

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

September 20, 2019  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The quarterly meeting of the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees was held at 1:25 p.m. on Friday, September 20, in the Millennium Center on ETSU's main campus in Johnson City, Tennessee. The meeting was also livestreamed for those who could not be in attendance.

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Scott Niswonger called the meeting to order.

In his opening remarks, Chair Niswonger welcomed new trustees – Mr. Kelly Wolfe (appointed by Gov. Bill Lee), Dr. Virginia Foley (faculty representative); and Mr. Cristopher Santana (student representative). He also thanked those, particularly Dr. Dennis Depew, for their leadership and work to host the Northeast Tennessee Southwest Virginia Regional Economic Forum earlier in the month. He encouraged the campus to stay engaged with this work and to help lead this work, which is central to ETSU's mission to improve the lives of the people of this region.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Secretary Adam Green called the roll. Board members in attendance were:

Janet Ayers  
Steven DeCarlo  
Virginia Foley  
David Golden  
Dorothy Grisham  
Linda Latimer  
Chairman Scott Niswonger  
Ron Ramsey  
Cristopher Santana  
Kelly Wolfe

**III. Public Comments**

Secretary Green called Connor McClelland before the Board to state his comments. McClelland said he is a member of the Student Government Association and co-founder of Adjunct Action, a group that advocates for increased pay for adjunct faculty. Adjunct Action remains unwavering in seeking \$1,000 per credit hour for adjunct faculty, he stated.

Next, Secretary Green called Dr. Dorothy Drinkard-Hawkshawe before the Board to state her comments. Dr. Drinkard-Hawkshawe stated that would address two issues. First, she indicated that she believed many faculty members are disappointed about Chief of Police Nicole Collins' resignation. Second, Dr. Drinkard-Hawkshawe asked the Board of Trustees to support more funding for the Africana Studies Program to help improve not only race relations in this country, but improve knowledge that will lead to the appreciation of all people who have helped to make the world greater. She hopes Africana Studies will become a department.

**IV. Approval of the Minutes from April 26, 2019**

Trustee Ayers made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2019, Board of Trustees meeting which was seconded by Trustee Grisham and the Board unanimously approved.

**V. Approval of the Minutes from June 17, 2019**

Trustee Golden made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2019, Board of Trustees special called meeting, which was seconded by Trustee Latimer and the Board unanimously approved.

**VI. Approval of Student Trustee**

Chair Niswonger stated that the Board of Trustees is required to appoint a non-voting student member to its board in accordance with the FOCUS Act. Dr. Noland introduced Cristopher Santana to the Board. He said Santana was selected through an interview process and is among the best leaders on campus.

Trustee Wolfe made a motion to accept the nomination of Cristopher Santana to the position of Student Trustee. Trustee Latimer seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously by the Board.

**VII. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee**

Committee Chair DeCarlo outlined a series of action and discussion items:

- Approved out-of-state tuition for Quillen College of Medicine.
- Conducted its quarterly review of agreements over \$250,000
- Heard a presentation on capital budget and facilities.
- Reviewed information from Human Resources on University profiles and trends
- Heard a presentation on ETSU Foundation efforts

**VIII. Report from the Academic, Research and Student Success Committee**

Committee Chair Latimer stated that minutes for the April Academic, Research and Student Success Committee minutes were approved with edits requested in regards to discussion held on research. Additionally, committee members approved the Letter of Notification (LON) to establish a master of science degree in prosthetics and orthotics program, which led to a discussion on ways Trustees can help ETSU facilitate new program approvals faster. Chair Latimer said this could be a point of discussion in future meetings with fellow LGI governing boards. The committee also received updates on the review process for chairs of excellence and student success initiatives, and held a critical conversation about research and innovation. The committee approved the following action items for consideration by the full Board:

1. **Tenure appointments** – Dr. Bishop, Senior Vice President for Academics, reminded the Board that they had approved promotion and tenure appointments at the April meeting, but since that time, ETSU has hired three faculty members who come with essential experience and credentials and have been reviewed through the process for tenure upon appointment.

