

**UNC System President Peter Hans**  
**Remarks to the UNC Board of Governors**  
**November 17, 2022**

Mr. Chairman I was going to deliver my remarks Ron Clark style but I've chosen to contain my charisma at this point.

It's wonderful to be here in Greenville, to feel the energy and the excitement of campus and remind us what an enormous engine of opportunity this University is for Eastern North Carolina.

Yesterday we got to see some of the extraordinary alumni and students of this place who are doing important work across our state. Educators, dentists, environmental researchers, proud members of the US military — they're all finding the inspiration and the resources they need right here at ECU.

I, too, want to thank Chancellor Rogers and his team for giving us such a warm Pirate welcome. We're genuinely grateful for the hospitality, and I look forward to seeing Mr. Beast feature higher education governance in a viral video to follow. Maybe not, I don't know.

When Chancellor Rogers was officially installed earlier this year, after spending much of his career working with colleges across the country for ACE, he said that the most challenging, most urgent, and most fulfilling work in higher education in America is happening right here at East Carolina. And I agree with him about this.

Providing a high-quality education to students from a wide variety of backgrounds — that's access and opportunity on a massive scale — is what this institution was built to do. It's in the DNA of East Carolina, which began as a teacher's college with the mission of bringing a great education to students across our state.

Spending time, as we saw yesterday, with a talented and motivated teacher changes the trajectory of students' lives and careers like nothing else, and ECU offers that experience on a vast scale every day. This institution has always been energetic and creative about extending great teaching to those who can benefit from it the most.

So it should be no surprise that ECU has taken that missionary spirit into the next frontier of education. ECU is the largest in-state provider of online education in North Carolina, with fully online programs reaching thousands of students every semester. That's especially important as we look to a future where working adults and other nontraditional students will be a larger share of the state's college-going population.

Given the demographic changes in our state, and the scale of the economic transformation we're already seeing in industries from agriculture to health care to entertainment, the need for people to retool and reconsider their career paths is only going to grow. We must demonstrate that our public universities are ready to meet that task, and we have a great deal to learn from ECU's success in expanding online access.

So when we started Project Kitty Hawk, the transformative investment in technology to bring the best of North Carolina's public universities to a new population of online learners, we knew the folks here in Greenville would have a lot to contribute. And it's wonderful to have Chancellor Rogers serving on the Kitty Hawk board. And by the way, I'd like to note here, he has been a positive, unifying leader for this university, just as ECU is a positive, unifying force in this region and throughout the state. And I thank you, Chancellor.

While ECU is leading in a new era of teaching and learning, as the chair noted, this university is doing enormously important work to reimagine the future of health care. The quality of life for countless North Carolinians depends on the role of ECU Health as a vital healthcare provider and on the Brody School as a hub of medical innovation. Creating a sustainable business model to deliver high-quality care, especially in those rural regions, is one of this University's most significant contributions to North Carolina, and I am encouraged by the thoughtful leadership that Chancellor Rogers, Dr. Waldrum and many others have displayed on this front.

Now, all of you have now received a copy of the UNC System's updated Strategic Plan, what Chair Ramsay and I have called our "confident recommitment" to accountability. And over the last five years, we've demonstrated how smart metrics and clear incentives that are aligned can drive better outcomes for our students and our state, and this plan builds on that success. I encourage you to review it closely, to share it widely, and to thank all of our chancellors for their personal commitment to a shared, statewide vision of what our public universities can achieve. The updated "Higher Expectations" plan is also available on the website for every North Carolinian to see.

We spoke a few months ago about the demographic challenges facing all of higher education, along with heightened public skepticism about the role of colleges and universities in promoting fair opportunity in our society. I think this plan goes a long way towards addressing those concerns and continuing North Carolina's tradition of adapting public higher education to the needs of the people we serve.

That promise drives all of our work, drives all of our work, and it is wonderful to see it up close right here in Greenville. Thank you. Go Pirates!