

# East Tennessee State University

## Staff Senate

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### Meeting Agenda

**Date:** January 12, 2026

**Time:** 2:30 PM

**Location:** Culp Center 311

**Facilitator:** Cody Morelock, Staff Senate President

### Agenda Overview

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Previous Minutes
  - a. December Approvals
3. Information Items
  - a. President's Report
  - b. Treasurer's Report
  - c. Committee Updates
4. Old Business & Follow Ups
5. New Business
6. Announcements, *What is on your mind?*
7. Adjourn

[Agenda](#)

# East Tennessee State University

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### Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2025

2:33 PM – 3:38 PM

#### 1. Call to Order

President Morelock called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

#### 2. Introduction of Guest Speaker

President Morelock began the meeting by introducing Jessica Vodden, Vice President for Marketing and Communication and Amerrica Duggan-Torbert, Web Strategy Manager. Vodden and Duggan-Torbert presented information on the University Website Redesign Initiative.

- The current web platform was last fully redesigned in 2013, and the current design presents reputational risks, technical instability, and a significant likelihood of misinformation remaining accessible.
- The Redesign Initiative also works to keep ETSU compliant with the new ADA Title II digital accessibility standards (April 2026 deadline), and updated visuals support ETSU's strategic position relative to recruitment and enrollment.
- Current timelines project the Redesign Initiative to take 36-months, with an estimated \$825,000 in one-time costs and approx \$100,000 annual recurring expenses.
- Operational goals relative to the Redesign Initiative include reducing the number of web editors from 600 to 100, reducing the number of web pages from 40,000 to 20,000, and reducing the number of web files from 500,000 to 100,000. Additional operational goals include standardizing templates and syndication for efficiency, with an emphasis on accessibility and mobile-friendly performance.
- Vodden and Duggan-Torbert shared that 86% of students and 85% of parents rely on the ETSU website as their primary source of information. Focus areas related to content strategy include reducing jargon, improving user navigation, and implementing storytelling/magazine-style page layouts.
- Once the redesign is implemented, units will designate content leads; academic units will organize by college/department and administrative units will organize by user experience (not hierarchy).
  - Consultants will be hired by the end of January 2026 to finalize the project's roadmap. Once the roadmap is finalized, it will be published so units can track the project's progress.
- A portion of the redesign will include cloud migration. Only informational/storytelling pages will migrate to the cloud – no student or employee data will migrate to the cloud.

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- UMC is partnering with Sherrod Library to archive significant amounts of legacy content in Digital Commons. Vodden and Duggan-Torbert continue to emphasize document cleanup; webpage editors will receive 30-90 days to remove outdated files.
- The Redesign Initiative rollout will be implemented in phased sections. Some areas will remain temporarily on the legacy system. Units will participate in content review to ensure accuracy with minimal delays, and chatbot guardrails will receive ongoing updates as content is migrated.
- Dynamic Forms continues to be recommended for secure data collection, and ATS provides training to build and use Dynamic Forms.
  - Senator Hutchison questions whether centralized campus support could be provided for building Dynamic Forms. As UMC works to reduce web editors, limit duplicative and outdated content, and improve accessibility, a move from PDFs to Dynamic Forms could align with UMC's goals.

### 3. Approval of Previous Minutes

President Morelock presented the November minutes for consideration. No corrections were needed. Senator Strauss made a motion to approve the November minutes, and the motion was seconded by Senator Siddell. The motion carried, and the November minutes were approved.

### 4. Information Items

#### President's Report

Due to time constraints, President Morelock announced he will send his updates to the senate via email. The President's Report is linked below under *Supporting Documents & Reminders*

#### Committee Updates

President Morelock and Vice President Albarado provided an update on the Season of Sharing and provided details on donations received from various departments.

- Approx 2,000 items and \$800 were donated
- 79 gift cards were distributed, an increase of 30 from 2024
- All surplus food items and gift cards were donated to Buckey's Food Pantry

Vice President Albarado shared impact stories from individuals accepting donations, and B. Dye advocated for a fulltime position assigned to Buckey's Food Pantry.

### 5. Old Business

No old business was presented for discussion.

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### 6. New Business

No new business was presented for discussion.

