

University Council
March 10, 2025
East Tennessee Room

1. Call to Order

Provost Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Melissa Nipper led the roll call. Members present were: Dr. Ginni Blackhart, Dr. Joe Bidwell, Dr. Bill Block, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. Joel Faidley, Mr. David Finney, Ms. Joy Fulkerson, Dr. Mark Fulks, Ms. Christy Graham, Dr. Adam Green, Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Dr. Keith Johnson, Dr. Chris Keller, Mr. John King, Dr. Karen King, Ms. Tricia Korade, Dr. Dhirendra Kumar, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle, Dr. Rob Pack, Dr. Tony Pittarese, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Dr. Alan Stevens, and Ms. Jess Vodden.

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve Minutes of the February 10, 2025, meeting

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded; the minutes were approved.

3.2 Review Agenda

Provost Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle noted that there will not be a President's Report since President Dr. Brian Noland was on a recruiting visit.

3.3 Consent Agenda Items

A motion was made to approve the policy on the consent agenda (noted below). The motion was seconded and approved.

3.3.1 Records Retention and Disposal

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

Faculty Senate: Dr. Alan Stevens reported on the ongoing work to explore the possibility of providing graduate student benefits for spouses and partners of faculty. Provost McCorkle added that a task force is reviewing this and will make a recommendation.

He also reported that Dr. Steph Frye-Clark has been re-elected as the Faculty Representative for the ETSU Board of Trustees. They will be serving until 2027.

Staff Senate: Mr. David Finney reported that the annual Staff Celebration will be held May 21 at the Ballad Health Athletic Center. Staff Senate will solicit nominations for Distinguished Staff and Career Staff awards in the coming weeks. Finally, another staff listening session will be held in the East Tennessee Room on March 11 at 3 p.m.

SGA: Dr. Joe Sherlin provided an update on behalf of SGA. He noted that SGA elections will be held in the coming weeks. He and Mr. Jeremy Ross recently met with SGA to discuss the Student Life Village, as well as the fraternity/sorority village project and parking infrastructure.

Athletics: Kay Lennon-McGrew reported that Athletics is looking forward to spring sports and continues to be in a holding pattern as they await settlement of the House agreement.

ITS: Dr. Karen King reported that the Information Technology Council has implemented two new procedures to enhance security. The first will reduce the number of emails students can send in one day from 10,000 to 500. This will help protect accounts targeted by scammers. The second is the automated password reset. When Microsoft analytics identifies an account with high-risk behaviors, it will require the user to reset the password. She reported that this will reduce the number of compromised accounts.

Dr. King also reported that changes have taken place in D2L and Banner that caused issues with the usage of preferred names. They are working to fix this issue before registration begins.

Information Technology Services will hold a tabletop exercise for security this week, and next month they will host one that includes other leadership groups across the university.

Finally, the Esports program received a \$150,000 donation from Brightspeed.

3.5 Sub-Council Report: University Governance Organizations

Dr. Ginni Blackhart reported that they are in the process of ensuring membership accuracy on the website and had no other items to report at this time.

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 Forever ETSU

Dr. John King, Interim Vice President for University Advancement, reported on the Forever ETSU initiative. For the last seven years, ETSU has held Day of Giving. This year, Day of Giving is being rebranded into Forever ETSU, a week of activities (April 21-27) designed to engage and involve more people across the campus and community. Mr. King asked for the university's support of Forever ETSU, which will consist of five days of programming:

- **Monday, April 21:** Faculty and Staff Day – The goal this day is to increase faculty and staff engagement and participation.
- **Tuesday, April 22:** Traditional Day of Giving
- **Wednesday, April 23: 4-2-3 Day** – This is a day to say thank you to community members, donors, and local businesses. Students will write thank you notes at stewardship stations across campus.
- **Thursday, April 24: Student Day** – A group of Student Foundation Ambassadors are helping to promote this day, which will also include a 2025 Graduation Celebration.
- **Friday, April 25: Community Celebration** – Plans for a special celebration are underway for this day.

5.2 Matching the Defense Tuition Assistance Rate (UG) for Active Military

Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, discussed the growth of the military and military-affiliated population at ETSU, which is in excess of 1,100 students. Col. Dan Bishop, Director of Military and Veteran Services at ETSU, and his team provide a “one-stop shop” to support this population.

Col. Bishop presented an opportunity for ETSU to help support those students through Department of Defense Tuition Assistance (TA), the primary education benefit available to active-duty military members. He reported that military culture is focusing on the importance of civilian education at this time. The challenge is that ETSU is currently not a competitive option for most people utilizing the TA benefit, as the per credit hour at ETSU exceeds the \$250 cap.

He proposed a plan to lower the undergraduate tuition cost for servicemembers utilizing TA to match the \$250 per credit cap. This will support ETSU's enrollment goals, including increasing male, transfer, online, and underrepresented student enrollment. If implemented by fall, their goal is to increase enrollment by 100 students by 2029.

5.3 Flagship of Appalachia Initiative

Dr. Randy Wykoff, Dean of the College of Public Health, and O.J. Early, Communications Manager in the Office of Marketing and Communications, provided the council with an overview of the new Flagship of Appalachia initiative.

Dr. Wykoff introduced Flagship of Appalachia as a way to position ETSU as the preeminent institution for improving the quality of life for people throughout Appalachia. The goal is that ETSU be recognized as the “flagship of Appalachia” by policymakers, grant funders, and community leaders. He presented key areas where ETSU impacts well-being and quality of life in Appalachia, including sustainable development, serving the community, research, health care, education, and arts and culture.

Mr. Early presented marketing and communication strategies to help promote ETSU as the Flagship of Appalachia. He discussed earned media examples, including securing news coverage, interviews, and stories placed in external outlets to highlight ETSU’s leadership in Appalachia. Owned media, referring to ETSU’s platforms and publications, is also critical to the initiative. He highlighted ways that ETSU will showcase Flagship of Appalachia storytelling. Finally, Mr. Early presented ways that the University Council can help promote ETSU as the Flagship of Appalachia, such as sharing content, considering ways to link to the [Flagship of Appalachia website](#), sharing success stories with University Marketing and Communications, and sharing thoughts on how to promote the strategy regionally and in various disciplines across campus.

6. Announcements

Dr. Tony Pittarese, Dean of the College of Business and Technology, reported that the annual Appalachian Highlands Economic Forum will take place Friday, March 14. The keynote speaker is renowned economist Dr. John Silvia.

Ms. Christy Graham, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Business and Finance, reported that the Strategic Resource Alignment Advisory Committee met on February 28 and has finalized the report to adjust the budget model. That report will be posted on the website and sent to Cabinet members. They will speak to Faculty Senate this month, as well.

7. Adjournment

Provost McCorkle adjourned the meeting at 9:28 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 14 at 8:30 a.m.