

University Council
October 12, 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. Wilsie Bishop, Dr. Bill Block, Dr. Myra Carew, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, 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. Janna Scarborough, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Mr. Joe Smith, Dr. Jeff Snodgrass, Ms. Alicia Williams

Those absent: Ms. Kayla Frank

Others in attendance: Ms. Mary Cradic, Dr. Dennis Depew, Dr. Bill Flora, Mr. David Golden, Mr. Jim Harlan, Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Dr. David Linville, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Jodi Polaha, Dr. Megan Quinn

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve minutes from September 14, 2020 meeting

A motion by Mr. Stephen Hendrix to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Janna Scarborough, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

3.2 Review agenda

Dr. Wilsie Bishop requested that agenda item 5.1 be addressed prior to item 3.3 Voluntary Reports.

3.3 Voluntary Reports of UC-Essential Action Items from Governance Organizations

Ms. Candy Massey reported that Staff Senate committee membership is finalized, and a new website and newsletter will launch soon.

Mr. Shivam Patel had no report from the Student Government Association.

Mr. Stephen Hendrix noted that Faculty Senate passed several resolutions in appreciation of custodial workers and ITS staff. Policy reviews and reporting continues.

Dr. Allen Gorman said the Council of Chairs continues to work on leadership development opportunities, the next of which will be facilitated by Dr. Janna Scarborough.

Ms. Alicia Williams said the Graduate and Professional Student Association continues to co-sponsor virtual events such as Library 101, Women on Wednesdays, and a leadership series with the Multicultural Center.

Dr. Karen King (Information Technology Council) said the outdoor wireless project is moving quickly and is on track to finish before Nov. 14. Esports is moving computers into the new esports arena in the D.P. Culp Student Center.

Dr. William Duncan (Research Council) reported that work continues with Ballad Health to establish the appropriate procedures for faculty and staff to conduct research utilizing the health system's data and facilities. This follows Ballad Health's decision to establish its own IRB. The process for obtaining administrative approval was shared in the President's Weekly Update newsletter. All ETSU studies will continue to be reviewed by ETSU's IRB with administrative approval needed for Ballad Health facilities.

Dr. Scott Carter noted that Athletics has engaged in competition for men's golf and men's and women's tennis this fall. The finalization of men's and women's basketball schedules is underway. The forthcoming spring schedule will be very active as fall teams are scheduled to compete. The Athletic Department recently announced a new fundraising initiative called "All Hands on Deck" to address challenges created by the pandemic.

Dr. Bishop (Academic Council) noted the approval of a new MBA program concentration in health care marketing, and the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences received approval for the orthotics and prosthetic master's program curriculum proposal, which moves forward to THEC for review.

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 Two Chairs of Excellence

Dr. Dennis Depew introduced Mr. Jim Harlan, Professor of Practice and AFG Chair of Excellence in Business and Technology, and Mr. David Golden, Professor of Practice and Allen and Ruth Harris Chair of Excellence in Business ([attachment](#)). Both individuals expressed excitement for the opportunity to join the ETSU faculty and build relationships across the College of Business and Technology and the region.

5.2 Proposal for Committee on Committee Sub-Council

When the University Council was established a work group brought forth the

structure and infrastructure for how it would operate, including two sub councils on quality effectiveness and budget planning, Dr. Bishop said. With forthcoming changes in the Office of the President due to retirements, it is time to think about how to best handle committee governance across the university. Ms. Mary Cradic has handled this for a number of years as she has collected names from the various groups, maintained the website, and accepted reports. Following discussion with Ms. Cradic and Dr. Susan Epps, who has had a significant role on the Committee on Committees in Faculty Senate, Dr. Bishop said she sent a note to both Faculty Senate and Staff Senate about the proposal. Both bodies saw it as an opportunity to move toward a smoother selection of committee members and assure the responsibility and accountability of standing committees. In fact, there are pages of standing committees, some that have not met for a number of years, she explained.

The proposal is to create a sub-council of University Council on university governance - a committee on committees, or another suggested name. This group, Dr. Bishop noted, would coordinate with other governing bodies across campus to assist with membership appointments, collect annual reports, and provide updates to University Council. This tie to ETSU's governing body would be an opportunity to report beneficial work that otherwise might not be shared, she said.

This working committee would make sure the standing committees are current and up to date, and Office of the President would continue to make sure the information is available online. It was suggested that undergraduate and graduate students also be represented on the committee.

Dr. Noland thanked Ms. Cradic for her work in university governance for a significant number of years. He offered support for the proposal and said it brings an important part of the operations of the university into greater transparency and enhances shared governance

Dr. Bishop said she would work to develop a written proposal for the University Council to vote on at the November meeting.

[5.3 Update on ETSU Surveys of Faculty, Staff, and Students](#)

Dr. Noland held a series of focus groups Sept. 14 through Oct. 1 as part of the Committee for 125 Part II. Four focus groups of 20 students revealed the following themes:

- Desire extended hours for services
- Review the one guest dorm policy
- Desire for more social events
- Broader variety of food options
- Some courses converted from on-ground to remote not providing expected level of instruction
- Mental health concern, specifically how cold weather will impact ability to be outdoors
- University communication is good and transparency appreciated

- Thankful for in-person engagement opportunities
- Noticed missteps experienced by friends at other schools and thankful their semester was not disrupted

Dr. Hoff made a call for questions to ask faculty and students in future surveys and focus groups. He said student focus group participants were a mix of gender, race, ethnicity, class level, and both on- and off-campus residents selected by Student Life and Enrollment.

