

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

February 18, 2022
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on Friday, February 18, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center. The meeting was also live-streamed and recorded.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Dr. Linda Latimer called the meeting to order at 1p.m. Dr. Latimer's introductory remarks referenced the following recent University headlines:

For the past 60 years, Blackburn, Childers & Steagall, the region's largest accounting firm, has been a steadfast partner and advocate for ETSU's College of Business and Technology. The Firm recently announced that it would fund a new faculty fellowship for the Department of Accountancy. Dr. Latimer expressed her gratitude to Blackburn, Childers & Steagall for their legacy of support and thanked Trustee Steagall-Jones for being an enthusiastic champion for the University.

A new program from Quillen College of Medicine and the Honors College will guarantee some students medical school admission after graduation. This fall, eight students will join the Early Assurance Pathway Program. Following graduation, five of those students will be guaranteed admission to Quillen, with the other three being alternates. Dr. Latimer thanked Dean Bill Block and Dean Chris Keller for creating this opportunity.

ETSU's work to serve other communities extends beyond the borders of the United States. Dr. Dawn Rowe of Clemmer College is a recipient of a \$1.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to help improve special education teacher retention in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Dr. Rowe and her grant partners will create professional development opportunities for these teachers as well as a retention plan.

Finally, as noted in a recent press release from the ETSU Research Corporation, "Today's leaders in business require creative and diverse professionals with crossover skills in marketing, media, and film, but there is a significant talent gap." To answer this demand, Brand Storytelling and ETSU, along with seven global industry sponsors, have stepped up to bridge the education and diversity gap with a first-ever professional certification program.

II. Roll Call

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green led the roll call and confirmed to Board Chair Dr. Latimer that a quorum was present.

Trustees present were:

Trustee Charles Allen, Jr.
Trustee Janet Ayers
Trustee Steven DeCarlo
Trustee Virginia Foley
Trustee Kara Gilliam
Trustee Ron Ramsey
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones
Trustee Kelly Wolfe
Board Chair Dr. Linda Latimer
Absent: Trustee Dorothy Grisham

III. Public Comment

No individuals in attendance at the meeting requested to offer public comment.

IV. Approval of Minutes from November 19, 2021

The minutes from November 19, 2021, were approved as submitted, with Trustee Janet Ayers making the motion and Trustee Virginia Foley seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Report from the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee

Committee Chair Janet Ayers delivered the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee report. Five informational items were presented to the Committee for consideration and discussion:

- Provost Kimberly McCorkle presented an update from Academic Affairs on several items on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation preparations and the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. A status report on leadership searches in strategic areas such as research and community engagement was presented. The Committee was also given an overview of enrollment data for Spring 2022. Dr. McCorkle discussed curriculum development efforts, including the exploration of new online programs in areas where enrollment is expected to grow. She also provided an update to the Committee on current strategic planning activities.
- Next, Dr. McCorkle and Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, presented an overview of student success initiatives at the University. The presentation included highlights of current successes, a framework for

student success activities, and an overview of planned actions. The presentation also included a discussion of student success metrics that the University uses to inform strategic planning to improve student success outcomes.

- Dr. Christopher Keller, Senior International Officer and Dean of Honors College, and Dr. Sam Mayhew, Associate Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, provided an update on the University's Internationalization Initiatives. They provided an overview of the current programs and services at ETSU in the Center for Global Engagement. The center is dedicated to enhancing the educational experience of all students and providing valuable skills to meet workforce needs. The presentation also included an update on the enrollment of international students and the efforts to increase enrollment in targeted areas in the next few years.
- Heather Levesque, Director of Admissions, and Jessica Vodden, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, presented an update on recruitment and marketing efforts implemented to increase enrollment. The presentation highlighted the collaborative approach taken across the University, provided examples of marketing initiatives, and focused on the increase in the applications received for Fall 2022.
- The final presentation was given by Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Interim Vice Provost for Research, and Dr. Eric Beaumont, Professor and Associate Dean for Research in the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine. Dr. Hagemeyer updated the committee on current external funding metrics, current university research rankings, and initiatives to increase the university's research profile. Dr. Beaumont provided an overview of his current funded research projects in biomedical sciences and discussed the process for research support in the Quillen College of Medicine.

VI. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

Committee Chair Steven DeCarlo reported that the Finance and Administration Committee reviewed and approved the following action items presented by Dr. B.J. King, Chief Financial Officer:

- The committee approved the 2022-2023 academic year tuition for the Quillen College of Medicine and the Gatton College of Pharmacy. Quillen is restructuring its tuition based on changes in curriculum and instruction over the four-year program. The change smooths tuition over the four years and includes a two percent increase. The college conducted a study of curriculum and tuition at 10 peer institutions, and of the 10, nine were discovered to have equal tuition pricing for all classes. Beginning with the next academic year, Quillen will be comparable with these other institutions in terms of curriculum and instruction delivery, as well as fee assessment. Gatton is requesting a two percent increase based on a cost study.

