



Strategic Priorities

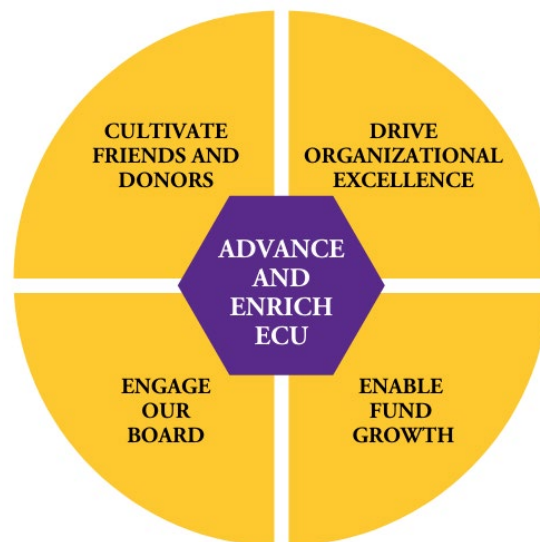
Five-Year Plan | 2023-2028

A Note from the President

The ECU Foundation stands behind and supports the university’s mission to be a model of student success, public service and regional transformation. The ECU Foundation is governed by you, an independent board of directors, who contribute generously of your time, talents and resources. As a board member, you are to serve as responsible stewards of all gifts and be committed to the highest levels of accountability and transparency in all you do.

As a foundation, we cultivate friends; raise, manage and distribute private resources to benefit the institution, its students and its academic programs; provide positive public advocacy for the university; and ensure funding for the “margin of excellence” that defines East Carolina University® today and in the future.

In order to create an actionable plan that best serves the university moving forward, the ECU Foundation has identified four strategic priorities that will guide our short and long-term efforts:



Each of these priorities allows us to become a more effective and efficient board, resulting in our ability to provide greater value to the ECU community.

Your dedication to the ECU Foundation, and all of Pirate Nation™, allows us to continue to support our students’ successes, serve the public and transform our region. We thank you for your service.

I look forward to working alongside you as we embark on this strategic plan.



Christopher M. Dyba
Vice Chancellor for University Advancement &
President of the ECU Foundation
East Carolina University

Cultivate Friends and Donors

Our university is only as strong as its relationships. As part of the ECU Foundation, you play a critical role in intentionally cultivating those relationships with students, alumni, friends, corporations and foundations, and community partners in a manner that leads to Pirate™ pride. We want our donors and prospective donors to walk away from every interaction with our board members feeling excited about the direction of ECU — and motivated to be a part of the university's growth and legacy. The Development & Donor Relations Committee and the Budget Committee will be primarily responsible for oversight and review of this strategic initiative.

» Strategy – Support Pursue Gold Comprehensive Campaign

The ECU Foundation will support the public phase of the Pursue Gold campaign and its goal to raise \$500,000,000.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Increase the overall marketing budget for fundraising and for Pursue Gold campaign and associated fundraising priorities.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Increase cultivation and donor acquisition through new communication channels.
 - **Measurable:** Follow all University Advancement social media accounts.
 - **Measurable:** Join Social Pirates and share at least 1 ECU post a month.
 - **Measurable:** Promote Pirate Nation Gives on social media annually.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Increase the use of campaign-specific marketing across campus by advocating for the use of University Advancement's campaign style guide and centralized marketing materials through your participation in advancement councils and advisory boards.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Participate in the life of the campaign by financially supporting an area of campus within the ECU Foundation as stated in the bylaws.

» Strategy – Enhance and Simplify the Donor Experience

The ECU Foundation will work to integrate activities between all of ECU's foundations to enhance and simplify the donor experience and increase giving.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Advocate for the integration of back-office Foundation staff — making asks, identifying donors, providing acknowledgments and tax receipts, creating marketing materials, planning events, stewarding donors, etc.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Advocate for the integration of the ECU Alumni Association, the ECU Foundation and the University Advancement team to have a shared vision around communicating with alumni and enhancing the engagement of alumni with our university.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Advocate for the consolidation of databases to ensure one source of accurate and up-to-date information is being utilized by all of campus.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Provide resources to increase donor-centric event planning to simplify the event registration and check-in process and provide strategic opportunities for engagement for ECU alumni, donors, and friends.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Provide feedback on how to improve donor-student connections.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Provide support for the update, distribution and oversight of the university-wide Pursue Gold stewardship plan.

