

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

MINUTES

February 17, 2023
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, February 17, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Janet Ayers called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green conducted the roll call. Since Committee Chair Janet Ayers participated remotely, in accordance with Tennessee Code § 8-44-108, section (c) (3), Dr. Green asked Committee Chair Ayers for the record if she could clearly hear so that she could participate in the meeting and if she would identify any persons present in the room with her. She reported that she could hear and that she was alone. Those in attendance stated that they could hear Committee Chair Ayers. Additionally, Dr. Green stated that because a trustee was participating remotely, any votes must be taken by roll call.

Committee members present were:

Committee Chair Janet Ayers, participating remotely
Trustee Charles Allen
Trustee Dr. Virginia Foley
Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones, who arrived after the approval of the minutes

Dr. Green informed the chair that a quorum was present.

Other Trustees who attended the committee meeting included: Allen Archer, Steve DeCarlo, Dr. Lisa Piercey, and Dorothy Grisham

III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from November 18, 2022

The minutes from the November 18, 2022, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Foley making the motion and Trustee Latimer seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Academic Action Notification for Period of August 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022

Provost Kimberly McCorkle presented an update regarding academic action items covering the period specified above.

A number of items noted in the meeting materials being sent to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as notifications were presented and included new concentrations within existing programs, name changes to programs and degree concentrations, alterations to certificate credit requirements, along with the inactivation and termination of certificates/concentrations.

Two curriculum items, fully vetted through ETSU's curriculum approval processes, have been submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as action items. ETSU proposes the establishment of a Bachelor of Science degree program in Mechatronics Engineering, a rapidly emerging field of engineering that will align with ETSU's strategic plan to meet workforce demand in a STEM field. The second item is an academic program modification. ETSU is recommending that the current Master of Science in Human Services degree be changed to a Master of Science in Individual, Family, and Community Sciences.

Provost McCorkle indicated that of the items that have been fully vetted and approved at the university level six of those changes involve admission requirements, and five of them involve revisions to curricula. Two new minors will be created, one in Ethics and the other in Esports. Two articulation agreements will be revised, and culminating examinations will be instituted for undergraduate students completing the BS degree in Engineering Technology.

In response to a question about the authority of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission over academic programs, President Noland expressed concern about legislation proposed by the commission that would give it the authority to terminate such programs. He indicated that more latitude should be exercised by the state so that institutions can meet workforce demand, and not more oversight.

V. Annual Institutional Review for Graduate Medical Education

Dr. David Linville, Associate Vice President for Clinical Affairs, presented to the committee an executive summary of the 2021-22 Annual Institutional Review of Graduate Medical Education. The review is required by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The report included specific information about performance indicators, action plans, and monitoring procedures from the accrediting agency.

Dr Linville reported that all such programs at ETSU are fully accredited. The institution received a Letter of Notification from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education on January 25, 2022, stating Continued Accreditation with no citations or Areas for Improvement. Regarding a letter of notification of April 12, 2022 received by OB/GYN outlining one citation and six Areas for Improvement, Dr. Linville reported that all issues have been resolved.

In response to a question from Trustee Ayers, Dr. Linville indicated that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has contracted with the state to fund graduate medical education positions in rural settings. He said that two of ETSU's programs are able to expand through this funding. Psychiatry requested and obtained a complement increase from 25 to 29 residents beginning with the 2022-23 academic year. The program successfully recruited seven PGY1s and plans to continue recruiting that same number per year for the foreseeable future. With the same funding, Dr. Linville said, Pediatrics has begun recruiting eight residents per year.

In reviewing 2022-23 Institutional Action Plans, Dr. Linville emphasized the theme of wellness, noting the hiring of an Assistant Dean of Wellness, the creation of a wellness curriculum for residents and fellows, and the establishment of a wellness subcommittee to enhance the wellness curriculum. He concluded that it is vital that medical professionals understand how to take care of themselves as providers.

VI. Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Update

Dr. Susan McCracken, Vice Provost for Community Engagement and Director of the QEP, provided a status report on the plan, which is a component of ETSU's reaffirmation of accreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. ETSU's QEP involves Community-Engaged Learning, with the theme "Go Beyond"—in this case, going beyond the classroom. Dr. McCracken defined Community-Engaged Learning as a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes. She outlined the key components of Community-Engaged Learning: that it be applied

and experiential, mutually beneficial and reciprocal, and that it provide opportunities for critical reflection.

Dr. McCracken told the committee that ETSU aspires to incorporate a Community-Engaged Learning experience for 50 percent of all freshmen during their first year and for 75 percent of all seniors prior to graduation. Dr. McCracken described several examples of going beyond the classroom that have taken place recently at ETSU, including community-based internships in Film and Media Studies and Public Health; alternative break experiences in Environmental Conservation in Charleston, South Carolina; and community-engaged learning classes through the course “Art and Public Space.”