- The committee approved the Housing and Food Service rates for fall 2022, which are included in the Board consent agenda. Housing is keeping rates flat for the next year. The university will keep the Meal Plans increase to three percent while the payments for the plans to the vendor will increase by 4.3 percent per the contract.
- The committee approved a \$29.8 million bonded project for housing renovations to several residence halls.

Committee Chair DeCarlo also reported that the following informational items were presented to the Committee for consideration and discussion:

- The committee discussed the salary pools in the Governor’s proposed budget. The campus could receive \$3.27 million in salary improvement funding from the State if the proposed budget is approved. An additional \$2.7 million would have to be funded by enrollment growth or reallocation of other expenditures or appropriation dollars. Since the funding for the pool is dependent on enrollment, any Board-approved salary adjustments will be implemented in November 2022. Quillen College of Medicine and Family Medicine has \$2.8 million in salary improvement funding in the Governor’s budget.
- The committee reviewed comparative tuition and mandatory fee information for all the public universities in Tennessee. ETSU continues to be an affordable option in the state.
- The Governor’s proposed budget was presented with a zero percent tuition and mandatory fee increase for in-state undergraduate students. The university is proposing a zero percent tuition and mandatory fee increase for all undergraduate and graduate students for fiscal year 2023.
- The committee received a quarterly financial update that compares operating revenues and expenditures from the current year to the prior year. Changes in revenues reflect increased state appropriations for the year and income from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Act (HEERF). Changes in expenditures reflect campus activities returning to normal after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The committee reviewed the quarterly report of contracts and agreements over \$250,000.

VII. Report from the Audit Committee

Committee Chair Melissa Steagall-Jones gave an overview of the items presented to the Audit Committee. The following informational items were presented to the Committee by Ms. Rebecca Lewis, Rebecca A. Lewis, CPA, Chief Audit Executive, for consideration and discussion:

- Ms. Lewis informed the Committee that she and her colleagues conducted two audits in November, December, and January. One was for women’s basketball and involved a coaching change, while the other was for WETS-FM Campus

Radio and was an annual audit for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

- The Committee approved three additions to the Audit Plan for fiscal year 2021-2022. Two audits were added to the plan as a result of the resignations of the Football and Men's Soccer head coaches. The third is a report of fraud, waste, or abuse. Internal Audit will conduct an investigation and/or refer the matter to the appropriate authority.
- Mr. Jeremy Ross, Chief Operating Officer, Cesar Gracia, Chief of Public Safety, and Mason Bowen, Director of Operations for Emergency Management, gave an overview of campus safety and emergency preparedness. A summary of the 2021 Annual Security & Fire Safety Report, which is published in accordance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act, was also provided to the Committee.
- Lastly, the Audit Committee went into executive session to discuss active audits in enterprise management.

VIII. Consent Agenda

With no requests for any items to be removed from the consent agenda, the Trustees unanimously approved the consent agenda with a motion from Trustee Steagall-Jones seconded by Trustee Ayers.

IX. Action Item: 2023 Board Meeting Dates

The Focus on College and University Success Act (FOCUS Act) requires quarterly meetings of the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees. In accordance with these requirements, the proposed calendar of 2023 quarterly meeting dates presented by Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green included:

- Friday, February 17, 2023
- Friday, April 21, 2023
- Friday, September 15, 2023
- Friday, November 17, 2023

The Standing Committees of the Board of Trustees may meet telephonically as necessary and hold standing meetings in conjunction with the full board's quarterly meetings.

The proposed Board of Trustees' 2023 meeting schedule passed unanimously, with Trustee Foley making the motion and Trustee Steagall-Jones making the second.

X. Trustee Self Evaluation Report

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green provided an update to the Board regarding their self-evaluation. The bylaws of East Tennessee State University's Board of Trustees, as well as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

(SACSCOC), require the Board to undertake a self-evaluation on a regular basis. During the spring 2021 semester, the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees completed their annual self-evaluation. Results of the report were included with the Board's meeting materials.

Overall the evaluation demonstrates a well-functioning board. Three items that received the unanimous ratings of excellent included:

- Approves revised and proposed ETSU Policies, when appropriate
- Grants tenure and/or promotion to eligible members of the faculty upon the positive recommendation of the President
- Approves the final operating and capital outlay budgets for each fiscal year

XI. ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II Update and Strategic Discussion

Dr. Michael Hoff, Vice Provost for Decision Support and Chief Planning Officer, began his overview of the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II with a review of the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter I vision and a report on the plan's successes. The outcomes for Chapter I include:

- ETSU has achieved the highest student success in the institution's history, as demonstrated through retention and graduation.
- The academic portfolio has expanded, and ETSU is providing more opportunities for both residential and regional students. The academic portfolio includes 51 more programs.
- The Academic Health Sciences Center has expanded enrollment and clinical services that are nationally recognized and benefit the community.
- ETSU has completed the Martin Center for the Arts and, in doing so, established an anchor within the community.
- Fundraising exceeded targets, as did extramural funding.
- Athletics has implemented new programs that have increased enrollment and excelled in competitions that extend the ETSU brand.
- Through facility renovations and new programming ETSU has created a residential experience that makes ETSU a first-choice destination institution.

