

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

April 21, 2023
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on Friday, April 21, 2023, at 1:33 p.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center. The meeting was also live-streamed and recorded.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Dr. Linda Latimer called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. Dr. Latimer told the board that there are a number of reasons to celebrate as the spring semester comes to an end:

- Students from ETSU's Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy received a national award for their work in educating the community about prescription drug misuse.
- The university's cybersecurity team placed third in the regional round of the 2023 Southeast Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition.
- For the 13th consecutive year, ETSU secured the Military Friendly School designation.
- The ETSU Marching Bucs will be one of only ten marching bands in the nation to perform in the 2024 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.
- During ETSU's recent reaccreditation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges, the onsite peer review team was incredibly complimentary and informed ETSU that they would recommend reaffirmation of accreditation.

Dr. Latimer expressed gratitude on behalf of the entire university community to two members of the Board of Trustees participating in their final regular quarterly board meeting: Faculty Trustee Dr. Virginia Foley and Student Trustee Allen Archer.

II. Roll Call

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green led the roll call.

Trustees present were:

Trustee Charles Allen
Trustee Allen Archer
Trustee Janet Ayers
Trustee Steve DeCarlo
Trustee Dr. Virginia Foley

Trustee Dorothy Grisham
Trustee Ron Ramsey
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones
Board Chair Dr. Linda Latimer

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

III. Public Comments

No individuals were signed up to speak to the board during the public comment period.

IV. Approval of the Minutes from February 17, 2023

The minutes from the February 17, 2023, meeting of the Board of Trustees were approved as submitted with Trustee Dr. Virginia Foley making the motion to approve and Trustee Janet Ayers seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Report from the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee

Trustee Ayers reported on the following activities of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee from the morning:

- Approved promotion and/or tenure for 56 faculty members.
- Approved a name change for the Clemmer College to the Clemmer College of Education and Human Development.
- Received a report on the Appalachian Highlands Center for Nursing Advancement that is addressing critical pipeline and retention issues in the field of nursing.
- Heard about the work of the Center of Excellence in STEM Education at ETSU and its collaborative relationships across the region.
- Received a report on several encouraging enrollment trends at ETSU while also recognizing, as is the case nationwide, that student mental health issues continue to be a concern, which ETSU is addressing on a number of fronts.

VI. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

Committee Chair Steve DeCarlo reported the following from the committee:

- The spring estimated budget for fiscal year 2023 and the proposed July budget for fiscal year 2024 were reviewed and discussed at the called Finance and Administration committee meeting held on March 28, and the materials were included in the board's consent agenda.
- The committee reviewed operating revenues and expenditures from the current year to the prior year and contracts and purchase orders that exceeded \$250,000, for the period of January through March 2023.

- The committee approved the capital budget submittals and disclosures for fiscal year 2024.
- Review of recommended tuition and mandatory fees for 2023-24 took place during the committee's February and March meetings. Ms. Christy Graham, Chief Financial Officer, presented those figures to the board.
- Ms. Graham reported the following to the board:
 - The Tennessee Higher Education Commission's model was built on flat enrollment with a 7.7 percent outcomes growth and inflationary adjustment, for \$9.7 million. Governor Lee's proposed budget for an expenditure increase and a partially funded 5 percent salary pool was \$8 million.
 - Tuition and fees did not increase in FY23. A comparison of tuition and mandatory fees demonstrates that ETSU remains below the state university average.
 - ETSU continues to conduct ongoing analysis of all academic and administrative units to identify areas to improve services, reduce costs, or allow assets to be used more effectively for students.
 - THEC proposed a zero to three percent tuition and mandatory fee limit at its November 2022 meeting. The commission is projected to vote on binding limits at its May meeting.
 - Other factors that were considered in structuring fees at ETSU were projected student enrollment and university enrollment goals; market and cost factors for higher education; new program or new facility costs; and costs related to operations, programs of study, or individual courses.
- Ms. Graham indicated that ETSU is proposing a 2.85 percent increase in total tuition and mandatory fees for all classes of undergraduate and graduate students on the main campus: 2.95 percent in tuition and 2.45 percent in mandatory fees, for a total increase to the full-time undergraduate student of \$114 per semester. The resulting revenue will help fund ETSU's portion of the salary pool, as well as inflationary costs, the Student Government Association wellness initiative, and faculty promotion.
- Ms. Graham added that on March 28, the university posted a notice for public comment regarding the proposed tuition and mandatory fees for the academic year 2023-24. Comments were accepted through April 13. Overall, the university received 33 comments, 20 of which were from respondents who self-identified as students. She said 24 of the comments opposed the increase because of a concern for students' financial situation; three opposed because of a concern that it would not improve facilities; and six comments were of a general nature.
- Trustee DeCarlo made a motion that the proposed tuition and mandatory fees be approved. Trustee Grisham seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