### 7. Announcements, What is on your mind?

- President Morelock shared the Pancake Breakfast is postponed until December 9 at 9:30 p.m.
- The Staff Senate Executive Team extended an invitation to Dr. Tony Norman for the February Staff Senate meeting to provide an update on the work of the Voyager Post-Go-Live Taskforce.
- Senator Hutchinson asked if there was clarification regarding future staff market adjustments
  - President Morelock reiterated that President Noland mentioned Spring 2026 for the next round of adjustments, but no firm details are available yet.
- President Morelock shared that the university plans to close December 22, 23, and January 2, but an official email from the President's Office will confirm.

### 8. Adjourn

Senator Sells made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Senator Henson. The meeting adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

# East Tennessee State University Staff Senate

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## **Meeting Materials**

December 8, 2025

*University Website Redesign Initiative Presentation*



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EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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*For internal and deliberative use only. Please do not share.*

# Web Strategy

## Redesign

*Note: Some content in this report may be difficult to process when using a screen reader.  
To request any of the information presented herein in a different format, please call (423) 439-4317.*

# Bottom Line, Up Front

1. Our website is perhaps our **single most important channel** for communications and marketing.
2. The **technology, content, policies, and procedures** supporting our current site are significantly out-of-date.
3. This introduces **significant risks** for the university
  1. Risks to reputation resulting from a lack of content publishing controls
  2. Potential failure of the platform or significant downtime of our website
  3. Inaccurate information spreading and amplified, particularly through AI tools
  4. Legal risks related to failures to comply with accessibility regulations
  5. Failure to harness key digital tools in a competitive enrollment landscape
4. UMC proposes a **36-month project** to develop a new web strategy, identify and implement a new tech stack, and clean up and optimize digital content requiring
  1. A new recurring annual investment of approximately \$50,000
  2. A one-time investment of approximately \$1 million over three fiscal years (~\$330,000 per year)



# Key Principles

1. As the “front door” to the university, our website should be **optimized for external audiences**
2. **Internally focused content should be kept to a minimum**, as much of this information can be housed or conveyed elsewhere
3. Messaging on our website should **mirror the university’s overarching brand messaging strategy**
4. The university website should serve as the **foundation for an omnichannel marketing strategy**





