

**University Council**  
**August 10, 2020**  
**Meeting conducted via Zoom**

1. Call to Order

Dr. Wilsie Bishop called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Amanda Mowell called the roll. Those in attendance were: Ms. Bridget Baird, Dr. Joseph Bidwell, Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Dr. Bill Block, Ms. Lisa Booher, Dr. Myra Carew, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, Dr. Mark Fulks, Dr. Adam Green, Mr. Stephen Hendrix, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Dr. Karin Keith, Dr. Chris Keller, Dr. B.J. King, Dr. Karen King, Ms. Candy Massey, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Dr. Wendy Nehring, Dr. Brian Noland, Mr. Shivam Patel, Ms. Pamela Ritter, Mr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Don Samples, Dr. Janna Scarborough, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Dr. Jeff Snodgrass, Ms. Alicia Williams

Those absent: Ms. Kayla Frank

Others in attendance: Dr. James Batchelder, Ms. Mary Cradic, Dr. David Linville, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Kason O'Neil

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from July 13, 2020 meeting

A motion by Dr. Don Samples to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Janna Scarborough, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3.2 Review agenda

No changes were made to the agenda as presented.

3.3 Voluntary Reports of UC-Essential Action Items from Governance Organizations

Dr. Joe Bidwell said the Council of Chairs is scheduled to hold a leadership workshop, and a new Chair will be selected following his role change (interim dean for the College of Arts and Sciences). That person will be the University Council representative moving forward.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix noted that Faculty Senate will participate in a fall retreat. Elections will also be held to fill remaining openings, and the bylaws were changed so that the senate will have five members at large, instead of three.

Ms. Lisa Booher noted that Staff Senate elections are underway.

Mr. Shivam Patel had no updates to report for Student Government Association.

Dr. Karen King reported that the Information Technology Council has added a subcommittee for data governance and data standards.

Dr. William Duncan (Research Council) said the new Ballad Health IRB will begin

submitting studies Aug. 17. ETSU IRB will not review any new studies after that date, and all ongoing studies will remain. Ballad Health will continue to provide administrative approval for use of facilities or EMR.

Ms. Bridget Baird (Government Relations) reported outcomes of elections as there will be two new members of the Tennessee General Assembly (House) and a congresswoman representing the First Congressional district for the first time. The General Assembly has resumed briefly to discuss liability related to COVID-19.

Dr. Scott Carter noted the busy week ahead for Athletics as adjustments are being considered for the fall calendar, including Southern Conference play. He anticipates modifications to fall schedules.

Dr. Bishop (Academic Council) called attention to several new programs and terminations listed in the [attachment](#) provided in the agenda materials (UC curriculum update).

- Consolidate Master's (M. Ed.) in Elementary and Secondary Education
- Concentration in Applied Theatre Pedagogy terminated
- New concentrations in MBA program
- French Concentration terminated
- New Certificate for Forensic Nurses
- New Department of Medical Education
- Modification to BA in Music

Ms. Alicia Williams said the Graduation and Professional Student Association will elect a new president soon.

#### 4. Action Items

##### 4.1 Old Business

No old business was brought before the University Council for consideration.

##### 4.2 New Business

No new business was brought before the University Council for consideration.

#### 5. Information Items/Presentations

##### 5.1 Quality and Effectiveness Sub-Council Report – Dr. Clavier

Dr. Clavier said the sub-council last met in person on Feb. 20 and members were assigned to analyze administrative reporting structure within ETSU units and other SACSCOC level V or VI institutions and share those findings.

During the April meeting, it was discovered that there was not a standardized reporting process across ETSU units, and most other universities do not share their process and results publicly. Adding to the challenge to implement this initiative were recent administrative changes and membership challenges, she explained.

In June, Dr. Mike Hoff led a discussion with the sub-council on planning, budgeting, and assessment and how to align the unit review process and strategic plan. He asked members to think about “what makes a quality university?”

A smaller group of QESC members has created a draft reporting structure and process based on the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's General Standards and the Baldrige Excellence Framework for quality in higher education that will be presented to Dr. Bishop and the larger group for endorsement.

