

Office of the President

From: Office of the President
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 2:35 PM
To: faculty@etsu.edu; staff@etsu.edu; 'students@listserv.etsu.edu'
Subject: Return to Campus Information and Strategic Options Workgroup Update



**East Tennessee State University
Office of the President**

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Dear ETSU Community,

I would like to thank everyone who was able to join me yesterday for our [Live Town Hall](#) discussion of the [Future Operations Workgroup Report](#). I appreciate the thoughtful and engaging questions received during the Town Hall and look forward to holding similar events and opportunities to receive feedback from the campus in the upcoming weeks.

As a follow-up, I want to highlight three important dates as they relate to our return to campus:

- Our campus will **re-open to the public on July 1.**
- In order to prepare for this opening, **most of you will transition from remote status to an on campus working status beginning June 15.**
 - Some employees may return on a rotational schedule to maintain physical distancing expectations. Flexibility will be provided to employees who may need to continue working remotely (*e.g.*, individuals who identify themselves or immediate family members to be at high risk as defined by the CDC).
 - Unit/Division leaders are responsible for making appropriate decisions regarding flexibility for their employees. Supervisors should work with employees to explore all appropriate options as we strive to meet the diverse needs of the campus community. The expectation is that there will be a physical presence in each office during normal office hours beginning July 1.
 - If you are unsure of when you should return to work or if you will require an accommodation, please reach out to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- The fall **semester will begin as planned on August 24.**
 - As outlined in the Future Operations Workgroup recommendations, we will transition to Stage 3 with face-to-face instruction offered whenever possible, students living in residence halls, and employees working on campus with options in place for staffing rotations and/or remote work options to maintain physical distancing expectations. More information about the Fall 2020 semester will be shared with the campus in the coming weeks.

Additionally, as stated in my Town Hall, I want to provide you with an update regarding the progress of the Strategic Options Workgroup, which has been charged to develop a set of principles and strategies that will

guide the institution in addressing the current budget landscape. Presently, ETSU leaders have begun to identify nearly \$12.8 million in required budget reductions for the 2020-21 academic year beginning on July 1. These reductions are needed as a result of an expected decrease in state appropriations, as well as a projected enrollment decline for the fall semester. Effective immediately, the following measures are in place:

- **New or replacement full-time hiring is suspended.** Given that state funded hiring is effectively frozen unless necessary for accreditation requirements and/or essential for program delivery. All essential hires will require review of justifications and approval from the appropriate Vice President, which includes requests to advertise as well as requests to hire.
- **Adjunct and temporary faculty/staff hiring is highly restricted for 2020-21.** If units need to request critical exceptions based on accreditation or essential personnel for program delivery, those justifications must be submitted and approved by the appropriate Vice President in advance of processing hiring documents.
- **Travel is suspended.** College deans will continue to approve travel requests within their respective colleges, but any travel approved must have justification that it supports accreditation, tenure activities, or essential program delivery. Dean or Vice President approval is required.
- **New stipend requests are suspended.** Any exceptions must have justification and approval from the Dean, the Provost, and the President. Generally, assuming additional duties without a change in role complexity will not be approved as an exception.
- **Renovation projects/furniture purchases for new locally-funded projects are suspended.** Any exemptions must be approved by the appropriate Vice President.
- **New contracts and consulting agreements will be curtailed.** Multi-year contracts will be reviewed and approved at the Vice President level.

The work of the Strategic Options Workgroup will continue, and I will share additional information as it is presented.

I recognize that these are uncertain times for higher education on a national, state, and local level. The measures outlined above are being taken to help ensure that East Tennessee State University can continue to achieve its mission to improve the quality of life for the people of this region through teaching, research, and service. Together, this campus has moved through challenging times throughout our history, and I know that together we will succeed through the uncertainties we are facing today.

Sincerely,

Brian Noland
President