

Summary of Employer Roundtable, Session #4
February 4th, 2013
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM
President's Conference Room
East Tennessee State University

ETSU Attendees

Brian Noland, President
Bert Bach, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Wilsie Bishop, Vice President for Health Affairs and University Chief Operating Officer
Jeremy Ross, Associate Vice President for University Advancement
Bill Kirkwood, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
Cheri Clavier, Director of Assessment and Teaching
Reedena Newlon, Executive Aide, Assessment and Teaching
Curtis Montgomery, Assistant to the President

Guest Employers

Roger Blakely Johnson City Parks and Recreation
Eric Chapman, CGI Federal
Rhonda Gilley, Department of Children's Services
Robert Houk, Johnson City Press
Kirk Lortz, CGI Federal
Terri Marcum, Wellmont Health Systems Holston Valley Medical Center
Tammy O'Hare, DENTSPLY Tulsa Dental
Fawn Price, CGI Federal
Linda Stroud, Greeneville City Schools

Welcome, Opening Remarks

Dr. Kirkwood explained to the guest employers the importance of "the cultural and wellness development of our entire region" and that we want to provide "employees that you are going to be proud to have working in your organizations as well as citizens that we are all going to be pleased and proud to be living with." He also thanked the guests for their attendance and prompted introductions in the room.

Dr. Noland thanked the guests and expressed that "the most important thing this morning is for us to get a sense of your observations, reflections, and perceptions of ETSU, our graduates, and the institution as a whole. We have been engaged for the past six months in a strategic planning process lead by The Committee for 125, a group that is looking to help shape and frame the future of the university. We just completed our Centennial and we are moving towards our 125th Anniversary and in preparation for that event we want to get a better sense of who we are as an institution and where we are headed. In order to do so we have been holding Employer Roundtables for the better part of the past two to three months just getting a sense of individuals across the region. What are you seeing from our graduates? What are you seeing from us as an institution? What are the strengths? What are the gaps? What are the areas you would like for us to focus on?" And with that he introduced the organizer and facilitator of the Employer Roundtable, Ms. Cheri Clavier.

Employer Needs

Other than the skill set based on the positions being filled by recent college graduates, Ms. Clavier prompted discussion of other skills, abilities, or attitudes that are important to have in all new employees hired. Participants mentioned the following attributes:

- mutual respect and integrity; adaptability, innovation and creativity, decision-making and problem solving, planning, and having self-awareness
- we hire people from all across the board—from English degrees to computer science degrees, but really written and oral communication is a huge factor
- we want people that say, “There is a problem and this is how I think we can solve it;” people that have that drive and initiative as well as the core competencies we certainly have both internships and externships; we look at their GPA and we get references from their instructors; if they are in our system and do a good job then we end up hiring them
- the full internship is huge, and I commend the University for moving to that
- we are looking for an “indefinable it;” we know “it” when we see “it;” we feel “it;” we hear “it;” and I think that really needs to be talked about with students; it is not just about curricular knowledge;
- what I have seen is that the maturity level of those who have gotten a four year degree is better and stronger; so we typically lean towards those, but we are not exclusive in that way

Online or Traditional College Experience

To build upon comments made about online students and their soft skills, Ms. Clavier sought opinions on what kind of difference it makes in graduates who have an online versus traditional college experience in a classroom.

- what I have seen through a lot of recruiting processes is that on paper it seems that the online people have the knowledge, but in practice it is not there; I think that the online does not give them the discipline to commit that information to their brain permanently so that they can pull it out and actually start applying it; having that hands-on and showing they can apply that—we need to see that
- I think what happens online is that you may miss the soft skills and the people skills and being able to work with folks more regularly; the reason I say communication is important because you have to work more with people online and people in different locations
- there are a lot of facial expressions and a lot of things that you can pick up from your interpersonal meetings; seeing expressions and hearing tone and things—you lose a lot of that through instant messaging or even just a phone call
- we have some hiring managers who if they see that their education has been online it is an immediate turn off to them; but we have had others who they themselves have gone through an online program; I think a lot of it depends on how the course is arranged and if you really have opportunities for the students to collaborate
- there are some opportunities for online classes I think in today’s society where you have to work and go to school and sometimes have a family at the same time; there is a need for the online classes to meet today’s busy schedules and people’s individual needs
- it is still about relationships; leadership is relationships; so I think that if they are together in a cohort group in an online program that makes a difference too, because it gives that relationship

Activities

Ms. Clavier asked, “Other than academics, are there any other college activities that are important to you when making a new hire? What kinds of things do you look for?”

