

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

MINUTES

November 13, 2020
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research and Student Success Committee met at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, November 13, 2020, via teleconference call due to extraordinary circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak. The meeting was livestreamed to allow individuals to attend remotely.

I. Call to Order

Dr. Linda Latimer, chair of the Academic, Research and Student Success Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Board Secretary Adam Green explained that before roll call could be taken, he needed to present a series of questions to the committee members, and that due to the trustees participating remotely, all votes taken must be done so by roll call. Trustees Janet Ayers, Virginia Foley, Scott Niswonger, Melissa Steagall-Jones and Chair Linda Latimer indicated that they could hear clearly and that there was no one present in the room with them. In accordance with Tennessee Code § 8-44-108 Section (b)(2), Green stated that this was a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting of the Academic, Research and Student Success Committee, that the committee business is critical to the operations of the university, and in light of the COVID-19 virus outbreak and the statewide recommendations as well as those from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, social distancing measures and a limit on group gatherings are being observed. Green requested a roll call vote to determine the necessity of holding the meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Stegall-Jones. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Green asked that the record reflect that in addition to members of the Committee, other Trustees participating in the meeting were Stephen DeCarlo, Dorothy Grisham and Austin Ramsey.

III. Revised Academic Calendar

Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Senior Vice President for Academics and Interim Provost, presented the revised academic calendar for the spring of 2021. Dr. Bishop noted that out of concern for the safety and security of students, faculty and staff as the COVID-19

pandemic continues, the university has revised the previously approved academic calendar to ensure a safe environment. The semester will start as scheduled on Jan. 19, 2021, following Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The significant difference is that spring break will not be a full week; but to give faculty and students time away, shorter breaks have been scheduled throughout the semester: Feb. 18-19, March 15-16, and April 14. University offices will remain open on those dates. The regular Good Friday holiday will be April 2, and the semester will end as planned with graduation on May 8; Winter Session will continue as scheduled from Dec. 16-Jan. 10. The Quillen College of Medicine and Gatton College of Pharmacy will continue to follow their own academic calendars.

A motion to approve the revised spring 2021 academic calendar was made by Trustee Ayers and seconded by Trustee Niswonger. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Letter of Notification Regarding the Establishment of a Master of Science in Orthotics and Prosthetics

Dr. Bishop told the Committee she would use this information item to give an update on several program proposals that have been before the Board and are now in the process of review by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). She said Dr. Don Samples, Dean of the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences, would give more of an in-depth introduction to one of those proposals for the benefit of Trustees new to the Committee so they would have an opportunity to be informed about what goes into the curriculum process. Dr. Bishop said the university is at the stage of moving forward with the Doctorate in Occupational Therapy that was presented in April 2019. An off-site review by external reviewers from the universities of Toledo and Arkansas State was completed to ensure that the quality of the proposal was consistent with what professionals in the field across the country expect. Following university response to the review, the proposal will be reviewed at the THEC staff level before going before THEC for approval in January. The proposal will then come back to the ETSU Board for final approval.

The Master of Arts in Digital Media approved by the Board is moving at a different pace. Dr. Bishop said the university is awaiting the results of an external review; no significant changes are anticipated from THEC, and the proposal may be brought back before the Board in the spring in time for implementation for the fall of 2021.

Dr. Bishop presented a Letter of Notification for the Master of Science in Orthotics and Prosthetics program, which is the first step in the Board of Trustees review protocols for the establishment of a new academic program; it has been approved by the Academic Council and President's Office, and upon Board approval, will be forwarded to THEC for

public comment and approval before final Board approval. Pending completion of the approval process, the program is anticipated to be implemented in the summer of 2022.

