

**University Council**  
**July 13, 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, Ms. Lisa Booher, Dr. Myra Carew, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, Ms. Kayla Frank, Dr. Mark Fulks, 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. Janna Scarborough, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Dr. Jeff Snodgrass, Ms. Alicia Williams

Others in attendance: Mr. David Adkins, Dr. James Batchelder, Ms. Mary Cradic, Dr. Tom Donohoe, Ms. Lori Erickson, Dr. Amy Johnson, Ms. Myra Jones, Dr. David Linville, Dr. Fred Mackara, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Kason O'Neil, Ms. Margaret Pate

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from June 8, 2020 meeting

A motion by Dr. Don Samples to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Janna Scarborough, 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

Dr. Joe Bidwell (Council of Chairs) welcomed new members Dr. Myra Carew (Nursing) and Dr. Jeff Snodgrass (Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences) and thanked Dr. Claudia Kozinetz and Dr. David Roane for their service.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix noted that Faculty Senate has been engaged in discussions related to budget and promotion. Dr. Noland will attend an upcoming discussion.

Ms. Candy Massey said Staff Senate presented the Distinguished Staff Awards to recipients in an outdoor ceremony. Nominations are being accepted for Outstanding Staff Senator.

Dr. Karen King (Information Technology Council) reported that phone service was interrupted the previous week, but the issue has been resolved. Anyone still experiencing phone issues should reach out to the Help Desk.

Dr. William Duncan noted that face-to-face IRB studies suspended because of

COVID-19 can now resume upon a formal review of safety plans. This process is running smoothly. He anticipates issues when faculty want to return to schools but said that will be addressed when the time is right. Mountain States will move to a Ballard Health IRB within the next month, which he does not believe will greatly impact ETSU.

Mr. Shivam Patel had no updates to report for Student Government Association.

Dr. Bishop did not have a report from Academic Council.

Dr. Scott Carter thanked those who have helped Athletics prepare to bring students athletes back to campus.

#### 4. President's Report

##### 4.1 COVID-19 Response Update

Dr. Noland walked through preparations for the return of students to campus for the fall semester. The Board of Trustees will hold a called meeting July 17 and will receive an overview of reopening plans and protocols across each major division of the university, as well as revised budget strategies.

Everyone is actively engaged in preparations for the fall semester that maximizes the safety, health, and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. Preparations range from the reorientation of classes to promote physical distancing to table top and training exercises. THEC and TEMA officials recently led ETSU in a tabletop exercise outlining scenarios that higher education could face this fall.

The opening of University School has been delayed to Aug. 3. A graduation ceremony was held recently at Greene Stadium and was a good exercise in practicing physical distancing, Dr. Noland said.

ETSU is entering uncharted waters that change rapidly, he noted. A month ago, preparations were underway for major budget reductions, but the landscape changed quickly, and higher education is being held harmless for now. The COVID-19 outbreak looks much different than it did in June. In terms of Athletics, the Council of Presidents for the Southern Conference will continue discussions about fall schedules at its next meeting on July 30.

Like many other institutions, ETSU is going through cycles of activity, the first being budget, Dr. Noland said. COVID-19 has caused many other schools across the country to enforce mass furloughs and significant budget reductions. Almost every entity across the state is taking a budget cut, but Tennessee higher education was held harmless from budget reductions. Dr. Noland said he is thankful to be in the current situation that provides the opportunity for a prudent and responsible approach to budget management. This fall will look different than any fall in recent history, he noted. The look and feel will be different; however, the mission remains unchanged as does our commitment to faculty research.

##### 4.2 ETSU Future Operations Workgroup

Dr. David Linville explained that the Future Operations Workgroup recommendations have provided a framework that gives each unit the opportunity to

address the best way to resume operations. One of the strengths of the report, he noted, is that it provides direction for those making these decisions. Department chairs are working diligently to determine how to provide instruction in this unique environment. Athletics and Student Life and Enrollment have each invested significant work into their own operation plans. He reminded everyone that the intent of the report is to provide a flexible document that is meant to be revised as things change.

#### 4.3 Facilities Operations Related to Return to Campus

Mr. Jeremy Ross said his team is working on the operational response and will work with a medical team being formed by Dr. Bill Block. Much of the work is assisting with COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. He said so far there have been 10 confirmed cases with another 17 individuals in isolation. The Washington County Health Department has indicated it will need ETSU to assist with contact tracing.

Mr. Ross said Facilities Management is addressing plexiglass requests for offices across campus, and he believes many of the 157 requests can be completed by the start of the fall semester. An HVAC project is underway at University School as well as work to find space that allows physical distancing for students.