- they have to have so many hours of volunteer work in a diverse area and not just focused in one area; also their activities on campus—and more with our population related to social aspects of the community
- how do they apply themselves; do they take advantage of any kind of unpaid internships to get experience; usually the students who are doing those things are the self-motivators and the good communicators
- whether they are part of organizations on campus or even if they have a job that is completely unrelated to what we are doing, it still shows they are taking initiative to do something outside of their coursework; we really like people who are part of different organizations on campus, or those kids who really like to do things on their own, whether it is creating android apps or whatever as long as they can talk about it
- I think being able to work or being heavily involved in an organization and keeping your grades up and being able to learn shows a lot of your work-life balance

- it is not about stacking your resume with as many groups as you can join; obviously, if you are part of multiple organizations on campus you are probably not that involved with all of them; some students think that if they join every organization that they possibly can that it is going to make them well-rounded and it just does not
- we ask applicants what did *they* do, to get them away from the “we” statements; we have questions around their team involvement and then what did they do as part of that team

How ETSU Can Fill Employer Needs

Dr. Noland asked employers to consider what “ETSU could do to help better serve your needs either from an employment perspective or a professional development perspective?”

- from a recruiting perspective, the career center is great; but you have an online system that is under-utilized . . . where the students go online, put their resumes on there and employers post their jobs there. I do not know what other institutions have done to make sure the students know about it, but some are very successful (Radford, Virginia Tech, Clemson)
- I would like to see more around professional development; seems like every third day I have something from a neighboring institution - programs that they have, etc.; but the only ones I have learned about through ETSU are through my LinkedIn connections
- I would agree with that; our staff is required to have 40-60 hours of annual training; I am not aware of any kind of trainings from the academic departments on ETSU’s campus in my area – that would be helpful
- I would encourage the professors at all levels to be involved in the professional development going on in education that the current teachers and principals and administrators are undergoing; it is changing so fast; we have to teach new teachers how to hack the standards because it is happening *right now*; they are not getting it in their programming just because it is happening *now*; professors need to be involved in that learning with us as we are learning all the changes going on in order to help the students

ETSU Reputation

Ms. Clavier asked about ETSU’s reputation. Specifically, “when you see on a resume that a potential employee is an ETSU graduate what does that mean to you?”

- we can give a student who has gone to ETSU an opportunity to stay in the area, if they wish
- we have a pretty good set of what we expect in a candidate, and generally we are pleased with the amount of technical skills or training that the individual has gone through; obviously there are always the soft skills that make or break the deal, but we have a pretty good idea what we are getting out of ETSU graduates; they should have a good set of foundational skills
- I always get excited because I measure the benchmark against some of the folks we have hired from ETSU that are doing really well
- they bring so much skill set; we particularly have those graduates who are in areas where we need very high level of skills; I certainly embrace the fact that we can bring those people in and they actually work right alongside with all of our other staff all the time and I think that brings some real quality
- there is something said about being local; but what I am looking for is that—you called it “it;” whatever that quality is; that is what we are looking for and we will take it from any graduate that we can get; we have done national searches, and our last seven hires have been from ETSU

ETSU – Lack of Qualified Graduates?

Dr. Noland pointed out that “one of the things that Governor Haslam has talked about is that there are more positions available across the state than there are qualified graduates to fill them. Are you seeing similar things in your industries? And is the lack of qualified graduates a reflection on something that we at ETSU may not be doing well?”

- we have struggled in the area of engineering; we did try to collaborate and partner in getting more engineering interns and we did not have great success with that; College of Business—we do not have issues; and before I was in the College of Nursing. . .never had any issues