VII. Report from the Audit Committee

Trustee Steagall-Jones reported that the Audit Committee conducted the following business:

- Recommended no changes in three charters and four policies that are required to undergo review.
- The committee approved the revised 2022-23 audit plan, which included the addition of one case involving a possible fraud, waste, and abuse concern.
- Two audits were recently completed, for public radio station WETS-FM and a randomly selected audit of the ETSU Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.
- Trustee Steagall-Jones concluded her report by thanking the ETSU staff for the work that led to the issuance of an unqualified opinion in the most recent audit by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

VIII. Consent Agenda

With no requests for any items to be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion and consideration by the full board, the Board of Trustees approved the consent agenda with a motion from Trustee Steagall-Jones, seconded by Trustee Foley. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Trustees Self-Evaluation Report

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green presented a brief summary of the Board of Trustees self-evaluation, which members had completed earlier in the spring semester. There were ten surveys sent, and the response rate was 100 percent. Dr. Green reported that the evaluation demonstrates a well-functioning board. Two items that received the highest ratings were: “adheres to its comprehensive code of ethics” and “promotes trust among board members through a culture of respect.” Both were rated five out of a possible five. The categories of board function, board operations, board role, board meetings, and board communication received strong ratings as well.

X. ETSU Army ROTC Update

LTC Kent Monas presented the following update:

- This year marks 70 years of leadership excellence. In 1953, East Tennessee State College’s ROTC program held its first commissioning ceremony. Since then, ETSU ROTC has commissioned over 1,600 men and women as U.S. Army second lieutenants. Ten ETSU ROTC alumni have given their lives while serving in the U.S. Army on active duty. Nine of these alumni died in the Vietnam War and one during Desert Storm.
- The Buccaneer Battalion partners with the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, Emory & Henry College, King University, and Milligan University to recruit, educate, train, and commission leaders of excellence for the U.S. Army. A total of 111 cadets are participating from these five schools.

- The Buccaneer Battalion is one of the Army’s premier SROTC programs providing more opportunities to attend Army schools (Airborne, Air Assault, Sapper, SCUBA, and Mountain Warfare), have strong cohesion and esprit de corps, and commission into the component and branch of their choice.
- A total of \$748,309 has been allocated for scholarships for academic year 2023-24.
- Of the 2023 commissioning class, three ranked in the top 10 percent Active Duty in the nation, and there were five Distinguished Military Graduates, placing ETSU in the top 20 percent in the nation. Advanced Camp 2022 statistics ranked ETSU the number-one school in Tennessee, and number two overall in the Brigade.

XI. Digital Media Update

Marty Fitzgerald, former Chair of Digital Media, introduced the presenters: Dr. Todd Emma, the new chair of the department, and Assistant Professor Greg Marlow. Their presentation focused on the Digital Animation Concentration within the department.

- Based on an analysis by AnimationCareerReview.com, ETSU’s program ranks number one in Tennessee and number seven nationally, among bachelor’s degree programs in Animation.

The presenters stressed the rigorous nature of the ETSU curriculum.

- Students in production courses have placed in the top 10 nationally three out of the last five years in the National Student Advertising Competition.
- The first four MFA graduates in the program will be awarded their diplomas during spring commencement.
- ETSU graduates have done work on Fortnite, Lightyear by Pixar, Stranger Things, Kung Fu Panda, Creed 3, Thor, The Last Jedi, The Walking Dead, a Taylor Swift video, Discovery Network, and more.

XII. ETSU State of the University Survey Overview

Dr. Michael Hoff, Vice Provost for Decision Support and University Chief Planning Officer, reported on the results of the ETSU State of the University Survey that was administered in the fall of 2022 by the ETSU Applied Social Research Lab.

The survey was sent to all ETSU students, faculty, and staff. It was launched on November 2, 2022, and closed on December 19. There were 2,935 responses.

Among the major findings:

- 62.7 percent of respondents feel a sense of belonging at ETSU
- 70.5 percent believe ETSU is headed in the right direction
- 89.4 percent are optimistic about the future growth of ETSU

- 95.5 percent believe ETSU improves the lives of people in this region
- 92.3 percent believe ETSU has the resources to support physical health and wellness
- 76.8 percent believe ETSU has the resources to support mental health and wellness
- 84 percent of respondents would choose to enroll at ETSU again

XIII. President’s Report

President Noland’s presented the following:

The State of Higher Education

The results of a 2023 survey of college and university presidents conducted by *Inside Higher Education* to ascertain critical issues facing the academy were shared. Among the findings:

- In answering the question “Why is your institution less financially stable now than it was in 2019?”, 73 percent of respondents cited decreased net tuition revenue; 72 percent cited increased salary and benefits expenses; and 67 percent cited increased purchasing costs due to inflation.
- In answering the question “Why is your institution more financially stable now than you expect it will be in 2024?”, 75 percent said labor costs will rise; 71 percent cited the impact of inflationary pressures; and 54 percent said they expected enrollment to be lower.
- In answering the question “What do you think are the major causes of turnover at your institution?”, 86 percent cited competitive offers elsewhere; 55 percent cited natural career progression; and 52 percent cited burnout.
- 40 percent of respondents said they used the pandemic period and its aftermath to make difficult but transformative changes in core structure and operations to better position their institutions for long-term sustainability.
- In responding to a question about changes made because of the pandemic that will be permanent, 77 percent pointed to increased online learning options.