Dr. McCracken underscored the importance of Community-Engaged Learning as a way to help address the region’s economic and workforce needs and as a way to help prepare students for the career demands of the future.

Trustee Ayers commented that Community-Engaged Learning is a great example of the university’s goal of encouraging its graduates to remain in the region. Trustee Latimer stressed the need to create even more community partnerships throughout the area served by ETSU.

VII. Student Mental Health and Wellness Update

Presenters on this topic were Dr. Michelle Byrd, Dean of Students; Sarah Bedingfield, Associate Director of the Counseling Center; and Vanessa Smith, Practice Administrator for the University Health Clinic and the Johnson City Community Health Center. Dr. Byrd described a “mental health tsunami” on American college campuses, created, in large part, by the fears of the COVID-19 era, and a resulting renewed focus on mental health challenges. She told the committee that in a 2022 poll asking college presidents what their top three challenges were, two of the three were related to mental health. After COVID, she said, there is higher demand for student mental health services, and in many cases, a higher severity of need.

The presenters described an increasing level of collaboration on the ETSU campus to address these needs, pointing to the involvement of units such as the University Health Center, the Counseling Center, Wellness Corner, Campus Recreation, the Multicultural Center, the office of the Dean of Students, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, and academic departments—specifically Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling. In an effort to provide students with holistic and wellness-focused care and support, those collaborative relationships cover all nine dimensions of wellness: emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural, intellectual, financial, environmental, occupational, and social. The group reported that the partnership approach has involved implementation of a stepped care model and an integrated behavioral health collaborative care model; inclusion of exercise as medicine; workshops that address various dimensions of wellness; and

building communities of support around students. Future plans are to increase peer education programming through mental health ambassadors, wellness coaches, and the use of resident assistants. Additional faculty and staff training is needed in the areas of suicide prevention and trauma-informed practices.

Trustee Ayers told the presenters that she is proud of the depth of what is happening in mental health at ETSU. In response to questions from President Noland about numbers of students visiting the Counseling Center, the University Health Clinic, and other units, it was concluded that approximately one-third of all ETSU students are seeking such help.

Trustee Foley suggested that this presentation be given before the ETSU Faculty Senate.

VIII. Research and Synthetic Biology Update

Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Vice Provost for Research, and Dr. Robert Pack, Executive Vice Provost, provided an update on ETSU's research activities as well as the implementation of initiatives related to synthetic biology. Dr. Hagemeyer reported a significant increase in research and development funds secured through grants and private investments. For fiscal year 2022, R&D funds are projected to exceed \$23.3 million, compared to \$18.5 million for the prior fiscal year. Dr. Hagemeyer told the committee that federal funds make up the largest single category in the pie chart. He added that at the close of FY22, there were over 500 active research studies at ETSU. These successes and other factors now place ETSU among the top 300 R2 research universities in the country, for the first time since 2003. Dr. Hagemeyer said this progress is consistent with the goal articulated by the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II: that ETSU be recognized, through funding and program rankings, as one of the premier R2 research universities in the nation. To realize that vision, Dr. Hagemeyer said, ETSU must continue to invest in research operations; integrate research into the educational experience; integrate research into clinical care; integrate research and engagement efforts; build business partnerships; and name its priorities. One of those priorities, he said, should be to play a large role in development of the rural bioeconomy.

Dr. Pack followed with an update on synthetic biology at ETSU. He indicated that several of the goals of the Synthetic Biology Task Force have been met. Those include curricular development, the hiring of faculty, creation of a faculty fellowship in synthetic biology, grant activity, expansion of connections to the BioBuilder organization, and progress toward improvement of laboratory spaces at ETSU/Eastman Valleybrook for bio-industrial manufacturing.

Dr. Pack reported that a synthetic biology minor has been approved by the ETSU Academic Council and that it will be in the catalog for fall. The ETSU Research Corporation is working on a landing page and a video for high school students who may

be interested in STEM programs and related science. The Corporation played a major role in hosting the Growing the Bioeconomy Symposium in October 2022. In addition, the BioBuilder curriculum, originally developed by MIT, will soon be in 19 area school districts, in collaboration with the Niswonger Foundation. Also included in Dr. Pack's presentation were planning timelines for a Bioengineering program and infrastructure for an Institute for Biotechnology.

IX. Committee Discussions

No further discussions were held.

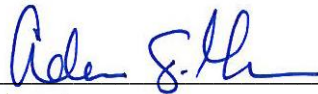
X. Other Business

There was no other business to come before the committee.

XI. Adjournment

The committee was adjourned by Trustee Ayers.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its April 21, 2023 meeting.