- we need to do a better job of building the confidence in our young men and women—that, “yes you can do math and science;” you see the results of that in finding engineers; we are also finding that in secondary education—if someone were to graduate with a high school certification in physics they can write their ticket; you just cannot find them; so we really need to try to turn some of those talented students in K-6 and encourage them to go into secondary, into the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)
- we cannot find [software] developers—we search the country; I do not know if there is a disconnect between high school and college where they are just not encouraged to go into the math and science fields, but there are not enough of them; I do not know if maybe there is a way that ETSU could turn around those undecided majors to encourage them go into more math and science oriented fields
- it is a mentality; it is a joint effort on everyone’s part; it is almost—I will throw it out there, “I want to get through and get my degree and get my ticket stamped and I want to get to there as easy as I can. And by golly, math and science is not that easy.”
- it is great that students have these really high expectations, but sometimes their expectations are astronomical; they do not look at the big picture, their entire benefits package or their salary; they do not take into account that the cost of living is a lot different locally as compared to larger cities
- I wonder if the campaign could start at the high school level, because if you think of it as a high school student you are trying to figure out what you want to do
- it has got to start way before then because they have to declare a pathway before they even get to high school
- as a student if you say okay, “I get to stay in the region. And I can have a job starting at a good salary. And I could make a career out of this here at home;” I think to hear that before you start college would go a long way; I mean, it would do me nothing better than to hire regional colleges to put our family, friends and neighbors to work here in the area
- it is not without its challenges too; because a lot of times when we do hire—the further out we go from the region the higher the likelihood they are going to want to leave—that just kills us; we spend two years with them and watch them walk out the door with all that knowledge

ETSU Strengths and Weaknesses

Ms. Clavier prompted discussion of areas in which ETSU graduates are particularly strong or weak.

- they have technical knowledge; but they are lacking in how to interact in a political environment and get their compelling arguments across in a non-threatening way
- it is not unique to ETSU; it just seems to be this generation where they have very high expectations; maybe graduates need to have more realistic ideas of what to expect and then also increase self-awareness; a lot of times they really do not understand themselves
- I think most of them are confident, but sometimes it is overconfident which I think might be the weakness
- they do not really know what they should know, but they think they know it
- there is definitely a fine line between confidence and arrogance and cockiness
- you can actually see they are lacking in their product—that is when you find out
- I do not know if that is anything the school can really address

ETSU Compared to Other Institutions

In terms of how our graduates compare to graduates from other institutions, Ms. Clavier asked if there are ways in which we stand out either positively or negatively.

- we know the graduates come out with a fairly good understanding and basic capabilities; we do work with other schools—they have good candidates, but we are kind of shocked sometimes because they do not have that interaction with the database side of programming; that is something that is not totally disqualifying, but it is an area that we have to work with them on and train them on
- I felt like that was the reason ETSU had the lion’s share early on of graduates; because your curriculum was in line with what we were looking for

- we have a strong partnership with the department from which we hire graduates and they know what we are looking for; they actually know our policies and procedures and have classes that engage the students around that specifically; we are always excited when we see ETSU on their application and know that they have a strong idea of what we do; the department encourages a lot of volunteer work and they do a lot of that at our facilities so they get a small taste of what we do and understand some of those stress factors
- the College of Education moving to the year-long internship is huge; thank you for that
- your nutritional dietary services, those areas we certainly do not have enough of those that are available within the community; there are some programs where we have real shortages; that is one that really hits very hard for me because I think you all only have a few graduates each year
- the health related field is just growing; you have to have enough that graduate to where you can just pick the ones you want; there are certainly some opportunities—we hire tremendous numbers of people every day
- one of the upper level managers—we have hired four; they all have master’s degrees; ETSU does not offer a master’s degree in recreation here; so none of those candidates have been from ETSU

Collaboration

Ms. Clavier prompted a discussion on collaboration by stating, “Working together with employers is a key to the transition from school to work. What role do you think you could play to help our students attain these skills and abilities and things that they need to be started in the job on day one while they are still enrolled at ETSU? Do you see any opportunity there?”

- through the internship program we have students who come in and get an idea of whether what we do is what they want to do for their career
- in an effort to sort of increase the pipeline I feel like we used to hire more folks from ETSU than we are hiring now; it is in a decline, at least in the technical field; I started talking to the upper managers on the federal side of the company to see if we could make it a collaboration or pipeline for a semester long type of thing
- there is a lot of money that is given to ETSU to support healthcare; I am very concerned that healthcare is making less money every year and those donations will have to continually reduce; and colleges are not making extra money either; I am concerned that it is going to decrease some of our input into the community for health related fields
 - Dr. Noland replied “We are concerned as well. We welcome the opportunity to talk a little bit offline as you look at residency. Depending on how you do the math, some may see them as a venue through which hospitals do not generate revenue. Others would look at the math differently and say they probably make four dollars to one per resident. I know Dr. Bishop and I would both enjoy talking a little bit afterwards.”
- we have several partnerships with ETSU; I would go back to the professional development one; we would welcome a partnership for your staff/professors to come to the Professional Development Center for State training; I just think it is very important that they hear the training that the teachers are getting if they are teaching new teachers
- it is nothing new; we always have embedded new teacher programming really intense after we hire them in the summer and really intense for the first year and ongoing program; but the professional development is embedded and ongoing for master teachers right now

Collaboration and Degree Completion

Because “degree completion is a continuing challenge for institutions of higher education,” Ms. Clavier charged employers to express “any thoughts you could share on how you may be able to collaborate with us to help make sure more students not only seek degrees, but complete degrees resulting in a more educated work force for you?”

