

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

May 23, 2025
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, May 23, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center.

I. Call to Order

Trustee Janet Ayers, chair of the committee, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green conducted the roll call. The following committee members were physically present:

Trustee Janet Ayers
Trustee Charles Allen
Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer
Trustee Tony Treadway

Other Trustees present were Steve DeCarlo, Dorothy Grisham, Melissa Steagall-Jones, and Trent White.

III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from February 21, 2025

The minutes from the February 21, 2025, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Tony Treadway making the motion and Trustee Charles Allen seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

IV. Promotion and Tenure of Faculty Members

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Kimberly McCorkle reviewed the process for earning promotion and tenure at ETSU, describing it as “long and arduous” and a

reflection of the institution's dedication to academic rigor. The process begins early in the fall semester and culminates in May, when the Board of Trustees acts upon the university's recommendations. Dr. McCorkle presented a list of faculty from across eight colleges at that the university that staff is recommending for promotion and/or tenure this year.

Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer made a motion to approve the promotion and tenure recommendations, and Trustee Charles Allen seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

V. Approval of the Letter of Notification (LoN) Regarding the Establishment of a Hospitality and Tourism Management BBA Degree

Provost McCorkle detailed the university's plans to create a new BBA degree program in Hospitality and Tourism Management. The 120-credit-hour program will be housed in the College of Business and Technology, within the Department of Management and Supply Chain. Plans are to start the program in the fall of 2026 and to seek accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Dr. McCorkle thanked College of Business and Technology Dean Dr. Tony Pittarese and the college's faculty for the planning and expertise that have gone into the program proposal. Provost McCorkle stressed that it will be a collaborative venture, drawing on strengths from across the university.

Over the past five years, Tennessee's leisure and hospitality industry has seen a 6.7 percent increase in employment, making it one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Southeast. Tennessee ranks eleventh nationally in tourism revenue, welcoming more than 144 million domestic and international visitors in 2023 alone. Furthermore, employment in the hospitality and tourism-related sectors is projected to grow significantly in Northeast Tennessee between now and the year 2030.

Provost McCorkle indicated that there is great interest in this new degree among community partners throughout the Tri-Cities as well as in Sevierville.

Trustee Allen made a motion that the Letter of Notification be approved and sent to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and Trustee Treadway seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

VI. Provost's Update

Dr. McCorkle reflected on the fact that it has been one year since the Board of Trustees approved the academic restructuring initiatives and the Compass General Education Core Curriculum. Academic restructuring, she said, went into effect on July 1, 2024, and the changes have gone quite well, including the creation of six new schools. She reported that several of those schools now have permanent directors. During the upcoming year, strategic

planning will continue, and the university will explore ways to share curricula across colleges in an effort to enhance efficiencies.

Provost McCorkle told the committee that a number of academic policies have been updated recently, and that work will continue throughout the summer and into the fall.

Provost McCorkle described the recent faculty salary adjustments as “historic,” as 389 faculty members were notified earlier this semester that they will be receiving increases. Later (on the day of the meeting), 599 staff members will be notified that they will receive pay increases as well. Another recent accomplishment is a review of the university’s academic portfolio to determine what programs need to be added in the future. Provost McCorkle then provided an update on Compass, the university’s new general education core curriculum, saying that its implementation has gone very well. All general education courses have been re-evaluated, and 30 new ones have been added.

In the area of program review and accreditation, Dr. McCorkle announced that ETSU’s new program in Occupational Therapy has been granted initial accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education. The new Orthotics and Prosthetics program has undergone a pre-accreditation site visit, and Dr. McCorkle indicated that the team was impressed with our facilities, our community support, and our connection to the Veterans Administration Medical Center at Mountain Home.

Dr. McCorkle highlighted areas of growth in ETSU’s current academic program portfolio, noting that as a result of the change in the delivery model for the Executive MBA program to online courses, fall 2024 enrollment in that program reached an all-time high of more than 200 students. Nursing, she said, continues to lead the state in enrollment.

Dr. McCorkle provided a brief update on plans in the field of engineering, which she called “our top focus” over the next five years. Mechatronics has already shown growth and next steps include looking at areas for curriculum revision in engineering to sharpen our focus. An external consultant will be identified to examine regional needs and our strengths. Facilities expansion will need particular attention, considering the limitations of Wilson-Wallis Hall. One of the future programs under strong consideration is a degree in bioengineering.

Provost McCorkle described recent successes of the Tennessee Center for Nursing Advancement (now under new leadership), including the Nurse Narratives project, which tells stories of the nursing profession, supported by Ballad Health.

Dr. McCorkle then summarized progress made in the Quality Enhancement Plan and the university’s Go Beyond initiative. She reported that over 75 courses have been developed for the Community-Engaged Learning designation and that 12 percent of students took a CEL course this past academic year. On April 1, the university submitted an application for the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. A decision is expected by January.

