

University Council
September 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: 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. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Dr. Jeff Snodgrass, Ms. Alicia Williams

Those absent: Ms. Bridget Baird, Dr. Janna Scarborough

Others in attendance: Ms. Lisa Booher, Ms. Mary Cradic, Dr. Bill Flora, Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Ms. Heather Levesque, Dr. David Linville, Dr. Sharon McGee, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Jodi Polaha, Dr. Megan Quinn

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from August 10, 2020 meeting

A motion by Mr. Stephen Hendrix to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Susan Epps, 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. Allen Gorman (new chair and UC representative) said the Council of Chairs is planning professional development opportunities, and the next one will likely take place in October.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix noted that a Faculty Senate working group is reviewing the tenure and promotion work report. Another group is looking at the procedures outlined in the concerns and grievance policy.

Ms. Candy Massey reported that new members had been elected to Staff Senate, and she welcomed new Vice President Joy Fulkerson.

Mr. Shivam Patel said Student Government Association is hearing concerns from students struggling to stay engaged in classes. SGA has asked Academic Council to consider a Pass/Fail option for fall 2020 similar to spring 2020. Dr. Sharon McGee has reconvened the committee from spring to discuss options. Their report will be reviewed

by the deans, Academic Council, and Faculty Senate in the coming weeks.

Dr. Karen King (Information Technology Council) said the university is using 81% of its Zoom storage, so efforts are underway to increase storage space as well as additional Respondus Monitor seats so enough are available. A wireless upgrade project is also underway to expand WiFi availability outdoors and to upgrade switches in buildings.

Dr. William Duncan (Research Council) reported that implementation of the electronic grants management system continues and should be ready to roll out to the university in March. Since Ballad Health has changed its research structure, Dr. Duncan and his team are working to establish an efficient ways to work closely with them to ensure access to facilities and the EMR.

Mr. Scott Carter noted that Athletics is awaiting a decision from the NCAA to determine the start of the basketball season. He said all sports are practicing with health and safety guidelines in place.

Ms. Kayla Frank said a new president has been elected to fill the vacated role in the Graduate and Professional Student Association. The group has been discussing ways to can help graduate students combat loneliness. Dr. Bishop connected Ms. Frank to initiatives underway within Student Life and Enrollment to support mental health and offer students more opportunities to connect.

Dr. Bishop (Academic Council) noted the recent approval of a reorganization within the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences. Physical Therapy will join the Department of Rehabilitative Sciences, which includes existing and forthcoming programs such as nutrition and occupational therapy.

4. Action Items

4.1 Old Business

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

4.2 New Business

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

5. Information Items/Presentations

5.1 Introduction of Whitney Goetz, Executive Director of Alumni – Ms. Ritter

Ms. Pam Ritter introduced [Ms. Whitney Goetz](#) who said she is eager to connect with individuals and build partnerships across campus as the Alumni Association looks to find creative ways to connect with graduates during the pandemic since many of the typical in-person events are not possible. The Alumni Association recently partnered with the Clemmer College to host a successful virtual event.

5.2 Quality and Effectiveness Sub-Council – Dr. Clavier

Dr. Clavier presented an overview of the Quality and Effectiveness Sub-Council ([attachment](#)), which exists to ensure efficient and effective quality assurance

practices, oversee academic and administrative unit participation in conducting self-assessment, and to provide necessary training and feedback. Her presentation highlighted the relevant SACSCOC standards and a timeline of the sub-council, which started meeting last fall.

At its last meeting, the QESC endorsed a plan for ensuring quality in administrative and academic/student support units. Membership to the sub-council fluctuated over the summer, so Dr. Clavier provided a current list of representatives.

The process to ensure quality in administrative and academic/student support units is a “living, developing, breathing” process that forces the review and use of data to inform and improve. Dr. Clavier said the QESC is using the university organization chart to base expectations for participation, and unit leaders will be given flexibility on how they would like to engage in this work. The SACSCOC expects effectiveness data/analysis to be available for all units, she noted.

The QESC is considering reporting template options – Academic Unit IE and 6-and-12 month goals – each with its own pros and cons. A small committee will continue the review, Dr. Clavier said. She then provided the 12 common areas for framing conversations with ETSU leadership based on the Council for Advancement of Standards for Higher Education General Standards (slide 10).

Previous QESC meetings also led to the suggestion of a standing agenda item for monthly University Council meetings. Several professional development opportunities are also available this fall for members of the QESC.

5.3 Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan – Dr. Johnson

Dr. Johnson provided an overview of the inclusive excellence framework used to develop the Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan ([attachment](#)). The plan was developed with input from the Advisory Group and is aligned with the University’s Strategic Plan. Accomplishing the items outlined in the plan will lead to ETSU becoming a HEED (Higher Education Excellence in Diversity) designated institution.

