

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING

9:00–10:15 a.m. EST  
Friday  
November 14, 2025

East Tennessee Room  
D.P. Culp Student Center  
412 J.L. Seehorn Road  
Johnson City, TN

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Janet Ayers, Committee Chair  
Dr. Steph Frye-Clark  
Jon Lundberg  
Melissa Stegall-Jones  
Tony Treadway  
—

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. [Approval of the Committee Minutes from September 12, 2025](#)

**ACTION ITEMS**

- IV. [Approval of the Letter of Notification \(LON\) Regarding the Establishment of a Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Science – McCorkle](#) (10 minutes)

**INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- V. [Quality Assurance Funding Update – McCorkle/Hoff](#) (10 minutes)
- VI. [Community Engaged Learning Update – McCorkle/McCracken](#) (15 minutes)
- VII. [ETSU Research Update: Orthotics and Prosthetics – Leister](#) (15 minutes)
- VIII. [Student Success Update: Transforming Student Care and Engagement – Byrd/Adinolfi](#) (15 minutes)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

- IX. Committee Discussions
  - General Discussion
- X. Other Business
- XI. Adjournment

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: Approval of the Minutes from September 12, 2025

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Adam Green  
Board Secretary

The minutes of the September 12, 2025, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee are included in the meeting materials.

**MOTION: I move that the Board of Trustees adopt the resolution, approving the minutes as outlined in the meeting materials.**

**RESOLVED: The reading of the minutes of the September 12, 2025, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee is omitted, and the minutes are approved as presented in the meeting materials, provided that the Secretary is authorized to make any necessary edits to correct spelling errors, grammatical errors, format errors, or other technical errors subsequently identified.**

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH, AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 12, 2025  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, September 12, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp Student Center.

**I. Call to Order**

Trustee Janet Ayers, chair of the committee, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Board Secretary Dr. Adam Green conducted the roll call. The following committee members were physically present:

Trustee Janet Ayers  
Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark  
Trustee Jon Lundberg  
Trustee Melissa Steagall-Jones  
Trustee Tony Treadway

Other Trustees present were Steve DeCarlo, Wade Farmer, Dorothy Grisham, Ron Ramsey, Grant Summers, and Aashi Vora.

**III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from May 23, 2025**

The minutes from the May 23, 2025, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Tony Treadway making the motion and Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**IV. Promotion and Tenure of Faculty Member**

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Kimberly McCorkle recommended to the committee that Dr. Cristina Barroso be granted tenure upon

appointment, at the rank of associate professor. Dr. Barroso is the new Chair of the Department of Community and Behavioral Health in the College of Public Health. She joined ETSU from the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she was Founding Chair of the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society. A scholar in rural health, she has secured over \$6 million in external grant funding.

Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark made a motion to approve the promotion and tenure recommendation, and Trustee Tony Treadway seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **V. Approval of the ETSU Mission Profile**

Dr. Michael Hoff, Vice Provost for Decision Support and University Chief Planning Officer, discussed highlights of ETSU's Mission Profile. He indicated that no changes are recommended to the Mission Profile approved by the ETSU Board of Trustees last year.

Trustee Jon Lundberg made a motion to approve the ETSU Mission Profile as submitted, and Trustee Frye-Clark seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **VI. Academic Notification for Period of January 1, 2025, through July 31, 2025**

Dr. McCorkle reported that there have been 67 curriculum updates during this period. Seventeen of them required notification to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. Most notable, she said, was the Letter of Notification for the proposed Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management, which is scheduled to go before the commission in the spring of 2026, so that the program can begin in the fall of 2026. She then reported on curriculum actions not requiring THEC notification that were approved internally. Some of those involved reductions in the required number of credit hours for graduation, some were new minors that were created, and 16 of those actions were policy-related, including changes in admission standards in certain programs to make them more accessible for students. Dr. McCorkle also informed the committee that ETSU has created a new Cybersecurity Innovation and Outreach Center within the College of Business and Technology, as well as an Institute for Cyber and Homeland Security.

### **VII. College Spotlight: Quillen College of Medicine**

Dr. Bill Block, Vice President for Clinical Affairs and Dean of the Quillen College of Medicine, reviewed the college's mission, which has held steady for over five decades:

“The primary mission of the Quillen College of Medicine is to educate future physicians, especially those with an interest in primary care, to practice in

underserved rural communities. In addition, the College is committed to excellence in biomedical research and is dedicated to the improvement of health care in Northeast Tennessee and the surrounding Appalachian region.”

Dr. Block noted that Quillen is currently home to 326 medical students, 30 Ph.D. candidates in Biomedical Sciences, 236 resident and fellow physicians, and more than 250 faculty members. Since its creation, the College of Medicine has graduated over 2,500 M.D.s, and more than 1,000 of them practice within the Tri-Cities region and Southwest Virginia. Dr. Block discussed recent recognition for the college:

- In the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of medical schools with graduates practicing primary care
- In the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile of medical schools with students who plan to participate in military service
- Number two in the nation for most graduates practicing in health professional shortage areas
- In the top tier of best medical schools for primary care and the only school in Tennessee in that category

Dr. Block said the college, through its practice plan, exceeds 370,000 patient visits a year. Quillen is also an exclusive provider for neonatal and pediatric intensive care in the region and for trauma and surgical intensive care. Quillen provides staffing for the Regional Cancer Center in Johnson City, the regional St. Jude affiliate, and Perinatal Center obstetrical care at Johnson City Medical Center. Further, Quillen’s clinics provide in excess of \$3.2 million per year in uncompensated health care for the people of the region.

Dr. Block pointed out that in 2023, Quillen signed a Master Affiliation Agreement with Ballad Health. That agreement increases educational opportunity across ETSU’s health sciences colleges, enhances clinical partnerships, allows for the development of joint research opportunities, and allows the two organizations to work together strategically to develop the workforce and improve the lives of the region.

Among future initiatives, Dr. Block announced the expansion of the medical school class from 78 entering students a year to 100 beginning in the summer of 2026. At the same time, the anatomy lab and classrooms are being expanded. Dr. Block said the college plans to break ground this year for an Integrated Health Sciences Building, and he noted several new faculty hires.

## **VIII. ETSU Research Update: Center for Community Outreach**

Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Vice Provost for Research, provided an historical view of the work of the Center for Community Outreach, which, since 1997, has brought in over \$175 million to serve Tennesseans. Dr. Hagemeyer recognized the founders of the center, retired sociology professors Dr. Judith Hammond and Dr. Jerry Leger. He then

introduced the center's current director, Ms. Amy Edwards, who has been in that role since November of 2023.

Ms. Edwards reviewed the mission of the center: "To utilize university expertise and resources in the provision of workforce services, human services, and clinical outreach to the citizens of East Tennessee." That mission, she added, is now statewide, as the center oversees two contracts and three grants from the Department of Human Services, employing 73 staff members across the state. The largest grant is for Families First Support/Activity, part of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The grant's primary purpose is to help remove employment barriers in all 95 of Tennessee's counties, through the work of 44 staff members.

Ms. Edwards then described the work of the Family Focused Solutions Counseling grant, also a part of TANF, which covers 34 counties and provides case management services and linkages to community resources for clients. Furthermore, Healthy Careers Chattanooga is a partnership between ETSU and Blue Care TN. Covering 10 counties in the Chattanooga/Hamilton County area, it provides support to remove barriers to employment.

The Fatherhood Connection Initiative began in February, and its purpose is to foster positive father-child connections in three counties, with plans to expand to six. The Non-Custodial IMPACT Program, Ms. Edwards said, involves a partnership with Judicial Districts 1, 2, and 3 to provide employment services for non-custodial participants and remove barriers to employment in nine counties. The grant has run its five-year course, with 935 individuals served and almost \$534,000 paid in child support through June 30, 2025.

President Noland expressed gratitude to Drs. Hammond and Leger, Ms. Edwards, and the staff members who help run these programs for the safety net they provide for citizens of the state.

## **IX. Overview of Strategic Enrollment Management Plan**

Dr. Joe Sherlin, Senior Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, and Dr. Heather Levesque, Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Admissions, Student Life, and Enrollment, outlined the key elements of the plan, created by a group charged in 2024 to review challenges and opportunities in the internal and external environments related to enrollment and student success. Highlights of the plan are:

- A goal of 15,500 students by the year 2030, which would equate to a 10.9% increase in total enrollment and an increase in headcount of approximately 300 students a year
- A goal of sustaining the size and academic profile of the first-year cohort: 2,100 students with an average GPA of 3.5

- A goal of expanding the incoming undergraduate transfer population by 2% annually
- A goal of growing undergraduate adult enrollment—that is, those age 25 and over—by 7% annually for a total of 2,000 students
- A goal of increasing graduate enrollment by 1.5% annually
- A goal of increasing the first-year persistence rate to 85% and the undergraduate graduation rate to 60%

Drs. Sherlin and Levesque described specific strategies to achieve each of these goals. Supporting all of them will be a new one-stop shop for student services, which will operate in tandem with the newly opened Jordan Center for Student Success.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **X. Committee Discussions**

There was no further discussion.

