

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

September 17, 2021  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The quarterly meeting of the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees was held at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 17, 2021 in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center. The meeting was also livestreamed.

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Dr. Linda Latimer called the meeting to order and commented on how this was the first time that the Trustees have held a regularly scheduled quarterly Board Meeting in the East Tennessee Room since the renovations to the Culp Student Center had been completed. The Chair noted that it was wonderful to see so many students back on campus. In highlighting major accomplishments at the institution during summer 2021, the Chair reported the following:

- The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation in Women's Health received a \$3.1 million research award that will expand and extend research and evaluation on women's health issues.
- ETSU's Center of Excellence in Inflammation, Infectious Disease, and Immunity, in collaboration with Vanderbilt University, was awarded a \$2.1 million federal grant to fund a study on sepsis.
- ETSU's federal TRIO program was selected by the U.S. Department of Education to receive renewed funding for two of its programs: the Educational Talent Search Program was awarded over \$323,000 each year for the next five years to help middle and high school students in Hawkins, Johnson, and Sullivan counties prepare for and to enter post-secondary education; and the Educational Opportunity Center will receive \$273,000 each year for the next five years to assist adults in obtaining their high school equivalency diplomas and pursuing post-secondary education.
- Ethan Galloway, a senior chemistry student from Surgoinville, was appointed to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as a student member.
- ETSU continues to be recognized in numerous national rankings. Among the most recent was a number 1 ranking in Tennessee for ETSU's digital media program in the area of game design. The ranking came from Animation Career Review, which also placed ETSU among the top 20 Game Design and Animation Colleges in the South.

## **II. Roll Call**

Board Secretary, Dr. Adam Green led the roll call. Because Trustee Dorothy Grisham participated remotely, in accordance with Tennessee Code § 8-44-108 section (c) (3), Dr. Green asked Trustee Grisham for the record if she could clearly hear so that she could participate in the meeting, and if she would identify any persons present in the room with her from which she was participating in the meeting. She reported that she could hear and was alone. Those Trustees present in the East Tennessee Room affirmed they were able to hear Trustee Grisham.

Additionally, Dr. Green reported that since a Trustee is participating remotely, should any votes be taken, they must be taken by roll call.

Trustees were present:

Trustee Janet Ayers  
Trustee Virginia Foley  
Trustee Kara Gilliam  
Trustee Dorothy Grisham (participating remotely)  
Trustee Linda Latimer  
Trustee Scott Niswonger  
Trustee Ron Ramsey  
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones  
*Absent: Trustee Steve DeCarlo and Trustee Kelly Wolfe*

Secretary Green informed the chair that a quorum was present.

## **III. Public Comment**

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

## **IV. Approval of Minutes from the April 23, 2021 and June 15, 2021 meetings**

The minutes of the Board of Trustees for April 13, 2021 and June 15, 2021 were approved as submitted, with Trustee Steagall-Jones making the motion to approve, and Trustee Janet Ayers seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously after a roll call vote.

## **V. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee**

Trustee Ramsey reported that because Trustee DeCarlo was unable to attend today's meeting, he would provide an update from the Finance and Administration Committee. During the committee meeting earlier that day, a financial update was presented by Dr. B.J. King which examined operating expenditures and revenues from the current year as well as the prior year. A comparison of the two years revealed the impact that COVID-19 has had on revenues and expenditures. Dr. King also reviewed contracts from the recent quarter. Karen Glover provided a report on the training provided to business and finance staff on combating fraudulent email scams. This training is required for all business and finance staff, and a recording of the training is also available. Jeremy Ross

provided a report on capital projects and facilities. An update from Pam Ritter on behalf of the ETSU Foundation revealed that the university had undergone a record-year in fundraising, and that the current comprehensive campaign – The Campaign for ETSU – had reached its goal.

#### **VI. Report from the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee**

Trustee Ayers reported that the committee approved one action item during its meeting. That action was to recommend awarding tenure to Dr. Leann Horsley, the new Dean of Nursing.

Trustee Ayers said she is delighted to welcome Provost McCorkle to ETSU. As part of her report, Provost McCorkle discussed recent curriculum actions taken by the university between January 1, 2021 and July 31, 2021, which included approving four new certificates and 11 new concentrations. A total of 145 curriculum actions took place at the undergraduate level, and 131 actions were taken involving graduate programs.

Provost McCorkle informed the committee that ETSU's current faculty-to-student ratio is 15:1, and she also noted that in the recent Great Colleges to Work For Survey, ETSU had met the Carnegie benchmark for the first time. Research and sponsored programs funding saw an increase from the previous year. In addition, she shared that all academic programs that have an external accrediting body have met the necessary standards. Provost McCorkle added that work is continuing for the SACSCOC review that is less than a year away.

#### **VII. Report from the Audit Committee**

Trustee Steagall-Jones gave an overview of information provided to the Audit Committee earlier that morning from Rebecca Lewis. Ms. Lewis presented the annual audit plan for fiscal year 2021-2022 which was approved. Her report also highlighted recent work performed by the Internal Audit staff which included a follow-up to the state's Sunset Audit. Ms. Lewis discussed memorandum of investigations that were issues, the audit heat map, the August 31, 2021 recommendation log status, a report of audit functions for fiscal year 2021, and operating expenses and employee profiles for the Internal Audit office. The committee approved the salaries for the ETSU Internal Audit staff. University Counsel Mark Fulks presented a draft copy of the Board of Trustee's Conflict of Interest Policy. An amendment was made to put emphasis on the fact in Articles 1 and 2 that employment by faculty and student trustees is permitted by law and is not a conflict of interest.