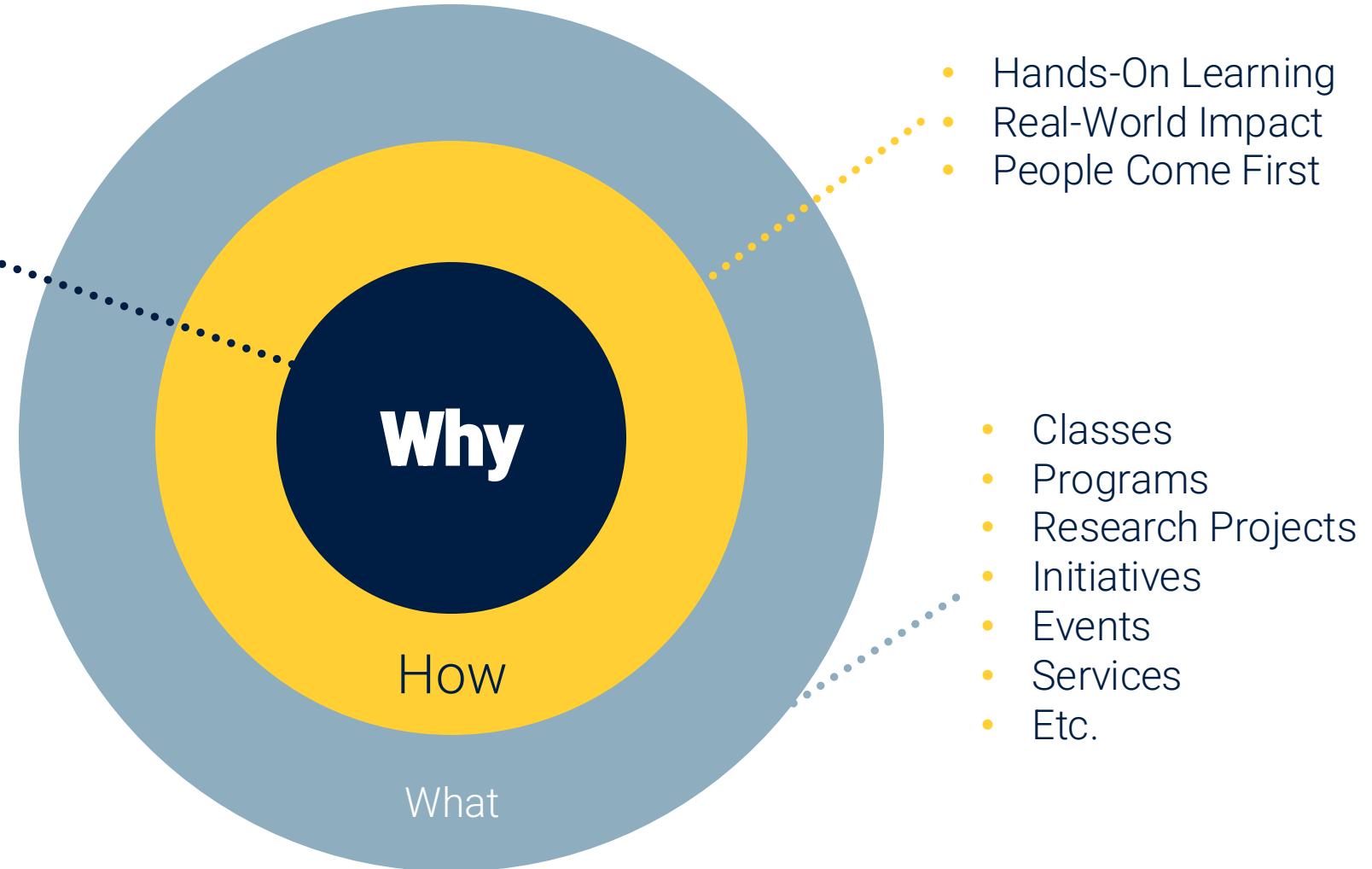
# Web Messaging Strategy

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# ETSU's Brand: Start with the Why

Improving the quality of life for people in the region – and beyond.



*Start with the Why* by  
Simon Sinek



# Key Differentiators

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**Hands-On  
Experience**



**A Premier Health  
Sciences Institution**



**Academic Quality &  
Signature Programs**

Student, Faculty, and Program Accolades ·  
Unique Offerings · Research



**Lifestyle &  
Location**



**Real-World  
Impact**



**Military-  
Friendly**



**Low Student  
Debt & ROI**



**Values**

People Come First · Tenacity ·  
College Access & Social Mobility





# Current vs. Desired State

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Current	Desired
600+ Web Editors	100 Web Editors
40,000 Web Pages; 500,000 Files	20,000 web pages; 100,000 files
70% internally focused; 30% external	Approximately 80% externally focused; 20% internal
Most sites and content created by individuals whose primary expertise is not marketing or communications	Most top-level sites and content created or guided by marketing pros working with campus subject-matter experts
Duplicative and outdated content is prevalent	Duplicative and outdated content is minimized by syndicating designated authoritative and cornerstone content
Accessibility problems are common	Accessibility checks are built-in to the process, ensuring compliance
No publishing controls (anyone with access can publish anything)	Content review is built-in to the process, ensuring accuracy and alignment with university messaging
Hosted on local servers managed by ITS employees	Hosted on cloud servers managed by external services
Outdated CMS focused on desktop access/single-channel strategy; legacy of TBR	Modern CMS focused on omnichannel strategy



# What does this actually mean?

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- User-friendly, form-like interface for posting web content
- Standardized, branded templates requiring no knowledge of code or design
- Ability to make updates once and syndicate those changes sitewide (accreditation statements, department name changes, contact information, etc.)

**Example:** In Modern Campus, it takes more than 30 minutes to post a single news story to ETSU News. In the new system we began piloting this summer, it now takes less than 3 minutes.



# User Research

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- 86% of students and 85% of parents rely on the website as their top source of information - [Forbes](#)
- 71% of website visitors expect a personalized interaction and 76% get frustrated when they do not receive one – [Hannon Hill](#)
- AI search visitors are expected to surpass traditional search by early 2028 - [Semrush](#)



# User Research

45% of students say they are *very familiar* with the term *undergraduate* but define it as:

- When you did not finish
- Someone taking a step below their major
- The first two years of college
- Insufficient credits to graduate
- Underage and graduating earlier than most
- First year of your graduate program
- Underachievement
- Graduating early
- Graduating late

– Ologie



# Examples of Optimization: School Page



Patterson School of Accountancy

About Academics & Admissions CPA Exam & Licensure News Resources & Involvement

← Back to olemiss.edu

Externally focused resources on the top-level navigation

## A Top 10 Accountancy School

The Patterson School of Accountancy at Ole Miss delivers top-tier education and innovative training, empowering students to excel in the dynamic world of accounting. With expert faculty and real-world experiences, we prepare future leaders to thrive in their careers.

