

# University Council

## February 9, 2026

### 1. Call to Order

Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and invited Dr. Joe Sherlin to begin the meeting with a “mission moment.” Dr. Sherlin recognized and thanked the ETSU staff, including facilities, food service, campus recreation, and library employees, for their dedication during the recent snowstorm, where nearly a foot of snow required round-the-clock work to keep operations running safely for students.

### 2. Roll Call

Ms. Melissa Nipper led the roll call. Members present were: Ms. Bridget Baird, Dr. Ginni Blackhart, Dr. Bill Block, Dr. Debbie Byrd, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. Dena Evans, Dr. Joel Faidley, Mr. David Finney, Ms. Christy Graham, Dr. Adam Green, Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Ms. Shelby Koerten, Ms. Tricia Korade, Ms. Kay Lennon-McGrew, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Provost Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle, Mr. Cody Morelock, President Dr. Brian Noland, Dr. Rob Pack, Mr. Howard Reddy, Dr. Richard Sander, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Dr. Alan Stevens, and Ms. Jess Vodden.

### 3. Standing Items

#### *3.1 Approve Minutes of the January 12, 2026, meeting.*

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2026, meeting. The motion was seconded; the minutes were approved.

#### *3.2 Review Agenda*

#### *3.3 Sub-Council on Quality and Effectiveness*

Dr. Cheri Clavier provided an update on the Sub-Council on Quality and Effectiveness (QESC), outlining its current work and external factors shaping its direction. She reviewed proposed changes to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission’s Quality Assurance Funding program, noting that this year is a pause year for scoring, a significant shift toward increased weighting of academic program quality, and continued uncertainty pending final approval. ETSU will continue conducting program reviews, accreditation activities, and general education assessment despite changes to funding metrics. Although the commission may no longer require the CCTST as a general education assessment measure, ETSU will continue its general education assessment efforts, with faculty actively collecting and analyzing course-level data to evaluate and improve Compass Core outcomes. Dr. Clavier also discussed preparation for the 2029 SACSCOC fifth-year interim report, emphasizing the need for coordination, documentation, and sustained

compliance efforts. She shared that QESC would like to continue to remain relevant moving forward and recommended re-envisioning the group to more intentionally connect planning, assessment, and accreditation. She indicated she would bring forward a proposal to clarify the council's purpose, scope, and membership to enhance its effectiveness and institutional impact.

### *3.4 Call for Voluntary Reports of UC-Essential Action Items from Governance Organizations*

*Faculty Senate:* Dr. Alan Stevens reported that the Faculty Senate is launching the faculty survey tomorrow, Tuesday, February 10. He encouraged the council to urge faculty to participate in the survey. He hopes that the survey can be used biannually. He reported that the Tennessee University Faculty Senate organization has been monitoring legislative bills.

*Staff Senate:* Mr. Cody Morelock reported that the Staff Senate is preparing for its Staff Celebration in May. As part of that preparation, they are calling for Staff Award nominations from February 16 through March 22. He encouraged the council to nominate staff members for these awards. Nomination information will be sent to staff next week.

*SGA:* Ms. Shelby Koerten highlighted upcoming SGA programming, including new professional development opportunities for students, such as the "Own Your Influence" networking night and the "Making Your First Impression Count" event, hosted by SGA senators. She also promoted the upcoming Mountain Made Folk Festival, which will take place on April 7, and the SGA Spring Concert featuring Flatland Cavalry and Gretchen Wilson. She also mentioned some of SGA's wellness resources, including the possibility of a wellness vending machine in the D.P. Culp Student Center.

*Athletics:* Dr. Richard Sander reported that due to 27 graduating players and 21 entering the transfer portal, the football program needed to replace 48 players and successfully enrolled 42 new recruits in January. He credited the administrative staff and Dr. Heather Levesque's Admissions team for their quick work to make all of this happen. He highlighted strong performances in men's and women's basketball, upcoming nationally covered games, the start of baseball and softball seasons, and continued academic success among student-athletes.

## **4. Action Items**

### *4.1 Old Business*

There was no old business to come before the council.

### *4.2 New Business*

There was no new business to come before the council.

## **5. Information Items/Presentations**

### *5.1 Update on the ETSU Mobile Credentialing*

Dr. Leah Adinolfi, Dean of Student Engagement, and Mr. Rusty Sells, Director of Emergency Management, presented an update on the campus-wide implementation of mobile ID credentials, a multi-year project that includes major hardware and software upgrades. Phase 1 lock replacements in residence halls are complete, with remaining updates and firmware installations nearing completion to enable full mobile compatibility across campus, including most off-site locations that previously had card access.

