

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

MINUTES

May 24, 2024  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, May 24, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center.

**I. Call to Order**

Trustee Charles Allen, substituting for Committee Chair Janet Ayers, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green conducted the roll call. The following committee members were physically present:

Trustee Charles Allen  
Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark  
Trustee Tony Treadway

Other Board of Trustees members in attendance were Dorothy Grisham, Steve DeCarlo, Ron Ramsey, Aamir Shaikh, and Melissa Steagall-Jones.

**III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from February 16, 2024**

The minutes from the February 16, 2024, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark making the motion and Trustee Tony Treadway seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

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

Provost Dr. Kimberly McCorkle gave a brief description of the promotion and tenure process at ETSU. A total of 54 faculty from nine of ETSU's colleges were recommended for promotion and tenure by President Noland and Provost McCorkle.

Trustee Frye-Clark made a motion to approve the promotion and tenure recommendations as presented, and Trustee Treadway seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **V. Approval of ETSU Academic Restructure Proposal**

Provost McCorkle presented to the committee the final proposal for the academic restructure of the university. She indicated that the process has taken almost two years to complete, and she praised the work of the highly representative, 26-member task force, chaired by Dr. Nick Hagemeyer and Dr. Virginia Foley. During the course of the review, the task force met with over 1,000 individuals. Earlier this spring, both the Academic Council and the University Council unanimously approved the restructure proposal. Provost McCorkle told the Board that one of the guiding questions was: What college organizational structure would best serve our students to ensure they have a clear path from admission to graduation? Other considerations included the need to build on our existing strengths, the need to avoid duplication, and the need to build on our reputation as a premier health sciences institution.

Provost McCorkle told the committee that this new academic structure promises to strengthen the university's position in the health sciences while maintaining our reputation in medicine, nursing, public health, and pharmacy. It also ensures that units performing cross-college functions are aligned in administrative structures that empower their ability to serve their constituencies. It provides an academic structure that is easier for students and external stakeholders to navigate. It emphasizes signature programs and strengths of the academic portfolio. Furthermore, it aligns clusters of programs within colleges to foster collaboration.

Trustee Frye-Clark made a motion to approve the proposal as presented, and Trustee Treadway seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

President Noland expressed thanks to Provost McCorkle, the members of the task force, Dr. Hagemeyer, and Dr. Foley for their hard work and leadership. He described their work as a "Herculean initiative" and reminded the board that the last time the university took on a comprehensive academic restructuring was in 1977-78 during President Arthur H. DeRosier's administration.

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **VI. Financial Aid and Enrollment Update**

Dr. Heather Levesque, Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of Admissions, and Ms. Catherine Morgan, Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships, provided an overview of the

challenges brought about by the federal government's launch of a new FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Ms. Morgan explained that, typically, FAFSA launches October 1, for the following fall semester. This year, it launched January 30, which greatly shortened processing time for institutions and impeded decision-making for students and their families. Additional delays occurred, as well as technical issues. Ultimately, financial aid awards were delayed, from November until April. As a result, hundreds of thousands of students nationally were negatively impacted.

Dr. Levesque described how ETSU tailored its communication strategies in light of these problems, particularly focusing on new students. In addition to regular communication, ETSU directly communicated with high schools and community colleges, both through a newsletter and through physical presence in those schools. The university also offered multiple webinars to answer questions from students and their families about the FAFSA and financial aid at ETSU.

Ms. Morgan indicated that a web page was created for the purpose of providing information on FAFSA updates and challenges. Messages were also placed in GOLDLINK. A consultant was engaged so that the importing of FAFSAs into the Banner student information system would go smoothly. Dr. Levesque summarized her division's efforts by saying staff took an extremely challenging situation and did the best that they could to work with it. She added that she feels really good about where we are as we look to the fall.

Dr. Noland commented that less than half of Tennessee's high school seniors had completed the FAFSA, and the state is number one in the nation. He underscored the critical nature of FAFSA as an entry point to lottery scholarships, Tennessee Promise scholarships, and Pell grants.

## **VII. Research Update**

Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Vice Provost for Research, reviewed the research and scholarship vision as articulated by the ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II: that the university be recognized, through funding and program rankings, as one of the premier R2 research universities in the nation. Dr. Hagemeyer told the committee about recent changes in the Carnegie classification system. To achieve Research 1 status—Very High Spending and Doctorate Production—institutions must spend at least \$50 million on research and development, on average, in a single year and produce at least 70 research doctorates. To achieve Research 2 status—High Spending and Doctorate Production—institutions must spend at least \$5 million on research and development, on average, in a single year and produce at least 20 research doctorates. Dr. Hagemeyer reported that ETSU will be at \$42.3 million for fiscal year 2023.

Dr. Hagemeyer provided a brief summary of the Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey, conducted annually by the National Science Foundation. It ranks all institutions with \$150,000 or more in research and development expenditures. In the most

recent survey, as is normally the case, Johns Hopkins ranked number one at \$3.4 billion. The University of Charleston ranked number 637 at \$217,000. These figures were from fiscal year 2022.

At ETSU, Dr. Hagemeyer said, research expenditures have gone up approximately 82% in the last two years, placing us ahead of some of our peer institutions. In total awards for fiscal year 2023, ETSU reports \$70.4 million.

Dr. Hagemeyer concluded his remarks by spotlighting several examples illustrating the diversity and depth of research that is ongoing at ETSU, including the newly created Trail Guide Research Mentorship Program. Eighteen faculty members were in the inaugural cohort. It was a yearlong process involving five mentors experienced in successful grant writing. Some 18 proposals will be submitted for external funding.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **VIII. Committee Discussions**

There were no additional committee discussions.

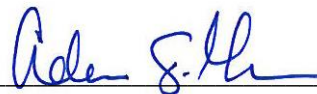
#### **IX. Other Business**

There was no additional business to come before the committee.

#### **X. Adjournment**

Trustee Allen adjourned the committee meeting at 10:07 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 13, 2024 meeting.