

**East Tennessee State University**  
**Administrative Services Review Committee Meeting**  
**April 22, 2015 – Meeting Summary**

**Background**

ETSU held a meeting of the Administrative Services Review Committee on April 22, 2015. The goals for this meeting were as follows:

1. Meeting Summary from last meeting (April 8<sup>th</sup>)
2. Student Communication (A2S) Report
3. Subgroup Reports
4. Matrix Summary Report

**Attendees**

Leslie Adebonojo, Bert C. Bach, Scott Beck, Michael Hoff, Scott Jeffress, Mary Jordan, Kathy Kelley, B.J. King, Karen King, Hal Knight, Barbi Ly-Worley, Mary Ellen Musick, Margaret Pate, William Rasnick, Vincent Thompson, Dora Wyett

Guests: Leah Adinolfi, William Kirkwood, Margaret Miller, Joe Sherlin

Lisa Clarke – rPk Group – teleconference

**Discussion**

The members present confirmed that the April 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summary was an accurate description of the meeting.

Dr. Bach stated that he spoke with President Noland regarding concerns presented at the last meeting, in general bringing closure to this committee and in particular what is going to happen to the recommendations that have been approved by the committee. In addition to the action items being presented today, Dr. Bach requested that if all possible any other items that subgroups plan to bring forward be included on the May 6<sup>th</sup> agenda. Per his conversation with Dr. Noland, a major part of the next meeting agenda will be used to assign priorities to the committee's recommendations as follows:

1. Which items should we make an immediate commitment to implement?
2. Which items should we make a commitment to implement within the next three to six months?
3. Which items should we make a definite commitment to implement but recognize that the implementation will be one year or further out?

Once the recommendations have been prioritized, the information will be submitted to the President.

**Student Communication (A2S)**

Dr. Bach reported that one of the brainstorming items addressed communications to students. The committee invited Dr. William Kirkwood to share with the committee what the A2S Committee is doing in the area of student communications. Dr. Kirkwood reported that the Access to Success Committee, co-chaired by Joe Sherlin, Mary Jordan and himself, have been reviewing this topic for quite some time and have implemented some things which have proven helpful. 1) In order to encourage undergraduate students to read e-mails from the University, this past summer, the VP of Student Affairs (Dr. Sherlin) lead students in every orientation to take the 'Buc Path' Pledge which in theory was voluntary. As part of the pledge, students agreed to read their GoldMail and pay particular attention to any e-mail that began with "Buc Path". In addition, students provided a good cell phone number and gave the University permission to contact them on that cell phone number. 2) The Committee commissioned a report from EAB entitled, Improving Institutional Communication with At-Risk Students, which is now available in the EAB library. The report was

exceptionally helpful and has been widely distributed. The report reflected that all institutions interviewed rely chiefly on e-mails when communicating with students; however, the response rate is still only about 40 percent. The report also reflected that students respond to e-mails that are brief, personalized and actionable. Challenges facing university personnel are the volume of e-mails, the student's perception of importance, the length, content and style of the e-mail and the ease of response for the student. Dr. Kirkwood reported that something universities on the cutting edge of communicating with students are doing is increasingly making it possible for students to click a link in the e-mail that will take them to an action they specifically can take to solve a problem or meet a need they might have. Some opportunities may be available if the university purchases the SSC campus product, which integrates two platforms the university currently uses. The A2S Committee thinks there is still a need to improve some of our websites. Finally, the university may want to look at a notification app for students which has the sole purpose of notifying them regarding anything they need to do directly related to graduation. The University of Kentucky has experienced some success with this app.

The committee acknowledged that the A2S Committee is addressing this issue and no further action will be taken by this committee.

### **Subgroup Reports**

#### **Student Support Structures – Financial Aid – B.J. King**

As this item was included in the Gap Analysis, Dr. King invited Dr. Joe Sherlin and Ms. Margaret Miller to provide a report to the committee.

Dr. Sherlin reported that over the last two years, the Office of Financial Aid has gained major ground in its quest to better serve students. The focus has been twofold: 1) The processing of information has been overhauled, and 2) services have been added that enable them to offer additional and more personal counseling opportunities to students with financial aid. Dr. Sherlin stated that in his early discussions with the department, he learned that it had systems issues, in that there was not enough capacity to handle the calls during critical times. This had caused wait times for students from 30 minutes to one hour. There were also systems issues in terms of technology, in that paper files had to be pulled to assist students with their problems and questions. The Banner Document Management System has been implemented to help resolve this issue. Student-submitted documents are now scanned, coded and indexed as they are received. In addition, the University has contracted with EdFinancial, a call center service, which has increased efficiency at handling incoming calls. The average wait time is now 1.29 minutes.

