



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY



May 20, 2020

Support Initiatives in Place for Current and Incoming Students

Although the student experience changed dramatically over the course of the spring semester, we have remained committed to ensuring students have access to services and resources, and continue to feel part of the ETSU Family as we learn and work remotely. To continue those efforts, several initiatives are in place for current and incoming students to ensure everyone has the opportunity to start or continue their dream toward a college degree:

- ETSU Board of Trustees has approved a 0% tuition and fee increase for the 2020-21 academic year
- Housing and meal plans will also remain at the current rate for 20-21
- ETSU will not charge online fees for summer courses
- Buccaneer Crisis Fund has provided more than \$50,000 in financial assistance to current students with housing and utility needs
- \$5.54 million in CARES Act funding is being distributed to qualifying students

Incoming freshmen may qualify for the **ETSU Promise Plus** program announced earlier this year which provides last-dollar tuition assistance and housing scholarships for eligible incoming freshmen, plus support for students to be successful during their first year of college. ETSU Promise Plus also offers free participation in pre-college programs (orientation, **Preview ETSU. Quest**), a seat in ETSU's first-year experience course, free

membership to the **Buccaneer Family Association**, and other benefits. This week, ETSU announced another new initiative designed to improve access to higher education for high school seniors. Our **Free Freshman Tuition** program will be available during the 2020-21 academic year for first-time, full-time freshmen who are residents of Tennessee and who meet the eligibility requirements, which include being enrolled full-time for fall 2020 and spring 2021 and being a recipient of the Tennessee HOPE (Lottery) Scholarship and the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA). Interested persons can learn more about this new program by visiting www.etsu.edu/free or emailing freetuition@etsu.edu.

I encourage you to share news about these opportunities with anyone who is considering starting the journey toward a college degree this fall.

Strategic Options Group Begins Work

In this past Monday's Weekly Update, information was provided about the Strategic Options Workgroup that has been formed to address the unique budget climate we are facing as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic and the potential fiscal impact it may have on our fiscal resources. The group is being led by Jeremy Ross and Dr. Michael Hoff and includes:

- Lori Erickson, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources;
- Margaret Pate, Senior Associate Vice President of Budget and Financial Planning;
- Dr. Tony Pittarese, Senior Associate Dean, College of Business and Technology;
- Candy Massey, President, Staff Senate;
- Dr. Daryl A. Carter, Professor, History;
- Dr. Fred Mackara, Associate Professor, Economics;
- Dr. Jodi Polaha, Associate Professor, Family Medicine and 2020 Presidential Fellow;
- and
- Dr. Larry Calhoun, Special Assistant to the Senior Vice President of Academics.

This group is charged with providing the Office of the President with projected budget scenarios for the 20-21 fiscal year and to make actionable recommendations and options in response to each identified scenario to ensure budget and strategic plan alignment. In addition, this group will be responsible for identifying long-term strategies that may be considered for implementation into future university operations.

The group began meeting earlier today and will work during the upcoming weeks to provide recommendations to leadership sometime mid-summer. I will keep you posted on their work as we move forward.

Surveys Reflect on University Response to COVID-19

Since March of this year, the COVID-19 epidemic has presented significant challenges to the

university and has resulted in unprecedented changes to our entire ETSU operations. I want to thank the staff with the Office of Planning and Decision Support and the Applied Social Research Lab for the work they completed this spring to assess feedback and opinions from across the university community on how we as an institution responded to these challenges. Overall, the results of these two surveys are encouraging and demonstrate a strong response by the ETSU family to a difficult situation.

During the spring 2020 semester, these two offices partnered to conduct a student survey that was sent to all 13,171 students in two rounds between March 29 - April 9. Over 4,000 students engaged with the survey with 13% completing the survey. Of the students who responded, 2.3% indicated being food insecure and the same percent indicated a need for housing/storage. When rating the university's response to the pandemic 75.7% indicated they were neutral or satisfied.