The action plan is based upon six goals:

1. Promote a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive living, learning, and working environment for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors.
2. Assess and monitor institutional progress on access, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
3. Provide personal and professional development and public programming related to enhancing understanding of diversity and inclusion.
4. A: Recruit, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of students from underrepresented and underserved populations and international students.
B: Recruit and retain a greater number of individuals from underrepresented populations into administrative, faculty, and staff positions, and especially into leadership roles across campus, including chairs, deans, and vice presidents.
5. Promote undergraduate curricular requirements to include significant intercultural perspectives.
6. Develop and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities locally,

regionally, nationally, and globally.

Dr. Chassidy Cooper, coordinator for Equity and Inclusion, assists with programming, reporting, and development of continuing improvement plans. Dr. Johnson said several colleges already have Equity and Inclusion plans, committees in place, and actively participate in curriculum reviews; however, this action plan is a way to connect all the individual efforts through the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

A grant has allowed Dr. Johnson to pilot Inclusive Excellence Training, and his team is working with an ETSU 1020 class to test inclusive and cultural course content. Feedback from the pilot course curriculum and training program will be implemented and offered campus wide next semester.

Additional highlights of the strategic action plan include:

- Scholarship dollars for underrepresented populations
- Working with HR to prepare search committee chairs for an inclusive search
- Expanding the “Lunch and Learn” speaker series
- Developing an online reporting system and continuous improvement plan

In order to implement the plan campuswide with a small staff, Dr. Johnson has enlisted Diversity Champions to assist with equity and inclusion efforts and serve as members of the Advisory Group.

5.4. Proposed Out-of-State Tuition Model – Dr. Sherlin

Before he presented the out-of-state pricing and scholarship strategy ([attachment](#)), Dr. Sherlin provided an overview for fall enrollment, which is down 450 students. He is very proud of the work that occurred during a very challenging year when we were unable to bring students to campus for in-person orientation. International students are down around 150, but on the plus side the University made gains in transfers (up about 110).

He said a strong strategic approach to recruitment has led to enhanced campus tours and the strongest academic information available in the new Viewbook. Dr. Sherlin said he feels good about recruitment efforts, but it is going to be a challenging cycle as access to high schools, and travel will be limited.

The enrollment team has been working with Maguire Associates to review current tuition strategy and identify strategic opportunities to spur enrollment growth, but also support student access, diversity, and engagement goals. Using historical data, predictive models were developed to determine where the greatest opportunities for out-of-state undergraduate students are.

In terms of the scholarship and discount rate, the current in-state model and APS Scholarship structure is efficient; however, the out-of-state model could benefit from a more straightforward approach. Currently, ETSU’s practice mimics a private school with high price and high aid (slide 4). At the next Board of Trustees meeting, Dr. Sherlin said he would present this tuition strategy with a simplified geographic

approach:

- Net cost (\$10,500) for border counties Buncombe and Henderson continue
- Offer discounted rate (\$10,500) for students from 5 states:
 - Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (current rate \$13,500)
 - Students from remaining states pay discounted rate (\$13,500)

The strategy models very well (100+ out-of-state students with net tuition and revenue growth) and would apply to incoming freshmen and transfers, Dr. Sherlin explained. Upon examining admit and enrollment data over the last several years, we see significant admit volume out of state but low yield as shown in a series of maps (slides 6-7). The tuition strategy is an opportunity for ETSU to be more competitive with in-state publics in Virginia and South Carolina. It “allows us to get in the door on price,” compete on academic programs, and expand into Atlanta and other diverse metropolitan markets with a more transparent and aggressive strategy, Dr. Sherlin said.

The plan comes with some risks. It depends on a more aggressive net pricing per student; therefore, an additional 40 students a year are needed to break even. The strategy models with over 100 and risk is mitigated because the total population is relatively small (10% of overall admit pool). The major focus has to remain in-state, but this strategy expands ETSU’s out-of-state footprint, Dr. Sherlin noted.

After much review and discussion, it was determined that the new pricing model would be phased in, and current students would continue with the current scholarship model they entered with, he said. However, it does provide the opportunity to hold out-of-state tuition flat for current students through graduation.

Marketing is critical, and, as soon as the strategy is approved by the Board of Trustees, a multi-channel strategy will launch that includes print, digital, and a road tour. The enrollment team is already working with the Alumni Association on ways to network with graduates in the five states included in the tuition reset. The team will continue to work with Maguire Associates to analyze geographic and data modeling and to focus on high admit, lower yield counties. Dr. Sherlin explained that out-of-state students add to the campus experience because many live and eat on campus, stay on the weekends, and possibly relocate to the region after graduation.

Discussion ensued about the impacts of the tuition strategy on e-rate and adopting a similar strategy for graduate tuition.

Dr. Sherlin reiterated that there would not be a change in the current agreement with border counties. He explained that West Virginia was not included because the current yield rate is not as high as the five states included in the reduced tuition strategy.