6. President's Report

6.1 [State of the University](#)

In many respects, Dr. Noland said, this has been a unique fall, but who we are as institution has not changed at all. The major campus decisions impacted by COVID-19 – course delivery, health, and safety – were driven by faculty, staff, and the medical team. The cost of single occupancy residence halls was not passed on to the students, he added. ETSU continues to be distinctive and is one of the only institutions in the state conducting random sampling/testing.

The Great Colleges to Work For survey was distributed in the middle of the pandemic, but the results show significant growth in several areas. There are still areas to improve in, but, overall, campus averages have increased, Dr. Noland said.

He then focused on enrollment, which is down 474 this fall but within budget confidence intervals set during the summer. Unless something unexpected comes from the spring legislative session in Nashville, the budget is set for the year.

Almost every institution across the state saw decreased enrollment at the undergraduate level, but graduate enrollment helped to balance overall numbers. Enrollment at community colleges has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, which will impact transfer numbers in the future.

ETSU's enrollment is more diverse this fall with more African American and Hispanic students attending; however, fewer males are choosing to attend college, a trend extending across the state.

Dr. Noland said if international enrollment had remained constant, the university would not have seen an enrollment decline. International enrollment is not likely to rebound anytime soon; therefore, we are focusing on increasing out-of-state enrollment. As we feared, many high school graduates have decided to take a gap year; nevertheless, our freshman class is academically prepared with constant average GPA and ACT scores. This fall, ETSU had its highest retention rate (78 percent) and graduation rate (50 percent) in the history of the institution.

Next, Dr. Noland discussed the budget and stressed the importance of the work that took place over the summer to prepare for multiple budget scenarios. Administrative units took a larger percentage reduction (5.3 percent) compared to academic units (4.3 percent). He said the university is in a very different position than other schools

facing 25 percent base budget cuts and cautioned units to be judicious about filling vacancies and to hold on to positions if possible.

The ETSU Committee for 125 Chapter II is launching now in an adjusted manner, Dr. Noland said. First, we will celebrate the accomplishments of the last decade:

- New budget model
- Transforming Advancement
- Restructuring Student Affairs
- Launching a unified brand
- Performing arts center
- \$85 million raised toward the \$120 million “Campaign for ETSU”
- Top performing institution in the state last year in THEC outcomes formula

There are things we can focus on going forward, specifically ETSU’s regional mission that takes us back to our normal school roots, Dr. Noland said. In terms of the education pipeline, a quarter of high school seniors graduate with bachelor's degrees. If we are to hit the goal of 55% of Tennesseans with some sort of postsecondary credential and grow the economy, we have work to do, he stated.

The Committee for 125 Chapter II will include analyzing new initiatives and alignments, and then implementing the changes as we move forward. Some of this work is underway, Dr. Noland explained. Surveys and focus groups will continue and by next October on Founders Day a revised plan will be presented to campus.

6.2. Spring 2021 Academic Calendar Options

Dr. Noland shared a series of proposed adjustments to the spring 2021 academic calendar ([attachment](#)). These options have been shared with individuals across the campus community and Dr. Bishop has communicated the proposal with shared governance in academics. Feedback from University Council was requested before making an official recommendation.

The four calendar options include:

- 1 – No changes to the calendar
- 2 – No spring break and delay start of semester by a week (Jan. 25) and conclude by May 6
- 3 – Start on time (Jan. 19) but remove spring break and shorten the semester
- 4 – Start on time, no formal spring break but distribute across spring semester

Dr. Noland recommended option 4. He asked for feedback and input and Mr. Shivam Patel offered his support for option 4. Dr. Sam Mayhew said option 4 would have virtually no impact on Financial Aid. Dr. Bill Block recommended messaging about taking precautions if traveling during intermittent breaks.

Dr. Noland clarified that option 4 does not add holidays to the employee calendar, as

the university would continue to be open during intermittent breaks just as it is for spring, although administrative day(s), similar to what was provided in the fall, would be explored. A poll was conducted with 89 percent of respondents choosing option 4.

Dr. Noland assured that campus communication about the academic calendar changes would be clear, and Dr. Bishop said course categories for spring would also be communicated and it is very probable that the university will continue in an 80/20 distribution of remote and on-ground courses. Dr. Noland anticipates that ETSU will hold a virtual commencement in December similar to spring.

7. Announcements

Dr. Scarborough said Access ETSU successfully launched last year with its first student Garrison Buchanan and an additional student was added this fall. Faculty in Special Education have received a \$2.5 million grant to expand the program and allow families to access financial aid to participate. Access ETSU will be able to enroll 10 students next fall.

Dr. Keith Johnson said the Equity and Inclusion Conference had close to 400 participants and diversity training is being piloted this month with the goal of offering the training campus wide in the spring semester.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.