

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

September 21, 2018
Johnson City, Tennessee

The quarterly meeting of the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees was held at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 21, in the Reece Museum 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

Chair Scott Niswonger called the meeting to order.

In his opening remarks, Chair Niswonger welcomed everyone to the seventh meeting of the ETSU Board of Trustees, which was moved to the museum due to the construction project at the Culp Center. Chair Niswonger noted that much work continues on campus, including projects like the Martin Center. He called it a busy start to the semester and added that enrollment figures look solid. Chair Niswonger also welcomed Mr. Mike Krause from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

II. Roll Call

Secretary David Linville called the roll, and the following trustees were in attendance:

Fred Alsop
Janet Ayers
David Golden
Dorothy Grisham
Linda Latimer
Keyana Miller
Scott Niswonger
Jim Powell
Ron Ramsey

III. Approval of the Minutes of April 27, 2018, Meeting

Trustee Alsop made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 27, 2018, Board of Trustees meeting. It was seconded by Trustee Ayers and unanimously approved.

IV. Consent Agenda

With no requests for any items to be removed from the consent agenda, trustees unanimously approved the consent agenda with a motion from Trustee Grisham and a second from Trustee Latimer. Items included on the consent agenda are:

- A. Minutes from the April 27, 2018, Finance and Administration Committee meeting

- B. Minutes from the April 27, 2018, Academic and Student Affairs Committee
- C. Minutes from the April 27, 2018, Audit Committee
- D. Minutes from the April 27, 2018, Executive Committee
- E. Policies from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee
- F. College of Nursing Insurance Payments Bank Account

V. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

Committee Chair Steve DeCarlo noted that Mr. Jeremy Ross presented an update on construction projects. He said B.J. King presented on the Tuition Transparency and Accountability Act, which requires a 15-day notice of the meeting in which tuition and fees will be voted on, among other provisions.

VI. Report from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Committee Chair Latimer reported that the committee reviewed a number of academic and student policies; learned of an ad hoc group's work regarding STEM; and had a robust discussion on ways the group would like to see the committee approach strategy. She also said that the group had approved for the full board's approval the granting of tenure to Graduate Studies Dean Dr. Sharon McGee. Dr. Bert Bach then presented the item for the board's approval and it was unanimously approved.

VII. Report from the Audit Committee

Committee Chair Golden reported that the Audit Committee met that morning and reviewed audits and investigations performed since the last meeting. The group also reviewed and approved the audit plan for the coming year and heard more about the QAIP self assessment and audit validation. Chair Golden said the QAIP self-assessment is a robust processes that includes a self-assessment and independent validators coming in. He said the validators found general conformance with a couple of recommendations for improvements.

VIII. Title IX Report from Athletics

Dr. Richard Sander presented a report on Title IX compliance. A 2007 major study at ETSU on Title IX served as the baseline for Sander's report. Sander explained that Title IX laws were passed in 1972 and, in 1975 was interpreted as it relates to collegiate athletics. He noted that there are 13 areas of review, with the two most significant being participation and financial aid. He shared definitions of "violation" versus "disparity" and "duplicated" versus "unduplicated."

He also shared what he called the "three-prong" test that looks at (1) proportionate participation, (2) program expansion and (3) demonstrating accommodations are made regardless of program expansion. He said ETSU is not compliant in any of the three prongs.

There are essentially three ways to become compliant: (1) add sports, (2) manage roster sizes and (3) eliminate sports. Dr. Sander said ETSU needs to look at adding another sport and identified possible women's sports to be considered, broken down into three tiers. He said his report utilized the 2015-16 strategic plan for determining

the sports. The first tier includes sports that are most feasible and most likely to be added: bowling, lacrosse, swimming and diving, and acrobatics and tumbling.

To become compliant by 2022-23, duplicated percentages must be 54 percent for women and 46 percent for men. Currently they are 40 percent and 60 percent, respectively. Unduplicated school assistance should be at 45 percent for women and 55 percent for men. Sander said the institution will also have to be very strict with mandated roster sizes. He noted that as you raise participation opportunities for women, you also have to increase the percentage of scholarship offerings.

Dr. Sander said the university wants to invest in the sports it has that are most successful, citing examples such as volleyball, women's soccer and women's basketball, so we can win conference championships and spread the brand.

In terms of the source of funding, Dr. Sander proposed increasing the student fee by \$25 starting in 2019. The increase only applies to new students coming in; current students won't see the increase. An additional \$25 will be added each year for all new students. Within five to six years, that would generate approximately \$1.4 million toward becoming compliant.

