lunch on May 8 and then close for the summer as is our regular practice.

### *CARES Act*

The federal government has made funding available to universities to assist students impacted by COVID-19. ECU has applied for the funding and will disburse it to students as soon as it is received. Students will be asked to attest they have a need for the funds. The awards will be based on the spring semester credit hours and be for students currently enrolled. The funds will be issued to the Bank Mobile card the University uses for refunds. The funds are considered a grant and do not need to be paid back to the University. Students will be notified of further action after the money arrives at ECU.

### *Enrollment and Balances Owed*

We recognize that many students and their families have lost their jobs in the past 30 days and have not been able to pay the balance owed on their spring tuition. To assist with enrollment, we are raising the financial hold limit to allow more students to enroll. The current hold is \$500 and will be raised to \$2,000 for the summer and fall 2020 semesters. Students will need to set up payment plans in order to pay the full amount owed before they may enroll in any subsequent semesters. We will resume the \$500 financial hold going into the spring 2021 semester. Transcripts and diplomas are not released until all balances are paid in full.

## **Employees**

### *Safer at Home*

We continue to be vigilant in protecting our campus community against the spread of COVID-19. Even though Governor Stitt's "safer at home" order expires on April 30 with an extension for vulnerable populations through May 6, we will be cautious about resuming normal activities. To protect our employees, only essential personnel should be on campus. Employees able to telework and/or on a flexible schedule should continue with this practice until May 18. Should non-essential businesses not be allowed to return to normal operation by May 18, we will extend the campus closure until it is reasonably safe to return.

On June 1, we begin our summer schedule of Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., with a 30-minute paid lunch break. We will also continue providing an additional 30 minutes for employees who use the wellness incentive. Check with the Wellness Center staff for details on activity times and program benefits.

### *Purchases*

Please remember that we are required to track COVID-19 related expenses which includes personnel leave for reimbursement purposes. When the second-half of the CARES Act funding is made available, we will be able to use it for COVID-19 related expenses.

### *Assisting Our Own*

We are all extremely fortunate to have ECU and our continued revenue. However, we are aware that many businesses in the area have furloughed or laid off employees, some of whom are spouses of our employees. ECU employees have once again rallied together to establish a grant through the ECU Foundation that may help another ECU employee during these uncertain times. If you are interested in learning more or are able to contribute, please click here: [ECU Helping Hand Grant](#).

*Frequently Asked Employment Questions*

There are many questions related to COVID-19. To help answer those questions the Office of Employment Services will post Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the [COVID-19 Response page](#) for staff and faculty as well as send emails. We hope we can keep everyone informed with timely information.

As noted, there are many positive things happening that we need to recognize. Indeed, each day I acknowledge the small blessings we receive. Many students have already enrolled for summer and fall semesters, new programs will be launched in the fall, and we continue to move forward on our strategic plan initiatives. By working together, we are insuring a bright future.

Stay safe and healthy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Katricia Pierson".

Katricia G. Pierson, PhD  
President