

University Council
May 11, 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. Joseph Bidwell, Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Dr. Bill Block, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. Dennis Depew, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, Dr. Adam Green, Mr. Stephen Hendrix, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Dr. Karin Keith, Dr. B.J. King, Dr. Karen King, Dr. Claudia Kozinetz, Mr. Joseph Kusi, Ms. Candy Massey, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Dr. Brian Noland, Ms. Pamela Ritter, Dr. David Roane, Mr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Don Samples, Dr. Jana Scarborough, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Ms. Alicia Williams, Mr. Andrew Worley

Those absent were: Dr. Mark Fulks, Mr. Shivam Patel

Others in attendance: Dr. David Linville, Ms. Mary Cradic, Ms. Amanda Mowell

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from [April 13, 2020 meeting](#)

A motion by Dr. Dennis Depew to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Don Samples and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3.2 Review agenda

No changes were made to the agenda as presented

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

Ms. Bridget Baird indicated that the Tennessee General Assembly is expected to go into session June 1 and will take action on the budget. She said there is a divide about whether to consider bills.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix had no updates to report for Faculty Senate.

Ms. Alicia Williams noted that the Graduate and Professional Student Association held three funding presentations at the end of April. Elections will take place soon and since Mr. Joseph Kusi has graduated and Ms. Williams expects to graduate in December, both their positions will be vacant.

Ms. Candy Massey said discussions are underway to reschedule the Staff Picnic, and a proposal will be presented to Dr. Noland.

Dr. William Duncan commended the Research Town Hall held recently. Research

Council is listening to concerns of faculty and providing resources to them.

Dr. Bishop had no updates to report from Academic Council.

Dr. Joe Bidwell had no updates to report from Council of Chairs.

Dr. Karen King (Information Technology Council) said a campus wide announcement is forthcoming about turning on modern authentication, which will require employees and students to log in with their credentials and confirm identity using two-factor authentication. There will no longer be an option to enter an app password. Instructions are available on the Help Desk website.

4. President's Report

Dr. Noland began his report by thanking those who played a key role in planning and executing the virtual commencement ceremonies. When University Council met in January, it would have been impossible for anyone to envision a close to the semester like the one that just transpired, he said. The University had an empowered response and across the board; faculty and staff not only met benchmarks and objectives, they exceeded them. The Future Operations Workgroup, led by Dr. Linville, is preparing recommendations for how the institution can open in the fall, he added. The opening structure must maximize the safety of our students, faculty, and staff and provide flexibility.

4.1 COVID-19 Response Update

Dr. Noland said he will charge another group, called the Strategic Options Workgroup, to look at operating budgets and explore cost savings in light of what could be a very rocky road as the General Assembly reconvenes in June to take action on the budget. What he is currently hearing from Nashville about the budget varies from significant cuts to no reductions. What makes the current situation different from others, specifically 2008, is the distribution of state resources to support operations is presently about 30 cents on the dollar and the University generates the other 70 cents; therefore, our ability to meet enrollment goals is critical to supporting campus operations.

A collective desire exists to launch Committee for 125 Chapter II as discussed previously to frame a strategic vision for the University by the close of the decade. The landscape has changed dramatically, and Dr. Noland said he is hopeful that the committee can lead us through some strategic options for the institution.

4.2 ETSU Future Operations Workgroup

Next, Dr. Linville provided an outline of the progress and tentative planning underway by the Future Operations Workgroup. ETSU is highly complex enterprise, so the workgroup is spending time working through University structure to develop a series of recommendations to senior leadership that provide the same flexibility demonstrated in March when the majority of campus operations moved to a remote status. The workgroup is developing a structure that allows for forward and backward movement along a continuum to make decisions to restrict or loosen physical distancing measures based on what is happening in our community, region, and the country.

Because we do not know how the pandemic will evolve, the workgroup will likely recommend a series of operational stages, similar to government plans, ranging from all instruction occurring online, to a limited number of individuals on campus, to a “new normal.” The University could move back and forth along the continuum, each with its own set of criteria. Dr. Linville said the workgroup has put together a set of guiding principles that is helping to determine what those stages look like while also emphasizing safety for everyone, including campus visitors. Continued flexibility will be needed for students and employees who cannot physically be present on campus, he noted. Maintaining focus on ETSU’s mission will be critical and will allow us to maintain academic, research, and service continuity even in various stages and remote settings if necessary.

