21 October 2020

TO: ECU Community

FROM: FY21 Fiscal Sustainability Coordinating Committee

SUBJ: ECU Fiscal Sustainability Initiative – Update #1

The University Fiscal Sustainability Coordinating Committee (FSCC) has been charged with engaging the campus community in formulating strategies and actions for sustaining programs, personnel, and infrastructure necessary to meet the core components of ECU’s mission: Student Success, Regional Transformation, and Serving the Public. Financial stresses due to COVID are expected to be significant, and units have been developing and implementing plans to manage anticipated short-term budget shortfalls. In most cases, these management strategies focus on budget cuts. In contrast, long-term sustainability will require different approaches, including but not limited to new revenue sources, reduced overhead costs, and the development of more efficient systems. The collective insight and intelligence of the ECU community are required to identify opportunities where we can expand our market share, collaborate, and consolidate to reduce costs, and adapt the way we do business to take advantage of changes in the internal and external environments. Reductions and reallocations are inevitable, and through thoughtful planning, we will have better control over their impacts.

The FSCC has begun its work. To ensure attention is given to the diverse aspects of the ECU enterprise, we divided into two subgroups – one focused on issues broadly related to academic programs, and the other focused on issues related to administration, operations, and facilities. We are defining opportunities and strategies related to revenue, reductions, and efficiencies in these two broad areas. In parallel, Dr. Sara Thorndike, vice chancellor for Administration and Finance, is compiling budget and funds flow information that will inform sustainability discussions. Starting in December, the FSCC will engage workgroups from across the institution to refine ideas and develop strategies falling within their areas of expertise. The workgroups will be formed from existing committees and councils (university, faculty senate, and staff senate) and other stakeholders to ensure broad representation. The workgroups will report to the FSCC, who will, in turn, report to the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

Here’s how you can help.
A website is being developed for posting updates from the FSCC and collecting input from the campus community. Anyone with a recommendation or suggestion related to long-term fiscal sustainability at ECU is encouraged to provide feedback through an electronic form (Fiscal Sustainability Feedback and Suggestions) that can be accessed from the website. Information can be entered anonymously, or contact information can be entered to enable further discussion with a Committee member. Your insights are essential to ECU’s success, and feedback is encouraged throughout the process.

Thank you for the sacrifices and hard work involved in responding to changes in higher education. Together we will overcome the challenges and continue to make ECU an institution of opportunity for faculty, staff, and students.

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