Apply

Clear and succinct value proposition with recruitment-focused call to action

← Home

THE *Patterson School*  
ADVANTAGE

Search-engine optimized description focused on value provided.

<https://accountancy.olemiss.edu/>

Subdomain structure, allowing for custom navigation and controls as well as phased rollout of updates



### Your path to success

The nationally ranked Patterson School of Accountancy offers programs including a Bachelor of Accountancy, several specialized master's degrees, and a Ph.D.

Graduates find placements with accounting firms, government and nonprofit agencies, and various businesses nationally and internationally, with many master's students passing the CPA exam before starting their careers.

# Examples of Optimization: Program Page

The screenshot shows the Accountancy program page on the University of Mississippi website. The page has a dark blue header with the university logo, navigation links (Academics, Admissions, Student Life, Research, Who We Are, Athletics), a red 'Give' button, a search icon, and a menu icon. The main content area has a dark blue background with white text. It features the title 'Accountancy, B.Accy.', a sub-headline about building a foundation for career success, a 'Apply Now' button, and a '← Academic Programs' link. Below this is a blurred image of students. The page is divided into sections: 'Clear call to action with search-engine optimized language' (highlighting the title), 'Student-focused calls to action' (highlighting 'Change Your Major to Accountancy' and 'Contact an Advisor' buttons), 'Student-focused selling points' (highlighting job market statistics: median income, projected growth, and financial income), and a footer icon.

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MISSISSIPPI

Academics Admissions Student Life Research Who We Are Athletics

Give

≡

UNDERGRADUATE

## Accountancy, B.Accy.

Build your foundation for career success by earning a Bachelor of Accountancy degree in the Patterson School of Accountancy.

Apply Now

← Academic Programs

Change Your Major to Accountancy

Contact an Advisor

What does a Bachelor of Accountancy look like on the job market?

**\$80k**  
Median income for Accountants and Auditors in 2023.

**6%**  
Projected employment growth for Accountants and Auditors from 2023 to 2033 (faster than the national average).

**\$100k**  
Median income for Financial

**9%**  
Projected employment growth

Clear call to action with search-engine optimized language

Student-focused calls to action

Student-focused selling points

# Other Examples of Optimization

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## Home Pages

- Belmont University ([belmont.edu](http://belmont.edu))
- South Dakota State ([sdstate.edu](http://sdstate.edu))
- Virginia Tech ([vt.edu](http://vt.edu))
- Texas Tech ([ttu.edu](http://ttu.edu))

## College-Level Pages

- Patterson School of Accountancy ([accountancy.olemiss.edu](http://accountancy.olemiss.edu))
- Haslam College of Business ([haslam.utk.edu](http://haslam.utk.edu))
- Fisher College of Business ([fisher.osu.edu](http://fisher.osu.edu))
- Davis College of Agriculture ([depts.ttu.edu/agriculturalsciences](http://depts.ttu.edu/agriculturalsciences))

## Program Pages

- Haslam College of Business ([haslam.utk.edu](http://haslam.utk.edu))

## Mission & Public Value Pages

- University of Georgia ([wearegeorgia.uga.edu](http://wearegeorgia.uga.edu))

## News Pages

- Ohio State University ([osu.edu/impact](http://osu.edu/impact))
- University of Georgia ([impact.uga.edu](http://impact.uga.edu))

## Student Life Pages

- Texas Tech ([depts.ttu.edu/financialaid](http://depts.ttu.edu/financialaid))
- University of Tennessee Knoxville ([utk.edu/admissions/tuition-aid](http://utk.edu/admissions/tuition-aid))
- Ole Miss ([olemiss.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/financial-aid](http://olemiss.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/financial-aid))
- Ole Miss ([olemiss.edu/student-life](http://olemiss.edu/student-life))
- Ole Miss ([olemiss.edu/housing](http://olemiss.edu/housing))



