

**University Council**  
**June 8, 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. Joseph Bidwell, Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Dr. Bill Block, Mr. Scott Carter, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. Dennis Depew, Dr. William Duncan, Dr. Susan Epps, Ms. Kayla Frank, Dr. Adam Green, Mr. Stephen Hendrix, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Dr. Karin Keith, Dr. B.J. King, Dr. Karen King, Ms. Candy Massey, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Dr. Brian Noland, Mr. Shivam Patel, Ms. Pamela Ritter, Dr. David Roane, Mr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Don Samples, Dr. Jana Scarborough, Mr. Joe Smith, Ms. Alicia Williams,

Those absent were: Dr. Mark Fulks, Dr. Claudia Kozinetz, Dr. Joe Sherlin

Others in attendance: Dr. David Linville, Ms. Mary Cradic, Ms. Amanda Mowell, Dr. Kason O'Neil

3. Standing Items

3.1 Approve [minutes](#) from May 11, 2020 meeting

A motion by Dr. Don Samples to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. David Roan, 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

Mr. Stephen Hendrix had no updates to report for Faculty Senate.

Ms. Candy Massey said details are forthcoming on how Staff Senate will present Distinguished Staff Awards to recipients.

Dr. Karen King had no updates to report from Information Technology Council.

Dr. William Duncan announced that the contract has been signed for the electronic administration software. The program will make it easier to follow, submit, and manage grants. Implementation will take 6-8 months. Also, researchers began returning to labs June 1. The transition is going smoothly, and he is hopeful that the remainder of labs will reopen June 15.

Mr. Shivam Patel had no updates to report for Student Government Association.

Dr. Joe Bidwell (Council of Chairs) announced that Drs. Claudia Kozinetz and David Roane are finishing their terms on University Council and the new representatives selected are Drs. Myra Carew (Nursing) and Jeff Snodgrass (Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences).

Dr. Bishop provided a report from Academic Council. New concentrations were established in the MBA program – business analytics, cyber security management, as well as a new certificate in forensic nursing. The proposals have been submitted to THEC and upon approval will become part of our academic inventory.

Academic Council also received the final report from the SGA resolution encouraging faculty to use D2L instead of digital products and services for quizzes and tests. The report includes four recommendations and Dr. Bishop said the report will be shared with other shared governance groups, including University Council, and she asked that a presentation be added to the July agenda.

A new academic department has been established in the Quillen College of Medicine. The Department of Medical Education will focus on medical education efforts and provide more rapid assessment and implementation of changes to the curriculum to meet accreditation standards. The implementation of the department is effective July 1, and, since this was a reorganized effort, there are no new costs associated with the department.

Academic Council has invested significant work in looking at curriculum and ways we can best attract students to the university because of the kinds of academic programs offered. A modification to the bachelor's of music was approved in order to create a Bachelor of Arts in Music for students who were not interested in following the professional career path but wanted the music theory that could support their work outside of musical talents. The department worked with THEC to allow us to count both bachelor's degrees together, Bishop said.

Academic Council also received a report from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee ([attached](#)). Over the last year, the committee has reviewed 65 proposals, approved 59 revisions and 6 new programs. A report from the Graduate Council is forthcoming, Bishop said.

#### 4. President's Report

##### 4.1 COVID-19 Response Update

Dr. Noland spoke about events that have unfolded across the nation and reopened a wound that has existed for centuries. He asked members to reflect upon their leadership and look at how our decisions impact our values of and goals of equity and inclusion. The next couple of months, he noted, will be unprecedented in terms of pace and urgency of issues. Dr. Noland then encouraged everyone to read the [Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter](#) that includes a letter written by Dr. Keith Johnson.

As we look toward the fall semester, there are many questions surrounding safety and a broad range of issues to address. The Future Operations Workgroup has prepared its

[report](#) that will serve as a guide as the institution transitions from its current state to a soft opening June 15 that allows units the remainder of the month to prepare for the reopening of campus in July. As Dr. Duncan noted earlier in the meeting, research faculty and staff have returned to campus, and there will be more activity leading up to the next University Council Meeting, Dr. Noland said. He has asked Jeremy Ross to provide an overview next month of the work that Facilities is doing to ensure our buildings are ready for the return of students, faculty, and staff. Bill Rasnick has returned to ETSU to lead the COVID-19 response from the Facilities perspective.