Trustee Powell asked what the penalty is for not being compliant. Dr. Sander said an institution can lose all of its federal funding for every program – not just athletics. Typically, though, if you have a plan in place, they work with you, he added.

Dr. Sander said the report presented just one option for moving toward compliance. Chair Niswonger authorized Dr. Noland to take the steps necessary to remain compliant and bring recommendations back to the Board of Trustees.

IX. Board of Trustees Self Evaluation Policy

Dr. Linville presented a draft policy that he said expands what is available and provides guidance on how to conduct the self-evaluation. He said it would include an anonymous survey each year with leadership's review for the Board of Trustees. Assessments can periodically be more in depth in terms of how the group wants to make improvements.

Trustee Ayers made a motion to approve the policy. It was seconded by Trustee Golden and unanimously approved.

X. Research and Economic Development

Dr. Noland introduced Dr. Paul Hill, chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education System. Dr. Hill compiled a report for ETSU after the Board of Trustees requested the university look at ways to grow research. His report focuses on the physical structure of research at ETSU.

Dr. Hill said he believed there was great opportunity at ETSU, largely because there is a good foundation that can help with competing among peers for the money available to institutions. He cited reasons to advance research, including academic enterprise, knowledge creation, addressing needs and economic development. Ultimately, he said, universities are about students and there is great learning that occurs through research.

In terms of advancing research, Dr. Hill emphasized several items, including focus and "BIG" questions. He said the centers of excellence already at ETSU are key targets for investments. He also said the Office of Sponsored Programs at ETSU

might need to grow. Other items he mentioned included making strategic investments, recruitment and partnerships, competitiveness and enterprise funding. He also spoke of economic development near universities, explaining the “fountain effect” and how businesses like to locate near universities.

In Dr. Hill’s experience in growing research in West Virginia, he said it occurred steadily through base investments from the state, and then getting more and more federal funds.

He offered near-term goal suggestions for assessment and action, including how to apply initial funding and invest it strategically to get stronger; having a strategic plan, recruitment and continuous infrastructure investments. He said start-up packages will be needed in recruiting faculty. Mid-term goals include capitalizing on outcomes, recognizing intellectual property, patenting and licensing policies, initializing business development and a business incubator on campus. Long-term goals should include capital investments, venture capital, and job growth.

Dr. Hill said ETSU is on a great trajectory. He said that it is a competitive market, but there are ways of getting into the market and getting funding.

Chair Niswonger asked Dr. Hill what the first three things are in terms of where ETSU needs to start. Dr. Hill said he has identified five centers at ETSU that show competitiveness. He said the university has to turn to the faculty and consult the centers about where they are going and what the gaps are that need to be filled to get there. He said ETSU should ask faculty to make proposals as to how they’d grow research, saying that is the very first thing he would do.

Dr. Noland asked whether Dr. Hill felt the university had sufficient staff to absorb the expectations that are to come with the Ballard merger. Dr. Hill said he would recommend growing some of those positions and make it readily apparent so faculty knows there is someone there to help with the red tape and paperwork. Dr. Noland also asked about how ETSU begins identifying clusters and works toward strategic improvement. Dr. Hill said it is about creating a research culture and expectation. He said that it is not evident here and it should grow over time. He asked whether research is valued in the tenure policy, noting that the institution needs to set the tone so that research is an expectation at ETSU. He also suggested using the Ballard funds to build firepower.

Trustee Alsop pointed out that vacancies are often looked at in terms of teaching load and that problems arise in prioritizing teaching versus prioritizing research. He asked how you create a culture where both are valued. Dr. Hill suggested finding a model in which you can use funds to buy out a faculty member’s time.

XI. President’s Report

Dr. Noland noted that the first day of class this semester was atypical with the required lockdown of campus because of an incident at the Culp construction site. Through a request for feedback, leadership has learned a lot from the incident. Dr. Noland said next steps include more security cameras on campus, potentially making Gold Alert an opt-out system; training programs and enhancing cell coverage. Overall, he gave the university a B+ for its response to the event on the first day of the semester.

Next, Dr. Noland addressed enrollment, noting that total enrollment is down 39 students from last year. He said the university surpassed its projections, with FTE numbers up slightly and undergraduate numbers down. He said it is once again the largest graduate enrollment in the history of the university. North Carolina numbers are down due to the institution of North Carolina Promise. International numbers are down by 121 students, a direct impact of federal policy, he said. Dr. Noland is hopeful that process improvements like the new CRM will help with enrollment. The total number of freshmen is down 74, however the academic competitiveness of the class is strong. He noted that the number of high school graduates across the country is expected to decline, causing a 15 percent decline in traditional students. This is something to be mindful of, he said. Trustee Alsop asked about the DACA impact. Dr. Noland said state law does not allow for state support for DACA students and noted that private universities are growing in that demographic because they can offer financial support. Trustee Ayers emphasized that there needs to be an employment piece to this, too, noting that DACA students who graduate cannot be hired due to their status. In terms of student success, Dr. Noland cited a 73.12 percent retention rate and noted that last year was the largest graduating class in the history of the university.