#### **XI. Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the committee.

#### **XII. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 10:21 a.m.



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: Approval of the Letter of Notification (LON) Regarding the Establishment of a Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Science

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Letter of Notification (LON) for the Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Studies is presented to the ETSU Board of Trustees (BOT) for review before submission to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to begin the process of establishing a new academic program. Pending approval by the BOT, the notification of the proposal to develop a new degree program will be sent to THEC, where it will be posted for public comment, reviewed by external academic evaluators, and subsequently recommended for approval by the Commission unless substantial curricular or fiscal changes are made to the proposal. If the Commission approves the proposal, no further action will be required of the BOT. This proposal has been appropriately vetted through the internal curriculum process, including approval by the Academic Council and President Noland.

The proposed Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Studies is a collaborative initiative between the College of Arts and Sciences (Department of Geosciences) and the College of Public Health (Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Sciences and Department of Biostatistics & Epidemiology). The program will provide students with an interdisciplinary approach to addressing complex issues in the fields of environmental, health, and disaster sciences.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of environmental scientists and specialists is projected to grow 7 percent from 2023 to 2033, which is faster than the average growth rate for all occupations. In Tennessee, the employment of environmental scientists and specialists is projected to grow 16.8 percent from 2023 to 2032. The program will equip graduates with cross-cutting skills needed for professional work in governmental agencies, state institutions, and research organizations as professionals qualified to lead environmental health efforts, develop risk-based sustainable practices, and implement extreme weather resilience strategies.

This degree will enhance ETSU's graduate academic portfolio, attract new students, and help further develop national, state, and industry partnerships. It will also provide students with a high-quality educational experience, offering strong research opportunities that will prepare them for post-graduation employment and the pursuit of additional graduate education in an evolving professional field.

Attachments:

- Letter of Notification
- THEC Financial Projections Form

**MOTION: I move that the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee recommend the adoption of the following Resolution by the Board of Trustees:**

**RESOLVED: The establishment of a Master of Science degree in Environment, Health, and Disaster Studies is approved by the ETSU Board of Trustees as outlined in the meeting materials. The University is directed to submit notification of a new degree proposal to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and complete all additional steps required for full implementation of this new academic program should the Commission support the proposal during the post-external judgment determination.**



# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Letter of Notification (LON)

## *Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences*

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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## Section I: Overview

### Program Information

**Institution Name:** East Tennessee State University  
**Name:** Master of Science (MS) in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences  
**Designation:** MS  
**Proposed CIP Code and Title:** 51.2202 (Environmental Health)  
**CIP code Definition:** An interdisciplinary program that focuses on the integration of environment, health, and disaster sciences to provide solutions to cross-disciplinary issues at the human-animal-environment interface. This includes instructions in air and water quality; infectious disease dynamics; environmental epidemiology; environmental toxicology; GIS and remote sensing; hazard & climate modeling; and geological processes.

### Academic Program Liaison (APL) Name and Contact Information:

Kimberly McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
P.O. Box 70733  
Johnson City, TN 37614  
(423) 439-4811  
[mccorklek@etsu.edu](mailto:mccorklek@etsu.edu)

### Proposed Implementation Date:

Fall 2026

## Section II: Background

### Background and Context of the Proposed Program

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) intends, as part of the 2016-2026 strategic plan [1], to expand the “foundation for scholarly excellence and innovation in all disciplines” through growing research productivity, including an increase in innovative interdisciplinary graduate research-focused degrees. Therefore, ETSU proposes to add a new interdisciplinary **Master of Science (MS) degree in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences**. These topics are relevant to several disciplines, including geoscience, biology, environmental health, infectious disease, epidemiology, biomedical sciences, ecology, agriculture, and environmental sciences. Many environmental and atmospheric challenges demand interdisciplinary solutions that integrate insights from multiple scientific disciplines [2]. This

proposed MS program emphasizes such approaches, preparing versatile professionals capable of addressing complex issues through an innovative combination of environmental, ecological, wildlife, agricultural, and human health perspectives. By focusing on the shared questions, problems, and solutions across these areas, the program offers both an international perspective and a focus on the unique challenges facing Appalachia. It provides a unique opportunity to explore cross-disciplinary approaches to the rapid changes driven by population growth and extreme weather, responding to the growing demand for professionals with specialized training in environmental health and disaster sciences [3] .

The proposed program is a collaborative initiative between the College of Arts and Sciences (Department of Geosciences) and College of Public Health (Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Sciences and Department of Biostatistics & Epidemiology). The program will expand the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Sciences' ability to conduct graduate-level research, providing a framework for curriculum and research, and opening pathways to strong collaborations that enhance teaching, learning, and research. The program will also expand the Geosciences Master's program opportunities through interdisciplinary understanding of the key concepts and methodologies with topics including but not limited to air and water quality, environmental toxicology, GIS and remote sensing, hazard and climate modeling, and geological processes. The program will draw ETSU undergraduate students in various programs such as Interdisciplinary Studies, Biology, Environmental Health, Health Sciences, Microbiology, and Geosciences, as well as students enrolled in the newly (as of fall 2024) launched interdisciplinary graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies.

## **Purpose and Nature of the Proposed Academic Program**

### **Purpose**

**The Master of Science (MS) degree in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences** program will equip graduates with the foundational knowledge and cross-cutting skills needed to adapt to emerging challenges and contribute to leading-edge research and solutions. Governmental agencies, state institutions, and research organizations are increasingly seeking professionals qualified to lead environmental health efforts, develop risk-based sustainable practices, and implement science-informed extreme weather resilience strategies, further highlighting the urgent need for mitigation and adaptation expertise. The collaborative departments, including 20 faculty at ETSU, will provide an interdisciplinary curriculum that builds on the wide-ranging expertise of faculty across the university.

### **Program Design and Delivery**

This program will provide students with an interdisciplinary approach to addressing complex issues in the fields of environment, health, and disaster sciences; foster critical thinking and innovative research methods to address emerging challenges; and provide a framework for curricular and research innovations and collaborations, enhancing the existing strengths across the core areas. This program will

be created using existing graduate-level courses in the relevant departments. This program will be completed by earning 30-33 credit hours that will be composed of core graduate courses, concentration-specific courses, and research. The program will offer two concentrations in Environmental Health Sciences and Disaster Sciences.

### **Target Audience**

The target audience for the proposed Master of Science (MS) program in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences at ETSU includes a diverse group of students and professionals who are interested in interdisciplinary approaches to addressing complex environmental and extreme weather-related challenges. This includes:

**1. Undergraduate students:** Graduates from programs such as Biology, Environmental Health, Geosciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, Health Sciences, Microbiology, and other related fields at ETSU and other universities regionally and nationally who are seeking advanced training in environmental, health, and disaster sciences. Students enrolled in the interdisciplinary graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies, launched in Fall 2024, are also a key group.

**2. Professionals in related fields:** Individuals currently working in governmental agencies, state institutions, research organizations, or private industries who are looking to enhance their expertise in environmental health and disaster resilience. These professionals may seek to lead environmental health efforts, develop risk-based sustainable solutions, or implement science-informed disaster strategies.

**3. International students:** Students from around the world who are interested in gaining an international perspective on environmental and disaster challenges.

The program is designed to meet the needs of international students, making it accessible to a broad audience, including those needing flexibility in balancing academic and professional commitments. The program will equip graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to address emerging environmental challenges, preparing them for leadership roles in research, policy-making, and implementation of disaster resilience strategies.

### **Program Outcomes:**

Students graduating with an MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences will have demonstrated an ability to:

- Recognize and critically assess emerging environmental health and disaster sciences challenges at the individual and population levels.
- Integrate interdisciplinary knowledge to design, evaluate, and implement research studies in environmental health and disaster resilience.
- Develop and conduct experiments or test hypotheses, analyze and interpret data, and use scientific judgment to draw conclusions.
- Communicate scientific findings effectively through written reports and oral presentations tailored to diverse audiences.

## Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission

### Alignment with State Master Plan

The State Master Plan emphasizes affordable higher education programs, support for distressed counties, and training students in the new foundational skills required for the digital economy, while preparing graduates for future jobs. The proposed program aligns with this vision by offering interdisciplinary courses and research projects that focus on creativity, critical thinking, data analytics, cross-departmental collaboration, and effective communication of research findings. Additionally, ETSU has one of the lowest tuition growth rates in the state and a high graduate student completion rate. The program is expected to attract students from low-income, distressed counties due to its affordability and opportunities for external funding through departmental support and extramural research.

The academic departments proposing this program have established partnerships with several state, regional and Federal agencies involved in environmental health and disaster-related initiatives such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA), Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), among others. Tennessee Climate Office (TCO) housed in the Department of Geosciences gained NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) and the American Association of State Climatologists recognition in 2021. TCO provides vital resource for extreme weather data, research, and services, benefiting Tennessee's communities, policymakers, and stakeholders. TCO will serve as a strong resource for the proposed program.

