

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

MINUTES

April 21, 2023  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, April 21, 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. Committee members present were:

Committee Chair Janet Ayers  
Trustee Charles Allen  
Trustee Dr. Virginia Foley  
Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer  
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones

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

**III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from February 17, 2023**

The minutes from the February 17, 2023, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Latimer making the motion and Trustee Foley seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**IV. Promotion and Tenure of Faculty Members**

After briefly describing the promotion and tenure processes, which begin in the fall semester, Provost Kimberly McCorkle presented to the committee the names of 56 ETSU faculty members being recommended for promotion and/or tenure. Trustee Foley made a motion that the recommendations be approved as presented, and Trustee Steagall-Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Proposed Change of Name: Clemmer College**

In presenting the rationale for a proposed name change, Clemmer College Dean Janna Scarborough said Clemmer currently includes 10 undergraduate majors/concentrations, 16 minors, 23 graduate degree programs including three doctoral programs, 16 graduate certificate programs, four research and practice centers, University School, and a Community Counseling Center. Dean Scarborough said the college is best known for educating thousands of the region's teachers, but about half of the college's graduates do not go into teaching. She described the various kinds of careers that Clemmer graduates are pursuing.

Dean Scarborough told the committee that in 2017, the college engaged in a renaming process, with the name Clemmer College put forward in 2018. However, instead of reflecting the variety and complexity of the college, that name change created vagueness and confusion. Thus began a strategic visioning process to reexamine the name, with a desire for representation, clarity, and connections. College faculty and staff examined peer universities for ideas and trends, reviewed the most popular names previously put forward by faculty and staff, and reopened a naming survey. The name that received the most support among constituent groups of the college and achieved consensus within the college's leadership team was: Clemmer College of Education and Human Development.

Trustee Foley made a motion that the board approve the new name, *Clemmer College of Education and Human Development*. Trustee Latimer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**VI. Update on Center for Nursing Advancement**

Committee members received a status report on the Appalachian Highlands Center for Nursing Advancement from Dr. Leann Horsley, Dean of the ETSU College of Nursing, and Dr. Holly Wei, Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship.

Dr. Wei pointed out that among the issues prompting the formation of the center are nurse well-being and the need for a healthy work force, given the fact that nurses are at the front and center of our health care system.

Addressing these needs and many others, the Tennessee Center for Nursing Advancement was established by the General Assembly and was charged with:

- Developing a statewide plan for nurses based on a detailed analysis of workforce needs;
- Establishing and maintaining a database of nursing workforce needs;
- Routinely convening representatives of nursing professionals, healthcare professional organizations, business and industry leaders, and others to solicit their views and recommendations for the Center;
- Recognizing nurses and the accomplishments of nurses and conveying a positive image of nursing to Tennessee; and
- Increasing the pipeline for nursing education.

Dean Horsley then reviewed the history of the Appalachian Highlands Center for Nursing Advancement. The center's four foci are: building a pipeline for CNA, LPN, and RN quality education in all areas of Tennessee; innovative clinical and academic models; nurse well-being; and developing, aggregating, and increasing accessibility to nursing data. Primary objectives of the center for 2023 include:

- Establish well-being baselines and identify trends relating to recruitment and retention across 30 trial hospitals;
- Test programs within the region and demonstrate activity with a positive impact on recruitment and/or retention; and
- Establish organizational strategy, structure, systems, and partnerships, ready for 2024 within approved budget.

Discussion took place about strategies to recruit more nursing students and how to retain them in the region once they graduate. Committee members stressed the need for nurse well-being in addressing these pipeline issues.

## **VII. Faculty Research Update: Supporting STEM Education in Northeast Tennessee and Beyond**

Dr. Alissa Lange, Director of the Center of Excellence in STEM Education at ETSU, spoke to the committee about the collaborative nature of the work currently occurring both on the campus and beyond.

