

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 16, 2018  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee met at 9 a.m. on Friday, November 16, 2018, at the Millennium Center.

**I. Call to Order**

Dr. Linda Latimer, chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, called the meeting to order.

**II. Roll Call**

Deputy Secretary Mr. Nathan Dugger called the roll. Committee members in attendance were:

Dr. Linda Latimer, Chair  
Dr. Fred Alsop  
David Golden  
Scott Niswonger, Chair, Board of Trustees

Not in attendance was Trustee Janet Ayers. Guests in attendance included: Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Vice President for Health Affairs; Dr. Larry Calhoun, Special Assistant to the President and the Vice President for Health Affairs; Scott Carter, Director, Intercollegiate Athletics; Lauren Collier, Tennessee Higher Education Commission; Alyssa Dingus, Institutional Research; Dr. William R. Duncan, Vice Provost for Research; Laura Hesser, Office of the Vice President for Health Affairs; Dr. Mike Hoff, Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Chief Planning Officer; Dr. Jane Jones, Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President; Dr. Karen King, Chief Information Officer and Senior Vice Provost for Information Technology Services; Dr. Sam Mayhew, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Wendy Nehring, Dean, College of Nursing; Dr. Brian Noland, President; Jeremy Ross, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dr. Larry White, Chair, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology; and Ms. Jennifer Hill of University Relations (taking minutes).

### **III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from September 21, 2018**

Trustee Alsop made a motion that the minutes of the September 21, 2018, meeting of the committee be approved and submitted. Trustee Golden seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

### **IV. Proposal for a Revised Pricing Model for an Online M.A. Degree in Criminal Justice**

In the absence of Dr. Bert Bach, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Wilsie Bishop presented a proposal to offer the complete 36-credit M.A. degree in criminal justice online for a total fee of \$19,800, or \$550 per credit. Dr. Bishop stated that there is a need for access across state borders and affordability for criminal justice professionals in the region, and that the program is similar in price and structure to other university programs. She referred committee members to the full text of the proposal in their meeting materials.

Trustee Golden made a motion to adopt the proposal for the revised pricing model for the online M.A. degree in criminal justice. The motion was seconded by Trustee Alsop and approved unanimously.

### **V. University Enrollment Projections and Strategies**

Dr. Mike Hoff delivered a slide presentation titled “Fall 2019 Enrollment Project & International Student Goal” (slides included in committee materials). He said that enrollment projections are important because enrollment provides the foundation of what the university is able to do and allows the administration to frame the budget. He noted that the university has used the Markov Chain model of enrollment projection for four years and that the colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy are not included in the projections. Dr. Hoff said the assumption of a consistent external environment is not true; he said the state has invested heavily in recruiting students to other institutions statewide, and ETSU administration has had to work harder to make sure that students who would benefit the most from starting college at a four-year institution do so. The total main campus projection is 13,689. Dr. Hoff pointed out the figures of 3,786 seniors compared to 1,978 freshmen, and noted that recent increases in graduation and degree production may be affected if the numbers of underclassmen are not filled back in. He said that four-year institutions across the state, including those close to the fast-growing metropolitan area of Nashville, are struggling and did not see enrollment increases this year.

Dr. Hoff said the administration is asking the committee’s endorsement to budget based on a decrease of 100 students at 14,473, which will allow administrators to run the model under such a scenario to project areas that need investment and ensure that critical items are funded.

Dr. Hoff shared several points of strategy that have been discussed, including international students, dual enrollment, CRM (customer-relationship management), scholarships, recruitment area, and marketing. He said that international students are a key part of the plan to increase diversity and build partnerships outside the country. CRM, he said, is a project to communicate with students and make their experience better. Scholarships have been increased in targeted areas, and recruitment has been expanded to a 250-mile radius. A brand awareness marketing-based survey will be conducted soon to help the university develop marketing plans within that radius.

In discussing international recruitment, Dr. Hoff said consultant Jim Crawley, Director of University Recruitment and Outreach for ELS Education Services, Inc., found this year that ETSU's international program is well done but could benefit from investments in recruitment. The university's goal of reaching 1,000 international students by 2026 was on track when it was set, and needs re-endorsement; ETSU is at 505 international students at present. Dr. Hoff said the university would like to take a small portion of current International Merit Scholarship funding to invest in recruitment efforts. He said the amount of money needed for this is small, because international students often have other means of support or have demonstrated the financial ability to be able to attend a university in the U.S., and if the effort is successful, it will allow administration to readjust strategy to allow other investments in retention and graduation.

Trustee Golden noted that ETSU is not alone in declining international enrollment, which is common for various reasons, and asked what unique things ETSU might do to boost recruitment.

Dr. Hoff said the university could do two things: continue to invest in international recruitment by building partnerships that will pay dividends later, and send recruiters to locations where ETSU has existing partnerships. Trustee Golden suggested leveraging relationships with regional companies that have significant international recruitment programs in place. Dr. Hoff also noted that the university could leverage partnership with the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, which has numerous sports that recruit internationally.