Other highlights include:

- 90% feel a sense of belonging;
- 96.7% of respondents likely/very likely to enroll in fall 2020; and
- 92.3% feel ETSU is a supportive environment.

Also, 90.7% students who needed services during the first round of the survey indicated they had received assistance.

The university also conducted an employee survey starting on April 27. The survey included all employees. Overall, 796 (16%) employees responded to the survey. Administrative Professional, faculty, and clerical staff comprised 90% of respondents with 10% comprising temporary and other part-time staff. Employees were asked about their well-being on a 10-point scale and the average rating was 7.4. When asked to rate the university's response to the pandemic, 97% indicated they were satisfied. Faculty were asked about student performance and 89% indicated students met or exceed their expectations this semester. While most of the results were positive, 50% of respondents did indicate they were more drained after a day at home than they were in their office.

Additional surveys and some online focus groups will be conducted this summer. I hope you will participate when opportunities arise so our university can continue to be prepared for additional responses requirements as we move through the pandemic.

I want to thank each member of the university community for the way you have responded during this time and have ensured that these circumstances did not serve as an obstacle for our students in achieving their dreams of earning a college degree. The faculty and staff have worked hard, and those efforts are recognized by our students. Thank you.

ASRL Team Releases Tennessee Poll Results

The Applied Social Research Laboratory (ASRL) is spending the month of May releasing the results of the Tennessee Poll. ASRL is part of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and is under the direction of Dr. Kelly N. Foster, associate professor of sociology.

The Tennessee Poll is an annual public opinion poll funded by ETSU. The mission of The

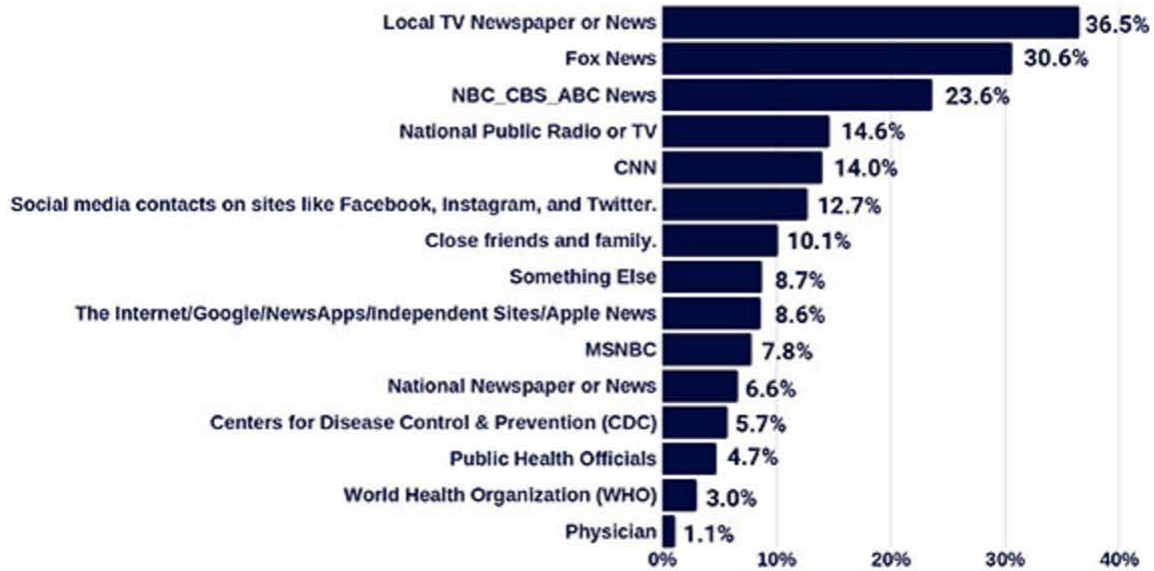
Tennessee Poll is to provide the citizens and governance of Tennessee with neutral, unbiased information on Tennesseans' perceptions of issues that impact their health, education, and quality of life.