Policy and procedure work is ongoing, and classroom capacity information was provided to the Academic Liaisons. There have been approximately 20 requests for additional capacity in learning spaces.

Disinfecting equipment, including e-misters, have been purchased, and contracts with outside companies have been established, Mr. Ross noted.

Capital requests are due Aug. 3, and Mr. Ross said the Humanities Building will be submitted again as a top priority. COVID-19 grant proposals through the state are also due soon.

Mr. Ross showed a photo of construction progress in the Martin Center lobby. Seats are set to arrive soon. Construction documents for the Lamb Hall renovation project are expected to be completed by the end of year, with construction beginning May 2021 and lasting about 18 months.

The fifth phase of the Culp Center renovation is underway, which includes the creation of an outdoor boulevard by leveraging an existing water maintenance project and a major donation, and should be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Ross then clarified that positive COVID-19 cases included other branch locations and not just main campus in Johnson City. Facilities is working through preparations for the fall by reviewing and reducing occupancy in every classroom and outlining proper physical distancing in those spaces.

Dr. Bidwell then asked a question on behalf of the Council of Chairs regarding the current stage of operations and if the university will enter stage three at the beginning of the fall semester. Dr. Noland said the soft opening of offices this summer is not altogether out of line with what is structured in the plan. The majority of buildings have very limited occupancy, and staff are providing rotational coverage. As we

move into the fall semester, the case count may require a review of operational stages. Although many administrative offices are open, the CPA remains closed, and buildings have limited access, so ETSU is not in stage 3. Dr. Linville added that stage 2 offers flexibility with remote work, which is the current environment. He feels confident that ETSU is following the Strategic Operations Workgroup plan. The next challenge is how to make decisions if parameters, such as the number of cases, change. Guidance from the medical team will be very helpful moving forward, Dr. Linville said.

Dr. Noland added that efforts are underway to acquire PPE, including 20,000 masks that will be distributed to students, and COVID-19 tests will be available.

Mr. Ross said positive test results are being reported to Facilities; Mark Gee is the first point of contact and is working with the Health Department on documentation. He will be working with the medical team as well.

#### 4.4. ETSU Strategic Options Workgroup

Dr. Noland said the Strategic Options Workgroup has met weekly to prepare multiple budget scenarios in response to a series of factors – first to remove 12% from state appropriations; second, to prepare for a very fluid enrollment landscape with a projected decrease of 500 students; and third, consider elements of the university budget that would require adjustments as we move into the start of the fall semester. The final report will outline a number of scenarios and a path forward for the institution to begin navigating the budget landscape.

Dr. Hoff began his presentation ([attached](#)) by outlining the charge of the Strategic Options Workgroup, which identified targets and reviewed cost containment strategies. On June 3, the workgroup asked units to identify their tactics to cut budgets by 12%. Knowing that committed action was needed, the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program was implemented. As the workgroup prepared to analyze the targeted budget reductions for each unit, Gov. Lee announced that higher education would be held harmless. Since then, the enrollment projection for fall has been readjusted, and we have more time to prioritize budget tactics, Dr. Hoff said. The workgroup's overall purpose was to save as many salaries as possible and avoid furloughs.

The workgroup worked under the assumptions that administrative units would take a 1% higher reduction (TAF funding not included) and that the university remains committed to holding tuition flat.

The workgroup developed three budget scenarios. The total impact is nearly \$8.3 million and includes:

- Enrollment projections (down 500 students)
- Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)
- Tenure and promotion adjustments
- College of Arts and Sciences budget deficit
- Removal of salary enhancements
- Implementation of phased approach to reopening

The workgroup recommends implementation of budget scenario 2, which directs

administrative units to take a 5.3% reduction and academic units to take a 4.3% reduction.

Dr. Hoff applauded the cost savings measures already in place such as travel and hiring restrictions. The Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program will likely reach its target of 75 staff and will open to faculty Aug. 15. There will be no distribution of new revenue to the budget model unless fall enrollment is greater than 2019. Any revenue generated from above the projected enrollment decrease (-500) would be placed in a central COVID-19 contingency fund (slide 10).

Recommended cost containment strategies are in no way meant to create a reduction in overall quality, Dr. Hoff explained. At the college level, the workgroup recommends hiring restrictions and limiting travel funds, new stipend requests, and temporary positions without a large scale loss to instructional support. These are intended to be tools, not mandates, he said.

Budget Scenario 3 is based on enrollment down 750 students. If that happens, units will implement the reductions they identified in early June. Dr. Hoff encouraged everyone to continue a mission-focused approach to selecting budget reductions.

Budget Scenario 4 is dramatic and would include implementing a furlough plan and compensation reductions.