President Noland referred back to the enrollment portion of Dr. Hoff's presentation and said the administration is trying to give this committee a line of sight on enrollment projections so members could anticipate how numbers would affect academic and budget strategies. He thanked Chairman Niswonger for his work in providing dual enrollment opportunities for rural high school students; it is hoped that more dual-enrolled students will enroll at the university level after high school. Dr. Noland also told the committee that a wide range of marketing initiatives will begin in 2019 that are also geared toward boosting enrollment.

Chair Latimer confirmed with Dr. Hoff that the matter did not need a motion, but an endorsement.

## **VI. Plan for Path Forward in Research**

President Noland delivered a slide presentation outlining “A Joint Vision for Research Between East Tennessee State University and Ballad Health.” In his presentation, he briefly covered the background of potential opportunities in research that could be provided by the newly formed Ballad Health, which has created a venture capital/investment pool of \$10 million and has spoken of the possibility of investing up to \$8 million annually in research at ETSU. He summarized the findings of various consultants who had reviewed and assessed ETSU’s infrastructure research capacities and identified areas of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. He noted that ETSU’s strategic plan recognizes the need to make research and infrastructure investments in areas of strength, such as infectious disease, addiction and others. He referred to the previous meeting, in which College of Arts and Sciences Dean Dr. Gordon Anderson had identified the need for upgrades in laboratories, and noted that improved start-up packages to support new faculty in research would benefit faculty recruitment efforts. Dr. Noland said ETSU has historically focused on its mission of instruction and service to the region, but needs to ensure that research is also integral to the mission.

President Noland reported that he and Ballad CEO Alan Levine have come to consensus that ETSU and Ballad must develop a path forward and strategically plan together to ensure collaboration across all regional institutions; he noted that the COPA requires the creation of a post-secondary collaborative in which resources from all institutions are used to address the health challenges of the regional population. Noland and Levine have proposed the creation of a new senior level position, possibly a vice president, which would report to both the ETSU president and Ballad CEO. The individual in such a position would direct and coordinate the research and innovation activities resulting from and coordinate strategic planning related to the ETSU-Ballad partnership; oversee cluster hires; and more. Their plan calls for restructuring the ETSU Research Foundation to include not only university employees (as it does now), but also leaders from regional industry, health care and business sectors who would provide guidance and expertise. It also calls for the creation of an ETSU-Ballad Collaborative Research Institute to provide infrastructure for collaborative research, support efforts to recruit new faculty, and more; a Ballad Health-ETSU Innovation Center as a venue for the venture capital fund; an Academic Consortium to coordinate the academic programming development and other related needs among member institutions; and a Center for Rural Health Research, which would build upon the existing Center for Rural Health in Appalachia currently housed in ETSU’s College of Public Health and become a destination center for rural health research. It would also build upon the existing efforts of ETSU’s Center for Prescription Drug Abuse and Treatment and its Overmountain Clinic. Dr. Noland noted that this plan is not yet fully articulated but provides a start in bringing the Ballad-ETSU partnership to fruition, and could be redirected if needed.

In response to a question from Trustee Golden, Dr. Noland stated he is certain that the proposed new position should be at the vice presidential level, but he welcomes the input of board members as the plan is fine-tuned. Trustee Golden requested copies of the full consultants' reports referenced by Dr. Noland, and Dr. Noland said he would send those.

In response to a second question from Trustee Golden, Dr. Noland noted two gaps in the plan. The first is that it does not address the clinical enterprise because it is, so far, focused on research; concerns were raised by consultants about the need to take the currently disparate set of clinical endeavors across campus and integrate them, and he said that work toward that goal is under way. The second is that it does not address other aspects that need to be enhanced in the area of research, including grant support and student research needs. He said the work being done by Dr. William Duncan in Research and Sponsored Programs needs to be strengthened and integrated with the efforts with Ballad.

Discussion ensued on the need to move quickly in putting elements of the partnership in place; opportunities for interdisciplinary research for non-health-related areas of the university; the need for patience, as long-term investments now could yield benefits 10 to 15 years from now; and the need for board members to see more metrics and timelines. Chair Latimer said the board needs to help the university in coming to an actual agreement with Ballad, and President Noland concurred, saying the university is ready. President Noland suggested calling a meeting of the board's Executive Committee prior to the end of the calendar year so that he and Mr. Levine could jointly present the plan to them; he does not want to wait until the February board meeting, as that would cause the legislative window to be missed when the General Assembly convenes in January.

## **VII. Discussion of Effective Use of Academic and Student Affairs Committee Structure and Time**

Chair Latimer told the committee that she had visited the online portal of the Board of Governors that oversees the University of Florida system and found a report by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, titled "Restructuring Board Committees: How to Effectively Create Change," which is included in today's meeting packet. She shared the article to spur thought and discussion on how the board and its committees spend their time. She specifically pointed to the introductory paragraph and pull-out quotation on page 1 of the report, which speak of boards spending "too much board time and attention" on routine reports and operational oversight and not enough on strategic, focused discussion. She said it is important to hear how the university is performing, but that the Board also needs to figure out where it's going.