Dr. Lange indicated that growth in STEM-related jobs will continue to be strong, with an eight percent increase expected by 2029, compared to all other jobs at under four percent. Yet, she said, opportunities are not equal. To illustrate that point, she shared a map showing origins of inventors and patent rates by area where children grew up. The lowest numbers are in the southeastern United States. However, she asserted, this can be

changed through several priorities: to engage in equity, to focus on innovation, to empower educators, to cultivate partnerships, and to expand our reach.

As examples of those priorities, she highlighted:

- Libraries Count, a three-year applied research project focusing on mathematics for diverse young children and their families
- Coding camps for elementary and middle schoolers led by Washington Elementary and ETSU
- STEM collaboration involving the university, area schools, and communities that has already resulted in 19 publications that will be part of STEM curricula
- STEM education-work force partnerships “from cradle to career”
- A three-year grant exceeding \$5 million awarded to ETSU’s Dr. Chih-Che Tai by the Institute of Education Sciences to improve computational thinking and literacy for school leaders

Dr. Noland described the commonality between this presentation and the previous one on the nursing profession as they are two vital pipeline programs. As an example, he told the committee that the U.S. needs some 300,000 more nuclear engineers than we currently have in the workforce. He said the foundation for these careers, and careers in nursing, starts in STEM. He added that Dr. Tai’s grant is “transformational.”

## **VIII. Student Life and Enrollment Update**

Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, told the committee that ETSU’s efforts to attract new students focus on four pillars, from recruitment through orientation: academic quality, experience, affordability, and location. He said that data collected since the pandemic indicate we are succeeding:

- Individual campus tours are up 27 percent and group tours 200 percent
- Counselor Connect events are up 104 percent
- Intents to enroll are up 56 percent
- Nashville area admits are up 33 percent as ETSU expands its footprint
- Preview attendance is up 30 percent

Furthermore, Dr. Sherlin announced the availability of Navigate Student, a virtual one-stop shop to schedule appointments with advisors and tutors, view course schedules, and look up information for over 80 ETSU resources.

In the vital area of student well-being, student CARE team reports are up 107 percent over the last five-year period. Mental health reports are up 200 percent during that same

period. And this year, the amount of food distributed through Bucky's Pantry is up 20 percent, at 11,000 pounds.

In the category of student engagement, Dr. Sherlin reported the following:

- Buctainment participation for the fall semester of 2022 was up 28 percent
- The Student Government Association concert series is on track to surpass 10,000 attendees
- Peer involvement mentoring is up 70 percent over the last five years
- ETSU VOTES was recognized by the Tennessee Secretary of State for its 2022 voter registration efforts
- Volunteer ETSU is partnering with over 150 nonprofit agencies
- The *East Tennessean* student newspaper observed its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year

Dr. Sherlin told the committee that student mental health continues to be one of the most serious challenges faced by ETSU and colleges and universities all across the country. He said the most cited stressors among college students are anxiety, depression, and isolation. In a nationwide survey, 40 percent of undergraduates expressed feelings of emotional stress and have considered dropping out of school in the last six months. Persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness have increased almost 10 percent in high school males and over 20 percent in high school females over the last 10 years. In addition, 60 percent of parents say the pandemic had a negative effect on their college students' learning, and almost half think the effect is ongoing. Rural, underserved, and low-income communities are disproportionately affected.

Dr. Sherlin said ETSU is addressing these challenges through holistic, relationship-rich support and by closing equity gaps. ETSU leads the state in improvement of six-year, first-time, full-time graduation rates. Complicating the situation in our region, however, are downward trends in college-going rates. In particular, beginning with 2017 and going through 2021, Dr. Sherlin noted Washington County's decrease of almost 21 percent, Sullivan's decrease of 11 percent, and Carter's drop of over 15 percent. He added that these figures are a call for P20 efforts.

Trustee Ayers added that Unicoi County is not seeing these kinds of decreases and lauded that county's "one student at a time" approach as a major reason why.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **IX. Committee Discussions**

No further discussions were held.

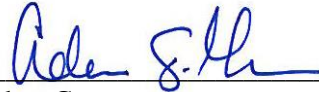
**X. Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the committee.

**XI. Adjournment**

The committee was adjourned by Trustee Ayers at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Adam Green  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its September 15, 2023 meeting.