### Alignment with Institutional Mission

The University's mission and values includes principles such as: *"People come first, are treated with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to achieve their full potential; Relationships are built on honesty, integrity, and trust; diversity of people and thought is respected; Excellence is achieved through teamwork, leadership, creativity, and a strong work ethic; Efficiency is achieved through the wise use of human and financial resources; and Commitment to intellectual achievement is embraced."* and *"endorses the value of liberal education and provides enriching experiences in honors education, student research and creative activity, study abroad, service learning, and community-based education"*. The proposed MS program aligns with ETSU's mission and values as it's designed to provide students with diverse experiences that will enhance their graduate education, foster creativity, and promote a commitment to excellence in research skills. The program offers a unique opportunity to explore cross-disciplinary approaches to addressing the rapid changes driven by population growth and extreme weather events. It will also benefit from 'on-the-ground' training focused on the unique impacts of disasters in the Appalachian region. The region's ecosystem and rural population provide a distinctive platform for addressing critical issues related to the effects of the environment, disasters, and human population growth.

## Institutional Capacity to Deliver the Proposed Academic Program

The proposed Master's degree in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences builds on existing interdisciplinary expertise at ETSU. The strengths of the existing expertise are in various scientific disciplines relevant to environmental and disaster sciences, such as biology, geosciences, ecology, environmental and occupational health, epidemiology, infectious diseases, and microbiology. Strengths in research infrastructure include well-established research facilities, laboratories, and field stations dedicated to environmental science and disaster science research. The Environmental Health Sciences laboratory is an important resource, and the new program should strengthen the ability to share the lab resources. The academic departments proposing the program have an existing collaborative graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies. The 13 credit-hour certificate is composed of 4 courses offered by four academic departments involved in this proposed program. Furthermore, the academic departments proposing this program have established partnerships with several state, regional, and Federal agencies involved in environmental and disaster-related initiatives, such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, TDEC, TEMA, TDH, TVA, TDA, TWRA, among others. TCO housed in the Department of Geosciences gained NOAA's NCEI and the American Association of State Climatologists recognition in 2021. TCO provides vital resources for extreme weather data, research, and services, benefiting Tennessee's communities, policymakers, and stakeholders. TCO will serve as a strong resource for the proposed program. The program can leverage these existing partnerships to enhance students' internship opportunities, facilitate guest lectures from industry experts, and support collaborative research projects.

ETSU is recognized as the premier health science and the premier disaster science institution in Appalachia, a region that poses unique challenges that will inform both student learning and faculty research.

The program has the potential to achieve national and international prominence in the areas of environmental health and disaster studies for the following reasons:

- We are aware of no other programs across the State that combine existing expertise across multiple core areas. This will provide graduates with the education needed to address complex environmental and disaster challenges effectively.
- The program will offer students multiple and varied opportunities to engage in original research projects under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors;
- The program leverages the expertise of renowned faculty members with diverse backgrounds in environmental health, ecology, geosciences, biology, infectious diseases, epidemiology and biostatistics, disaster sciences, and microbiology.
- Program faculty have national and international reputations in the unique impacts of environmental issues and weather-related disasters in the Appalachian region. The regional ecosystem and its rural population provide a unique platform to address important problems related to the impacts of extreme weather and human population growth.
- The collaboration among faculty members and the resulting increase in interdisciplinary research initiatives will position ETSU for global prominence as a hub of expertise and innovation at the interface of environmental health and disaster sciences.

The program curriculum is guided by an interdisciplinary committee composed of faculty from the academic departments proposing the program. A total of 20 faculty members will teach and mentor MS students enrolled in the program, representing five different departments. The committee is responsible



for continuously developing and managing the curriculum, updating courses, and selecting relevant electives for the concentrations. This collaborative approach highlights the strong partnership and shared commitment among the participating departments.

### Existing Programs Offered at Public and Private Tennessee Institutions

Based on our review of public and private higher education institutions in Tennessee, there are currently no MS graduate programs offered in the interdisciplinary fields of Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences. The only interdisciplinary program covering these areas is a graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies, offered by ETSU.

The proposed MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences falls under CIP Code 51.2202, Environmental Health. A search for environmental health programs at Tennessee institutions revealed no MS graduate program with the same CIP Code. The existing graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies is a 13-credit program consisting of four courses and a capstone (**Table 1**). Its goal is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between environmental changes and health outcomes at the human-animal interface, equipping them to develop innovative strategies for addressing complex health systems. This differs from the proposed MS program, which will heavily focus on training students in cutting-edge interdisciplinary research and solutions to emerging challenges at the human-animal-environment interface.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) in Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Sciences, also offered at ETSU (CIP Code 51.2201), emphasizes the *“interrelationships between chemical, biological, and physical factors in the environment and social and organizational factors in human communities.”*. However, as an MPH degree, it requires a capstone project instead of a research thesis. In contrast, the proposed MS program will concentrate on foundational knowledge and cross-disciplinary skills in environment, health, and disaster sciences, preparing students to tackle emerging challenges and contribute to interdisciplinary research projects.

**Table 1.** Graduate programs in Environmental Health with similar CIP Code to our proposed MS program in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences

Institution	Program Title and Degree Designation	CIP Code	Program Description	Degrees Awarded for the Last 3 Years
East Tennessee State University	Graduate Certificate in One Health and Climate Studies	51.2202	“The graduate certificate in One Health and Climate Studies provides an opportunity to learn about one of the greatest challenges facing our planet. By completing this certificate, you will have a broad introduction of how the planet’s climate is changing and the impact that this will have on	It a new program started in Fall 2024; hence no graduates yet.

			human health, the well-being of plants and animals, and on the environment. It is ideal for people interested in a better understanding of atmospheric changes and the many challenges that it poses.”. Certificate is composed of 13 hours of graduate coursework in One Health, Appalachian Studies, Environmental Health, and ecological modeling. Graduates of this certificate program will be prepared to pursue careers in: “Academia & Global Health, Food & Agriculture, Public Health, Environmental Health, and Climate Sciences.”.	
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### Accreditation

East Tennessee State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, master’s, education specialist, and doctoral degrees. <https://www.etsu.edu/provost/pds/ie/etsusacs.php> The proposed Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Studies will not have specific program accreditation (SPA) and will therefore be subject to program review through THEC.

### Section III: Feasibility

#### Local and Regional Demand

An MS in Environmental, Health, and Disaster Sciences can be classified under several Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, depending on their specific job role and expertise. These SOC codes reflect the broad, interdisciplinary nature of careers in environmental, health, and disaster sciences, spanning roles in research, public health, environmental management, and disaster mitigation.

- 19-2041 Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health
- 19-2042 Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers
- 19-2021 Atmospheric and Space Scientists
- 19-4042 Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health
- 19-4043 Geological Technicians, Except Hydrologic Technicians
- 19-2042 Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers
- 19-1031 Conservation Scientists
- 29-9011 Occupational Health and Safety Specialists
- 11-9121 Natural Sciences Managers
- 19-1029 Biological Scientists, All Other

Employer Demand

Anticipated Job Openings and Workforce Projections for environmental health: 2023-2028

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employment of environmental scientists and specialists is projected to grow 7 percent from 2023 to 2033, faster than the average for all occupations (Figure 1). About 8,500 openings for environmental scientists and specialists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.”[4] . The median annual wage for environmental scientists and specialists was \$80,060 in May 2024.

Employment projections data for environmental scientists and specialists, 2023-33

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2023	Projected Employment, 2033	Change, 2023-33	
				Percent	Numeric
Environmental scientists and specialists, including health	19-2041	84,600	90,700	7	6,100

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

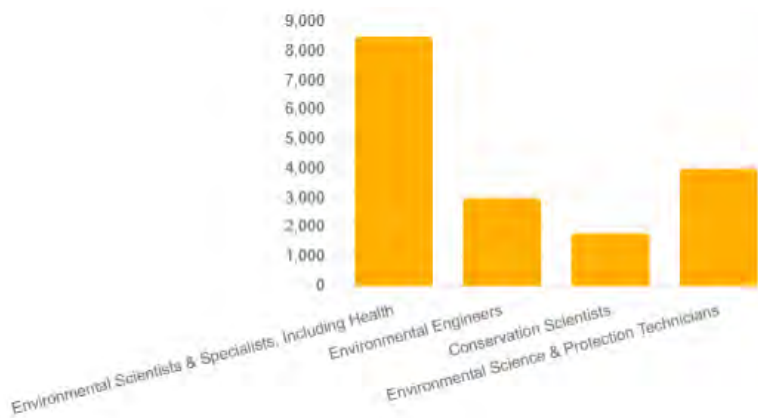


Figure 1. Five-year projected job openings (2023-2028) for ‘Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health’ compared to other key occupations in Environmental Health.

In Tennessee, the “Employment of environmental scientists and specialists, including health” is projected to grow 16.8 percent from 2023 to 2032, with an expected 110 average annual openings [5].

The employment of Geoscientists, including those who are Environmental geologists, is projected to grow 5 percent from 2023 to 2033 [6]. The median annual wage for geoscientists was \$99,240 in May 2024. About 2,200 openings for geoscientists are projected each year, on average, over the decade.