Trustee Alsop agreed, and stated that while the Academic and Student Affairs Committee has had some times of real discussion, including during this meeting,

there has been little opportunity to hear other board members and learn their thoughts about items being presented. He expressed appreciation for information given, but said he did not feel that board members had enough time for meaningful discussion on items on which they vote. Trustee Golden also agreed and asked how the board and its committees could have more “unscripted” discussion; he said he understands that some “scripted” governance has to occur, but suggested that more meaningful discussion could be sparked by asking better, pointed questions and provide time to think about the answers. He also questioned whether Academic and Student Affairs is the proper name for the committee, but stated that he is happy with where the board is after just 18 months since its inception.

President Noland said that boards across the state are going through a similar process, and at this point, the board members now have a sense of the institution and its mission, people and data; they also have experience and expertise that they can bring to bear in addressing shortcomings. He rhetorically asked how the university positions agendas and the institution itself, and how comfortable we are with having uncomfortable conversations. He stressed the importance of shared governance and said the campus needs to have a sense of the board’s angst, excitement, and support. He pointed out that this is a growing process for the university after 100 years of doing things essentially on its own, and other institutions are in the same process. He welcomed board input on how to structure committee operations, and stated that staff was committed to working with the board.

Regarding shared governance, Trustee Alsop stated that he liked the group assembled today, and would like to see more diversity among those in attendance – more faculty members, more students and more administrators who listen to the conversations and know what is going on. He said he would like to have more dialogue in some way.

Chair Latimer said having a small board as ETSU does is effective, but it is unusual to have a medical school, a nursing school and a pharmacy school and not have a health sciences committee. She said she looked at other schools to see what they were doing, and suggested a discussion about its name, and possibly change it to something like Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee. That would remind members that research is a very important focus and part of the mission. She said tradition is wonderful, but we are in a time of rapid change, and it is important to avoid “silos.” She also pointed to the importance of the Sunshine Law and transparency, but said it is uncomfortable, because it is easy to discuss successes but hard to discuss shortcomings; she said that is a shame, because shortcomings are discussed for the purpose of making things better.

Trustee Golden agreed about both the importance of transparency and the idea of including Research in the committee’s name, particularly after hearing from President Noland about the importance of research.

President Noland questioned whether changing the sequence of board meeting activities would help facilitate conversations, and said that while ETSU has tried to be

mindful of board members' time, some universities are scheduling committee meetings the afternoon before a full board meeting. In addition to changing the sequence of events, some ideas discussed by committee members included having board members eat breakfast with randomly selected employees to get unvarnished truths, continuing the walking tours of the colleges, and taking a bus tour of campus and allowing more time for board members to get to know each other during the next retreat. It was mentioned that the next retreat needs to be placed on board members' calendars as early as possible.

## **VIII. Update on University Strategic Plan**

President Noland noted that he would be touching on the funding model and outcomes performance in his afternoon presentation to the full Board of Trustees. He said the takeaway is that ETSU is ranked second among all institutions in the state in terms of performance in the outcome formula. He referred to feedback from the last Board meeting requesting a clear line of sight and strategy, and said that on a handout being provided to committee members, Dr. Hoff had condensed multiple key performance indicators to two pages, aligned those KPIs to the Strategic Plan, provided data points on where the university is presently, and showed that ETSU is on target to hit its aggressive goal for 2026.

Dr. Noland said this sheet would be presented at every Board meeting going forward to let members know where the university is on KPIs. He noted that the sheet contains the indicators about which he asks most frequently, including numbers of applications, ACT scores, numbers of freshmen and transfers, research expenditures, and numbers of funding proposals submitted and funded.

## **IX. Athletics Initiatives and Success Metrics**

Mr. Scott Carter provided committee members copies of "Taking the Initiative," the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics' 2017-18 annual report covering its academic, athletic, service and business achievements. He called their attention to a number of highlights, including:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.211
- 234 students on Southern Conference Honor Roll
- 141 student-athletes on the Dean's List
- 41 with 4.0 GPAs
- ETSU is the only conference school with two post-graduate scholarship recipients

Mr. Carter told the committee that Nikki Stewart was recently promoted to assistant athletics director for academic services, and her previous position will be filled with a third full-time academic support staff member, continuing to increase focus on

academics following the additions of the new sports of football and triathlon. Not in the annual report is the fact that 63 of ETSU's more than 400 student-athletes were recently awarded the Southern Conference Commissioner's Medal for carrying a 3.8 GPA for the entire academic year. In addition, new turf has been installed inside the Mini-Dome; this project carries a large academic component in that it provides needed practice space for the ETSU marching band and for physical education classes, in addition to practice space for the football team.

In response to a question from Trustee Golden, Mr. Carter said that his top two concerns as an athletic director are how APR (Academic Progress Rate) funds will be distributed from the NCAA through the Southern Conference, which is why it is important to continue to invest in the academic services model of the department, and the NCAA's shift toward easier transfers by student-athletes from one university to another. He said that the more freedom student-athletes have to transfer, the more it could affect the metrics collegiate athletic departments are held accountable for, and it is not yet fully known how some of the NCAA's decisions regarding ease of transfer will affect APR.

There being no further business, Chair Latimer adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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David Linville  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its February 22, 2019 meeting.