Dr. Samples delivered a PowerPoint presentation (included in meeting packet along with proposal and supporting materials) regarding the proposed Orthotics and Prosthetics degree program in the Department of Rehabilitative Health Sciences. He said this would be a high-demand program and would be the only program of its kind in Tennessee and within 400 miles of Johnson City; there are only 12 such programs in the country. The degree would prepare students to pursue three distinct career paths, with orthotics being most in demand. Dr. Chris Hovorka, a national leader in the profession, has been hired as director of the two-year program, for which curriculum design is underway. Some courses will be interchangeable with physical therapy and occupational therapy, providing interdisciplinary training and research opportunities; there will also be collaborative opportunities with the Quillen College of Medicine and the Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VA). The first class is expected to be admitted in the summer of 2022.

Dr. Samples said that one-time costs for the new program will be approximately \$2 million, which has already been set aside through careful budgeting. The dean noted that the college has planned for several years for this program, and therefore surplus funds have been carried over from year to year. The program should be self-supporting by year two when it is fully operational with 28 to 30 students who will be charged standard tuition rates and the health science fee. The college currently does not have any federal or private grants or gifts to establish the program, but its development officer is working to identify potential funding sources. Space for the Orthotics and Prosthetics Program, as well as the Occupational Therapy Program, has been identified on the first floor of Building 2 on the VA Campus. Building 2 also currently houses the Physical Therapy Program and Department of Family Medicine. The new space for Orthotics and Prosthetics will require training, fitting, sewing and mechanical rooms; a lab for working on devices; a multipurpose room; and more.

The presentation of this Letter of Notification was an information item and did not require Committee action.

V. Research Foundation Reorganization

Dr. Brian Noland, ETSU President, recognized the Committee's ongoing support for research and set the stage for a discussion that would give Board members an opportunity to indicate whether the university is moving in a direction consistent with the Board's expectations and the regional vision to grow and diversify research. He said that as the university moves into its second phase of strategic visioning, it is appropriate to ask questions about research and what research should look like at ETSU. He reminded Committee members of successes to date and recognized the efforts of Drs. Rob Pack and

Nick Hagemeyer and others for their work in fine-tuning the vision for research that grew out of the Committee for 125. He also noted that there have been conversations about potential opportunities for partnership with the formation of Ballard Health. He said some matters are emerging both across the region and campus that provide potential opportunities to make some defined progress in 2021 and begin to realize the visions of the Board and the campus. The first of these is the creation of the Center for Rural Health Research with state funding. He said Dr. Randy Wykoff, Founding Director of the Center and Dean of the College of Public Health, has moved aggressively to recruit and hire faculty and has garnered millions of dollars in federal support. This has created space issues within the College of Public Health, and space within such assets as the Innovation Lab and Eastman Valleybrook campus is being assessed.

Dr. Noland noted that David Golden, Professor of Practice and Allen and Ruth Harris Chair of Excellence in Business, is bringing new ideas to the table, and that as the university moves into the post-COVID world, it is time for the university to move and begin to fully explore opportunities for the ETSU Research Foundation to coordinate a portfolio of disparate but related organizations, including the Innovation Lab, the Tennessee Small Business Development Center, the Institute for Computational Research and Data Sciences, Valleybrook, intellectual property, and technology transfer. Dr. Noland thanked Prof. Golden and Dr. William Duncan, Vice Provost for Research, for taking the lead on these discussions and turned the floor over to them.

Dr. Duncan expressed excitement about the opportunity to link the university's research growth with the growth of innovation and economic development in the region, and said Prof. Golden's regional and national contacts would be beneficial in achieving this outcome. He said faculty would have greater opportunities to interact with outside companies, and this could contribute to attracting new faculty.

Prof. Golden echoed Dr. Duncan's excitement and said that an enhanced or "next-gen" approach to the Research Foundation could build bridges connecting the different organizations of which it is comprised, help design for a range of outcomes and embrace the uncertainties of the world in a positive way, and help the university to improve timelines to be able to pivot quickly in the development of new academic programs. He said the Research Foundation can be a convening point for campus, and therefore can facilitate connections to spur creativity and innovation.

