

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 15, 2023  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, September 15, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center.

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Janet Ayers called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green conducted the roll call. All committee members were physically present:

Committee Chair Janet Ayers  
Trustee Charles Allen  
Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark  
Trustee Dr. Linda Latimer  
Trustee Tony Treadway

**III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from April 21, 2023**

The minutes from the April 21, 2023, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Latimer making the motion and Trustee Frye-Clark seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**IV. Recommendations for Tenure Upon Appointment of Faculty Member**

Provost Kimberly McCorkle summarized the qualifications of Dr. Rodney Handy, who was appointed to serve as Professor and Chair in the Department of Environmental Health in the College of Public Health on July 1 of this year. Based on his exceptional qualifications, Dr. McCorkle requested that he be granted tenure upon appointment. Trustee Allen made the

motion that tenure be granted, and Trustee Treadway seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **V. Academic Notification for Period of January 1, 2023, through July 21, 2023**

This agenda item, presented by Provost McCorkle, consisted of two parts: curriculum actions that require Tennessee Higher Education Commission notification and ETSU academic approval items that do not require such notification.

Changes submitted to THEC include:

- Six revisions in student credit hours, most involving a reduction of credits, with the goals of keeping content relevant and avoiding repetition.
- Plans to establish new certificate programs in Healthcare Spanish; Child Advocacy Studies Training; Interprofessional Pediatric Feeding; Educator Job Embedded; Student Affairs; and Child Advocacy Studies.
- Five concentration name changes.
- Four new concentrations within existing programs
- One academic program name change and the termination of the academic concentration in Counselor Leadership.

ETSU approval items include several program policy revisions as well as the establishment of two minors: Synthetic Biology and Forensic Science.

General discussion took place about the length of time required by THEC for program reviews. The consensus was that, in many cases, reviews at the state level are taking far too long. Chair Ayers requested that Provost McCorkle provide a list of curricular actions requiring THEC approval and the status of those approval processes.

### **VI. Provost's Update**

Provost McCorkle's report to the committee consisted of six parts: Academic Administration, Academic Programs and Curriculum, Research and Scholarship, Faculty Affairs, Going Beyond, and Student Success Initiatives.

Her report included the following highlights:

- The Academic Structure Task Force continues its work in designing an academic structure that will more efficiently serve the students, faculty, staff, community, and mission of ETSU.
- This year, ETSU will complete the review of 79 academic policies.

- Accreditation reviews for 2023-24 include Music and Physical Therapy. The review of Nursing included a site visit last week, and Provost McCorkle indicated that it resulted in many positive comments and special praise for ETSU's seven nurse-managed clinics.
- A summary of the status of three new academic programs: Synthetic Biology, Bio-Engineering, and Mechatronics.
- An update on the general education redesign with an expected implementation in the spring of 2024.
- A \$70 million award for sponsored projects for fiscal year 2022 at ETSU with federal awards for the fiscal year totaling over \$22 million, while research and development expenditures topped \$23 million.
- Information on events to promote research participation and foster interdisciplinary collaboration including the ETSU Trailblazer Series and the New Faculty 3-Minute Mixer.
- The welcoming of 120 new faculty who were provided the first of four challenge coins they earn throughout their career at ETSU.
- The launch of a new Campus Read program and that the first book, selected for this year is *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*, by Jamil Zaki.
- A new Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) designation for courses that provide students with community-engaged learning experiences.
- A report from Trent White, President of the ETSU Student Government Association, who spoke about the administration's student-focused approach.
- A report from Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment That highlighted the success of ETSU's Academic Coaching initiative, which pairs incoming students with a trained peer mentor.

President Noland thanked and commended Provost McCorkle and her staff for their efforts to lead some of the most significant academic changes in decades at the university.

## **VII. Tennessee Climate Office Presentation**

The Tennessee Climate Office (TCO), which is part of the ETSU Department of Geosciences, is the official climate office for the state of Tennessee. The committee heard a report on the office's work from Dr. Andrew Joyner, Associate Professor of Geosciences and Tennessee State Climatologist. He was assisted by Wil Tollefson, Lecturer in Geosciences and Tennessee's Assistant State Climatologist.

Dr. Joyner informed the committee that state climate offices provide state-specific products, data, event histories, and archiving. In addition, they coordinate with state agencies on extreme events, hazard mitigation, and other priorities.

Among the office's goals is the creation of a statewide mesonet, which is a weather network that can provide data to a variety of stakeholders, including agriculture, education, emergency management, the energy industry, environmental research, management of prescribed burns

and wildfires, transportation, and weather forecasting. The mesonet proposal involves \$2.7 million for the first year and \$750,000 annually in recurring costs.

Dr. Joyner reviewed several grants currently being administered through his office, including two from FEMA, one from TEMA, and one from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, totaling more than \$1 million.

Discussion by the committee centered around the value of the work being done for the entire state and the need to inform more people about the existence of the Tennessee Climate Office at ETSU.

### **VIII. Annual ETSU Research Corporation Update**

David Golden, Chief Executive Officer of the ETSU Research Corporation, presented an update to the committee on recent accomplishments related to building connections between the university and industry partners to advance regional prosperity and entrepreneurialism. Golden described current initiatives including the RC Content Studio, StoryCollab, the Center for Bioindustrial Manufacturing, the Innovation Lab, the Center for Innovation, K-12 initiatives and partnerships, and the Regional Higher ED<sup>2</sup> Council Initiative. Golden described ways in which the ETSU Research Corporation is working to achieve its mission as it helps to expand ETSU's impact in research and innovation across disciplines. Among the highlights of the report:

- Several hundred individuals attended Growing the Future: A Symposium on Innovation and Education for the Bioeconomy, organized by the Center for Bioindustrial Manufacturing and held last October.
- The occupancy of the Innovation Lab is now at 97 percent, with 22 companies on board.
- The Center for Innovation has established its administrative, financial, and working organization, with several programs in the planning stages and in the process of being established. Among its current programs are the Valleybrook Synbio Industrial Manufacturing Facility and Programs; B-Tech Accelerator; and entrepreneurial and academic software.
- The ETSU Research Corporation has convened the Regional Higher ED<sup>2</sup> Council Initiative to connect regional economic development officers and the innovation/economic development offices of ETSU and other regional higher education entities.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **IX. Committee Discussions**

No further discussions were held.

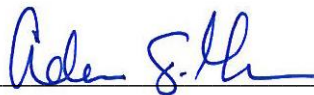
**X. Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the committee.

**XI. Adjournment**

The committee was adjourned by Trustee Ayers at 9:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Adam Green  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its November 17, 2023 meeting.