Trustee Wolf made a motion to approve the tenure appointments. Chair Latimer seconded and all members voted in favor of approving the action item.

2. **Student Conduct Rule** – Dr. Michelle Byrd, Dean of Students, provided the following summary of the rule revisions:
  - a. Addition of the medical amnesty policy, a resolution provided by the Student Government Association
  - b. Changes to sexual misconduct hearing process
  - c. Slight changes to violations – adding ammunition to list of items prohibited on campus

Trustee Foley made a motion that was seconded by Trustee Grisham to approve the code of conduct revisions. Secretary Green led a roll call vote and the action item was unanimously approved.

3. **Approval of LON** – Dr. Bishop said the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences brings forth the LON, which is the first step in the approval process for creating a new academic program. The master's in prosthetics and orthotics will be the first of its kind in Tennessee. She said the program has significant feasibility due to workforce need and limited number of programs currently available.

Trustee Wolf moved to approve the letter of notification. It was seconded by Trustee Ayers and approved unanimously by the Board.

## **IX. Report from the Audit Committee**

Committee Chair Golden outlined two action items listed as part of the consent agenda, the first being the adoption of the compliance charter. Trustee Golden said the university has established a centralized compliance office, which necessitated the adoption of a charter. He noted a small modification made to the materials that were mailed to Board members. Athletic compliance was added to the list of university organizations included in the charter.

The committee reviewed the audit plan for fiscal year 2020 as well as audits completed since April and recommendation log status. The committee also received the report of audit function for fiscal year 2019, which included a quality assurance review (completed every five years) and Internal Audit received the highest assessment. The committee concluded its meeting in executive session.

## **X. Consent Agenda**

With no requests for any items to be removed from the consent agenda, Trustee Grisham moved to approve the consent agenda and Trustee Golden seconded the motion. Trustees unanimously approved the consent agenda. Items that were included on the consent agenda were:

- Minutes from the April 26, 2019, Finance and Administration Committee meeting
- Minutes from the May 29, 2019, Finance and Administration Committee meeting
- Minutes from the April 26, 2019, Academic Research and Student Success Committee
- Minutes from the April 26, 2019, Audit Committee
- Quillen College of Medicine Out-of-State Tuition Revision
- Adoption of the Compliance Charter from Audit Committee
- FY 2020 Annual Audit Plan from Audit Committee

## **XI. Accreditation Update**

Dr. Cheri Clavier, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and ETSU's Accreditation Liaison, provided a brief presentation on ETSU's fifth-year interim report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. ETSU completed its fifth-year interim report to SACSCOC in spring 2019. Comprehensive reviews take place every 10 years (2013 and 2023 for ETSU), but the U.S. Department of Education requires more frequent monitoring, resulting in the fifth-year interim report. ETSU was not selected to do a follow up. Dr. Clavier reported focused on three parts of the review:

1. **Fifth-Year Compliance Certification** – ETSU must comply and respond to around 73 accreditation standards and the fifth-year review looks at a third of them. Dr. Clavier works with individuals across campus to document compliance and the report is submitted to a committee for review. The committee can decide no referral, which is rare, or the second outcome is

referral to a separate compliance and reports (C&R) committee. The C&R committee conducts a separate review.

- A. Results – No recommendations or requests for information were issued in many of the areas where historically institutions have difficulty showing compliance. Comments were issued on student achievement, stemming from an update in accreditation standards in 2018, but no follow-up was required. Two referral reports are due in April 2020 to address:
  - a. Qualified administrative/academic officers – provide evidence (redacted evaluations) of evaluation policy being implemented
  - b. Policies for awarding credit – Show evidence that forms are being used
2. **Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan** – QEP is a process where institutions spend five years increasing student learning or improving environment for student learning. Dr. Clavier submitted a report on ETSU’s QEP called “In Top Form.”
  - A. Results – The QEP report was accepted with positive comments.
3. **Review of Approved Off-Campus Instructional Sites Initiated Since Last Reaffirmation** – This review included the submission of a report and on-site evaluations of off-campus instructional sites initiated since 2013 in Abingdon, Virginia; Asheville, North Carolina; and Kingsport where ETSU nursing and social work programs are offered. The process for this review is different because after a report is established, the review committee visits in person.
  - A. Results – Not official until voted on in December; however, there were no recommendations for improvement provided in the results.

