

**University Council**  
**December 14, 2020**  
**Meeting conducted via Zoom**

1. Call to Order

Dr. Wilsie Bishop called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Amanda Mowell called the roll. Those in attendance were: Ms. Bridget Baird, Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Dr. Bill Block, Dr. Myra Carew, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, Ms. Kayla Frank, Ms. Joy Fulkerson, Dr. Mark Fulks, Dr. Allen Gorman, Dr. Adam Green, Mr. Stephen Hendrix, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Dr. Karin Keith, Dr. Chris Keller, Dr. B.J. King, Dr. Karen King, Ms. Candy Massey, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Dr. Wendy Nehring, Dr. Brian Noland, Mr. Shivam Patel, Ms. Pamela Ritter, Mr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Don Samples, Dr. Jana Scarborough, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Dr. Jeff Snodgrass, Ms. Alicia Williams

Those absent: Dr. Karen Keith, Mr. Shivam Patel

Others in attendance: Ms. Lisa Booher, Ms. Mary Cradic, Mr. James Batchelder, Dr. Bonnie Burchett, Ms. Wilma Fields Smith, Dr. Bill Flora, Ms. Karen Glover, Ms. Adrianna Guram, Dr. Frank Hagelberg, Dr. Nick Hage-meier, Dr. Amy Johnson, Ms. Kay Lennon-McGrew, Dr. David Linville, Dr. Sharon McGee, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Megan Quinn, Dr. Deborah Slawson, Ms. Jessica Vodden

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from November 9, 2020 meeting

Dr. Susan Epps requested an editorial change on pg. 2 from “Dr.” to “Mr” for Scott Carter and made a motion to accept the minutes with the editorial change. Mr. Stephen Hendrix seconded the motion. The November meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

3.2 Review agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

3.3 Voluntary Reports of UC-Essential Action Items from Governance Organizations

Mr. Shivam Patel had no report from the Student Government Association.

Ms. Bridget Baird said the state legislature will “gavel in” in January. Several members have COVID and are hospitalized, which could impact the session.

Dr. Karen King had no new information to report from the Information Technology Council.

Ms. Candy Massey reported that Staff Senate collected \$2,000 in donations for the Holiday Food Drive. Twenty-eight baskets were requested and there are enough funds to cover Christmas baskets and a few angels to ETSU families in need. The Staff Concerns Committee distributed a newsletter in November.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix said Faculty Senate conducted a survey concerning faculty workload and results should be available in mid-January.

Dr. Allen Gorman said the Council of Chairs continues to explore leadership development opportunities for spring.

Dr. William Duncan had no new information to report on behalf of the Research Council.

ETSU will host its first athletic event (basketball) since March, said Mr. Scott Carter. Communication is ongoing internally and externally to follow protocols and keep everyone safe.

Dr. Bishop said the Academic Council is cleaning up the academic proposal process so that any proposal also goes before the University Council before going to the Board of Trustees. The letter of notification for the MS in applied data science is part of the agenda.

Dr. Sam Mayhew reported that undergraduate admissions is putting together a significant road event for Jan-March. He asked for any staff and faculty available to join virtually or attend to look for future communication about opportunities to participate.

Ms. Kayla Frank said the Graduate and Professional Student Association would meet in the coming weeks to discuss activities for the spring semester.

#### 4. Action Items

##### 4.1 Old Business

##### 4.1.1. Policy on Use of Electronic Signatures

In a review of the policy included in the agenda materials, Ms. Karen Glover said it identifies when an electronic signature may replace a written signature in order to conduct official university business. There must be a mutual agreement by each party to conduct the transaction by electronic means, she noted. This policy does not apply to the internal administrative approval processes on forms and departments can utilize electronic approvals, but are required to adopt appropriate processes to ensure names are appropriately stored and maintained, however, internal approvals or acknowledgments of cash is not eligible for electronic signature. This policy was discussed at the November University Council meeting and did undergo another comment period, Ms. Glover said.

Ms. Kay Lennon-McGrew said the policy would be effective following approval by University Council and President Noland's signature.

Dr. Brian Noland made a motion that was seconded by Dr. Jana Scarborough. The policy was approved unanimously.

#### 4.2 New Business

##### 4.2.1. Establish New Academic Program: MS in Applied Data Science

Dr. Bishop said the Letter of Notification for New Degree was included in the agenda materials and if approved by University Council it will move to the Board of Trustees and upon approval by the Board will enter an interesting journey of debate and review that includes a review and comment period through THEC. She and Dr. Bill Flora will meet with Dr. Adam Green to discuss ways to reduce the length of the process at the university and Board of Trustee level.