Dr. Hoff continued his update by presenting an overview of Chapter II's Draft Report. Launched in March 2021, the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II held three meetings, each with a candid discussion of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and the national context; vision and metrics; and task forces organized around the six domains. The process used by the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II is outlined below:

- Task Forces were formed and charged with the development of vision statements around six domains

- The President and senior leaders directed constituent engagement
- A fall retreat of the Board of Trustees allowed for discussion of crucial issues
- A unified vision was developed by senior leaders and shared with the campus through town halls and internal constituent engagement

The strategic framework for the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II encompasses Access, Success, and Impact. The framework's first pillar, Access, aims to achieve the following goal: ETSU will broaden the academic portfolio and delivery modalities to appeal to both residential students and non-traditional learners, allowing the university to become a destination university for students from the region and beyond. Draft outcomes for years one through five include:

- The enhancement of bridge programs for underrepresented students that couple pre-enrollment services with mentoring throughout the freshman and sophomore years
- Complete capital improvements
- Initiate new programs in Health Sciences, Business and Technology, and Arts and Sciences

Draft outcomes for years five through 10 include:

- Expand the number of fully online undergraduate programs
- Launch a competency-based education program targeted toward the needs of adults across the region
- Develop multiple pre-college academies for middle and high school students and create a seamless pipeline for matriculation to ETSU
- Begin construction or renovation of a significant residence hall
- Create five new interdisciplinary programs

The framework's second pillar, Success, is designed to accomplish the following goal: ETSU will deploy programming and student services that ensure every entering student has a robust educational experience and has the opportunity to graduate and achieve professional success. Draft outcomes for years one through five include:

- Launch a comprehensive student support center that focuses on first-generation students from the point of application to career placement
- Implement an African American male leadership initiative that doubles the number of African American men in the student body and closes achievement gaps
- Launch a comprehensive review of university peers to develop an updated cohort of realistic and aspirational peers

- Implement a faculty-driven general education renewal process that ensures every graduate of ETSU is prepared for life-long learning and professional success

Draft outcomes for five to 10 years include:

- Be recognized as a “Great College to Work For”
- Improve graduation and retention rates for minority students,
- Establish a faculty “culture of contribution” in which research and teaching programs are closely interrelated and responsive to industry needs
- Ensure all students at ETSU have opportunities to participate in collaborative scholarship activities before graduation
- Develop a co-curricular curriculum for “soft skills” that can be documented on an experiential or co-curricular transcript and via badges

The framework’s third pillar, Impact, is intended to achieve the following goal: ETSU will be a model institution for how regional public universities can improve community outcomes in education, economic development, and public health. Draft outcomes for years one through five include:

- Expand presence in downtown Kingsport and open a new off-campus location in one of the state’s metropolitan areas
- Improve the Valleybrook campus such that it is a fully equipped center to promote innovation in key research areas
- Create a Center for Community Engagement in conjunction with the Quality Enhancement Plan and expand experiential learning opportunities for students
- Improve faculty salaries to a level equivalent to the peer average by year five

Draft outcomes for years five through ten include:

- Double the volume of externally sponsored research activity
- Build academic program/faculty partnerships with area middle and high schools
- Make at least five cluster hires in existing or potential growth areas of research and broader scholarship, mainly focused on health sciences
- Partner with a local high school with a high-risk population to develop our region’s first cooperative high school opportunity to provide a seamless transition from high school to college

The presentation concluded with an open discussion.

President Noland opened the conversation by informing the Board that the report of the Draft ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II had just been introduced to the campus for the very first time at the same time the Board heard the material. President Noland then asked

the Board for their thoughts on the report. He noted that Dr. Hoff had offered a high-level overview and requested feedback from the board. *Where did we go wrong? What are we missing? Is there anything you'd like to see us investigate further?*

The following were some of the subjects that were discussed and questions that were posed for consideration:

- How does ETSU address long-term trends, such as the national challenge of declining enrollment?
- Recruitment strategies for appealing to specific demographics, educating the public about the value of attending college, and eliminating barriers to college
- The Healthcare Initiative was discussed, specifically the desire to ensure that the University becomes a healthcare research facility linked with an academic research hospital that draws people to the region.
- It was suggested that the University offer a student insurance plan for graduate programs.
- Dual enrollment and high school counseling programs were discussed.
- Economic development and the University's role in promoting, growing, and articulating the region's importance were considered.
- As a regional university, ETSU promotes higher education to students, such as rural first-generation students, who can enroll at ETSU or any university in the world. Therefore, how can we, as a university, attract students from surrounding counties and keep them in the area after they graduate? How can we create opportunities and make our community a desirable place to live, a place where they will want to stay? How can we re-engage students who have left the area? What distinguishes us?