Dr. Clavier also provided a brief update on recent discipline-specific accreditation Activities:

1. Accredited programs list available online updated annually
  - A. Currently over 60 programs are accredited through professional or discipline specific accrediting bodies
2. The slideshow included a list of recent and upcoming accreditation activities
  - B. Four programs are seeking accreditation

At the conclusion of Dr. Clavier’s presentation, Dr. Noland commented that it is very rare for an institution to go through a mid-cycle review with no findings or recommendations. Furthermore, he said it was rare for 22 programs to go through accreditation review in a two-year period with no findings or recommendations. He commended the hard work of Dr. Clavier and others.

## **XII. Capital Projects and Facilities Update**

Mr. Jeremy Ross, Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on select administrative projects including capital construction, planning, and campus safety.

He began with an overview of several philosophical principles that will inform and drive master planning taking place this year. The first concept is archology, which brings together architecture and ecology, focusing on how the built environment should work with the natural environment instead of working against each other. He also pointed out an emphasis on implosion (meeting facility needs by working with existing buildings and facilities) rather than explosion (constructing new buildings to meet the needs).

Mr. Ross provided updates on a series of facilities and projects across campus:

- **Culp Center** – While this building is an example of modern (brutalist) architecture, Mr. Ross pointed out that the current renovations are transforming the monolithic, heavy building into a structure that incorporates curves, shapes, and light – using archology to create beautiful views of surrounding campus. He showed Board members a rendering of their renovated meeting space in the East Tennessee Room.
- **Martin Center for the Arts** – Currently under construction, this facility incorporates curvature in design, lighting features and other principles of archology to bring the outside in and create a welcoming, useful space for the university and the community.
- **Lamb Hall** – More information is to come on the renovation of this building. The University and the State are in ongoing conversations about balancing renovation and additional space.
- **Boulevard Commons** – A donor has contributed \$1 million for this space on South Dossett Drive to make it more dynamic, transforming it from a “sea of suburbia” to an area that emphasizes student experience through fire pits, outdoor fitness, plazas, and other engaging opportunities to create community. Designs are in the preliminary stages.
- **Millennium Center** – Recent renovations in this facility enhance computer/cyber programs, complement the Niswonger Digital Media Center and provide opportunities for new students/enrollment growth.
- **Humanities Building** – The architecture on the proposed \$72 million aims to bring indoor and outdoor space together.
- **Housing** – A new housing master plan will be presented at a future meeting, Mr. Ross noted. Students were surveyed about what they would like to see outside residence halls and the top answers were swings and outdoor games.
- **Updating of classrooms** – New furniture and updates have enhanced many classroom spaces on campus.
- **Brown Hall** – Outdoor furniture, installation of a food truck, and pressure washing have transformed the courtyard of this building, drawing students, faculty and staff to congregate in the area.

- **Mini-Dome** – Renovations in this facility have made it one of the finest indoor practice facilities. It is utilized by ETSU Marching Band, Clemmer College’s sports science program, and other athletics programs.
- **Baseball (Thomas Stadium)** – Thanks to a gift from a donor, the parking lot was paved and more improvements have been proposed, including a \$3 million addition to the stadium. Its location is a gateway to the campus.
- **Signage** – Campus signage reflecting new branding has been installed.
- **Former book drops adjacent to Sherrod** – This space was transformed from a rarely used book drop to an outdoor eating area with food truck and seating.
- **Football field house** – Space formerly used to store construction materials was transformed into a field house for football.
- **Gilbreath Hall** – The oldest building on campus received welcoming updates, including new flooring and artwork.
- **Security cameras** – Through a state grant, the University will install improved security cameras.
- **Safety app** – The University is introducing a new “ETSU Safe” app that will be a tool for safety and information on campus.
- **Human Resources** – A strategic plan is currently being developed and compensation is one of the key pieces and aligning efforts with the new budget model.
- **Capital maintenance** – He presented capital maintenance at 7.6% and \$73 million funded, which is very close to previous years.