ASRL is a member of the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations (AASRO) and adheres to the reporting requirements of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Transparency Initiative standards in research reporting.

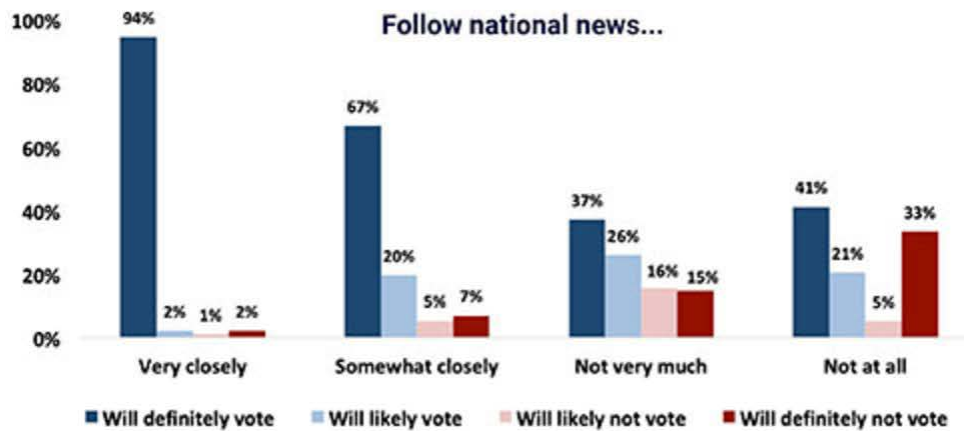
For detailed information on The Tennessee Poll, including results, methodology and additional analysis, please visit www.etsu.edu/asrl/tnpoll.

You can also read about the findings of these polls at our [ETSU News Site](#).

What is your primary source of news?



How likely are you to vote in the general election on November 6th? * In general, how closely do you follow news about national politics?



THE AUTHORS: Dr. Rich Clark, Dr. Kelly N. Foster, Ms. Morgan Kidd
 TN POLL #5, PR 2
 For detailed methodology on The Tennessee Poll as well as margin of error reports and additional analysis, please go to www.etsu.edu/esr/tepoll.

Important Reminder About the Census

As the efforts of the U.S. Census continue, questions have been raised regarding the correct way for university students to be counted. Now that the spring 2020 semester has drawn to a close, many of you have returned home to live with your family.

According to the official guidance provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, students that normally live at school should be counted at school, even if they have been temporarily living somewhere else during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you normally live in a residence hall or college-owned housing, no further action from you is needed as ETSU is already working with the U.S. Census Bureau to count you. If you resided in an apartment or house alone or with roommates, you or your roommate will need to complete the 2020 Census.

You should have received one or more invitations in the mail asking you to respond to the census. You can respond online, by phone or by mail. Whatever method you choose, make sure you use the address where you lived while attending ETSU. You should also include the names of the other persons who lived there too, even if you do not have all of the information, such as date of birth, that is requested for your roommate(s). The Census Bureau has tools to remove duplicated responses. If you did not receive an invitation in the mail, please visit the 2020 Census online at 2020census.gov and respond. Also, if you usually live with your parents during the school year, they should include you when they respond to the Census.

Ensuring that everyone is counted in the U.S. Census is critical. These responses will impact how billions of dollars in federal funding will be distributed during the upcoming decade. Funds will be dispersed based on population numbers for services that affect you, including school safety, mental health services, and Pell Grants. The City of Johnson City also receives funding based on population numbers for projects such as roadways and outdoor recreation areas that make this a great place to live.

Please share this message with your friends and make sure that you, and everyone you know, is counted in the census. Thank you.

Memorial Day Weekend

As we approach the holiday weekend, I want to wish you and your loved ones a safe and restful Memorial Day.



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