# Student Input



**Trailblazers Website  
Redesign Recommendations**

Curated and developed by BucDigital

Aspirational example from students:

<https://www.hausofwords.com/en>



**Best practises  
for research  
storytelling &  
innovation websites**

LEAD WITH HUMAN-CENTERED STORYTELLING

CREATE A "MAGAZINE EXPERIENCE"

DESIGN FOR DISCOVERY & DEPTH

EMPHASIZE VISUAL STORYTELLING

CURATE THEMATIC "ISSUES"

BALANCE CREDIBILITY WITH ACCESSIBILITY

SOURCES & REFERENCES:

CASE Circle of Excellence Awards (2023); EAB Higher Ed Storytelling Benchmark (2022); Harvard Nieman Foundation – Nieman Storyboard; Adobe Experience Cloud – Digital Magazine UX; The Webby Awards (2023–24); Knight Lab (Northwestern University); Harvard Research Communications Office; Content Marketing Institute; PRWeek Global Awards.





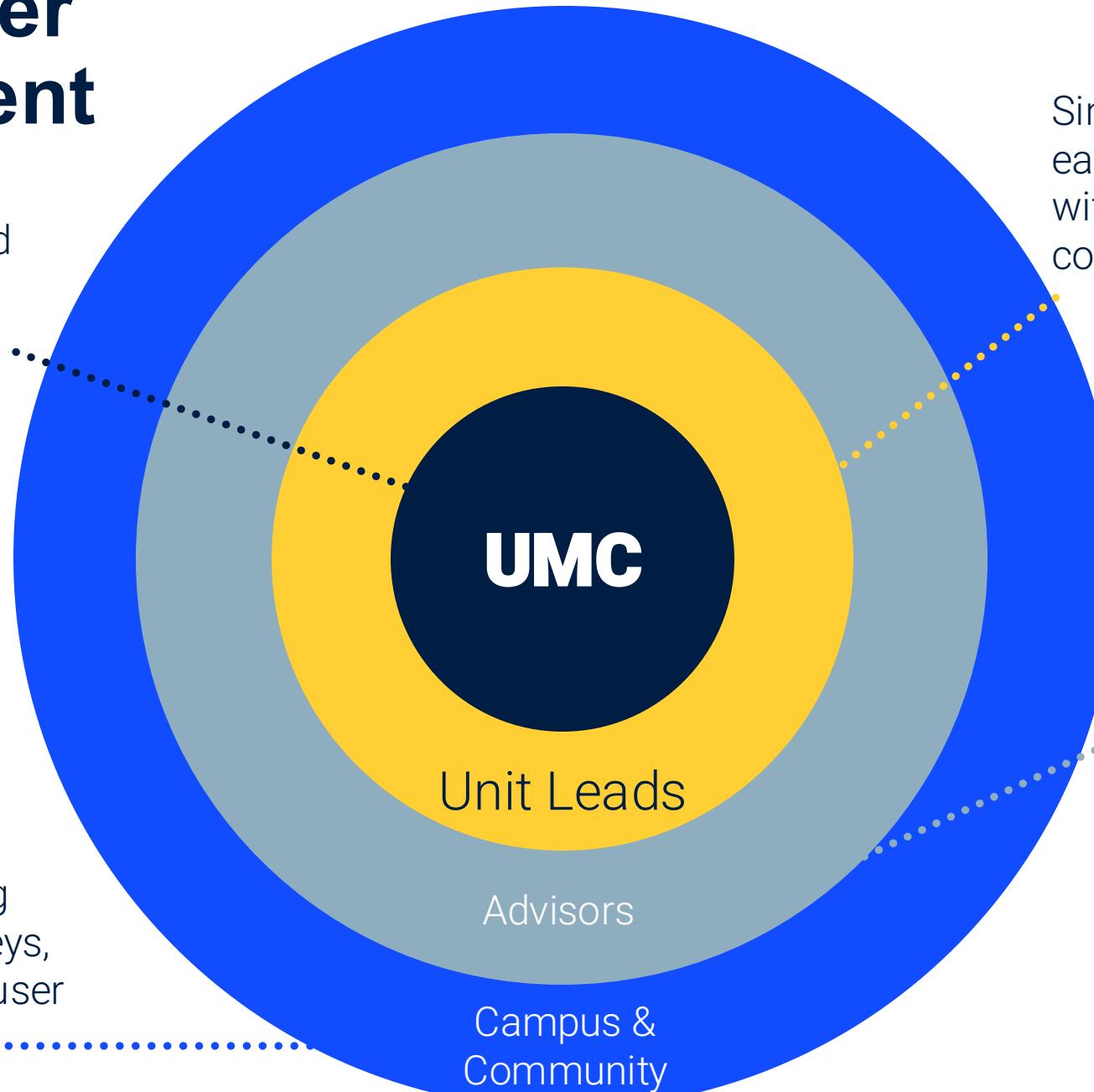
# Project Plan

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# Stakeholder Engagement

UMC team members leading the project and the university's long-term web strategy



End users providing input through surveys, focus groups, and user testing.

Single points of contact for each college or unit to assist with the migration and new content development

Campus leadership and domain experts providing guidance and feedback on the project.



# Timeline

This 36-month initiative includes a phased content migration over 30 months.

## Summer

- Secure executive support and funding.
- Develop campus communications plan.

## Fall

- Complete RFP for tech stack and vendor.
- Hire first of three new full-time project staff.
- Develop new web policies and procedures.

## Spring

- Define roadmap for subsite builds and content migration.
- Develop new design styles and components.
- Migrate undergraduate admissions content and selected additional content.
- Hire remaining full-time project staff.

## Beyond

- Develop user governance and training protocols.
- Phased migration of all subsites to new platform and domains (over 30 months).

## Ongoing

- Audience feedback and research



# Project Staffing & Support

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## Internal

- UMC web team (3 new hires for at least three-year terms)
- Designated point of contact for each college/unit

## External

- Project consultant to assist with configuration, migration, and initial design/build
- Managed hosting services



# Budget

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## Annual (Ongoing)

- New investment of \$50,000 (total ~\$100,000) for platform and managed services

## One-Time

- \$150,000 for external consultant
- \$675,000 for additional web employees over three years\*

\* ETSU will need to decide whether to centralize web content services and management with UMC holding responsibility for making web updates or retain the decentralized model with colleges and units being responsible for updates. If we choose a centralized model, we will need to retain the three additional web employees. If decentralized, colleges and units will need to invest greater personnel resources into ongoing website management.