#### **VIII. Consent Agenda**

Chair Latimer asked members to refer to the materials in the agenda that reflected items discussed during this morning's committee meetings and asked if there were any items on the consent agenda that members would like to have pulled for discussion and consideration by the full board. No requests to have items pulled were made, and a subsequent motion by Trustee Ramsey was made and seconded by Trustee Steagall-Jones

to approve the consent agenda. Dr. Green led the roll call vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **IX. Approval of the ETSU Mission Profile**

Dr. Michael Hoff presented a copy of the ETSU Mission profile. Under the FOCUS Act, each institution must present its mission profile to THEC annually. The current ETSU Mission profile was approved by the University Council. A motion was made by Trustee Ayers, and then seconded by Trustee Steagall-Jones, to approve the ETSU Mission profile. Dr. Green led the roll call vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### **X. Approval of ETSU Mission Statement**

Dr. Hoff stated that the ETSU Mission Statement differs from the ETSU Mission Profile in that the mission statement is intended to articulate what the institution hopes it can achieve. This Mission Statement is necessary for SACSCOC compliance. A motion was made by Trustee Foley, and then seconded by Trustee Ayers, to approve the ETSU Mission Statement as presented by Dr. Hoff. Dr. Green led the roll call vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### **XI. Alumni Update Presentation**

Whitney Goetz, Executive Director of the ETSU National Alumni Association, gave an update on the activities of the alumni association.

- ETSU has just over 100,000 alumni living around the world.
- The largest concentration of ETSU alumni is in Tennessee and in border states. ETSU engages with its alumni through regional clubs, Affinity groups, events and reunions, printed materials and social media.
- Campus partnerships have been extremely beneficial in promoting alumni engagement. Recent activities have been made possible through partnerships with the Clemmer College, University Career and Services, and Athletics.
- This year, a series of alumni town halls were held in cities where a large concentration of alumni resided. President Noland participated in these events and gave a series of updates on recent campus accomplishments and also informed guests about opportunities for alumni to get more engaged.
- Clubs and Affinity groups have been very active. One group, the Blue and Gold Club, traces its roots back to 1926 and provides opportunities for former student athletes to connect with the university.
- Regional clubs are currently active in Knoxville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Asheville. Plans are to launch a club in Charlotte.
- A range of activities already have taken place during the fall semester, including an event in Nashville when the Bucs played Vanderbilt. Other upcoming events include Homecoming (November 6, 2021) and the National Alumni Awards Banquet (November 19, 2021).

## **XII. College Spotlight: College of Arts and Sciences**

Dr. Joe Bidwell, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, gave an overview presentation of the college.

- The College of Arts and Science is the largest college at ETSU with 3,559 students. The college is very diverse with 18 academic departments, with the four largest being Biological Sciences, Media and Communication, Psychology, and Criminal Justice and Criminology. The college has other major units/programs as well as centers of excellence and museums.
- The college currently has 237 full-time faculty; adjuncts are an important part of the team.
- The majority of general education courses are offered through the College of Arts and Sciences. This allows the faculty to interact with the majority of students who matriculate at ETSU
- During the period between 2015 and 2018, there were over 400 peer-reviewed publications, 1,000 performances, 700 presentations, and 40 exhibits.
- Major strategic initiatives for the college are aligned with those at the university. The college recently hired its first associate dean for equity and inclusion.
- Facility upgrades in various stages of planning and completion for the College of Arts and Sciences include plans for the academic building, renovations to Brown Hall, enhancements to Mathes Hall and the dance facilities, and discussions of a dedicated space for Bluegrass/Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.

Dr. Bidwell concluded his presentation with a review of current challenges and opportunities for the college.

## **XIII. President's Report**

President Noland provided the Board of Trustees with a preliminary fall enrollment update highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment across the nation. Overall ETSU enrollment for the fall 2021 semester declined just over 400 students. A contributing factor to this decline is that freshman classes at ETSU have been smaller in recent years. While overall enrollment declined, there was significant growth in the number of new freshmen this fall, which is evidenced by the tremendous work of Admissions staff during the pandemic, he noted. In terms of geographic areas where students are represented, the President said a majority of students enrolled come from Northeast Tennessee. The President completed his enrollment update by discussing the institution's enrollment marketing strategy for the fall, which includes a number of rebranding efforts.

President Noland informed the board that the work of the Committee for 125 Chapter II remains ongoing. The committee first met in April 2021, and the six task forces, with a

total of 95 participants, have also met. The task forces are nearing completion of their draft reports.

President Noland provided the Board of Trustees with a brief report on the institution's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic specifically highlighting the following:

- ETSU Health continues to offer vaccine clinics for the region
- Three new contract tracers have been hired
- Outreach efforts, such as the ETSU Vaccine Challenge, have been successful

President Noland concluded his report by noting that ETSU's budget remains balanced and he anticipates no changes to the base budget for this academic year. The President stated that he intends to bring a minimum three percent across-the-board salary enhancement request for consideration. He also noted that the next round of Federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) funding distribution will be made to students in the upcoming weeks.

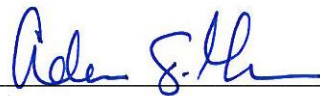
#### **XIV. Selection of New Committee Chairs and Members**

Chair Latimer stated that the FOCUS Act and the Bylaws for the Board of Trustees provide the organization for the Board, including the operations outlined in the structure of standing committees. The standing committees of the Board are the Executive Committee; Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee; Finance and Administration Committee; and Audit Committee. A listing of the committee members and committee chairs was included in the agenda materials. A motion was made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Grisham to approve the membership. Dr. Green led the roll call vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **XV. Other Business**

There were no other business matters to discuss. Trustee Ron Ramsey made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



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Adam Green  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its November 19, 2021 meeting.