Next, Dr. Sharon McGee provided a presentation ([attachment](#)) about the proposed master's program. She said data science is a very particular field of study that requires advanced education. It requires interdisciplinary knowledge and involves the collection and analysis of data and helping industries utilize the data. This is a high-demand employment area, as the average position is filled in 46 days nationally, but regionally, these positions are open about a year on average. Every industry, including education, needs data scientists, Dr. McGee said. Math, statistics, computer science will be the core of the program with a wide array of electives already in the current inventory. The program will be 36-39 hours with thesis and non-thesis options as well as full and part time options online and on-ground. Several regional employers have offered letters of support, including Eastman and Chick-fil-a promising to provide projects for students and send employees through the program. This would be the only "Applied" Data Science program in the state, Dr. McGee added. A feasibility study was conducted last spring and 85 of 121 undergraduate students in disciplines relevant to the master's degree expressed strong interest in the program. Additionally, EAB completed a graduate portfolio diagnostic looking at labor market demands in the region (250 miles) and this falls within the top quadrant.

Given the current timeline, students would likely not be able to start in 2021, but we foresee a start of 12 students working up to a pool of 24; some will complete fulltime; others will take 3-4 years, she said. Following the first year, the program is projected to bring revenue enhancement to the university. Dr. McGee said the applied data science program supports the goals with ETSU's master plan and career readiness goals at the state level.

President Noland asked Dr. Bishop to walk through next steps in the approval process. She said following approvals by the University Council and the Board of Trustees, the Letter of Notification (LON) will be reviewed by THEC and will go through an open comment period. Once complete and with THEC's approval of the letter, the proposal enters the program application process that requires more information and a syllabus. The time spent on this step often depends on the department and availability of a consultant to participate and provide recommendations, although virtual reviews do speed up the process, Dr. Bishop said. Then, the university must reply to the recommendations, which are then reviewed by THEC. Following discussion, THEC releases the proposal to return to the Board of Trustees for final approval followed by another final approval by THEC.

Dr. Bishop said the ideal change would be for the Board of Trustees to approve once pending approval by THEC. Discussion ensued about how this process is currently impacting the master's program in prosthetic and orthotics as a competitive application process makes the timing of approval crucial to the launch of the program.

Dr. Bishop also introduced Dr. Frank Hagelberg who has helped produce the LON, Math will be the home department for the proposed applied data science program.

Dr. Flora said THEC has proposed an expedited approval model for certain programs, STEM or high-need, but it only takes out the second Board of Trustees approval and shortens public hearing time. Other programs in development might consider the expedited process, he added.

Dr. Noland made a motion to approve the letter of notification, which was seconded by Dr. Don Samples. The motion approved unanimously.

## 5. Information Items/Presentations

### 5.1 Student and Faculty/Staff Survey Presentation

Dr. Hoff provided a presentation ([attachment](#)) with selected results from the student and faculty/staff surveys conducted fall 2020. The surveys were developed and launched through ASRL.

Highlights from the student survey:

- 29.1% response rate
- 80.7% live within an hour of ETSU
- 17.6% are living with someone or have themselves tested positive for COVID
- On a 10-point scale from not very to extremely dangerous 66.5% of respondents rated COVID-19 a 7 or higher
- 86% think ETSU has done a good job of protecting students from the negative health consequences of COVID-19
- 67% are satisfied with ETSU's response to COVID-19 for fall 2020
- 61.9% rated their courses this semester worse or slightly worse (students want virtual office hours)
- 81.2% plan to register for spring (finances are a concern – don't foresee major drop in enrollment and should see rebound in the fall if vaccine hits)
- When students were asked if they felt depressed – 22.9% said they felt depressed 1-2 days a week
- 42.4% indicated they would get a vaccine if free
- 35.4% would feel safer coming to campus if vaccines were mandatory

Highlights from the faculty and staff survey (included graduate assistants and temporary employees):

- 37.9% Response rate
- It was noted that the survey was not anonymous – wanted to be able to intervene and provide support to university community if needed

- 75.9% were satisfied with ETSU's response to COVID for fall
- 78.8% received timely updates and informative communication from leadership
- 2-5% had some challenge with access and/or technology while working remotely
- 18.7% of respondents of someone they live with has tested positive for COVID
- 73.7% of respondents rated the dangerousness of COVID-19 between 7-10 on a 10-point scale
- 57% think everyone should be vaccinated (skepticism of vaccine noted in comments)
- 14.3% of population would be resistant to vaccine requirement
- 53.2% indicated they would get a vaccine if it was free

Discussion followed around the pandemic's impact on mental health. Dr. Hoff noted that student survey respondents were referred to services depending on how they answered mental health questions. He will also look at grade performance this semester to ascertain some of the academic stressors. Dr. Epps asked about distinctions between undergraduate and graduate students and Dr. Hoff said the results were very similar. Another similar survey will be distributed in February and again toward the end of the semester.