Ms. Miller reported that the office is in the process of implementing Dynamic Forms which will improve efficiency in that required forms by applicants will be created online by the Financial Aid Office staff. This will allow students to electronically complete, file, and submit their forms. Ms. Miller shared information regarding Financial Aid Counselors and how they are assisting students to navigate through the financial aid process and also their outreach activities to students. Finally, a FastPass System has been implemented in which students can go to the Financial Aid web page and make an appointment with a counselor.

Dr. King stated that Dr. Sherlin and Ms. Miller made this presentation to her subgroup about eight months ago. At the end of the presentation her group felt comfortable that they were doing everything reasonable and possible to improve services in the Office of Financial Aid.

#### **Public Service – Scott Beck**

##### **i. George L. Carter Railroad Museum**

**Recommendation:** While it is recognized that the Carter Railroad Museum draws some people to ETSU on Saturdays, particularly children, the subgroup concluded that the museum has limited connection to the University's mission and to opportunities for student recruitment and retention. Therefore, the subgroup

recommends that, with a one-year notification, the Museum be relocated off campus and zero University dollars be dedicated to its operation.

Dr. Beck reported that although the cost to the University is minimal, the committee felt the space could be better utilized. Dr. Beck moved to accept the recommendation from the Subgroup. Dr. Knight seconded the motion and the motion carried.

## ii. **Reece Museum**

**Recommendation:** 1) The THEC grant currently provides 60% of the salary for a tenured professor in the Department of Appalachian Studies. The subcommittee recommends moving the funding of this line completely to the budget for Academic Affairs. 2) Develop and fund a staffing plan to ensure quality management of the museum exhibitions, collections and outreach activities. At a minimum the museum should have a full-time Director (who does not have duties in other programs), a Collections Manager, and an Executive Aide.

Dr. Beck reported that the Reece Museum is a unit of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (CASS). It houses over 20,000 artifacts and is one of twelve museums in Tennessee accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The primary funding comes from a THEC grant; however, it does require some additional funding from ETSU. Finally, collaborative efforts at the museum contribute to student recruitment and retention as well as community engagement. Dr. Beck moved to approve the recommendation and Dr. Knight seconded the motion. The motion failed.

## iii. **Slocumb Galleries**

**Recommendation:** The subcommittee views the Slocumb Galleries as integral to the academic program within the Department of Art & Design, with only a small public service or outreach component. Virtually the entire budget for Slocumb is contained within that department and thus decisions as to the level of funding are made by the department chair, Dean of Arts & Sciences, and Provost. The subcommittee does not view some type of integration of the Slocumb Galleries with the Reece Museum or any other unit as necessary, useful, more efficient, or bureaucratically logical. Thus, the subcommittee recommends no changes in the current operation of the Slocumb Galleries.

Dr. Beck moved to approve the recommendation. Dr. Knight seconded the motion and the motion carried.

## iv. **Gray Fossil Site/Natural History Museum**

Dr. Beck stated that it appears the Governor's budget will include a "separate line item" year-to-year funding of \$350,000 for the Natural History Museum at ETSU. In that light, his recommendation was as follows:

**Recommendation:**

1. The subcommittee recommends that ETSU follow as fully and closely as possible the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Museum Assessment Program regarding the Natural History Museum.
2. The subcommittee recommends the approval for funding of an Associate Director position and an Assistant Curator. It is estimated that the addition of these two staff positions will cost \$160,000 per year.
3. With the additional finding from the state, the subcommittee recommends that a portion of the savings to the ETSU general fund be re-directed to fund research at the Gray Fossil Site, i.e., excavation and curation activities.
4. The subcommittee, venturing into academic programs, also recommends that a study group be formed to investigate the pros and cons of creating a Museum Studies program that can benefit from the existence of the Natural History Museum, the Reece Museum, and also the Archives of Appalachia.

Mr. Jeffress moved to table this item. The motion was seconded and carried.

## Matrices

Ms. Lisa Clarke reported that she consolidated the subgroups matrices into one document to reflect what has been identified in terms of savings, investments needed, and revenue enhancements at a team level. The net impact to date is approximately \$11.4 million dollars. The biggest savings item is under Net Revenue Generators from the Flat Tuition Model recommendation. In many cases, the recommendations do not have financial impact, i.e., pain points or to increase efficiency. The goal is to capture all savings and investments needed which is critical for the budgeting process. Ms. Clarke stated that she provided notes and question marks on some of the matrix items. She asked the subgroup leads to please review those notes in order to ensure that everything has been captured in the matrices. Ms. Clarke invited the subgroup leads to contact her if they had any questions regarding her notes or needed assistance with finalizing their matrices. In addition, any items brought forward during the next meeting will need to be included in the matrices.

Dr. Bach stated that the next meeting will include the following:

- The Meeting Summary for today's meeting
- The item on today's agenda from Public Services that was tabled due to time constraints (General Recommendations of the Public Service Subgroup)
- New focus items
- Prioritization of the recommendations that have been approved by the committee as discussed at the beginning of this meeting.