Dr. Noland then introduced Dr. Wallace Dixon to discuss a plan to become the first trauma informed campus in the nation. Dr. Dixon talked about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the chronic exposure to toxic stress, noting that the more ACEs you accrue, the more likely you are to die from them. Five colleges at ETSU – Education, Medicine, Public Health, Nursing and Arts and Sciences – formed a “brain trust” and are working to develop an attack on ACES, with the goal of becoming a trauma informed campus. A trauma informed campus will prevent attrition and grow the student body while also producing ACEs-literate graduates. Dr. Noland noted that ACEs impact health and long-term outcomes and suggested bringing forward a formal plan to become the first-ever trauma informed campus. Chair Niswonger called it an excellent idea.

Continuing with this report, Dr. Noland shared selected initiatives for the 2018-19 year. They include an enrollment focus; launch of an institutional marketing campaign to support the growth agenda; development of new academic programs aligning with market needs; continued work with decentralized budget, which allows for flexibility to colleges to manage their resources; development of KPIs and metrics; Title IX from the Human Resources perspective; continued safety efforts and pursuit of ICLEA accreditation; moving fraternities to create Greek Village; creation of ETSU Health; enhance research structure; continue with capital projects; create structures to support service mission; launch presidential fellows program; launch capital campaign; and continue with HR restructure.

In terms of legislative initiatives, ETSU will continue its support for the outcomes formula and push for pharmacy school tuition equalization. Additional areas of focus will include a campus safety initiative; state support for research; addressing predictability for capital projects; support for deferred maintenance projects; and support of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, new governor and legislative leadership as they develop the higher education agenda.

Dr. Noland next introduced THEC's executive director, Mr. Mike Krause and asked him to present to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Krause noted that, in 2013, only 33.8 percent of Tennessee residents had a degree and the state then instituted comprehensive higher education reform. Through such things as Tennessee Reconnect and the Focus Act, the result is 62.5 percent more Tennesseans going to college. The state now sees 64 percent of all graduating high school students go on to further their education. The state has seen an unprecedented level of investment in higher education, moving the state to 13th in the nation for it. He noted THEC will soon ask the boards of the locally governed institutions to join the THEC board in advocating for continued investment in higher education. Mr. Krause noted that ETSU has moved to the front of the pack in terms of fall-to-fall retention among the LGIs and called ETSU a "regional rutter in culture, scholarship and health care." He noted that students are succeeding at ETSU, which has resulted in an 18 percent increase in state funds for the university through the outcomes-based formula. Bachelor's degrees have been the engine for ETSU's funding, he added. ETSU has also essentially doubled its number of veterans in approximately five years. Challenges include a deep college graduate deficit in rural areas and the need to equalize college graduate numbers as the state's next goal. Another challenge is the low-income student who does not have the same chance at success. Closing the gap between low-income and mid-income students is the state's great task over the next few years, Mr. Krause said. Chairman Niswonger asked Mr. Krause for his advice in terms of the pharmacy school garnering state-supported scholarships to address the tuition disparity. Mr. Krause noted that when THEC initially considered the pharmacy school, the parameters were generally not to depend on state funds, however, an exception was written into the agreement that could allow for the assistance. Mr. Krause said he and Dr. Noland had agreed that the student scholarship approach was the best option and said the proposal that was brought forward last year was deemed to be satisfying by THEC.

XII. Other Business

Mr. Niswonger noted that, as chairman of the Board of Trustees, he has the responsibility of coordinating the evaluation of ETSU's president. He noted that members of the Executive Committee had been individually reviewing and an evaluation and employment agreement would be finalized this week.

Chair Niswonger also asked the trustees to authorize Dr. Noland to execute the purchase of the Millennium Centre. Trustee Golden made a motion to authorize. It was seconded by Trustee Grisham and unanimously approved.

Finally, Chair Niswonger pointed out that staff recently completed a request for proposals to select banking services. He asked trustees to authorize Dr. Noland to execute the banking services agreement. Trustee Alsop made a motion to authorize, which was seconded by Trustee Ayers. The motion was approved unanimously, with Trustee Latimer abstaining.

XIII. Adjournment

Chair Niswonger adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David Linville
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its November 16, 2018 meeting.