5.5. Enrollment Update – Dr. Mayhew

Dr. Mayhew and Ms. Heather Levesque walked through undergraduate admissions recruitment plans underway for fall 2021 ([attachment](#)). This past year, ETSU has

faced significant challenges:

- Students not able to sit for national tests (ACT/SAT)
- Staff's inability to visit high schools
- Students/Families unable or unwillingness to visit campus
- Lack of travel opportunities

In light of these challenges, the University has enacted several changes:

- New format for orientation in a safe environment; leveraging virtual advising
- Moving drop date for non-payment to five days prior to the first day of classes
- Increase processing time for applications to send admissions decisions faster
- Leverage CRM to move students through the enrollment funnel seamlessly
 - Communication – emails and texts, phone calls, and print materials
- Improving print collateral (new Viewbook)
- Meet with community college partners to improve transfer process
- Implementing new recruitment operations –
 - Live chat, texting, tele-counseling, Zoom, writing campaigns
- Digital content from new partner Fire Engine Red
- Bucky's ETSU Road Trip (safe, in-person events)
- Minority recruitment events
- Virtual and in-person recruitment events – ETSU Experience, Get Connected series, Open House, Top Scholars, high school counselor information sessions
- Campus tour transformation with academic focus; in-person tours led by Expedition Leaders
- New virtual tour with interactive map

5.6 Strategic Visioning Process – Dr. Hoff

In his report, Dr. Hoff said Strategic Planning in its current iteration started with the Committee for 125 – an opportunity for members of the community internally and externally to dream big. The next phase will launch in October and does not deviate from the vision, but is a chance to refocus and define the activity of “closing the loop.” The Committee for 125 built a tactical plan with sound objectives that provided guidance and committed significant resources toward key aspects of the strategy and vision (examples – Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan, work around community engagement, and organizational changes). None of these efforts should be set aside or stopped, he said, but how do they fit with overall University?

The first two items to discuss are what worked and what didn't and celebrate what worked. That's what a big part of the fall will be, Dr. Hoff explained. We will be able to consider new initiatives and alignment with budget because ETSU has a new budget process that didn't exist before. We will collect meaningful input and have a document that solidifies our position because the higher education landscape is increasingly competitive to obtain faculty, dollars, and students, Dr. Hoff said. To be competitive, we need a common purpose.

6. President's Report

6.1 COVID-19 Response and General Update

In his report, Dr. Noland thanked staff from Facilities and other units as well as faculty who worked tirelessly over the summer to prepare for employees and students to return to campus. He said campus has gone about the fall in a different way that is paying off.

Dr. Noland stressed vigilance and is pleased that a random testing initiative will begin soon to track the movement of the virus. He called for focus on both physical and mental health as many are fatigued by excess time spent on screens. Although he is hopeful some things will begin to reopen and return to more normal operation in late spring, he suspects January, February, and March will look a lot like it does now.

Fall enrollment was within the projected decline, so there will be no major conversations about budgets this fall as the adjustments made over the summer should carry the University through the academic year although some colleges and units may have to make additional adjustments. State budgets seem to have remained relatively solid, and enrollment should remain solid in the spring, he noted.

Undergraduate enrollment was down overall across the state, and graduate school saved the day. Community colleges in our region are seeing declines from 11 to 15%.

The Equity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan presented earlier in the meeting will go before the Board of Trustees for approval. Dr. Noland said the diversity speaker series Dr. Johnson mentioned will launch through a partnership with Ballad Health and include national speakers and programming via Zoom. He lauded the plan's focused investments for students of color and from underrepresented groups. ETSU students are calling for changes at the institution just as students are making their voices heard across the country demanding change. Others are not representing voices of light and change, he said. In recent weeks, individuals distributed flyers and went behind the scenes to draw attention to their cause, and Dr. Noland provided reassurance that the University spoke out against this activity and will not legitimize or draw attention to their cause. He thanked individuals from the Art Department who had an outstanding presence in the face of difficult circumstances. Public Safety will continue to monitor the activities that transpired.

The forthcoming Board of Trustees meeting will include the appointment of a new Trustee, Melissa Steagall-Jones. She will fill the position previously held by David Golden, who stepped down from the Board earlier this year and recently joined the College of Business and Technology as a chair of excellence.

As Dr. Hoff reported, work is underway to continue to frame and shape the next chapter of Committee for 125. As we move through the fall, there will be opportunities to provide input and feedback around the past present and future through surveys, focus groups, and other community engagement activities. Information collected will come together into a planning document next year with a presentation anticipated for the September 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, Dr. Noland said.

Next, he discussed educational attainment and the number of high school graduates

who enter postsecondary education and graduate. These data on a regional level will help inform Committee for 125 Chapter II and how the University can improve those numbers with existing programming such as TRIO. Another important data point is the number of high school graduates living in the region three years after graduating from college. This is how we can look at economic development and improving the quality of life in the region, he explained.

Dr. Noland provided a reminder that parking restrictions have been lifted for the fall semester for faculty, staff, and students with a valid parking permit.

To say thank you and to provide an opportunity for individuals to rest and recharge, the university will close for two additional days this fall, a recommendation from senior leadership. He said specific dates and details would be announced at a later date.

7. Announcements

There were no announcements

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:56