Employment projections data for geoscientists, 2023-33

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2023	Projected Employment, 2033	Change, 2023-33	
				Percent	Numeric
Geoscientists, except hydrologists and geographers	19-2042	26,000	27,400	5	1,400

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

## Community and Industry Partnerships

The proposed program will benefit from a strong network of existing and emerging partnerships with state, regional, and federal organizations that are actively involved in environmental, public health, and disaster resilience initiatives. These collaborations will enhance the program's relevance, applied learning, research capacity, and job placement pathways for students.

### Existing Partnerships

ETSU has already established relationships with numerous key agencies, including:

- Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)
- Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)
- Tennessee Department of Health (TDH)
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
- Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA)
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

These partners provide support in the form of:

- Guest lectures and field-based instruction
- Collaborative research and applied projects
- Access to regional datasets, modeling platforms, and hazard/climate resources
- Input into curriculum development and workforce skill alignment

### Anticipated Partnerships

The program is expected to foster additional partnerships with:

- Public health departments and environmental NGOs in TN and nearby states
- Private sector employers focused on sustainability and hazard mitigation
- Federal agencies such as the EPA, CDC, and USDA

These anticipated relationships will further:

- Expand experiential learning and applied research opportunities
- Support graduate student employment and mentorship pipelines
- Facilitate cross-sector problem-solving aligned with interdisciplinary education and research

## Student Interest

### Student survey at East Tennessee State University

A survey of current undergraduate and graduate students at East Tennessee State University indicated a strong interest in the M.S. degree in environment, health, and disaster sciences. **More than half (60%) of respondents indicated a very strong (extremely likely) interest.**

The survey was distributed to students between August 25 and September 5, 2025 (the first few weeks of the fall 2025 semester). There were 43 responses. We plan to collect more responses during this semester and update the results when the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) is submitted.

The survey was brief, consisting of only two questions, to maximize the response rate. Below are the questions and results:

#### Question 1.

Table 2A. Likelihood of Enrolling in the *MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences*. this survey was distributed to students in Environmental Health, Geosciences, and Health Sciences majors.

If a Master of Science (MS) degree in environment, health, and disaster sciences was offered at ETSU, how interested would you be in enrolling in this program?	Percentage	Count N= 43
Extremely Likely	60%	26
Extremely unlikely	12%	5
Neither likely nor unlikely	28%	12

#### Question 2.

Table 2B. *Interest in Concentrations for the proposed MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences*. This MS has two concentrations to choose from. This survey examined interest among students for each of the concentrations. Numbers represent count of responders.

If an MS in environment, health, and climate sciences was available to you and offered a choice of concentrations, which concentration would interest you?	Not interest at all	Moderately interested	Extremely interested
Environmental Health Sciences	1	13	10
Disaster Sciences	3	9	7

These results indicate a strong to moderate interest in both concentrations. Moreover, the results show that there is similar interest in both concentrations among students. This is useful for curriculum planning and resource allocation to both concentrations of our proposed MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences.

## Section IV: Enrollment and Graduation Projections

### Projected Enrollment and Graduates

The proposed MS program anticipates enrolling students primarily from ETSU's undergraduate pipeline in fields such as Environmental Health, Biology, Geosciences, and Health Sciences, as well as professionals and international students interested in interdisciplinary environmental health and disaster training. It is expected that an initial cohort of 10 students will be established, with modest

annual growth as awareness and reputation build. Given ETSU’s strong graduate completion rates and institutional support, an estimated attrition rate of 10–20% is anticipated, with most students completing the program within two years. Graduation projections are approximately six students annually starting in year two, with eventual stabilization at seven to eight graduates per year as enrollment scales.

*Table 1 – Projected Enrollments and Graduates*

Year	Academic Year	New First-Year Cohort	Projected Total Fall Enrollment	Projected Attrition	Projected Graduates
1	2026-2027	8	8	1	0
2	2027-2028	9	16	2	6
3	2028-2029	9	17	2	7
4	2029-2030	10	18	2	7
5	2030-2031	10	19	2	8
6*					
7*					

\*Year 6 and 7 projections are only required for doctoral programs.

## Section V. Curriculum

### Program-specific goals/objectives

The MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences has four learning objectives. Our graduates will:

1. Recognize and evaluate emerging challenges in the fields of environment, health, and disaster sciences
2. Build expertise in a chosen specialization (e.g., environmental health, disaster sciences) while integrating perspectives from multiple public health and environmental disciplines.
3. Apply a set of analytical, technical, and quantitative skills across diverse career paths.
4. Contribute to scientific understanding through the design and execution of original laboratory and/or field research projects.

### Student learning outcomes

Students graduating with an MS in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences will have demonstrated an ability to:

- Recognize and critically assess emerging environmental health and disaster science challenges at individual and population levels.
- Integrate interdisciplinary knowledge to design, evaluate, and implement research studies in environmental health and disaster resilience.
- Develop and conduct experiments or test hypotheses, analyze and interpret data, and use scientific judgment to draw conclusions
- Communicate scientific findings effectively through written reports and oral presentations tailored to diverse audiences.

## Academic Program Requirements

The proposed Environment, Health, and Disaster Studies MS is comprised of 30-33 credits. There is a thesis track and a non-thesis track. Within each track, students may select the concentration that fits their academic and professional aspirations. Each track has a 10-credit core, a concentration that is 14 – 17 credits, with the distinction between thesis and capstone determining the final degree credits.

### a. Summary

Thesis Track (On-ground Program )		Non-Thesis Track	
Component	Required Credits	Component	Required Credits
Core	10	Core	10
Concentrations	14-17	Concentration	14-17
Thesis Research	3-6	Capstone Project + <b>Additional Elective</b>	3-4 <b>2-3</b>
Total minimum hours	30-33	Total minimum hours	30-33

### b. Core courses for both Concentrations: **10 credit hours**

Course	Title	Credits
EPID 5100	Analytic Methods in Pub Health	4
ENVH 5100	Environmental Health Practice I	3
GEOS 5010	Geospatial Analysis	3
Total		10

### c. Concentration Courses: **14-17 credit hours**

**Environmental Health Sciences Concentration:** In consultation with their advisor, students will select additional courses from the list below to fulfill program requirements. On-ground students must also complete the Experimental Design course, in addition to the required thesis research credits.

Course	Title	Credits
	<b>Select 14-17 Credits from the list</b>	
ENVH 6910	Experimental Design* (required for thesis track)	3
ENVH 5640	Environmental Risk Assessment	4
EPID 5430	Infectious Disease Epidemiology	3
ENVH 5357	Toxicology	3
EPID 5450	One Health	3
ENVH 5250	Environmental Microbiology	4
ENVH 5397	Environmental Analysis	4
ENVH 5910	Seminar	1

**Disaster Sciences Concentration:** In consultation with their advisor, students will select additional courses from the list below to fulfill program requirements. Thesis track students must also complete the Geosciences Research Methods course, in addition to the required thesis research credits.

Course	Title	Credits
	<b>Select 14-17 Credits from the list</b>	
GEOS 5000	Geosciences Research Methods* (required for thesis track)	3
GEOS 5300	Topics in Geospatial Analysis	3
GEOS 5017	Advanced Cartography: Web & Mobile Mapping	3
GEOS 5237	Advanced Remote Sensing	3
GEOS 5807	Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Mapping and Modeling	3
GEOS 5317	Advanced GIS	3
GEOS 5700	Seminar in Geosciences	1

d. Thesis: **3-6 credits**

- ENVH 5990- Research in Environmental Health  
Or
- GEOS 5960 - Thesis

Capstone: **5-7 credits**

- ENVH 5640 - Environmental Risk Assessment (4 credits)  
Or
- GEOS 5910 - Research in Geosciences (3 credits)
- And **2-3** additional credits in Advisor Approved Electives



## References

1. ETSU. East Tennessee State University Strategic Plan 2016-2026. Available online: [https://www.etsu.edu/president/documents/univ\\_strategicplan.pdf](https://www.etsu.edu/president/documents/univ_strategicplan.pdf) (accessed on October 6, 2024).
2. Sorensen, C.J.; Fried, L.P. Defining Roles and Responsibilities of the Health Workforce to Respond to the Climate Crisis. *JAMA Network Open* **2024**, *7*, e241435-e241435, doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.1435.
3. Schwerdtle, N.; Horton, G.; Kent, F.; Walker, L.; McLean, M. Education for sustainable healthcare: A transdisciplinary approach to transversal environmental threats. *Med Teach* **2020**, *42*, 1102-1106, doi:10.1080/0142159x.2020.1795101.
4. Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Environmental Scientists and Specialists, . Available online: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/environmental-scientists-and-specialists.htm> (accessed on September 30, 2024).
5. Projections Central. State Employment Projections. Projections Managing Partnership (PMP). . Available online: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/environmental-scientists-and-specialists.htm> (accessed on September 30, 2024).
6. Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Geoscientists. Available online: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/geoscientists.htm#tab-1> (accessed on