- **Measurable:** Annually review the stewardship plan and provide feedback.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Board members will provide feedback on how to improve the donor experience at ECU.
 - **Measurable:** Provide suggestions for donor gifts and unique engagement opportunities.
 - **Measurable:** Provide feedback on endowment reports.

» Strategy – Cultivate New Donors

The ECU Foundation board members will actively participate in the cultivation of new donors to increase the pipeline.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Explicitly define the value of an individual/corporation/foundation’s investment to ECU. Ensure they see the benefit of giving and how their dollar donation goes further at ECU.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Host events for prospective donors and the Chancellor and/or university leadership
 - **Measurable:** Host and financially support one Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, or dean event during your 4-year term. Coordinate timing with other board members to maximize coverage and impact.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Board members will provide opportunities for staff to connect with prospective donors. Board members will host events; provide introductions via setting up a meeting, sending an email or making a phone call; or find other creative means to open the door for staff to connect with prospects.
 - **Measurable:** Provide four names to staff annually. DDR Committee and staff will collect and track the referrals and will coordinate outreach.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Assist gift officers with donor conversations that may help in closing a gift.
 - **Measurable:** Participate in one call or meeting annually. DDR Committee and staff will collect and track this activity and will coordinate outreach.

Engage our Board

The ECU Foundation is comprised of diverse leaders who bring unique skills, affinities, relationships and passions to the board. We want to be intentional in providing a clear direction and path for our board members to ensure we best utilize their strengths to create the most significant impact on the university. The Development & Donor Relations Committee, Recruitment & Engagement Committee, and Executive Committee will be primarily responsible for oversight and review of this strategic initiative.

» Strategy – Enhance Board Engagement

Create a highly engaged ECU Foundation Board of Directors.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Clearly define board member expectations and committee goals and hold board members accountable to meeting requirements and giving requirements.
 - **Measurable:** Attendance is to be followed as stated in the bylaws.
 - **Measurable:** 100% board giving in accordance with the Minimum Giving Policy.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Increase collaboration between the Foundation and College Advancement Councils.

- **Measurable:** Board to host one joint event annually with the college advancement councils and advisory boards to increase collaboration and recruitment planning.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Attend campus, college or ECU Alumni Association events on behalf of the ECU Foundation.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Be intentional about board requirements seeking professional skills such as legal, real estate, investment, governance, fundraising, etc.
 - **Measurable:** Annually review the board matrix to diversify and strengthen the board by skill sets.
 - **Measurable:** Maintain a board succession plan.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Continue to diversify the board on gender, race, geography, connection to ECU, etc.
 - **Measurable:** Annually review the board matrix to increase diversity on the board.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Enhance board orientation.
 - **Measurable:** Review orientation process annually.

Drive Organizational Excellence

The ECU Foundation is committed to creating a culture of continuous improvement. We must be intentional in tracking our efforts to determine what's working and what isn't in order to drive organizational excellence. As board members, your time is valuable. We want to ensure all of your interactions as part of the ECU Foundation are productive and successful. The Audit, Strategic Planning, and Governance Committees will be primarily responsible for oversight and review of this strategic initiative.

» Strategy – Excellence in Governance

Ensure all ECU Foundation activities are done in accordance with the highest level of governance as directed by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB).

- ◇ **Tactic:** Meet with AGB annually to review board governance practices to ensure we are up to date on national trends. (ECU Foundation Staff and Executive Committee)
- ◇ **Tactic:** Maintain easily accessible written documents. (ECU Foundation Staff, Audit and Governance Committees)
 - Measurable:** Maintain a board policy manual.
 - Measurable:** Board members receive a yearly written statement of responsibility and expectations related to board service.
 - Measurable:** Board members have a written code of ethics and/or principles.
 - Measurable:** All board committees have written charters and job descriptions.
 - Measurable:** Annually, board members receive a copy of the Foundation's IRS Form 990.
 - Measurable:** Board members receive a memorandum of understanding that clearly addresses all aspects of their interdependent relationship, including financial, operational, personnel and other respective roles and responsibilities.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Regularly review and update documents. (ECU Foundation Staff, Audit and Governance Committees)
 - Measurable:** All governance policies are reviewed yearly and updated as needed.
 - Measurable:** Foundation bylaws are reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Measurable: All board members sign an annual conflict of interest and disclosure statement.

◇ **Tactic:** Maintain standard policies and practices. (ECU Foundation Staff, Governance Committee)

Measurable: The length of board services is subject to term limits. Board members may serve a maximum of three 4-year terms.

Measurable: New board members participate in a formal, documented and monitored onboarding process, including orientation prior to the first board meeting.