#### 5.2 Update on ETSU 125 Chapter Two Interview and Focus Groups

Dr. Hoff outlined ETSU 125 Chapter 2 activities led by Student Ready Strategies (SRS) ([attachment](#)) that includes interviews and focus groups to measure progress on intended outcomes of the Committee for 125 final report. Six interviews and focus groups have been conducted consisting of faculty groups, staff group, community/alumni, executive leadership, and regional employers/business leaders. He then showed a slide with lists of some accomplishments, opportunities for advancements and other insights collected from these groups.

#### 5.3 Update on Membership on the Sub-Council on University Governance

In her update, Dr. Bishop said membership had been named and the first organized meeting is scheduled Dec. 21. The committee will be given its charge and choose a chair. Ms. Wilma Fields Smith will provide staff support.

#### 5.4 The Future of the Residential Experience

Dr. Sherlin began by saying how proud he is of our Housing Team this year. They have worked incredibly hard to support students and those in quarantine. ETSU has taken one of the most aggressive approaches in the state in terms of limiting the number of students in housing and we have serious financial challenges, but we will continue to be forward-thinking and focus on quality connection with peers and faculty, he said.

Dr. Bonnie Burchett then presented the vision for Housing and Residence Life ([attachment](#)) and how we can partner together to support the campus living experience. We see ourselves as partners with our colleges and part of the mission to

educate students, she said. We want all freshmen to live on campus, to find a sense of community, to try to connect them at least two high-impact practices in their first year because we think that is a key to get them connected to the university and to help them be successful.

Next, Ms. Adrianna Guram presented the 7 pillars of student engagement, some are things already in place as new ideas for what a student living on campus could experience through an entire year at ETSU.

1. Traditions
2. Competitions
3. Engagement – Grow Preview and Quest participation
4. Academic Support and Success
5. Diversity and Inclusion – staff training, diversity educators in residence
6. Health and Wellness
7. Faculty Participation

Dr. Burchett highlighted several exciting opportunities in the works:

Vision #1 – Incubation Center in Lucille Clement Hall; partnership with College of Business and Technology to create collaborative workspace with faculty in residence.

Vision #2 – Global Emphasis in Carter Hall; partnership with the Honors College

Dr. Burchett said a partnership with Clemmer College is being developed and partnerships with any college is encouraged in order to grow the residential population and experience.

Dialogue continued about the timeline to implement the activities and initiatives outlined in the presentation. Dr. Burchett said a taskforce is already working specifically on the increasing participation in the first year seminar course and Preview, therefore, things are in place to move forward. Dr. Sherlin said a timeline will be developed.

## 6. President's Report

In his report, President Noland reflected on the year 2020, which began with a great deal of promise and optimism. In late 2019 and early 2020 we were looking forward to cutting ribbons on the Culp Student Center and the Martin Center, and there was much excitement around the basketball season and legislative session with potential funding for the humanities building and Quillen College of Medicine. However, when looking back at what was a very hard year, within hardship resides hope, he said. Reflecting upon the year, President Noland gave a list of things he is thankful for, one for each of the remaining 17 days of the year. Among the list was the Board of Trustees for allowing ETSU the latitude to lead and operate differently than other institutions during the pandemic. He also thanked faculty for transitioning courses online in an expedited manner and staff for keeping campus running and navigating the change to singles in the residence halls. Individuals in IT, Finance, Financial Aid, Admissions and Student Life were acknowledged for their work to simplify processes,

tackle budget challenges, distribute CARES Act dollars and connect with potential students in a remote environment. President Noland thanked Gov. Bill Lee for holding higher education harmless from state budget cuts, as well as deans and VPs for their dedicated leadership throughout the year. He commended the work of Ballad Health and ETSU Health for shaping COVID response to keep our region and university safe. Lastly, President Noland extended appreciation for students who have sacrificed much, but continue to be compliant with the mask policy and safety measures.

In 2021, Dr. Noland said he would like everyone to focus on visions for what the university can be and to celebrate the outstanding excellence that already exists. He then read a resolution of appreciation for Ms. Mary Cradic, who has provided outstanding leadership in the President's Office and for University Council, and will retire at the end of December. Dr. Bishop commended Ms. Cradic on being part of the establishment and successful operation of the University Council.

Dr. Susan Epps made a motion to accept the resolution of appreciation that was seconded by Dr. Jana Scarborough. The motion passed unanimously followed by a round of applause for Ms. Cradic.

7. Announcements

Dr. Bishop recognized Dr. Wendy Nehring, who recently announced her decision to step down from her role as Dean of the College of Nursing at the end of the year and return to her faculty role, therefore this is her last meeting with the University Council. She thanked Dr. Nehring for her service and outstanding work.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.