### Financial Projections Form

<b>Institution</b>	East Tennessee State University							
<b>Program Name</b>	Master of Science in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences							
<b>Projected One-Time Expenditures</b>								
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6*</b>	<b>Year 7*</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff								
Non-Instructional Staff								
Graduate Assistants								
Accreditation								
Consultants				\$4,000				
Equipment								
Information Technology								
Library resources								
Marketing								
Facilities								
Travel		\$4,000						
Other		\$2,000						
<b>Total One-Time Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Projected Recurring Expenditures</b>								
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6*</b>	<b>Year 7*</b>
Faculty & Instructional Staff								
Non-Instructional Staff								
Graduate Assistants		\$ 21,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 42,000		
Accreditation								
Consultants								
Equipment								
Information Technology								
Library								
Marketing								
Facilities								
Travel								
Other								
<b>Total Recurring Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Grand Total (One-Time and Recurring)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$46,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Projected Revenue</b>								
<b>Category</b>	<b>Planning</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6*</b>	<b>Year 7*</b>
Tuition*		\$94,576	\$189,152	\$200,974	\$212,796	\$224,618		
Grants								
Other								
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$94,576</b>	<b>\$189,152</b>	<b>\$200,974</b>	<b>\$212,796</b>	<b>\$224,618</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
*Years 6 and 7 should only be included for doctoral programs								
*Base Tuition and Fees Rate		\$11,822	\$11,822	\$11,822	\$11,822	\$11,822		
No of total students per year		8	16	17	18	19		

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: Quality Assurance Funding Update

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Michael Hoff  
Vice Provost

Staff will provide an update regarding the status of the Quality Assurance Funding cycle. The update will cover the history of Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) program and ETSU's performance. Tennessee was the first state to utilize quality and academic performance metrics in state funding; for over 40 years, QAF, previously known as Performance Funding, has provided incentives for all public colleges and universities to measure student learning and institutional effectiveness as part of the continuous improvement process. Institutions may earn an additional 5.45 percent over their operating budget predicated on performance on metrics particular to their sector and aligned to the Tennessee Higher Education Master Plan.



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# **ETSU 2024-2025 Quality Assurance Funding Review**

Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle

Dr. Michael Hoff

# Overview

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- Quality Assurance Funding (QAF), previously known as Performance Funding, provides incentives for public colleges and universities to improve student learning and institutional quality
- Institutions may earn an additional 5.45% beyond Outcomes Formula funding
- QAF Standards are evaluated every five years
  - QAF Advisory Committee is comprised of governing board members, institutional leadership, and THEC staff.
- Final standards approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission



# General Education Assessment

- **Points Available:** 10
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives to institutions for improvements in the quality of their undergraduate general education program as measured by performance of graduates on an approved standardized test of general education.

Sector	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Institution Mean	16.40	16.88	16.66	17.10	16.83
National Mean	15.40	15.12	15.12	14.82	14.82
Difference	1.00	1.76	1.54	2.28	2.01
% Institution to National Mean	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Points Awarded	10	10	10	10	10



# Major Field Assessment

- **Points Available:** 15
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives for institutions to improve the quality of major field programs as evaluated by the performance of graduates on approved examinations.

MFT	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
Program Type	N	Points	N	Points	N	Points	N	Points	N	Points
Licensure	6	14	6	14	6	15	6	15	6	15
Non-Licensure	8		8		9		8		8	



# Academic Programs

- **Points Available:** 35
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives for institutions to achieve and maintain program excellence and accreditation.

Evaluation of Standards						
Programs (Level)	<i>Points Available</i>	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Undergraduate	10	9	9	9	9	10
Graduate	10	7	8	9	9	9
Accreditable	15	15	15	14	14	14





# Institutional Satisfaction Studies

- **Points Available:** 10
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives for institutions to improve the quality of their undergraduate programs as evaluated by surveys of undergraduate students, recent graduates, and faculty.

Cycle Year	Satisfaction Study	Points Earned
2020/21	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	7
2021/22	Qualitative Report	10
2022/23	PEG Alumni Survey	10
2023/24	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	10
2024/25	Comprehensive Satisfaction Study Report	10



# Equity

- **Points Available:** 10
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives for institutions to increase the number of graduates from select populations.
- **Focus population:** First-Generation students
  - Quantitative (6 points): Compares the 3-year rolling average of full-time fall to fall retention with the retention rate in that year
  - Qualitative (4 points): Landscape report of current initiatives

Year 4	3 Yr Avg (2020-21 to 2022-23)	2023-24	Percent	Points (Max. 6)	Points (Max. 4)	Total (Max. 10)
	66.7	71.1%	106.7%	6	4	10



# Focus Populations

- **Points Available:** 20
- **Purpose:** This standard is designed to provide incentives for institutions to increase the number of graduates from select populations.

Year 5: 2024-25

Focus Population	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	3 Yr Avg	2023-24	Percent Attained	Points Earned
Bachelor Graduates with Associate Degree	730	669	651	683.3	602	88.1%	2
High Need Academic Programs, Graduate	357	370	365	364	427	117.3%	5
High Need Academic Programs, Undergraduate	1141	1097	1164	1134	972	85.7%	1
Low Income*	28.06	28.33	29.26	28.55	24.68	86.4%	1