Measurable: A board member education standards are reviewed annually with the board as part of a regular meeting agenda.

◇ **Tactic:** Maintain an up-to-date strategic plan and budget. (Budget and Investment Committees)

Measurable: The Foundation board's strategic plan is reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Measurable: The Foundation's annual budget is approved by a full board vote.

◇ **Tactic: Maintain a** CEO/President Compensation and Performance Review plan. (Executive Committee)

Measurable: The Executive Committee, with feedback from the board, completes an annual assessment of the President of the Foundation.

◇ **Tactic:** Maintain a Board Assessment plan. (Governance Committee)

Measurable: Annual self-assessment to include each of the following areas:

- Mission and vision
- Guiding principles, goals and objectives
- Strategic alignment
- Leadership
- Structure/composition
- Oversight and accountability
- Philanthropy/advocacy for the institution
- Board performance
- Culture

Yearly full board and individual member self-assessments are completed. The findings are incorporated into actions to improve board function.

◇ **Tactic:** Model best in class and foster relationships with national resources. (Executive Committee)

- **Measurable:** Board leadership and staff attend the AGB Foundation Leadership Conference annually.

» Strategy – Invest Resources

Invest in tools, resources and individuals in an effort to grow the fundraising arm of the university. The ECU Foundation has substantially increased the budget to support University Advancement over the years, but it has usually been to offset state budget cuts. This will need to continue, but we also seek to increase resources and grow the effort.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Increase budget for University Advancement and grow each year. (Budget and Investment Committee)
 - **Measurable:** The Budget Committee will meet annually with the President of the Foundation to discuss needs, vision for growth and available resources. This annual review will include the approval of the annual operating fee assessed to the endowment and will be approved by the Budget and Investment Committees.
Measurable: Long-term planning to solidify a \$1 million state budget for University Advancement, with the majority of support for personnel and operational costs coming from the ECU Foundation. The President will be responsible for preparation of funding needs from the ECU Foundation and may also make requests as needed during each operating year.
 - **Measurable:** Work with University Advancement to set parameters for when we add new gift officers and back-office support based on prospects and potential ROI. Establish a formal request/review process for budget allocation for each FTE.
 - **Measurable:** Allocate appropriate budget to allow for additional staff (accountants, communication, gift officers, stewardship, etc.) and ensure a competitive salary for University Advancement staff members.
 - **Measurable:** Provide resources, as needed, for University Advancement staff partners to support various initiatives — campaigns, reports, website, social media, events, stewardship, etc.

» Strategy – Enhance Flexibility

The ECU Foundation seeks to explore new entity structures to enhance flexibility related to budgets, personnel and compensation, all with the understanding that university employees fall within clearly defined state policies and structures. Nonetheless, strategically, the Foundation seeks to examine options.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Form a working group of University Advancement staff and Foundation board members that consult with other institutions and meet with campus leaders to determine a potential path forward.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Reduce duplication of efforts by aligning staff strategically around function instead of Foundation.

Enable Fund Growth

The ECU Foundation enables various groups across campus to flourish — from student scholarships to faculty and research to regional transformation. The wide variety of funds ensures that ECU has something to fit every donor’s unique interests. The greater we can grow our funds, the more lives and communities we can impact. The Investment Committee will be primarily responsible for oversight and review of this strategic initiative.

» Strategy – Manage Assets

Manage assets to maximize earnings.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Perform regular real estate review.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Undergo a deep-dive review of investment strategy and determine best return options vs. risk. Perform RFP against current manager/strategy if and when determined by the Investment Committee of the board.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Determine run rate to have AUM of \$500M and then \$1 billion. Develop different scenarios of time based on return rates and new money added through gifts. Use these projections in forecasting based on real returns.

» Strategy – Analyze Strategy

Review current strategy and recommend next decade approach.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Continue quarterly meetings of the Investment Committee.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Hold an annual retreat to review performance and investment manager/consultant/management company.

» Strategy – Oversee Budget

Ensure proper oversight of the ECU Foundation budget.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Continue to hold quarterly meetings of the Budget & Finance Committee.
- ◇ **Tactic:** Continue to hold monthly reviews of the operating budget.

» Strategy – Distribute Funds

Distribute funds to students, departments and programs that are not fully funded by the state budget.

- ◇ **Tactic:** Perform annual review of account balances and ensure the use of donor/Foundation funds is maximized.
 - **Measurable:** President to review account balances with all Deans and the Provost each year.
 - **Measurable:** President to provide annual update to the board, Provost and Chancellor on account balances to ensure maximum use of funds.