- you have got to have a program for people these days to balance home, work and school
- I think if students saw an end result—there is a lot of concern with unemployment and students coming out of college who cannot get jobs; if from their freshman year, they see, “I am going to stick with this program and there is a good chance that I am going to have a job at the end of four years with these companies that each college is working with.”

- there is something to be said for those that can finish a degree; they have initiative; they have the drive to see something through to completion; I think we all want to see that for the potential person we are going to hire
- advertising that to students that says, “Look okay, that is great that you are going into this field, but realize there are a gazillion other people and it is going to be very competitive. Think about your decision that you are making. You are making a financial commitment like buying a house in that respect. You are going to be paying off on that education for years to come. Think about that decision and that investment and what the long term implications are. That is part of the decision making process. If this is what you truly love and want to do for the rest of your life and you are committed to that financial commitment then great. Just know that.”

Question and Answer and Discussion Session

Ms. Clavier prompted questions, answers and discussion among the ETSU attendees and guest employers.

Comments about Entitlement

“We have had individuals who come in with us, and have over a period of months working either decided they like what they were doing and changed their attitude and progressed. And then we have had people that left. Quite frankly, they did not want to change. They did not like the work environment. They did not think it was a good fit. They thought they could go on and most of them moved on to bigger and better things. I think the ones that we have kept that have stayed with us, over a period of time their work ethic got better . . . They either get with the program or they move on. That is usually what we have seen.”

“Folks that feel they are entitled will go see if the grass is greener somewhere else . . . It is very humbling getting into a professional job. I always tell the new hires it took me six months to get where I felt self-sufficient—wearing my team lead out; I pick my job off the floor daily. I think the job in itself is humbling enough that if you are level-headed and open minded you will fall into place. Otherwise you are going to look for a job elsewhere.”

“There needs to be a discussion about unreal expectations—salary, the way the job really is conducted. As an adjunct, I try to educate my students about what it is really like. Either they do not believe me or they think I am just exaggerating. But, when they get actually in a work environment they realize this is the way things really are.”

“We have got more and more information available today than we ever have. And some students are finding those studies. And all they see is okay, here is the national average for computer science degree, sixty thousand dollars (\$60K)—that is the national average. But they do not consider that figure takes in New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, but probably very little sampling from small regions like this. And so they get these preconceived notions, “Well this is what I should be making.” And they cannot really drill down because this is just a national average. That sets expectations up for a lot of them right out of the get-go. I think sometimes the career centers too . . . are just seeing that national average and this is what you should be making. Then it starts.”

“Best places.net. Whenever I am recruiting someone here I refer them to Bestplaces.net. It does a wonderful comparison not only to cost of living, but crime, other statistics, air, the whole bit, the entertainment, safety, schools. So that has always been a good factor for us. “

“But you know, I have been born, raised, and educated here in the area. And when I was in the salary negotiating business with _____, I looked at Salary.com. And part of the negotiation, “This is what Salary.com says. And I am from southwest Virginia; I can appreciate what you are offering.” And so we met somewhere in the middle of what Salary.com said, which I knew was high.”

Technical Skills and Soft Skills in ETSU Graduates

“I forget which program it was . . . They took their cell phones away for two weeks. By the end of the two weeks, after they got past all that they realized they could sit at a table and have a full on conversation and not be multi-tasking so much. I think that is kind of what you are up against with the soft skills—forcing people to make eye contact and have a conversation. The other thing is when you are trying to work through a problem, you could send a hundred emails and

figure it out in a week or you could pick the phone up and probably fifteen minutes solve it right then. Do not be afraid to pick the phone up and use the phone—having a conversation. I think that is what you are up against. It is not an ETSU problem; I think it is a societal problem.”

“These are all great tools—instant messaging, email, phones—they are all great tools. They all have weaknesses and strengths and there are times when you should and should not use these things . . . Find the most effective way to communicate for the situation.”