The team is currently conducting final testing and preparing for beta testing, with broader rollout plans underway. Incoming first-year students this summer will be the first large group issued mobile-only IDs, followed by a campus-wide push in the fall, with a goal of reaching 90% mobile adoption by spring 2027. Emergency Management now oversees centralized physical security, including locks, card access, and electronic controls, to streamline operations. While mobile ID will be strongly encouraged for security and convenience reasons, individuals may choose either a mobile credential or a physical card, but not both.

### *5.2 Update on the University Website and Accessibility*

Ms. Jess Vodden, Vice President for Marketing and Communications, provided an update on the university's comprehensive three-year overhaul of the etsu.edu website. She cited significant risks with the current legacy platform, including outdated content, lack of publishing controls, accessibility issues, and legal exposure. The redesign will prioritize external audiences—particularly prospective students—through a modern CMS, structured content, improved governance, reduced number of editors, enhanced accessibility compliance ahead of the April 24, 2026, federal deadline, and optimized performance for search and AI-driven discovery.

The project is currently in the vendor selection phase, with final demos underway and a partner expected to be selected soon; the first rollout of new content is anticipated in fall 2026, followed by phased migration through 2028. Ms. Vodden emphasized a shift toward dynamic, personalized, and mobile-optimized content, along with stronger publishing workflows and cloud hosting to reduce IT burden.

To support the effort, Ms. Vodden asked council members to continue encouraging the cleanup of current webpages. She also asked the council to send examples of web design that they like to her for consideration as the new website is developed.

During the discussion, a member of the council asked about the distinction between IT and University Marketing and Communications (UMC) regarding responsibility for accessibility and website support. Vodden clarified that UMC oversees external-facing website content and accessibility compliance for public-facing materials, while IT and academic leadership manage

accessibility and training related to academic systems such as D2L, highlighting the distinction between academic sites and public-facing web content.

## **6. President's Report**

President Noland opened with reflections on recent weather-related campus closures, thanking Facilities and Public Safety for their extensive snow response efforts. He spoke about how decisions are made regarding campus closures during weather, emphasizing that the goal is always to remain open while balancing safety. He noted that missed class time may require calendar discussions and provided updates on construction progress as warmer weather approaches.

He reviewed key developments in the national higher education policy landscape—including discussions around three-year degrees, community colleges offering bachelor's degrees, tenure changes in other states, H-1B visa restrictions, federal indirect cost considerations, and accreditation oversight—while noting that none have yet directly impacted Tennessee.

At the state level, he summarized Gov. Bill Lee's State of the State address and budget proposal, which includes a \$1.3 million operating enhancement for the main campus, approximately \$1.28 million for ETSU Health (Medicine, Pharmacy, and Family Medicine), an estimated 1.5% salary pool, and approximately \$26 million for infrastructure and deferred maintenance projects, including a \$19.2 million utilities upgrade.

He highlighted key legislation and noted upcoming budget presentations and the February 20 Board of Trustees meeting, which will include enrollment updates and distribution of approximately \$2.5 million in strategic initiative funds.

President Noland concluded by announcing the passing of ETSU's longtime General Counsel Ed Kelly, recognizing his 15 years of service, commitment to shared governance, and lasting impact on the university community.

## **7. Announcements**

Provost McCorkle announced that the search for the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources is ongoing, with candidate Andrea Yanego scheduled to visit campus on Wednesday, February 11, to present at an open forum at 10:30 a.m. in the D.P. Culp Student Center; the campus community is invited to attend and provide feedback through the search website. One additional candidate has already visited, another withdrew from consideration, and the search committee is reviewing applicants to determine whether to invite a third finalist.

She also shared that a meeting has been convened with Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA, the Registrar, and other campus leaders to review the academic calendar and consider adding

instructional days due to four missed class days, particularly impacting courses that meet only on Mondays.

Finally, Dr. Adam Green, Chief of Staff, announced that the Chair of the ETSU Board of Trustees will conduct the President's annual performance review and has partnered with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to gather additional institutional feedback. Members of the University Council will receive a survey invitation the week of February 23, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

## **8. Adjournment**

Provost McCorkle adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

*The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.*