Dr. Tami Eggleston, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Professor of Psychology at McKendree University, will lead QESC in a discussion about quality at institutions like ETSU. She will facilitate sessions with both the QESC and ETSU's Executive Team.

Dr. Clavier said the main goal is to have a structure, process, and template for reporting in place by September to help units identify outcomes and the extent to which those outcomes are achieved.

## 5.2 Enrollment Update – Dr. Mayhew

Dr. Mayhew provided an enrollment overview ([attachment](#)). Currently, headcount is down 525 (undergraduate) and 18 (graduate) for total of 543. Enrollment has fluctuated due to external forces and the financial challenges facing students and families.

ETSU Promise Plus launched in January, and currently 190 students are registered to participate, and 102 students have signed up for the Free Freshmen Tuition program.

Dr. Mayhew said some first-time freshmen are cancelling applications, and, although orientation numbers are up, the goal is registration.

Housing recently announced a shift to single occupancy in residence halls to reduce occupancy below 60%, and students have until Aug. 12 to cancel housing agreements. Many pre-semester programs moved to virtual delivery, he added.

Various units have been mailing postcards and contacting students directly to assist with questions and encourage enrollment. Dr. Mayhew said the outreach has been very beneficial because academic advisors have been able to help students gain a better understanding about how classes will be conducted as well as how much financial aid will be applied. Staff are also communicating with students about the fee payment deadline (Aug. 17).

An internal group is working with a consulting firm to review current pricing and scholarship structure for out-of-state tuition. Currently, ETSU has a high cost, high scholarship structure. Dr. Mayhew showed a map representing the volume of out of state students over the last three admissions cycles. High interest comes from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia. An adjusted out-of-state model would allow for a more aggressive strategy, he explained. More information will be shared as the report is finalized.

Discussion ensued about ETSU's enrollment numbers compared to those of other

institutions. Some are taking different approaches especially when it comes to housing but are reporting between flat to 5-10% decreases and even as much as 20% at some institutions across the country. Minority enrollment was also discussed.

### 5.3 Update on Student, Faculty, and Staff Surveys – Dr. Hoff

Dr. Hoff provided a summary document ([attachment](#)) from the survey conducted in July with over 6,000 responses from individuals who “might be students in the fall.” The response rate (37%) was very good, and the demographics matched ETSU’s population. Some of the major findings include:

- Overall, 80% think ETSU is making decisions to keep students safe
- About 15% of students said they would have technology/access issues if all classes were online
- 85% indicated they have access to laptop/desktop
- 94% can take online courses
- 77% of respondents who took classes in the spring said they had a good experience
- 34% know someone who’s been diagnosed with COVID-19
- 5-10% indicated they would not participate in healthy behaviors like wearing a mask, physical distancing
- 13% of respondents are apprehensive or have little experience using Zoom

Dr. Hoff said the Faculty/Staff survey was postponed and will be sent out as an early semester check in. Results are also available from the latest Great Colleges to Work For Survey conducted from March 9-April 10, which was a tumultuous time due to the pandemic. The response rate was 18%. There is still work to do, but the overall average increased by 1%. Survey results will be shared, Dr. Hoff noted.

### 5.4. Strategic Visioning Process – Dr. Hoff

In his report, Dr. Hoff said a major portion of the Strategic Visioning Process is around operational changes. He said we are closer to “one ETSU” than ever before, and a lot of work is happening across the region, so it is time to capitalize on the momentum. At the September meeting, Dr. Hoff will provide a plan that includes a calendar and committees to engage internally, externally, and undergo a visioning process similar to the Committee for 125, a part II. By staying focused, he said, the university can end up in a better position than where it started. He said this process will ask, “What does it mean to be a quality university?” as ETSU has created centers of excellence, hired faculty, and increased student success metrics such as graduation rate.

Dr. Hoff said he will provide a report outlining what ETSU has achieved thus far from the Committee for 125 report. There will be a kickoff for the new visioning process, and the steering committee will likely include external names and national names in higher education.

Dr. Hoff asked others to provide examples of strategic visioning at other institutions as well as names of individuals who should be included on subcommittees.