“They come out with the technical skills. For nursing it is more soft skills too, but really is critical thinking. And critical thinking is key when you get into healthcare. And I think that ETSU stands up. Critical thinking is really something—a lot of stuff like soft skills; I do not think you can teach them. People have either got them or they do not. Critical thinking is kind of the same thing, but you can ease them along and let them know what they have to do. And that works for us very well with ETSU.”

“We see teachers coming out of ETSU very well prepared with technology. But a lot of it is generational—they have no fear; they know how to use it. But you are providing them the tools to allow them to use it in education. We spend a lot of time with our first year teachers teaching them how to clean up the messes they have made in their life on Facebook. You are a teacher and you cannot have those pictures that were innocuous or cool in college. You have got to go back and clean that mess up. You cannot have them and they are out there. And parents and your students find them.”

“Is there a class to address those kinds of things—professional development, taking care of Facebook, when you should use email vs. picking up the phone? Even things too—people do not think about it—do not do drugs, do not do this. But even your credit history can be a career or life changer if you are not taking care of those things as well. Most companies now are doing background checks across the board and credit checks are a part of it.”

“Kind of let them know too it is not just a drug test; it is not just a blood test; it is hair follicles (test). We have lost two very good candidates that we just terminated for employment for _____ because we take hair follicles. It tells past drug use history; it is pretty significant . . . And I am going to tell you that the hiring of smokers and the question of whether or not we are going to hire smokers is certainly high on everybody’s list right now.”

Development

“How about requiring job shadowing if you know the student declared the major. Put them with somebody in that profession for a period of time just to give them a taste of what they could be doing.”

“We would welcome the opportunity to market our company during your orientation . . . We would take sophomore or even freshmen interns . . . If we can get them interested very early on—we have a variety of different positions. It does not really matter to us in the beginning what discipline they are pursuing. We would love that opportunity. Does ETSU still do the mock interviews? I used to serve on that quite a bit, but in a while I have not seen it. I think that is a really nice opportunity for the employer to talk with the students about some of these other soft skills. A gap that we also have—and I do not know really how to term this. But I think ETSU does better at this than some of the others that we have seen—is just having curiosity. You do not have to have all the information, but you have to know how to go look for it and research it. ETSU does a little bit better of instilling that in the students than some of the others I have seen where they get stuck in a problem then they just sit back and do not really have that drive. But it is almost because they do not know how to go find the information.”

“Some of the barriers that we have had with that—students will call and want to do a job shadowing freshman or sophomore year. There is a lot of cost to that with our department—confidentiality issues; time, because they can only observe with our line of work; but we have to have them fingerprinted, and criminal background checks. It is a long process. There is some cost to that.”

“I think with certain programs—Healthcare, Education, and Social Work—maybe even considering somewhere in there that they have to go through that process of going ahead and getting their background check completed so that they can

work with us. We do a great job of practicum and student teaching and now internship. Freshman and sophomores—there is a real need for after school programs, summer school programs where they would have a required number of hours they would have to do on their own. We always need people to tutor and to work in those programs outside of the regular school hours. Of course, that would still require the background checks, but they could get some real world experience and find out if they like this or not before they get into their junior and senior years.”

“A lot of the time the students may not want to do something unless it marks off some kind of requirement. In other words, what is their return on an investment going here or there?”

“We have done some (shadowing)—mainly with professors with understanding some stuff that we work on. We have had a couple of people who just shadowed us. We do the intern program every year; we really like junior level students. That being said, we have brought in people who are freshmen and they have come back every summer and then we hire them immediately after graduation. The only problem that we have with freshmen coming in as interns is that they just do not have the skills yet; that is perfectly understandable. But if they are willing to kind of start with some more functional roles, and they have the skills that they can do that and we will work with them.”

“Typically we hire ninety percent of our interns. We offer something to almost all of them. It is a good pipeline.”

“There is some seriousness to the comment on job shadowing. A lot of what we do is not terribly earth shaking if you are watching someone on a day to day basis. We probably could think of ways to be a little creative and expose some of the challenges that we are faced with. From our field we brought in some high schools to see what we could do.”

“I work with a guy . . . the company he works for now had an idea that they were kicking around and they wanted someone to research it. I think to put it in today’s thing it would be like a mobile concept. We want to put mobile into our product. Can we give that as a semester long project to a university and have them see how they would spin that? We could work up a partnership there. That was a capstone. That would be something that was relevant—cutting edge as far as what would interest students and really what is going on in the industry now? As a business we get the benefit of you guys doing leg work for us. It is a win-win for both of us.”