Mr. Ross said now is the time for those with ideas to bring them forward as master planning continues. Trustee Latimer asked Mr. Ross if bike racks are being strategically placed on campus to encourage a connection between campus and the Tweetsie Trail. Mr. Ross said broad conversations with the Johnson City Commission has included bikes, scooters and pedestrian walkways. Zoning and ordinance work are taking place and should provide the mechanisms to make connections, especially as the West Walnut Street transformation moves forward, he added. Dr. Noland asked the Board to encourage partners at the City of duJohnson City and Washington County to consider safety improvements along the State of Franklin Road corridor.

### **XIII. Center for Rural Health Research Update**

Dr. Wykoff, Dean of the College of Public Health and Founding Director of the Center for Rural Health Research, provided an update on the steps take thus far, and that are planned, to establish the Center for Rural Health Research following the announcement of the Center by Governor Lee on July 16, 2019. Dr. Wykoff said the Center for Rural Health Research will partner with Ballad Health to put together a world-class center.

- **Logistics** – A transition team is in place to get things started while hiring a fulltime director, coordinator and 4-7 faculty positions. Space has also been allocated.

- **Initial outreach/partnership development** – Dr. Wykoff attends standing meetings with Ballad Health, is meeting with ETSU Health leadership and has met with government officials and staff. He is also reaching out to rural health experts at the state and national levels. The purpose is to be very systematic and thoughtful to make sure that the Center is going to make a real difference to the lives of the people in this state, he noted. In his conversations, Dr. Wykoff is announcing the existence of the Center for Rural Health Research, identifying issues of concern as well as research opportunities in order to build connections and networks.
- **Prioritization** – Dr. Wykoff stated that conversations and outreach have led to the Center focusing on the following six priorities:
  1. Interrupting inter-generational cycles of poor health
  2. Innovative models of health care delivery
  3. Longitudinal database
  4. Identifying policies
  5. Support to empower local organizations
  6. Focus on rural elderly

Dr. Wykoff expressed his appreciation of the Board's support for the new Center for Rural Health Research. Trustee Foley asked Dr. Wykoff to consider the Clemmer College among his list of collaborators. Trustee DeCarlo asked how funds from the Purdue Pharma lawsuit would be distributed. Dr. Wykoff said it is unknown, but the process could be similar to the tobacco settlements and states would decide how to invest the funds. He said the Center and Ballad Health is well-positioned to make the case that there should be a significant investment in Northeast Tennessee. Dr. Noland added that those who invested the tobacco settlements wisely are still seeing the benefits. He asked Dr. Wykoff and Board members to look at how those funds could best be put to use toward long-term challenges in the state.

#### **XIV. Key Performance Indicators Update**

Dr. Michael Hoff provided an update on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and presented a current dashboard of the KPIs. His presentation began with a series of peer development questions used to help ETSU determine who it is and who it wants to be. He said it is important to focus on competitors and determine peers that are both aspirational and communal. Dr. Hoff said ETSU's peer group is balanced.

- **Key performance indicators (KPI's)** – He stressed that KPI's are not operational indicators. The KPI's for ETSU were established by RPK Group (consultants) and focus on: (1) student experience, (2) diversity and inclusion, (3) employee satisfaction, (4) excellence in teaching, (5) research and grant activity, and (5) regional stewardship.
- **Strategic Dashboard** – Dr. Hoff explained that enrollment growth continues to an ETSU strategic goal. He stressed that while the University has not made as much progress in enrollment growth as it would like that it does not mean



ETSU set the wrong goal. He continued to explain that educational attainment has the power to change lives and move the needle in Tennessee. He said ETSU's graduation rate is at almost 50%, which is an outcome of implementing "15 to Finish." There are highlights (retention and graduation rates) and areas in the dashboard that the University will continue working on (applications, enrollment, Great College to Work For score).