One of the guiding principles of the workgroup is to develop ideas and solutions that are easy or relatively easy to implement and do not complicate the process, Dr. Linville said. Promoting individual responsibility is another principle; just as restrictions are lifted in certain communities, it will be up to individuals to be cognizant of wearing masks in certain situations and maintaining social distancing. The group also aims to provide departments and units the flexibility to implement their own plans and maintain the ability to innovate. The plan will set the tone and expectation, but units such as the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration and University School will need to generate specific day-to-day operation plans.

The timeline within the stages will have specific categories such as employment, academic instruction, campus safety, student life, housing and food services, and Athletics (separate consideration). The workgroup is collecting information related to these categories and coordinating with plans already underway. Dr. Linville said it is important to retain students by balancing safety. The challenge is to provide a clear picture of what each stage looks like and how to decide to move forward and/or backward to various stages

The Future Operations Workgroup will collect and review public feedback and recommendations and will have its recommendations available by the end of the month.

Discussion ensued about providing plans to faculty as soon as possible in order to plan fall courses.

Dr. Noland reminded everyone that the current structure is to work remotely through the end of May and to receive recommendations from the Future Operations Workgroup that will be incorporated in the operations for the remainder of the summer. All major campus activities and travel are restricted through June 15 and may be extended.

5. Action Items

5.1 Old Business

No old business was brought before the University Council for consideration.

5.2 New Business

5.2.1. Proposal for Change in University Council Membership for Department Chair Representation

Dr. Bishop provided some background regarding the University Council and when it was initiated as an interim council to provide a collective voice and a final review of major items to go before the Board of Trustees for action. A centralized approval structure did not exist previously. Standing rules were developed and the membership structure has changed over time to reflect new and evolved positions, she explained. The original membership outlined representation from deans and chairs (2 each from Health Sciences and 2 each from Academic Affairs).

Presently, four chairs from the Council of Academic Chairs serve on University Council. Dr. Bidwell's proposal ([attachment](#)) requests that the chair of the Council of Academic Chairs has a standing membership to University Council similar to other governing bodies. He assured that every effort will be made to maintain balance among the colleges represented by chairs serving on University Council.

Dr. Bishop recommended that the deans discuss their level of representation at their next council meeting.

The proposal passed unanimously.

6 Information Items/Presentations

6.1 Update from Survey

Dr. Mike Hoff provided an update on the second round of student surveys and first round of employee surveys implemented by the Applied Social Research Lab (ASRL) ([attachment](#)). He is finalizing the data and open-ended responses and will distribute a report for each dean.

The first round of the student survey was meant to connect needs with the specific office that could provide support. It assessed the University's response to the virus outbreak. Dr. Hoff commended staff who quickly reached out to students with food, housing, and other needs. Only 17 students noted that they had not heard from their instructors about continuing coursework online. Also noteworthy, 72.6% of students were neutral or satisfied with the University's response to COVID-19, which is a strong response for group dynamics. Recurring themes in the open-ended questions were the Pass/Fail Option, technology, and encouraging continued communication. Many students said they were doing well.

The second round of student surveys was conducted April 19-29 with more questions. The percentage of those indicating a need for food and housing decreased, and only four students had not heard from their instructors, Dr. Hoff said. The satisfaction with the University's response increased to 75.7%. Other notable results in the second survey:

- 90% feel a sense of belonging
- 96% likely/very likely to enroll in fall

- 75.6% have already met with an advisor for summer/fall
- 90.7% of students who indicated need for assistance during first round of surveys have been contacted
- 92.3% feel ETSU has a supportive environment

The employee survey began April 27 and remains ongoing. Overall, well-being is at 7.4 out of 10, with adjunct faculty at 8, administrative professional at 7, and executive administrative at 8+. The faculty total was 6.9, and Dr. Hoff said he hopes to get more responses. Satisfaction with current work-life balance is at 81%, and 80% of respondents thought the university was prepared to transition to remote work. Employees were also asked about Zoom fatigue, and, although people are tired, Dr. Hoff said, they are working hard, and they are satisfied. Satisfaction with University's response to the virus outbreak is at 97%, and 89% of faculty indicated that students met or exceeded their expectations this semester. Dr. Hoff said the employee survey indicated good morale, given the circumstances. Discussions continue for launching a second employee survey.