Dr. McCorkle highlighted recent *U.S. News & World Report* recognition of the Quillen College of Medicine. It is one of only 16 schools designated as Tier 1 medical schools in primary care and is second among U.S. medical schools with the most graduates practicing in medically underserved areas.

Dr. McCorkle extended congratulations to Leah Loveday, who became the second ETSU student in two consecutive years to earn a Truman Scholarship. Dr. McCorkle announced that the BlueSky Institute graduated its first class in December. And she announced that ETSU's inaugural Doctor of Occupational Therapy graduates, 27 of them, were presented their diplomas on May 10.

VII. Student Success Update: Student Government Association

This was a joint presentation by Dr. Michelle Byrd, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students and Student Life, and Hunter Turgeon, 2024-25 SGA President. Dr. Byrd also serves as Advisor to the SGA.

Dr. Byrd told the committee that the SGA is comprised of students from all areas of the campus whose common purpose is to serve the community. Mr. Turgeon outlined SGA's values and focus:

- Service to others
- Respect
- Building relationships
- Following process and procedures
- Listening to constituents
- Leadership and integrity
- Decision-making and impact

Dr. Byrd reported that interest in SGA is growing. In the 2025 SGA election, 86 candidates met the requirements and completed the steps to be on the ballot.

Among SGA's major accomplishments for the most recent academic year, Dr. Byrd highlighted the organization's leadership role in mobilizing resources and services in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, including item collection and blood drive support.

Mr. Turgeon reported on the SGA's involvement with new spaces and accents: Pepper's Grill, the proposed Student Life Village, and plans for a statue of Bucky. Mr. Turgeon reviewed SGA's focus on academics, highlighting expanded library hours and 24/7 study space, a partnership with Career Services, and more opportunities for internships and networking. Dr. Byrd said one of SGA's major goals is to help students help each other, through supporting mental health and wellness and improving access to campus facilities, with such additions as

push plates on doors. Dr. Byrd recapped efforts in which the SGA has helped to bring about change on campus. These projects included the Center for Physical Activity, the return of the football program and Marching Bucs, and the renovations to the Culp Center.

Looking to the future, Dr. Byrd said the SGA plans to continue working with Sodexo on dining options. It will continue to help plan the Student Life Village. It has supported the addition of pickleball courts at the CPA. And the SGA hopes to help plan an Appalachian-themed cultural event on campus. Dr. Byrd concluded the presentation by summarizing recent student successes and by briefly reviewing the annual SGA calendar.

President Noland complimented this year's SGA leadership team for doing an outstanding job.

VIII. Research Update

Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Vice Provost for Research, began his presentation with a brief analysis of how the federal landscape has shifted since January. He said that ETSU has lost one grant, in the amount of \$1.6 million, that would have supported rural STEM education, and will lose out on two awards that would have focused on climate, in the amount of approximately \$1 million.

Dr. Hagemeyer gave an overview of recent research and sponsored program activity at ETSU. For fiscal year 2024, we reached the \$70 million mark for the third consecutive year. A breakdown of those totals shows 32.15 percent for service, 34.82 percent for clinical service, 22.52 percent for research, and 10.52 percent for training.

Dr. Hagemeyer reported on an expansion of his office's recognition program for faculty and staff research, and he announced that in July, two inaugural Research Fellows will join his office to learn more about research administration. They are Dr. Pamela Mims from the Clemmer College of Education and Human Development and Dr. Saurabh Mehta from the College of Health Sciences. Dr. Hagemeyer described his office's partnership with the ETSU Research Corporation and the contract with Jon Wood, who is assisting with intellectual property matters.

Dr. Hagemeyer then summarized Carnegie R1-R2 status. He reminded the committee that our research vision, as outlined in the Committee for 125, Chapter II, was to be a premier R2. Historically, R1 status was out of reach for ETSU. However, Dr. Hagemeyer indicated that with the release of new classification standards in February, "the goal posts have changed." For R1, the threshold is now at least \$50 million annually in research and development expenditures and production of at least 70 research doctorates. With recent increases in research expenditures, Dr. Hagemeyer explained, ETSU is now at \$50.6 million, based on fiscal year 2024 figures. He added that this does not automatically make us an R1. That level has to be sustained for three years. In the new classification system, Dr. Hagemeyer said, the R1 designation is no longer a select group of flagship and elite institutions. R1, he said, is now mission-aligned. In the number of doctorates produced, ETSU is well above the new threshold.

Based on this change and the growth that is occurring in research at ETSU, Dr. Hagemeyer suggested that it is time to revisit our vision. He added that a research strategic plan will be developed this fall.

GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

IX. Committee Discussions

There was no further discussion.

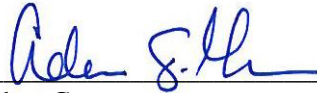
X. Other Business

There was no other business to come before the committee.

XI. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its September 12, 2025 meeting.