Legislative and Budget Update

President Noland reported that the appointments of Trustees Ramsey and Steagall-Jones to the ETSU Board of Trustees were confirmed by the General Assembly.

He indicated that the recent legislative session was an active one, with focus on curricular issues across the K-12 and post-secondary landscape. Operating enhancements, a 5 percent salary pool, and base operating support for non-formula units were included in Governor Bill Lee’s budget. That budget directed an additional \$3.43 million to the medical units, of which \$503,000 was allocated to the Quillen College of Medicine. President Noland also noted support for deferred maintenance projects such as ADA/life safety, roof repair projects, and HVAC work.

President Noland reported that for the first time in its history, the Gatton College of Pharmacy will become a non-formula unit and will receive \$2.5 million in recurring state appropriations.

Looking ahead to the fall semester, President Noland shared general enrollment information showing that freshman applications received are up by 3.25 percent and acceptances are up by 1.15 percent. Transfer applications received are up by 16.76 percent and acceptances are up by 8.72 percent. The fall enrollment projection for undergraduates shows an increase of 76 students. The fall budget was based on a projected 100 FTE decrease. Dr. Noland then reviewed several marketing strategies the institution is using in its student recruitment efforts, including branded pizza boxes in Nashville and billboards in Knoxville and Chattanooga.

Campus Update

President Noland informed the board about a number of successes and accomplishments recently taking place on campus:

- During this year's Day of Giving, 1,060 gifts were received for a total of \$358,300, a 12 percent increase.
- An on-site reaffirmation review team from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges visited the campus in April. The team made no recommendations, and no further reporting is required. Reaffirmation by the SACSCOC board is anticipated for December 2023.
- The Voyager project, which will greatly streamline many office and departmental procedures, is set to go live in December.
- Much work is needed to address gender-based equity, which is a nationwide problem as men constitute the lowest share of college enrollments in history.
- Planning is continuing on the university's new academic building, as the latest renderings presented to the board show.
- ETSU has been designated a "Voter Friendly" campus.
- The Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature has named ETSU "Best Delegation."
- The *East Tennessean* student newspaper has celebrated its 100th anniversary.
- The Quillen College of Medicine achieved a 100 percent match rate.
- The American Pharmacists Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists presented its Chapter Achievement Award to the Gatton College of Pharmacy.
- On March 27, the ETSU Division of Veterans Affairs held the largest veteran-centered event to take place in the region.
- The ETSU Marching Bucs, 283 members strong, are already making plans for their participation in the 2024 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Almost one-third of the band members are first-generation college students. A total of 53 different academic programs are represented in the band.

President Noland then introduced Mason Mosier, who thanked Dr. Noland and the Board of Trustees for the leadership opportunities he has been given, as President of the Student Government Association and as a member of the board.

XIV. Action Item: Selection of Board Chair

Trustee Grisham made a motion that Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer be reelected as Chair of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Ayers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XV. Action Item: Selection of Board Vice Chair

Trustee Latimer made a motion that Trustee Steve DeCarlo be reelected as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Grisham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVI. Action Item: Selection of Executive Committee Member

Trustee Ramsey made a motion that Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones be named to the board's Executive Committee. Trustee Ayers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVII. Action Item: Resolution of Appreciation for Dr. Virginia Foley

Trustee Grisham made a motion to pass a resolution honoring and thanking Dr. Virginia Foley for her dedicated service to the university and the Board of Trustees. Trustee Ayers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVIII. Action Item: Resolution of Appreciation for Mr. Allen Archer

Trustee Steagall-Jones made a motion to pass a resolution honoring and thanking Mr. Allen Archer for his dedicated service to the university and the Board of Trustees. Trustee DeCarlo seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

XIX. Action Item: Student Trustee Selection

President Noland asked the board for its approval of Mr. Aamir Shaikh as the new Student Trustee. Mr. Shaikh was nominated for the post by the ETSU Student Government Association, which he had formerly served as President. He is a rising second-year student at the Quillen College of Medicine. Trustee Foley made a motion to appoint Mr. Shaikh as Student Trustee. Trustee Grisham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XX. Other Business

There was no other business to come before the board.

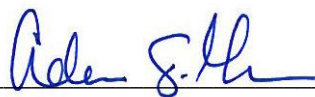
XXI. Executive Session

There was no need for an executive session.

XXII. Adjournment

Trustee Ramsey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Green", is written over a horizontal line.

Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

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