\*Calculated as awards per 100 FTE

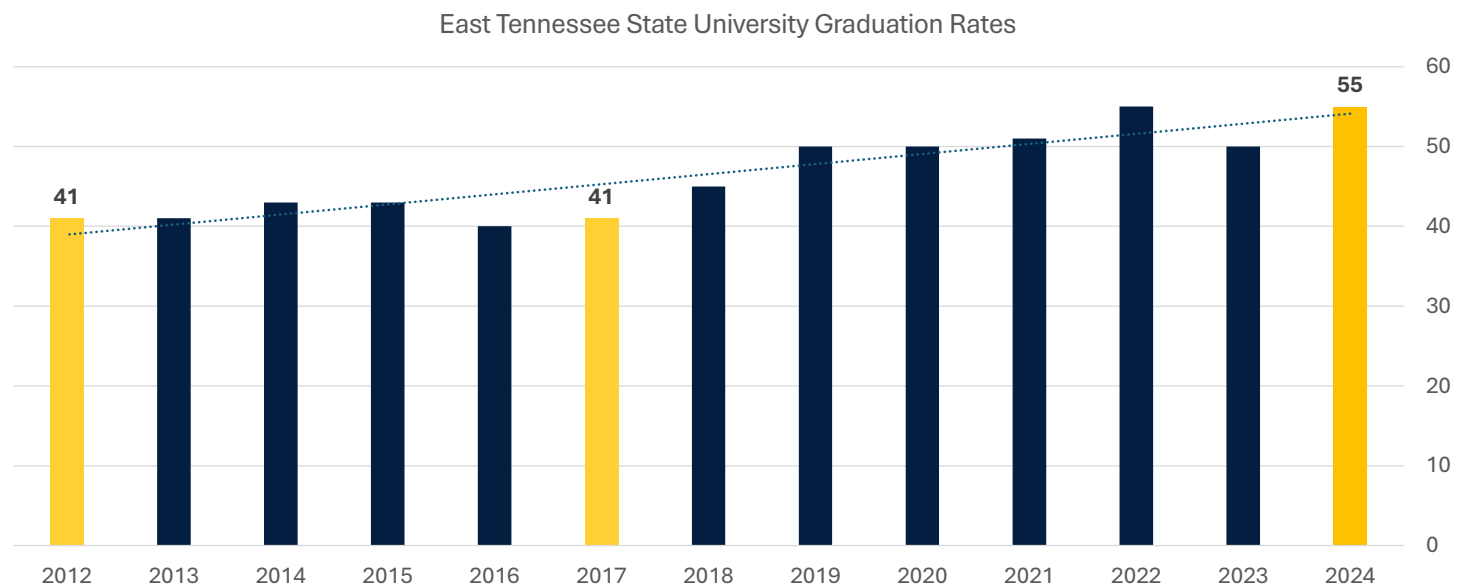


# Summary – Final Year 2020-25 QAF Cycle

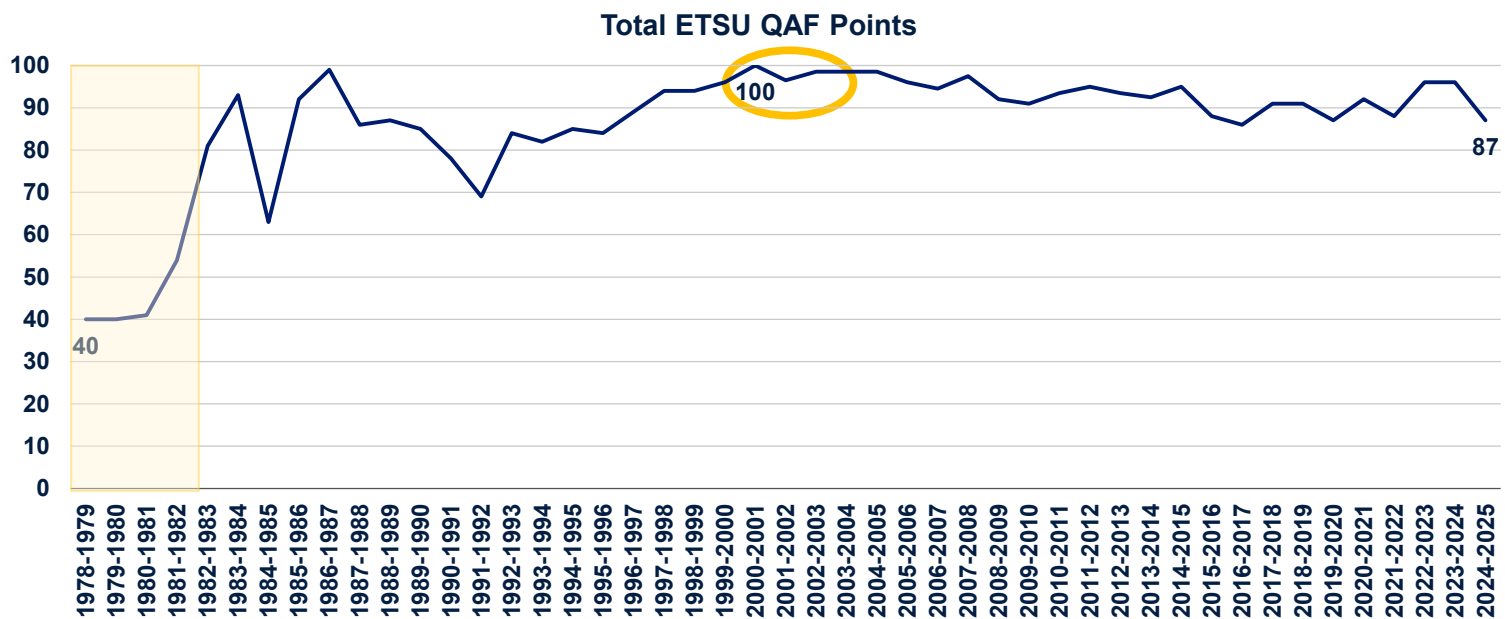
Quality Assurance Funding Standard	Maximum Points	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1. General Education Assessment	10	10	10	10	10	10
2. Major Field Assessment	15	14	14	15	15	15
3. Academic Programs	35	31	32	32	32	33
<i>Specialty Accreditation</i>	15	15	15	14	14	14
<i>Undergraduate Program Review</i>	10	9	9	9	9	10
<i>Graduate Program Review</i>	10	7	8	9	9	9
4. Institutional Satisfaction	10	7	10	10	10	10
5. Student Equity	10	10	4	9	10	10
<i>Quantitative</i>	6	6	2	5	6	6
<i>Qualitative</i>	4	4	2	4	4	4
7. Student Access and Success	20	20	18	20	18	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>87</b>



# Degree Production Impact



# Overall Trend: 1978-2025



# University QAF Comparison

Tennessee Quality Assurance Funding 2018-2024						
Institution	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Austin Peay State University	90	89	87	87	83	97
<b>East Tennessee State University</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>
Middle Tennessee State University	89	87	94	89	94	92
Tennessee State University	79	75	83	85	74	79
Tennessee Technological University	97	92	95	93	100	93
University of Memphis	93	83	95	92	94	91
University of Tennessee, Chattanooga	90	88	93	95	97	96
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	93	92	93	90	97	97
University of Tennessee, Martin	92	83	92	94	96	96



# Next Steps

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- **General Education Assessment**
  - Encourage serious student participation and engage faculty with respect to teaching critical thinking
- **Major Field Assessment**
  - All licensure programs tested every year, and any necessary non-licensure programs will be tested when required
- **Academic Programs**
  - Encourage all accreditable programs to seek accreditation (87 programs accredited by 25 different accreditors)





# Next Steps

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- **Institutional Satisfaction Studies**
  - Comprehensive Satisfaction Study Report
- **Equity**
  - Focus on success initiatives of first-generation students
- **Focus Populations**
  - Continue to identify and implement strategies that improve the probability of graduation for each population of focus



# Questions

**Dr. Kimberly D.  
McCorkle**  
Provost and  
Senior Vice President

**Dr. Michael Hoff**  
Vice Provost



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: Community Engaged Learning Update

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Susan McCracken  
Vice Provost

Staff will present an overview of the recent initiatives launched by the Office of Community Engagement and describe how community-engaged learning creates transformative student experiences. They will explain how these experiences, which are part of the “Go Beyond the Classroom” initiative, encourage students to explore career paths, develop leadership and communication skills, and provide opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Dr. McCracken will highlight the Office’s programs and services that foster relationships among community partners, faculty, staff, and students. Dr. McCracken will also discuss why community engagement was chosen as ETSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan focus, and how it supports the university's mission and aligns with the strategic plan.



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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Office of Community Engagement

# Go Beyond the **classroom**

**COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING**  
ETSU'S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN (QEP)



# What is a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

- The Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, is an integral part of ETSU's reaffirmation and accreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- The QEP is a 5-year strategic student learning initiative with a focus on undergraduate student success.
- ETSU's QEP was accepted by SACSCOC in 2023; the implementation period is 2023 to 2028.



# Community Engagement: A Strategic Priority

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ETSU strategic plan that included “Stewardship of Place” as one of six pillars of success is approved</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ETSU Task Force on Community Engagement created</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ETSU 125 Chapter II visioning exercises identified community engagement as potential QEP topic</li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ETSU Board of Trustees approved Community-Engaged Learning as focus of ETSU’s QEP</li> <li>• Vice Provost for Community Engagement/QEP Director hired</li> </ul>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Go Beyond the Classroom</i> QEP developed</li> <li>• SACSCOC site visit; <i>Go Beyond the Classroom</i> accepted as QEP</li> <li>• ETSU Elevates relaunched after pandemic</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-Engaged Learning Course designation created ; 44 approved</li> </ul>
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80+ Community-Engaged Learning Courses approved</li> <li>• Application for Carnegie Community Engagement Designation submitted</li> </ul>



## ***Go Beyond the Classroom***

Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes (Jacoby, 2015).





## Our Aspirations

**50%** of all ETSU freshmen will have a CEL experience during their first year.

**75%** of all ETSU seniors will have had a CEL experience prior to graduation.

### As a result, students will

- make meaningful connections between their CEL experiences and academic course content.
- critically reflect on how CEL influences their future aspirations.
- articulate how CEL prepares them to make productive contributions in a diverse society.



# ***Go Beyond the Classroom: Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Course Designation***

## ***Selected Examples***

### **CEL in Arts and Sciences**

APST 3530-001 Religion in Appalachia  
COMM 4356 Intercultural Communication  
GEOS 4857 Principles of Hydrology  
SPAN 3123 Intro to Translation and Interpretation

### **CEL in Health Sciences**

HSMP 3200 Health Services Administration  
NRSE 3510 Community and Public Nursing  
OCTH 6205 Foundations of OT I: History, Philosophy, Professionalism, and Ethics  
SOWK 5406 Advanced Field Practicum II

### **CEL in Business and Technology**

SALM 4102 Corporate Social Responsibility in Sport and Recreation  
DIGM 4917 Digital Media Production  
ACCT 4905 Accounting Internship in VITA

### **CEL in Education**

PEXS 4250 Adapted Physical Education  
SPED 2300 Exceptional Learners



# ***Go Beyond the Classroom Goals***

## **Provide**

Provide infrastructure and resources for student leaders, faculty and staff, and community partners to support long-term success for Community-Engaged Learning.

## **Expand**

Expand student involvement in Community-Engaged Learning opportunities across the undergraduate curricular and co-curricular experiences.

## **Describe**

Describe the impact of student involvement in Community-Engaged Learning on student outcomes for various student populations.





## **Goal 1: Provide infrastructure and resources**

- Currently, 80+ courses have the Community-Engaged Learning Course Designation:
  - 46 faculty
  - Over 1,700 students
  - 100+ community partners
- Professional development
- Establish awards and recognition for students, faculty, staff, and community partners; \$7,500 invested