Last month, Dr. Noland referenced potential “thunderstorms,” which are now coming much closer to the horizon. A few weeks ago, Gov. Lee’s office asked state agencies to begin preparing for significant budget reductions – ranging from 10-15%. Mr. Ross and Dr. Mike Hoff will discuss the ongoing work of the Strategic Options Workgroup. A budget reduction target of \$12.8 million may be needed by the beginning of the fall semester. There will be no examination of raising tuition and passing those costs along to students, Dr. Noland said. We as a campus will roll up our sleeves and get to work making those budget adjustments. More details will be provided as the General Assembly moves closer to finalizing the budget.

Dr. Noland then provided a legislative update as the House and Senate continue to take up bills, many of which will not likely gain traction, but are still being discussed. One bill that has been passed by both chambers affords the opportunity for our Board of Trustees to meet in a virtual format without some of the technical roll calls. Another piece of legislation would make changes to the Tennessee Lottery and would remove the credit limitation on the HOPE Scholarship. A literacy bill has also generated a great deal of discussion and will likely roll forward to the fall.

#### 4.2 ETSU Future Operations Workgroup

Dr. David Linville said the Future Operations Workgroup invested a lot of time and energy to develop a [plan](#) that is functional and useful. The report starts with some guiding principles because as a University it is important to pay attention to the larger strategy and not get lost in the tactical responses that were necessary as the pandemic was accelerating, he noted. The report is a tool and framework that can be used to make decisions between four different stages of operations depending on what the pandemic is doing. It provides flexibility at the department and unit level. Innovation and flexibility were critical to our success in March, Dr. Linville added.

Next, Dr. Noland opened the floor for questions. Several issues were discussed, including benefits eligibility for adjunct faculty and the metrics that will be monitored and what would prompt the decision to change the current operational stage. The flexibility for colleges and departments to determine the best means of instructional delivery was also discussed. Dr. Bishop said she is working with the deans to operationalize the recommendations report. The document will include parameters and specific guidance for things colleges and departments should work on such as physical distancing in classrooms and more.

Next, Dr. Bishop presented a draft of the revised Academic Calendar for Fall 2020 ([attachment 1](#); [attachment 2](#)). Dr. Noland said institutions around the country are considering changes to the fall semester in anticipation of a second wave of the

coronavirus. The recommendation brought forward for consideration includes adjustments to the holiday structure so that when students go home for Thanksgiving they do not return to campus – faculty and staff will return, but the final week of courses and exams will be offered remotely. Essentially, the revised calendar removes Labor Day, Veterans Day, and Fall Break and moves them to the first two days of the week of Thanksgiving. The University would be closed Nov. 23-27. Instruction would continue after Thanksgiving by remote modalities, and exams would begin on Saturday. Dr. Bishop said proctoring packages for exams are being identified. Discussion ensued around concerns about testing integrity for final exams and how these revised calendar might impact graduate students presenting dissertations.

Dr. Noland encouraged University Council members to discuss this proposal with colleagues. After sharing with other groups and collecting feedback, a final decision will be announced in the coming weeks, and the Board of Trustees will take action for approval at a forthcoming called meeting.

#### 4.3 ETSU Strategic Options Workgroup

Dr. Noland said the Strategic Options Workgroup is operating under the assumption that the state budget will be significantly reduced. Because of the way the state may implement cuts it could change the timeline by needing to make more cuts up front instead of later. Reduction targets have been communicated with each unit lead, and they have been asked to estimate cost-saving tactics by June 15. The workgroup is also developing a voluntary retirement incentive plan and will conclude its final report by July 1, Dr. Hoff said.

This workgroup, or another committee, will likely need to meet again in September once we know about enrollment and have a better idea of state budget projects, he added. The workgroup started with 67 possible items for reduction and has been very thoughtful, making sure that our values are considered, and reduced that number to 10-15. The last thing the workgroup has agreed it would want to do is implement furloughs so as not to jeopardize service or quality. We think the best approach is to target things that do not have the return we intend or seem to be outside the mission, Dr. Hoff stated.