The Committee for 125 developed a shared vision, and this fall will be a time to refocus and talk about the future of ETSU, Dr. Hoff said.

Dr. Hoff confirmed that the workgroup was recommending implementation of budget scenario 2, but units could consider more or less aggressive tactics. A mid-year impoundment would automatically put the university in scenario 3. If the university “shuts down” in August as it did in March, Dr. Hoff said scenario 3 would be a reality.

#### 4.5 University Budget Status Discussion

Dr. Noland said he will record a budget presentation video to distribute to campus explaining the scenarios. He will walk through the same presentation at the Board of Trustees meeting and recommend implementation of scenario 2.

Campus is moving through three cycles:

1. Budget
2. Reopening
3. Meeting expectations for fall semester

Dr. Noland said it is time to move forward and focus on positively impacting enrollment numbers – retention of current students and attracting incoming students to register. He expects many questions about face masks and said ETSU will require all faculty and staff to wear masks and protective equipment. Policies are being developed. He asked for patience as circumstances are rapidly changing.

## 5. Action Items

### 5.1 Old Business

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

## 5.2 New Business

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

## 6. Information Items/Presentations

### 6.1 SGA Resolution SSR-19-013 Encourage Faculty to Use D2L for Quizzes and Tests Instead of Digital Product and Services

During the 2018-19 academic year, the SGA approved a resolution ([attached](#)) to encourage faculty to use D2L for quizzes and tests instead of third-party digital products and services, Dr. Bishop explained. The resolution was referred to Academic Council for further discussion, and it was determined that the resolution was multifaceted and impacted a number of stakeholders. There was significant concern about adding costs for students already paying tuition and fees. A group was formed to study this issue, gather feedback from stakeholders, and bring the information back to Academic Council. The report, which includes a number of recommendations, was completed just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dr. Bishop added. There are no policy changes being presented at this point. This is an opportunity for UC to hear what has been learned and to get feedback, Dr. Bishop said. Academic Council will be responsible for taking future actions.

In his presentation, Mr. David Adkins said the initial focus of the workgroup was on third-party online learning environments and D2L duplicates that students see as “hidden costs.” Students are asking for more transparency and want to know the cost before enrolling in classes.

After reaching out to faculty, Mr. Adkins discovered that faculty use different platforms and tools they find very valuable. Faculty also support controlling costs and improving transparency.

There are already some responses underway:

- Cost of Books Policy says ETSU will adopt practices to minimize the cost of textbooks
- ETSU Bookstore can share resources needed for a class, even if they are not offered by the bookstore (Information can be pushed out to Banner)
- More detailed cost estimates offered by Bursar and Financial Aid
- Syllabi bank

Currently, no university-level oversight (privacy, liability) for faculty-selected materials exists, Mr. Adkins stated. He offered several recommendations:

1. Use ETSU Bookstore discovery textbook adoption center to relay instructional material information to Banner
2. Support, promote, and expand syllabi bank
3. Workflow to capture textbook costs to make data available in Banner
4. Incorporate textbook costs into cost calculator

University Counsel could vet course material subscription agreements to provide oversight of liability and privacy, and maintain a list of approved vendors, Mr. Akins said.

Efforts to support affordability include:

1. Open education resources – ETSU program expanding this year
2. Leverage library licenses
3. Explore incorporating costs of instructional materials into course fees
4. Raise faculty awareness of instructional material costs and transparency
5. Participate in THEC affordability task force

Mr. Adkins said an academic and administrative home is needed to support reporting and decision-making.

Mr. Shivam Patel complimented the report and asked if third-party learning tools would be incorporated into course fees, as it is frustrating for students to learn about additional costs above tuition and fees. Mr. Adkins explained that these would be college and department-level decisions and some are already doing so.

Dr. Bill Flora provided an update on the Syllabi Bank. He said departments are being asked to provide syllabi voluntarily, and those received are being transferred into a standard format and will be uploaded to Banner. It will likely not be available this fall, he added, but is moving forward, and students will get a more representative picture of the last time the class was taught.

Mr. Adkins said he is willing to present the report to other colleges and departments for discussion. He is scheduling a time to present to Faculty Senate.

Dr. Bidwell reiterated that an important next step is to share course material information with the ETSU Bookstore. He encouraged others to “get the word out” now. Dr. Janna Scarborough suggested simplifying the process by creating a template.

Mr. Adkins said quite a few elements are already underway. He is also working with Dr. Amy Johnson for implementation into faculty development training. He also recommended making textbook affordability and transparency a standing topic for Academic Council to keep things moving.