Chair Latimer said she was excited about the possibilities presented by the Research Foundation, and stressed that this needs to yield public-private partnerships. She noted opportunities presented by the Valleybrook facility, which is located at the corner of two interstates (I-26 and I-81). She noted opportunities for regional entrepreneurs to invest in the site, and that the Washington and Sullivan County mayors will be important in building out the Valleybrook site. She also said she thinks that Ballard, which is required

to fund research, has been waiting for a cohesive plan, and that through the Research Foundation, a plan is being crafted that could lead to an investment.

Trustee Niswonger called this a “game-changer” for the region, unlocking many opportunities for creating high-paying jobs. He noted that what has always held us back has been capital.

Prof. Golden said the field of synthetic biology is expected to grow by \$4 trillion over the next 10 years, and the Valleybrook site could provide laboratory and office space when the university creates a synthetic biology curriculum. He said this field has myriad applications in agriculture, manufacturing, medicine and more, and he envisions the establishment of a K-12 project in local schools through a partnership between various ETSU colleges and such entities as the Niswonger Foundation, the non-profit BioBuilder Educational Foundation and others. He said that Dr. Natalie Kuldell, a top synthetic biology expert from MIT and founder and Executive Director of BioBuilder, is scheduled to visit campus in the coming weeks.

Trustees agreed this would “break down silos” between colleges at the university. Trustees noted it would be instrumental in keeping university graduates in the region, and said we must continue to craft the story, recognizing the world-class talent of the research faculty at ETSU.

Although this was an information item that did not require a vote, the Committee gave President Noland authorization to begin working quickly on the process of restructuring bylaws, chartering a new board, and appointing a CEO of the research corporation. He will also begin reaching out to local entities to see if there is an opportunity for ETSU to serve as a nexus for economic development and regionalism conversations.

VI. ETSU Health Update: Ballad MOU and ETSU/Ballad Coordinating Council

Dr. David Linville, Executive Vice Provost for Health Affairs, provided background for new Board members and an update on the Ballad Health MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and ETSU/Ballad Coordinating Council. He said that since February, the three sub-councils (Education and Training, Clinical and Community-Based Care and Innovation, and Research) have been meeting, organizing, and cataloguing what currently exists in the relationship between Ballad Health and ETSU. These include such things as agreements between the two pertaining to faculty practice, IRB (Institutional Review Board) operations, contracts, and more. The councils have discussed pipeline and workforce issues, including matters of attracting and retaining staff during the pandemic; student clinical rotations were temporarily suspended in the spring of 2020 due to the pandemic. Dr. Linville said the university and Ballad Health are still focusing on positioning themselves to strategize together in a better way. Whereas historically, agreements between Ballad Health’s legacy organizations (Mountain States Health

Alliance and Wellmont) and ETSU were transactional, the entities now are recognizing the importance of strategizing together, focusing on the academic mission of the university, Ballad's health care delivery system, and the quality improvement both are striving to achieve. He said Board members would play an important role in helping to frame and develop the relationship with Ballad Health into a strategic partnership.

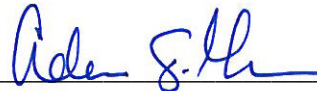
Dr. William Block, Vice President for Clinical Affairs and Dean of the Quillen College of Medicine, agreed and said communication will hopefully be the bridge that helps the entities progress from a transactional relationship to one that is more collaborative and forward-thinking.

President Noland stressed the importance of exploring a deeper integration of ETSU Health operations with those of Ballad Health. He noted that most major academic health sciences center across the country have a robust partnership with their local health system, whether by ownership or a deep, integrated partnership. He said that in spite of complications presented by the COVID pandemic, progress is being made in that direction and both entities are committed to aggressive timelines for moving the process forward.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Latimer adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m. following a motion by Trustee Ayers to adjourn that was seconded by Trustee Niswonger and approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its February 19, 2021 meeting.