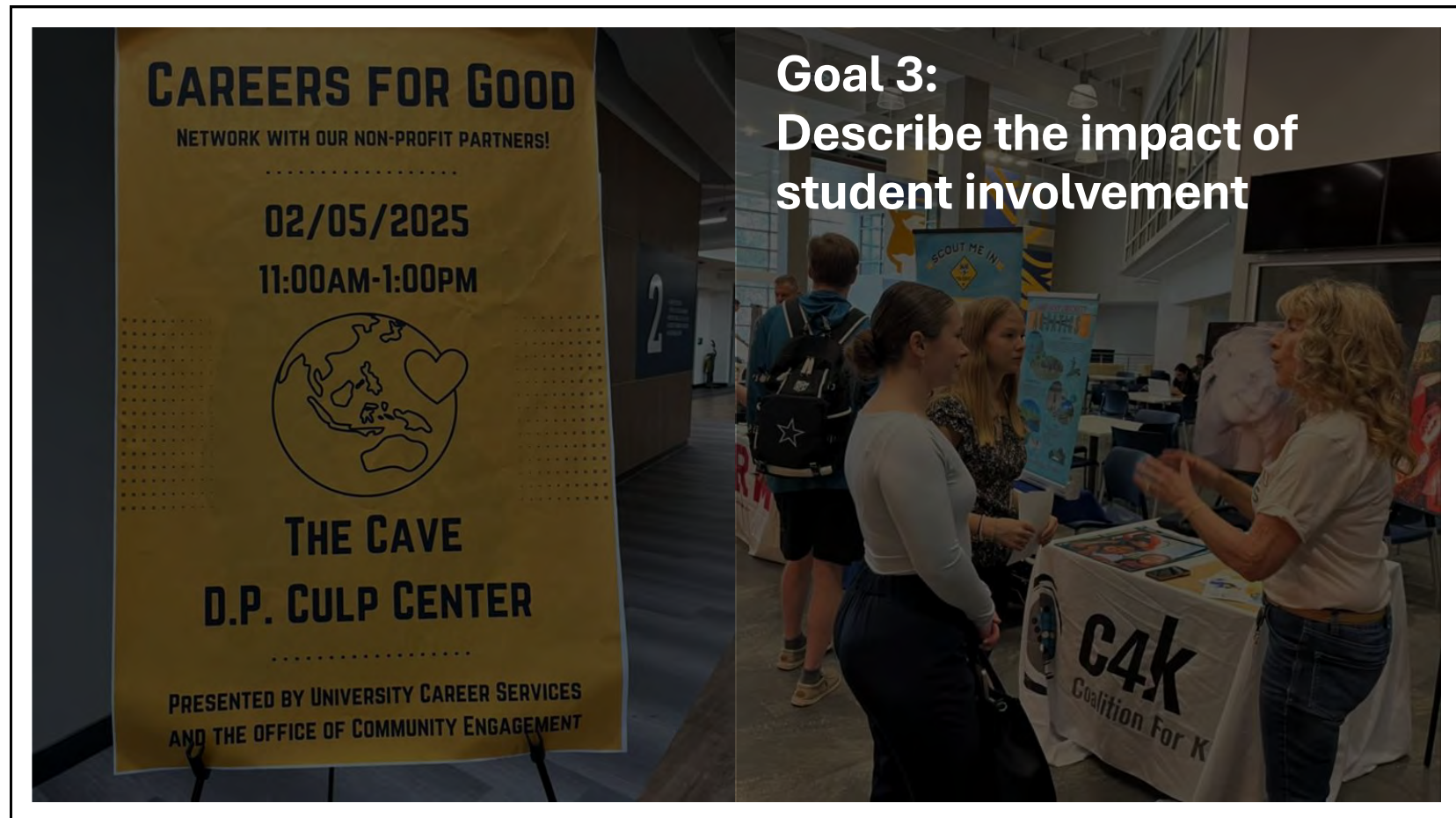




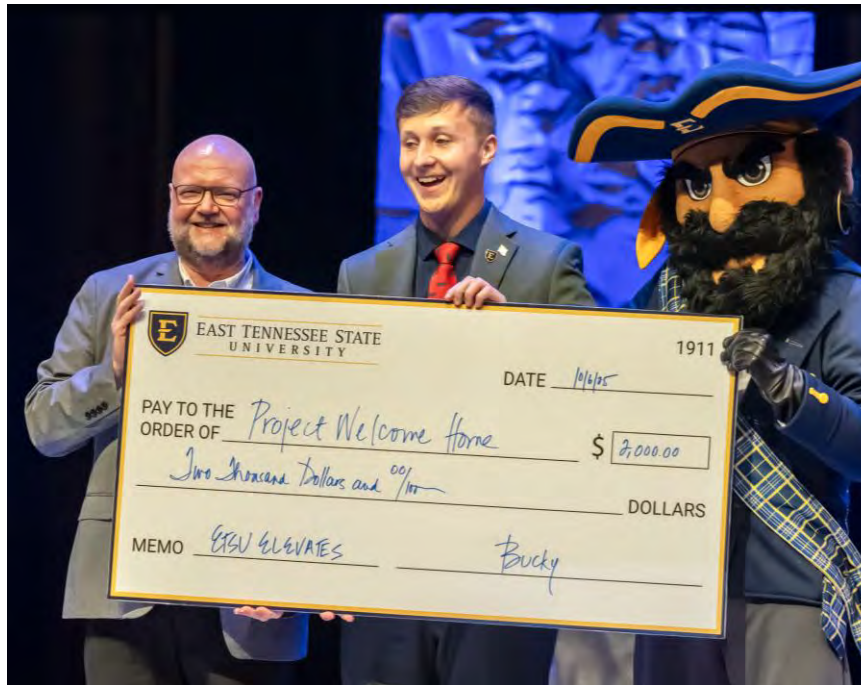
## Goal 2: Expand student involvement



- Students logged **over 21,000 hours of service** in ETSU Serves (increase of approximately 140%) in 2024-2025.
- Since August 2025, **335 students** have participated in a day of service.
- ETSU Elevates has funded **\$60,000+** for 22 projects to date, serving Carter, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan and Washington counties and SW Virginia.
- **82 students** participated in **5 Alternative Breaks** and **2 CEL Study Abroad** in 2024-2025.



### Goal 3: Describe the impact of student involvement



## Community-Engaged Learning influences students' aspirations.

*"Moving forward, I hope to grow this project by supporting the development of the housing community and connecting with more veterans in need."*

### Reed Bull, 2025 Elevates

*"Before participating in ETSU Elevates, I was solely interested in a career in criminal justice. However, I am now equally as interested in a career in either local government or non-profits."*

### Layne Maddox, 2024 Elevates





## **Community-Engaged Learning prepares students to make productive contributions in society.**

- Students recognize how they are integrated with the community.
- Students experience ETSU's broader role in the region.
- Students express that these learning experiences impact how they live their lives daily.





# Results from Community-Engaged Learning Designated Courses, Years 1 and 2

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)	Exploring (Novice)	Developing Commitment (Emerging)	Transforming (Proficient)
<b>SLO 1 (Connecting):</b> Students will make meaningful connections between their Community-Engaged Learning Experiences and academic course content.	5%	26%	69%
<b>SLO 2 (Influencing):</b> Students will critically reflect on how Community-Engaged Learning influences their future aspirations.	7%	29%	65%
<b>SLO 3 (Contributing):</b> Students will articulate how Community-Engaged Learning prepares them to make productive contributions in a diverse society.	6%	28%	66%

**Emerging or Proficient: 93.6%; QEP Goal 75%**  
**Proficient Level: 66%; QEP Goal 50%**



## **Our Vision for Community Engagement - Meeting the Challenge of ETSU 125 Chapter II**

*Community-Engaged Learning Experiences will address the economic and workforce needs of the region.*

*Community-Engaged Learning Experiences will prepare students for the career demands of the future.*

*Community-Engaged Learning will be a signature experience for all ETSU students.*



# Questions, comments, and feedback



Senta Scarborough (Journalism) and student presenters at the 2025 Engagement Scholarship Consortium National Conference



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: ETSU Research Update: Orthotics and Prosthetics

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Kyle Leister  
Assistant Professor & Program Director, Orthotics and  
Prosthetics, Department of Rehabilitative Sciences

Faculty will provide an overview of the evolving landscape of orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) and the role of research in enhancing clinical and educational outcomes. The educational pathway to becoming a Certified Prosthetist-Orthotist will be discussed. This presentation will cover current research focusing on wearable technologies and leveraging machine learning to predict patient mobility, directly aligning with the shift toward value-based care. Faculty will demonstrate how data-driven models can personalize treatment and improve functional outcomes, reinforcing ETSU's mission to train practitioner-scholars who integrate evidence-based practice into clinical care for people of the region and beyond.



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# Research, Education, and Clinical Practice: Bridging Gaps in O&P

Kyle Leister, PhD, CPO

# O&P Profession

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- World Health Organization estimates that 25-40 million people require orthotic/prosthetic (O&P) care
- Over 5.6 million Americans living with limb loss or limb difference
  - Increased life expectancy translates to increased chronic disease

## Increased demand for O&P services

Employment projections data for orthotists and prosthetists, 2021-31

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2021	Projected Employment, 2031	Change, 2021-31		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
Orthotists and prosthetists	29-2091	11,100	13,000	17	1,900	<a href="#">Get data</a>

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program



# What does it take to become a CPO?

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- Master's degree requirement – 2013
  - 18 – 24 months of study
  - Capstone/Thesis requirement
- 18-month O&P Residency Period
- American Board of Certification (ABC) Exams



# Accredited Programs

## 14 CAAHEP accredited programs in the US

\*Only MSOP program in the state of Tennessee

CAAHEP Accredited O&P Schools	
*ETSU, Johnson City, TN*	Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA
Baylor University, Houston, TX	Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA
California State University, Los Alamitos, CA	University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
Century College, St. Paul, MN	University of Hartford, Hartford, CT
Florida International University, Tampa, FL	UT Southwestern, Dallas, TX
Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI	University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Northwestern University, Chicago, IL	Alabama State University, Montgomery, AL





# O&P at ETSU

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## **Mission:**

Our mission is to prepare competent practitioner-scholars to provide evidence-based services for individuals requiring orthotic/prosthetic care in Southern Appalachia and beyond.