Dr. Amy Johnson suggested that policy work is needed around third-party vendors. It would also be helpful if students could predict if they would need products for more than one semester so they could buy an extended license.

Dr. Flora added that some faculty have expressed concerned about public access to syllabi. They will be connected to courses in Banner and will require students to log in to view.

Dr. Bishop said this issue is being taken seriously, and the university is making progress and would have been a little further along if not for COVID-19. She is hopeful that the correct decisions and actions will be put into place.

## 6.2 Altered Schedule

Dr. Bishop recalled the previous discussion in June of the proposed altered schedule for fall. The changes have been accepted, published, and will be presented to the

Board of Trustees. Start and end dates remain the same, and the exam schedule will be maintained with the use of remote technology. The two days of fall break will be moved to the beginning of the week of Thanksgiving. Twelve-month employees will get Labor and Veteran's Day holidays the week of Thanksgiving; therefore, the university will be closed the entire week of Thanksgiving. Students will have more instruction days, and the weeklong break and remote finish to the semester will reduce the potential of COVID-19 being reintroduced after students go home for Thanksgiving break. The Board of Trustees will officially approve the altered schedule.

### 6.3 Enrollment update

Dr. Mayhew provided a presentation on current enrollment status for fall ([attached](#)). Currently, total enrollment is down 3%. There are fluctuations in how new students are registering because they are not coming to campus for traditional orientation programs, Dr. Mayhew explained. Transfer students are slightly up compared to last year, and returning students with less than 60 credit hours are down by 250. There are also many unknowns related to international student enrollment and financial challenges facing students and their families.

Dr. Mayhew said we still have time to impact fall enrollment – specifically online enrollment and dual enrollment. Work is underway with high school principals and superintendents to assist high schools with online options.

Campus tours have resumed, and 90 tours are scheduled through Aug. 14; a third of participants are considering ETSU for fall, and the majority are considering ETSU for fall 2021. Tours are modified with small groups and physical distancing. Dr. Mayhew said on- and off-campus recruiting events will be modified.

Promise Plus launched in January with a goal to enroll 100 students; 150 are currently enrolled for the inaugural program.

Housing and Residence Life is currently at 85% occupancy for fall 2020 with more private rooms compared to last year. There are some cancellations, Dr. Mayhew noted, as more students are concerned about rising cases of COVID-19. How courses are adjusted will likely also make an impact on occupancy rates. Summer Bridge Program participants will move in this month, and staggered move-ins will be scheduled through the beginning of the fall semester.

Applications increased April-June, including transfer applications, which is an opportunity to impact fall enrollment. How we communicate with new applicants is very important, Dr. Mayhew explained. Once freshman and transfer students complete applications, they are contacted three times within the first three to four days of applying. Each student receives a text message within 24 hours, and they receive both an email and phone call thereafter. Dr. Mayhew said the goal is not to sign up for New Student Orientation, but registration for fall 2020 courses. Advisors are very busy working virtually with new and returning students who have not registered. About 82% of those registered for orientation in May and June are now registered for courses, leaving about 350 students who have not registered.

Dr. Mayhew said there are currently around 1,100 returning students on the non-



registered list, and text messaging outreach efforts will begin soon.

Dr. Bishop noted that deans have been working to make sure course formats are clearly identified. Proposed recommendations are *on-ground required*, *online with on-ground option*, and *online*. Clear terminology will help us label courses and will help with recruiting, she said. Dr. Donohoe will get the course information from deans to update in Banner.

Drs. Hoff and Mayhew have been working on a student survey that will gather information about students' perceptions of returning to campus. Dr. Hoff is also working on a faculty survey and asked for suggestions.

#### 6.4 Adjustments to Scholarship Work Requirements

Dr. Mayhew also provided an update for APS service requirements for the 2020-21 academic year ([attachment](#)). Due to physical distancing requirements departments and offices will likely need to reduce the number of students scheduled at a given time, and, with the adjustments to the academic calendar, we anticipate some students will not return to campus after Thanksgiving, which leaves students fewer weeks to complete their service hours. The following adjustments will be implemented for APS recipients:

- Service hour requirement decreases from 75 to 60 hours
- Eliminate service requirement for Presidential APS students
- Eliminate service requirement for students with 90+ credit hours

These changes are for the 2020-21 academic year only. Dr. Mayhew recognized that some offices rely heavily on APS students, and Financial Aid will be communicating with those offices to adjust allocations. Financial Aid will also communicate directly with students who will not be required to complete service hours as well as those who will work reduced hours.

#### 7 Announcements

Dr. Bishop announced that Faculty Convocation will be held virtually on Friday, Aug. 21. More details to follow.

#### 8 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.