Results from the latest Tennessee Poll will be shared soon, Dr. Hoff noted.

Discussion followed about the survey completion rate, how ETSU communicated with campus following the onset of the coronavirus outbreak, and using surveys to set a baseline and develop the framework for the Committee for 125 Chapter II.

6.2 Enrollment Update

Dr. Sam Mayhew provided an enrollment update ([attachment](#)). While his team is honing in on a strategy and setting the framework for fall 2021, Dr. Mayhew said he wanted to provide overview of the tactics implements over the last 12 months. Over 95% of admitted students have received a phone call from a member of the recruitment team. The CRM is now being used for application and recruitment communication, and we are strengthening the connections with our top 20 high schools, he noted. Additionally, financial aid packages for new students began in December, and Dr. Mayhew said they are working toward the goal of 100 students in the new ETSU Promise Plus program. Throughout the summer, the recruitment team is communicating with parents and families and exploring texting capabilities with current students.

A tool called Decision IQ helps the recruitment team focus the admission pool (was not used in 2019). Dr. Mayhew reviewed first-time freshman data and said offered admissions are in line with 2018. For transfer data, applications are slightly ahead of last year, and the number of currently admitted transfer students is ahead of 2019. There is still time to impact transfers, and we could see 700-800 more applications, he said.

Admissions had to pivot to respond to the changing landscape and unforeseen circumstances as campus events, as well as high school and community college visits, were canceled as everyone transitioned to remote teaching. Also, family financial situations are changing because of the pandemic. Admissions is connecting with students and families and has launched a series of online videos focused on

recruitment and academic programs. Service hours were extended to 8 p.m.; phone calls increased since students are now at home; and texting and chat through the CRM were launched. Financial aid award notifications have been distributed, and staff are working with advisors to register students who signed up for orientation.

Dr. Mayhew presented Decision IQ data and the opportunity to impact fall enrollment. First-time freshmen receive an email asking if they are still interested in attending ETSU. Nationwide, fewer students are saying “yes” or “no.” Most are saying “probably” or “maybe.” Those applicants receive a phone call within 48 hours, and, through outreach, we are impacting college choice as almost twice as many students have changed from “maybe” to “yes,” Dr. Mayhew said. Orientation numbers are slightly ahead of 2019. The goal is registration for fall, and a virtual orientation experience has been created with a live element to connect students with current leaders and resources through Zoom. Dr. Mayhew hopes to bring new students and families to campus in small groups to connect with each other and campus to build community.

In terms of current student enrollment, summer headcount is down about 1.5% for undergraduates, and total fall headcount is down about 2%, and FTE is down 5% compared to last fall. Dr. Hoff will send current enrollment data to deans.

Many schools are projecting a 10% decrease, and we know families are experiencing new financial challenges, Dr. Mayhew noted. Continued teamwork will positively impact fall enrollment as advising teams continue to connect and help students register.

Dialogue continued about community college enrollment, student financial needs, possibility of students taking a gap year, and how current students can help with recruitment.

7 Announcements

Dr. Noland said CARES Act funds have been received from the federal government. The University has carefully reviewed FAQs and put together a distribution plan for phase 1. Students meeting the criteria will be informed when funds are dispersed to their accounts. About 10% will be set aside for the crisis fund to help students with food insecurity and other immediate needs. Just under 8,000 students will receive CARES Act funding, Dr. Joe Sherlin said. Students with the most need will receive larger awards. Around \$50,000 was distributed to support students ahead of the CARES Act awards.

Mr. Joseph Kusi expressed his gratitude for being part of University Council.

Mr. Scott Carter shared that Athletics communications staff have been working on projects with Admissions and are conducting a virtual press conference to announce Jason Shay as the next men’s basketball coach.

8 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.