Impressions

Dr. Noland: “I am concerned about professionalism in the appearance of our graduates as they move out through that interview process. I know folks do not wear ties. Their casual work days become the norm. I still think you should sleep in ties.”

“We still want to see that professionalism. We want candidates to come in dressed the way you are dressed. We want to see them come in that way. I think other things that we have kind of antidotal things that we have seen—we do not want to hear about your woes, where to put your dog while you are interviewing, and things like that. That is not the venue; that is not the place to be spewing all that. It screams high maintenance—more trouble. . . We want to know something about you; we want to know what you bring to the table.”

“When they come to the interview in their sweat suit—thank you very much. I mean, come in your business attire. Have your portfolio. Have your act together and your resume in there, and even if you submitted it have it with you so you can give it to them again. I mean, come in and be business prepared. I cannot tell you how many people just say, “Thank you. Bye.” It did not matter how much they had. They came in entitled—entitled to not get a job. You have to instill in these kids that college was fun; you did what you wanted—you are now entering into the business world. Get ready for that. It is not going away; your business attire does not go away. And casual Fridays may be casual some places. In our culture we are trying to change that so it is not.”

“Do your due diligence on who you are interviewing with. Do not just run a list. Do you know who we are? Do you know who you are interviewing with? Have you done your homework? It is easy to find—it is on the website. Do not come to an interview outside of the dress code with pink in your hair or a nose ring. That is not allowed by anybody in our organization. Those kinds of things I think—it is not just ETSU; it is anybody and it certainly is not ETSU across the board. Every once in a while we run into that where someone has come to an interview dressed totally out of dress code. How did you not know that?”

“I would say also for the interns to understand when they come to work, they need to be behaving and dressing professionally . . . Really, they were leaving an impression . . .”

“I think we also have an issue with people not following directions. We ask for students to bring a copy of their transcripts with them to on campus interviews and more often than not they just do not. We also have had several ETSU students that we have signed up to come on-site for interviews and they just do not show up. They do not call us; they do not do anything; they just do not show up. When we are planning on those people coming in to interview obviously, someone is taking time out of their day to speak to them. It is really frustrating when they do not realize that they need to take the initiative to make a phone call, send an email and say, “Sorry, I am not coming.” We do not get that.”

“It is usually just the students. I know when we do on campus interviews, the career center works really well with us to reach out to the students as well as myself to make sure that they are bringing everything they want to. But we need them to, but they do not always do that even after the career center tells them, “you need to bring a transcript and a resume,” and they still do not. But that is at different schools too.”

“I use that as a marker even before the interview. If we give them a list of things to do and if they can’t figure that out then I don’t want them. Maybe you could train that—at least part of your curriculum somewhere.”

Wrap Up, Closing Remarks

Q: “It looks like, from an outsider looking in your world, you are trying to change a culture too in some way, hence the meeting here. You are trying to understand what is going on. What is your view? Where would you like to be? Where do you want to be in an ideal period? Where is it that we should be as a community? Be looking and seeing that ETSU may strive—what goal, whatever it is you are looking for.”

A: Dr. Noland said, “I think part of the conversation today—it is not just where we want to be, but where do we collectively want to be as a region? If we all of a sudden transform into _____ in five years, but we still have unemployment rates and systemic healthcare challenges and low levels of education attainment then what good is the accomplishment that we have made as an institution? What we are more interested in is how do we collectively raise the bar for the community? That is part of today. How do we produce better nurses? How do we produce better doctors? How do we produce nurse anesthetist? So that all of those individuals contribute to the region—stay at home. Or maybe the leave and come back for a little bit. How do we ensure that the teachers that we produce are ready to meet the needs of Greene County, Washington County, and Sullivan County? Because in many respects it is a circular environment. A majority of our alum live within a hundred miles of campus. The majority of the teachers in the counties around the area came from ETSU. So if we are not working together, we are not going to meet your goals as corporate entities or public entities or our goals as an institution. I am not trying to duck the question, but I really firmly believe that you see that in our mission statement. Our goal is to be the best regional institution in the nation. Our goal is not to be _____. Because when you go to _____—no disrespect because it is a world class institution—a few blocks away what do you see? How good of an institution are they—different way of looking at it? From our perspective we are here today to listen so that collectively we can raise the quality of life for everyone in the region. Best attempt to answer your question . . . I thank you all for your candor because the only way we are going to improve as a region is to be honest with one another . . .”