



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY



October 2, 2019

State of the University Address today at 10:30 a.m.

I encourage everyone to attend my annual State of the University Address today at 10:30 a.m. in the Millennium Center ballroom. I will provide a campus update to our students, faculty, and staff regarding new university initiatives, enrollment and retention, budgets, and construction projects. The presentation will also include a discussion of other emerging themes across the higher education landscape. For those who are unable to attend in person, the event can be viewed via [livestream](#). I hope to see you there.

National Custodial Worker's Recognition Day

Our Faculty Senate and Staff Senate recently passed a resolution recognizing and expressing appreciation to our custodians, maintenance workers, grounds crew and other staff who work each day to care for all of ETSU's facilities and grounds. October 2 is National Custodial Worker's Recognition Day. As I have said on many occasions, East Tennessee State University has one of the most beautiful campuses in the country, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Facilities team. Take the opportunity today to say thank you to these men and women who make ETSU such a wonderful place to work.

Fall 2019 Enrollment Report

As anticipated, our overall enrollment for the fall 2019 semester was relatively flat but within our budget confidence intervals. Our current enrollment of 14,441 reflects a decrease of 133 students. Though overall enrollment was down, some colleges did see growth, including the Clemmer College (up 2%) College of Nursing (up 5%), and the College of Public Health, which saw an increase of 7% in enrollment. In addition, our Dual-Enrollment participation increased by 57%.

I will speak in more detail about enrollment during my State of the University Address today.

ETSU sets record for highest graduation rate

I am pleased to share with the campus community that ETSU has achieved its highest graduation rate. Our graduation rate of 50% means that students who started here in fall 2013 graduated from ETSU within six years. Since 2017, approximately 280 more degrees have been awarded per cohort. In addition, our fall-to-fall retention rate for first-time freshmen this year is 72.4%. Overall, since 2017, approximately 128 more students have been continuing at ETSU each year.

These accomplishments reflect the collective efforts of the entire university community and the sustained commitment across this campus to help every student achieve the dream of earning a college degree. I appreciate the work each of you have done and will continue to do to support our students. Thank you.

Board of Trustees Meeting recap

The following major action items were taken during the [September 20 Board of Trustees meeting](#):

- Tenure was granted to three faculty members who were hired effective August and September.
- Christopher Santana was approved as student trustee for the 2019-20 year.
- A letter of notification regarding the establishment of a Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics was approved.
- The revised student code of conduct rule was approved.
- Scott Niswonger was reappointed as chair of the Board of Trustees and David Golden was reappointed as vice-chair of the board.
- Resolutions were presented to Dr. David Linville and Mr. Jim Powell in recognition of their service to the Board of Trustees.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will take place November 15.

New Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

Also during the September Board of Trustees meeting, I had the honor of announcing that Dr. Keith Johnson has been named as Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Johnson, who will continue to serve as chair of the Department of Engineering, Engineering Technology, and Surveying, is assuming the role previously held by the late Dr. Angela Lewis.

Report on Equity and Inclusion Conference

Last week ETSU hosted a highly successful two-day Equity and Inclusion Conference that drew participation from over 130 students, faculty, and staff. We were honored to have as our keynote speaker Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, one of our country's leading experts on the topic of inclusion and diversity within higher education. Special thanks to the conference planning committee members – Dr. Daryl Carter, Steve Ellis, Adrianna Guram, Carshonda Harris, Dr. Amy Johnson, Mary Jordan, Mary Little, Dr. Lorianne Mitchell, Dr. Janna Scarborough, Dr. Phyllis Thompson, and Dr. Stacey Williams – and to Dr. Keith Johnson and Ann Eargle for their leadership in organizing this event.

Belated congratulations to ETSU Chorale

Please join me in congratulating our ETSU Chorale for their international success this past summer. Our Chorale competed against choirs from all over the world in the prestigious Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, held July 1-7 in Wales, United Kingdom. This is one of the foremost world festivals of music, dance and culture, and includes competitions showcasing choirs and dance troupes from across the globe. Each year, it attracts over 4,000 performers and as many as 50,000 visitors throughout the week. The ETSU Chorale took first place in the Folk and Youth categories and second in the Mixed category. [Click here](#) to read more.

Did you know...?

Today is a significant date in the history of our campus. **On October 2, 1911, East Tennessee State Normal School opened its doors to 29 students.** There were two courses of study offered: a four-year high school curriculum and a two-year normal school curriculum. ETSNS was comprised of the departments of education, English, history, science, languages, industrial training, agriculture, and the training school.