When asked how units can be doing this work internally at the same time as the university, Dr. Hoff explained that work is underway to provide a two-page document for every department highlighting key characteristics and success metrics. A list of questions will also be provided to guide conversations.

Dr. Hoff explained that he will begin to request information that is not meant to be critical. He is trying to determine the best places to start this process. He also requested to be invited to meetings with people outside the institution who will be engaged with the visioning process.

## 6. President's Report

### 6.1 COVID-19 Response Update

In his report, Dr. Noland said this fall may be different, but a great degree of excitement remains in front of us. He recognized that many are feeling disappointment for missing the traditions and connections that typically define the fall semester. He thanked the staff who have worked tirelessly throughout the summer to prepare for students to return.

Over the course of the pandemic, Dr. Noland said he has learned to have several plans and backup plans in place. The Future Operations Workgroup determined appropriate stages of operations to guide the university into the fall. Following spring break, ETSU entered stage 1 and by mid-June transitioned to stage 2 as some employees began returning to their offices and working on rotational schedules, while others continued to work remotely. During that time, the Board of Trustees supported the recommendation to maintain tuition and fee levels at current rates with no increases for the 2020-21 academic year. As we moved from spring into summer, many of our plans have been forced to adjust because COVID-19 has not responded in the way many of us anticipated. We had hoped that by summer, he continued, the number of cases would drop and remain minimal through the fall with a potential second wave later in the fall. Campuses all across the country adjusted their calendars based upon this suggestion.

The virus has not operated on this cycle, and we continue to see upward trends across the country and Northeast Tennessee, he noted. As a result, the operating framework has been updated. Effective immediately, ETSU will remain in stage 2 with the following modification in place:

1. Reducing on-ground courses to reduce population density during peak hours. More than 80 percent of courses will be online, a decision driven by faculty
2. Moving residence halls to single occupancy to reduce density. This recommendation was driven by the COVID Medical Team and Housing staff. ETSU is one of few institutions in the state to make this decision.
3. Indoor gatherings of greater than 15 people without special exceptions will be prohibited. Outdoor gatherings will be limited to 50.
4. Employees will continue to have the flexibility to work on rotational schedules and remotely to reduce density within offices.

Dr. Noland said more information about modified stage 2 operations would be posted on the [Bucs Are Back website](#) immediately following the meeting. The COVID Medical Team will continue to develop a series of health-related recommendations related to testing and quarantine space.

A question arose about child care being offered under the stage 2 modifications, and Dr. Noland said he looked forward to holding more conversations about the possibility of safely reopening.

ETSU will not see a full pivot to online, Dr. Noland stated, because some degree programs must be delivered in person to maintain academic quality. Face coverings and social distancing will be required for on-ground courses. When asked about the potential impact on graduate students conducting research, Dr. Noland said research labs and facilities will remain open.

Next, Dr. Noland discussed the legislative changes and said he looks forward to working with newly-elected legislators. He also spoke about the support higher education has received from Gov. Lee that many other states have not experienced from their respective governors.

Dr. Noland anticipates changes to the operation of the Marching Band this fall, and a forthcoming meeting of Southern Conference leaders will likely determine how to proceed with athletics. Dr. Noland said it difficult to envision an environment in which ETSU is playing sports this fall.

He encouraged everyone to be wise stewards of resources as ETSU moves to implement the budget reduction plans submitted by the Future Options Workgroup. There will likely be enrollment implications for decisions to move more courses online and restrict occupancy in residence halls, he added, but because the institution placed safety first, it will manage through the budget outcomes. Dr. Noland believes this fall has the potential to be ETSU's "finest hour" if we keep our values in front of us.

Next month, Dr. Keith Johnson will join Dr. Noland to present the Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan.

Dr. Noland noted that the Committee for 125, Chapter II is a chance for the university, colleges, and departments to focus on big visions for life after COVID-19, which begins with energy, enthusiasm, and hope. He expressed confidence that ETSU will be a strong intuition as long as we take care of one another and continue to be good neighbors. We will persevere through these uncertain times.

7. Announcements

There were no announcements

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.