Mr. Ross added that the decentralized budget model provides options to get the University to the \$12.8 million reduction target. The workgroup has looked to see how other institutions are addressing budget cuts and approaches vary across the country.

Dr. Noland explained that throughout ETSU's history, people have always come first, and that will continue. Cost savings put into place may not be popular, but actions will be made to protect benefits-eligible full-time faculty and staff.

Dialog commenced about how cuts would be incorporated into the budget model and what it means for academic departments. Dr. Hoff said the budget is currently being modeled based on an estimated decrease of 300 students with shared reductions across the colleges. When the decreases come in, it is likely they will have a higher

impact on some colleges more than others, especially because 74% of credit hours taken by freshmen are in the College of Arts and Sciences, he noted. If we end up better than 300, we will run the budget model and make collective decisions.

Dr. Noland finished his report by encouraging University Council members to reach out to colleagues and ask how they are doing. He said it is also time for the campus and community to have some conversations that are difficult. He asked for members to remind colleagues about social media and influence and who we are as a campus and to model our values on campus and in the virtual space.

## 5. Action Items

### 5.1 Old Business

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

### 5.2 New Business

#### 5.2.1. Election of 2020-21 University Council Vice Chair

Dr. Bishop has served as University Council Vice Chair for two years. Dr. Noland recommended she remain in the position for another year.

Dr. Susan Epps made a motion to approve the recommendation that was seconded by Dr. Dennis Depew. The recommendation was unanimously approved.

## 6 Information Items/Presentations

### 6.1 Update on University Council Membership for 2020-21

Ms. Kayla Frank is the new representative for Graduate and Professional Students Association and Ms. Alicia Williams will continue as the alternate.

As previously noted, Drs. Claudia Kozinetz and David Roane are finishing their terms on University Council and the new representatives selected are Drs. Myra Carew (Nursing) and Jeff Snodgrass (Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences).

Dr. Dennis Depew will rotate off University Council and a new dean will be selected.

Acting Staff Senate Vice President Ms. Lisa Booher is replacing Mr. Andrew Worley as Staff Senate representative on University Council.

New University Council members will be welcomed in July.

### 6.2 Strategic Plan Update and Future Planning Outlook

Dr. Hoff said at some institutions planning is very formal with lengthy presentations, but ETSU has moved to more decentralized plans. Colleges have strategic plans built off the University's plan. One example is Diversity and Inclusion – the operational recommendation was to have a vice president and the pieces of the plan were minimal because it was expected that the individual in that position would lead the development of the plan. There has also been a lot of work around Facilities and ETSU's role as a place for enlightenment, development, and cultural change.

Dr. Hoff said he views planning as a collection of items that everyone does to

represent the institution. He shared two important KPIs – the fall 2019-20 retention rate is currently 75%, a 3% increase over last year. The graduation rate is 51% of start at ETSU, end at ETSU (fall 2014). These are almost the highest rates in the history of the institution.

### 6.3 Enrollment Update

Dr. Mayhew presented an update for fall and an overview of the last three months ([attachment](#)). The Board of Trustees approved no fee increases for tuition, housing, and meal plans; therefore, Admissions has been working with University Relations to share this affordability message called the “ETSU Advantage.”

ETSU Promise Plus launched in January, and nearly 500 inquiries and 124 students are in the program for fall. Work continues to identify students who are eligible. Last month, Free Freshman Tuition launched with over 200 inquiries to date. Housing is at 82% occupancy rate.

CARES Act funding has been distributed and qualifying students have received communication. Also, Academic Advising units are busy and sending postcards to those who have not registered for fall and those enrolled below fulltime.

When students went remote in March, Admissions saw a decline in applications that has since picked back up for both freshman and transfer applications in May. Dr. Mayhew compared new student orientation numbers to previous years and said 2020 headcount is slightly ahead of 2019. He and Dr. Hoff said they felt comfortable that current enrollment projections are within the confidence intervals.

Dr. Bishop noted that Drs. Joe Sherlin and Mayhew provided an enrollment and retention update to Academic Council. She said these teams are working effectively together, and she is pleased with the progress being made.

## 7 Announcements

Dr. Bishop said the Advisement Taskforce has presented its report and more information on advisement structure and activities will be shared in July.

## 8 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.