# What Can You Do Now?

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- Clean up your departmental website
  - Remove outdated and inaccessible PDFs and other documents
  - Update web content and recycle outdated webpages
  - Archive historical content in the Digital Commons (newsletters, publications, meeting minutes, etc.)
- Start determining your unit lead who will assist with the migration and new content development
- Share this information with your teams



# Questions?

## **Jess Vodden**

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# East Tennessee State University

## Staff Senate

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### **Meeting Materials**

December 8, 2025

*President's Report*

## Presidents Report- 12.8.25 Staff Senate Meeting

### Updates from University Council

-Dr. Ginny Blackhart shared updates from the Shared Governance Sub Council Report:

The Veterans Affairs Committee advised that they are currently have a search underway for an Office Coordinator Position. They are also hoping to acquire Graduate Assistant Positions for their office.

The Sustainability Committee reviewed and funded 9 of 13 proposals: initiatives are focused on energy efficiency, lighting, water fill stations across campus and solar powered tables.

The Scholarship Committee reviewed over 3,000 candidates.

-Ronnie Gross shared updated regarding the GEAR UP Grant

The mission is to help students in the region focus on college readiness, with a focus on low income students in Carter, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, and Washington Counties as well as Kingsport City Schools.

We plan to work with 46 partner schools and hope to reach over 5,000 students during the 7 year life of the project.

Goals Include:

Performance Improvement and increased graduation rates and the high school level, with continuation into secondary education programs.

Provide professional development opportunities for teachers, counselors and school admin to better support their students.

We will be hiring employees to work here at ETSU to oversee the project as well as staff to serve in the counties we are partnering with for the program.

### Executive Team Meeting with Dr. Noland

Dr. Noland shared that the Associate VP of HR Position had been posted to the website and that interviews were expected to take place early in the Spring, with Dr. McCorkle chairing the search committee.

Dr. Mark Fulks is retiring from his position as University Counsel. Kay Lennon-McGrew will service as Interim University Council.

Dr. Noland also shared that we anticipate a ribbon cutting for the new academic building in the Spring.