XII. President's Report

President Noland began his report by paying tribute to local legend Mr. James J. "Jim" Powell, who passed away on February 7, 2022. Through his generosity, Mr. Powell changed the lives of more than 4,000 undergraduate students. The President stated that Mr. Powell and his wife, Mrs. Sandy Powell, have played a significant role in the history of this institution. ETSU is an all-Steinway School because of Mr. Powell. Much of the Martin Center exists because of Mr. Powell. He served as a founding member of the ETSU Board of Trustees, President of the ETSU Foundation, and Chair of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Mr. Powell's memory was honored by President Noland, who acknowledged the impact he had on the University and the Board of Trustees.

President Noland noted that enrollment in Tennessee's community colleges has decreased by 6.4 percent during fall 2021. ETSU has slowed the enrollment decline overall and

increased freshmen enrollment; more than any other Locally Governed Institution. Outreach work has yielded dividends. According to President Noland, ETSU completed a structural overhaul of the University Marketing and Communication division in the fall of 2021. In the last nine months, marketing and billboards have been aggressively pushed, surpassing previous records. Applications, web pages, and admissions websites have doubled in popularity. Additionally, retention rates from fall 2021 to spring 2022 were 90 percent and the President anticipates record graduation rates this spring.

President Noland presented an overview of the Governor's budget and legislative update. The details of Governor Lee's 2022-2023 proposed budget are as follows:

- The budget includes more than \$2 billion of new investments in higher education.
- The Tennessee HOPE scholarship is slated to receive an \$88.6 million increase, thereby allowing university students to receive up to \$5,100 per year for all four years of enrollment.
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- These salary resources equate to a four percent salary pool for ETSU, which is partially funded consistent with prior state precedents.
- The proposed investments in capital are the largest in history, with over \$1.11 billion in capital improvements, including 21 capital outlay projects.
- The unprecedented investments at ETSU include approximately \$162 million for campus upgrades, new construction, and major renovations. This funding represents the single largest investment in new academic construction in the history of the university. New projects include:
 - \$47.7 million for the first phase of renovations to Brown Hall
 - \$43.9 million for a new Integrated Health Science Building
 - \$59.2 million for a new general academic building to be constructed on the site where the Campus Center currently resides
 - \$7.5 million for deferred maintenance projects, including roof replacements and HVAC
 - Upgrades and replacement of the radio tower for WETS-FM
- \$1 million in recurring investments to support the creation of a statewide Center for Nursing Excellence that builds upon the Ballad Health investment of \$10 million that was announced in late 2021.
- \$19 million to upgrade our ERP data system.
- Funding to support operating increases across the Quillen College of Medicine, as well as an \$18.6 million expansion of GME funding.

President Noland highlighted the following implementation initiatives for the Committee for 125 Chapter II plan. A complete list of implementation initiatives was included with the Board meeting materials.

- The University will initiate campus housing and residence life programming/facilities plans, renovation, and infrastructure improvements.
- ETSU's current capital campaign, the most successful in University's history, will be finalized. New philanthropic efforts will be developed in light of emerging capital projects.
- Staff will work with the consulting group Huron to evaluate the current ETSU internal/decentralized funding model and operating procedures, policies, staffing, structures, and opportunities for efficiencies.
- ETSU online recommendations from the 2021 Huron report will be presented to the Board, expanding market penetration and creating new online programs that align with labor market needs.
- The launch and implementation of the Finance and Human Resources modules of the Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP) will begin July 1, 2022.
- The University will finalize administrative searches and on-boarding for College Deans, the Provost office, and the Division of Business and Finance.
- The University will enhance efforts to support equity and inclusion, including staffing, scholarships, expanded bridge programs, and a potential partnership with EAB to close equity gaps and focus on student success across the campus.
- The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will be launched, and preparations for the SACSCOC upcoming reaffirmation cycle will be finalized.

President Noland concluded his presentation by sharing a video from the Celebration of Service ceremony held on February 11. In the video, Dr. Joe Robertson, Professor of Biological Sciences, reflected on his career as an embryologist on ETSU's first In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) team.

XIII. Other Business

No other business was discussed.


XIV. Executive Session

There was no need for the Board to convene in executive session.

XV. Adjournment

Board Chair Dr. Latimer requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved, with Trustee Ramsey making the motion and Trustee Allen making the second.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its April 22, 2022 meeting.