



## MOON SHOT FOR EQUITY 2023-24 PROGRESS REPORT

July 24, 2024

During the 2023-24 academic year, East Tennessee State University (ETSU) participated in Moon Shot for Equity – a public-private partnership dedicated to ensuring that more students complete college degrees, especially those most often left behind – low-income, first-generation, and students of color. With support from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, ETSU focused on five initiatives related to Moon Shot “Best Practices:” Coordinated Care, Holds Reforms, Student Microgrants, Transfer Student Pathways, and Student Belongingness. During the 2022-23 academic year, committees were formed to develop strategies and goals, many of which were carried out this academic year. Below is a brief report on each initiative’s progress.

### **Coordinated Care** (Lead: Ethan Hutchinson)

- EAB Navigate360 is ETSU's student success management system that links college leaders, advisors, staff, and students in a Coordinated Care Network. Navigate360 provides the necessary tools to collaborate with and assist students on their path to graduation. Ethan has focused on onboarding staff following campus units and groups:
  - International Enrollment and Services staff
  - Pride Center staff
  - Libraries staff
  - First-Generation Buccaneer Involvement Guides (BIGs)
- Additionally, a new position, Navigate Coordinator, was advertised and filled, and a 2024-25 action plan was developed. ETSU’s coordinated care efforts now fall under the umbrella of ETSU’s Office of Undergraduate Student Advisement

### **Holds Reform** (Lead: Dr. Tom Donohoe)

- The Registration Committee and Financial Communications Review Team were formed and have begun working.
- The Registration Committee reviewed all registration holds and many were removed.
- The Financial Communications Review Team worked with campus partners to review all financial communications calendars and make improvements in time for fall 2024.
- Joe Chappell (IR) created a registration holds dashboard. Tom met with Joe about next steps in improving the dashboard for analysis and decision making.
- Student Life & Enrollment (SLE) hired an Assistant VP for Student Success, Dr. Jennifer (Jenny) Osborne. Jenny has met with Tom, Joe, SLE advising staff, and college deans and their advising staff to explore additional steps to further remove holds affecting student success. Jenny is also working with Joe and college advising staff to propose pilot studies of the effect of removing holds for certain students (e.g., for seniors) on progress and success outcomes.

**Student Microgrants** (Lead: Dr. Michelle Byrd)

- The Moon Shot Steering Committee reviewed and approved a proposal to increase funding for retention grants and “one-time completion grants.” As per President Noland, the approach will be to replenish funds “as needed.”
- In spring 2024, Dr. Byrd, Associate VP and Dean of Students, worked with the Bursar to identify students currently enrolled, with GPAs ~2.5, and with financial-related registration holds (original list N = 84). After refinement of the list of qualified students, the Bursar lifted their financial hold and notified them they were now eligible to register for fall classes. Students were informed that scholarships are contingent upon their return to ETSU in fall 2024
- Total spring awards granted = ~\$16,000 (21 students).
- Student awards were documented in Navigate, which will be used to track students’ academic progress. SLE will also provide “wrap around” follow-up services to award recipients.
- Furthermore, twelve students who had previously stopped out (and were in good academic standing but not enrolled in spring 2024) were identified and provided financial scholarships. These scholarships are contingent upon their return to ETSU in fall 2024. However, the exact number of students who will ultimately return remains uncertain.

**Transfer Student Pathways** (Lead: Kristin Wright)

- ETSU recruitment staff met with Virginia Highlands Community College staff to develop a transfer MOU template that could also be used with other ETSU community college partners.
- ETSU recruitment staff completed a webpage audit with Marketing and Communications toward providing better information and support for transfer students. A new design draft is under review and should be in place by August 15.
- Kristin is working with EAB on transfer student financial aid and scholarship opportunities ETSU could enact. This work will continue into 2024-25.
- Kristin met with nearly hired Assistant VP for Student Success, Jenny Osborne, who will continue transfer student pathways work as part of her position responsibilities.

**Nichols Academy** (Lead: Dr. Kevin Brooks)

- The Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center (MCC) launched the Captain George Nichols Academy. Named in honor of George Nichols, the first African American male to graduate from ETSU, this holistic mentoring program aims to enhance recruitment, academic success, and a sense of connection and belonging among Black male students.
- Of the 15 students recruited for the Academy, 6 attended sessions regularly. Across all events, Academy students participated 76 times, with an average attendance of 8 per event.
- The Academy held biweekly meetings in the Culp Student Center, where Micah Taylor, owner of Taylor Made Barbershop and an ETSU alum, and his team of barbers and stylists provided free haircuts. This space emulates the Black barbershop experience, fostering open and honest dialogue on topics relevant to the Black male experience.
- During the spring semester, Academy participants engaged with industry professionals and community leaders, discussing College Student Mental Health, Study Skills and Test Taking Strategies, Student Engagement and Leadership Development, and Career Exploration and Entrepreneurship.
- A total of 216 ETSU students participated in Academy-related events, with an average of 24 attendees per event; the highest attendance reached 35, while the lowest was 17.
- Going forward, addressing the challenge of encouraging consistent attendance among students who could benefit most from the Academy remains a key consideration for future planning.