At the November Board Meeting, Dr. Hoff will present Trustees with a packet containing more detailed information and benchmarks.

## **XV. President's Report**

In his report, President Noland indicated that presenters throughout each of the meetings have included individuals who may be unfamiliar faces, but are some of the many faces of those who diligently work to ensure the work of the university is completed. President Noland stressed that during the 2019-20 academic year he wants the Trustees to get to know the personalities that comprise the University.

Next, President Noland presented a series of University updates including:

- The introduction of two recent senior leadership hires – Dr. Adam Green, Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Board and Dr. Mark Fulks, University's Chief Legal Counsel
- Fall 2019 enrollment is down 133 students total (within budget confidence intervals). Enrollment grew in the Clemmer College, College of Nursing and College of Public Health.
- The graduation rate is the highest it has ever been at 50%.
- A reminder that the Board governs the University School (K-8<sup>th</sup> grade). Last year, 48 students earned an ACT score of 30 or higher, which is significant because the graduating class has around 80 students. It is a top 10 high school in Tennessee.
- Rankings and points of interest from the President's Annual Report as well as recent rankings placing ETSU as the Best Online RN to BSN Program in Tennessee and Best Doctor of Nursing (DNP) Program.
- An update on the decentralized budget model and fall-out revenue. Specific highlights included:
  - October revised budgets will be presented to the Board in November
  - Starting hourly pay was increased to \$9.20 per hour
  - Adjunct salaries were raised on a college-by-college basis to meet market demands
  - At the November Board Meeting, some colleges will request performance incentives
  - The budget is balanced, funds are going to reserves and investments are being made in faculty

- ETSU has a major regional impact through service hours provided by student organizations, money raised for charities and patient care provided by ETSU Health.
- Enrollment services at ETSU is being transformed. Those changes are necessary because a decreased population of college-age students is on the horizon. A game plan for 2025 is needed now, President Noland said.
- The announcement of Dr. Keith Johnson as Vice President for Equity and Inclusion.

In closing, Dr. Noland provided a look back at accomplishments made the Board of Trustees since 2017. He thanked Trustees for their advocacy, for pushing the University to achieve more and for being present at University events.

#### **XVI. Resolution of Appreciation for Mr. James Powell**

Dr. Noland expressed gratitude for Mr. Powell's service to the Board of Trustees and said he has provided scholarships for than 9,000 students. Trustee Golden made a motion to adopt the resolution followed by a second from Trustee Ayers. The resolution was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **XVII. Resolution of Appreciation for Dr. David Linville**

Dr. Noland thanked Dr. Linville for serving as ETSU's first Secretary of the Board of Trustees. He said Dr. Linville has done an outstanding job shepherding the Board of Trustees through its first two and half years of existence. Trustee Grisham motioned to adopt the resolution. Trustee Latimer seconded the motion and the resolution of appreciation for Dr. Linville was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **XVIII. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair and Committee Membership**

In compliance with the FOCUS Act and the ETSU Board of Trustees Bylaws, the ESTU Board of Trustees is require to elect a Chair and Vice Chair every two years. Dr. Noland made the recommendation on behalf of the staff to reappoint Trustee Niswonger to a two-year term as Chair and reappoint Trustee Golden to a two-year term as Vice Chair. Furthermore, he recommended that the composition of the committees Trustees sat in earlier in the day continue.

Trustee Wolfe moved to adopt the appointments and committee membership. It was seconded by Trustee Ramsey and unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **XIX. Other Business**

No other business was brought before the Board of Trustees.

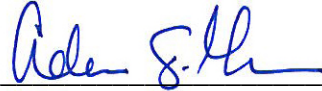
#### **XX. Executive Session**

The Board of Trustees did not convene in executive session.

**XXI. Adjournment**

Trustee Ramsey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



---

Adam Green  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its November 15, 2019 meeting.