# O&P Research



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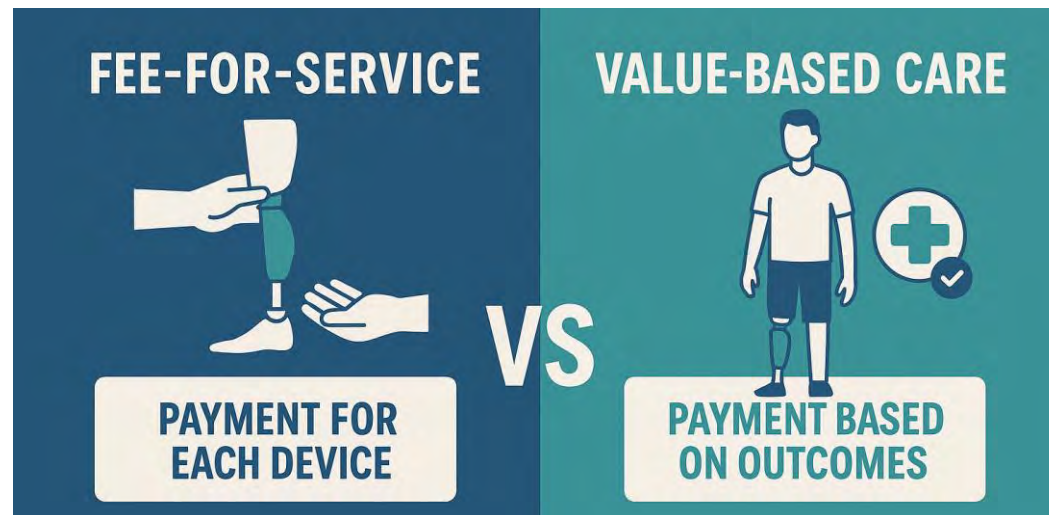
Orthotics and Prosthetics



# Paradigm Shift

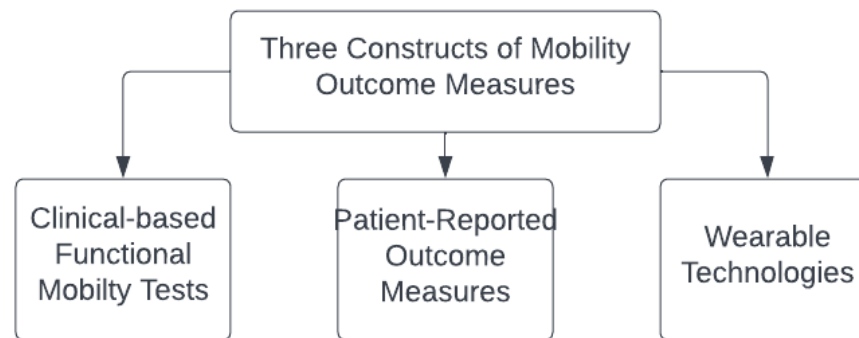
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- Fee-for-Service vs. Value-Based Care



# Outcome Measures

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# Specific Aims

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- Develop and cross validate a model utilizing machine learning to estimate free living mobility according to clinical-based outcome measures and health state predictors
- Examine the relationship between model-predicted and actual daily steps



# Methods and Collaboration

1. Design a study
2. Get Funding
3. Build a collaborative team
4. Get after it!



The  
Orthotics and Prosthetics  
**Foundation**  
for Education and Research

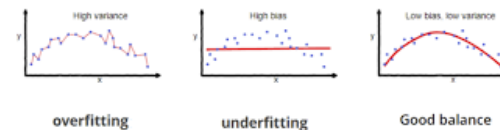
**S** Syracuse University

D'Aniello Institute for  
Veterans & Military Families



# Model Building with LASSO Regression

- Type of machine learning that improves model prediction capabilities
  - Selects most important variables for predicting outcome by shrinking regression coefficients associated with least important variables to zero
  - Reduces likelihood of overfitting model to training data variables
- LASSO Regression
  - n=80 training
  - n=26 testing



$$\sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - \sum_j x_{ij} \beta_j)^2 + \lambda \sum_{j=1}^p |\beta_j|$$



# Beta Values and Prediction Equation

Characteristic	
Intercept (steps)	3,089
Age (years)	-27.59
Sex	0
Ethnicity	0
Amputation Cause	0
Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) Status (Yes)	-440.15
Body Mass Index (BMI)	-8.18
Years of prosthesis utilization	0
Years since amputation	0
Age of current prosthesis (years)	0
PLUS-M T-score	65.04

$$\text{Predicted Step Count} = 3,089 - (27.6 \times \text{Age}) - (8.2 \times \text{BMI}) - (440 \times \text{T2D}) + (65 \times \text{PLUSM})$$





# Let's Try it!

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## Patient 1

- Age: 67
- BMI: 30.5
- T2D: Yes (1)
- PLUS-M T-Score: 41.5

$$3,089 - (27.6 \times 67) - (8.2 \times 30.5) - (440 \times 1) + (65 \times 41.5)$$

**= 3,247.2 Steps**

## Patient 2

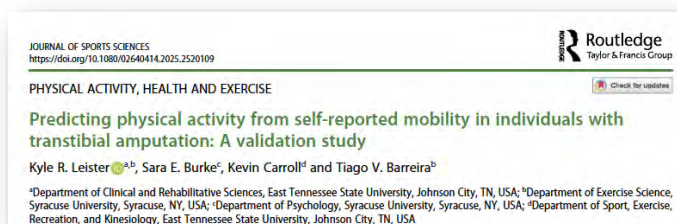
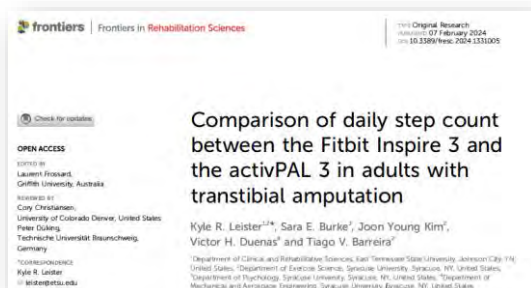
- Age: 22
- BMI: 19.5
- T2D: No (0)
- PLUS-M T-Score: 67.1

$$3,089 - (27.6 \times 22) - (8.2 \times 19.5) - (440 \times 0) + (65 \times 67.1)$$

**= 6,683.4 Steps**



# Publications and Presentations



# Clinical Applicability & Program Integration

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- **Personalized Mobility Prediction:**
  - The model enables clinicians to estimate mobility using free-living data and clinical measures
  - Supports more customized interventions and improved outcomes
- **Value-Based Care Alignment:**
  - Supports shift from fee-for-service to value-based care by quantifying functional outcomes and promoting evidence-based decision-making
- **Empowering Future Practitioners:**
  - Students engage directly with research, gaining skills in data analysis, clinical assessment, and technology integration
  - Prepares them to be leaders in modern O&P practice
- **Regional Impact:**
  - Training practitioner-scholars ensures underserved regions benefit from innovative, data-driven O&P care



# Thank you

**Kyle Leister, PhD, CPO**  
Program Director, Assistant Professor  
Email: [Leister@etsu.edu](mailto:Leister@etsu.edu)



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 14, 2025

ITEM: Student Success Update: Transforming Student Care and Engagement

COMMITTEE: Academic, Research, and Student Success

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Michelle Byrd, Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

Dr. Leah Adinolfi, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Student Engagement

Over the past decade, ETSU has seen an increase in students who need additional support services to be able to be successful. While mental health is one facet of overall student wellness and community well-being, other supports such as the provision of basic needs, emergency funding, social engagement, peer mentoring, and academic coaching play a significant role in student persistence and retention. In order to support students, ETSU is approaching student wellness in a holistic manner.

Educating and supporting students with wellness in mind is proving to be a successful approach for many institutions. ETSU is actively developing programs, centers, and strategic initiatives to support community well-being. The Jordan and Robertson Centers are two new centers that compliment and collaborate with services provided by the Dean of Students Office, the Carrier Center and Student Activities and Organizations, the Counseling Center, and other areas.

# Transforming Student Care & Engagement

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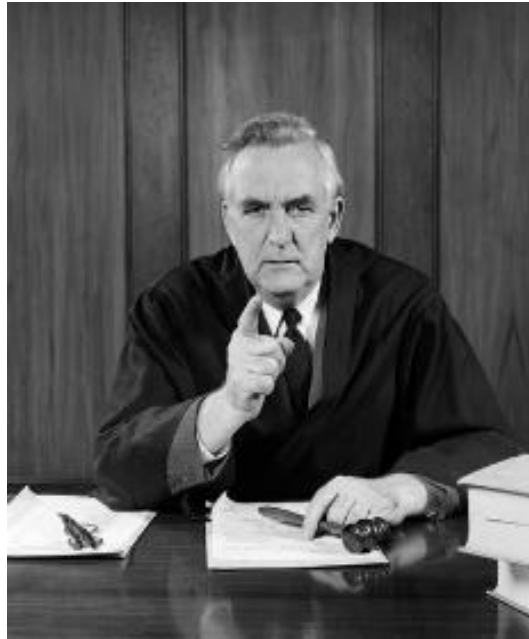
**ETSU Board of Trustees  
November 14, 2025**

Michelle Byrd, Senior Associate Vice President/Dean of Students  
Leah Adinolfi, Assistant Vice President/Dean of Student Engagement

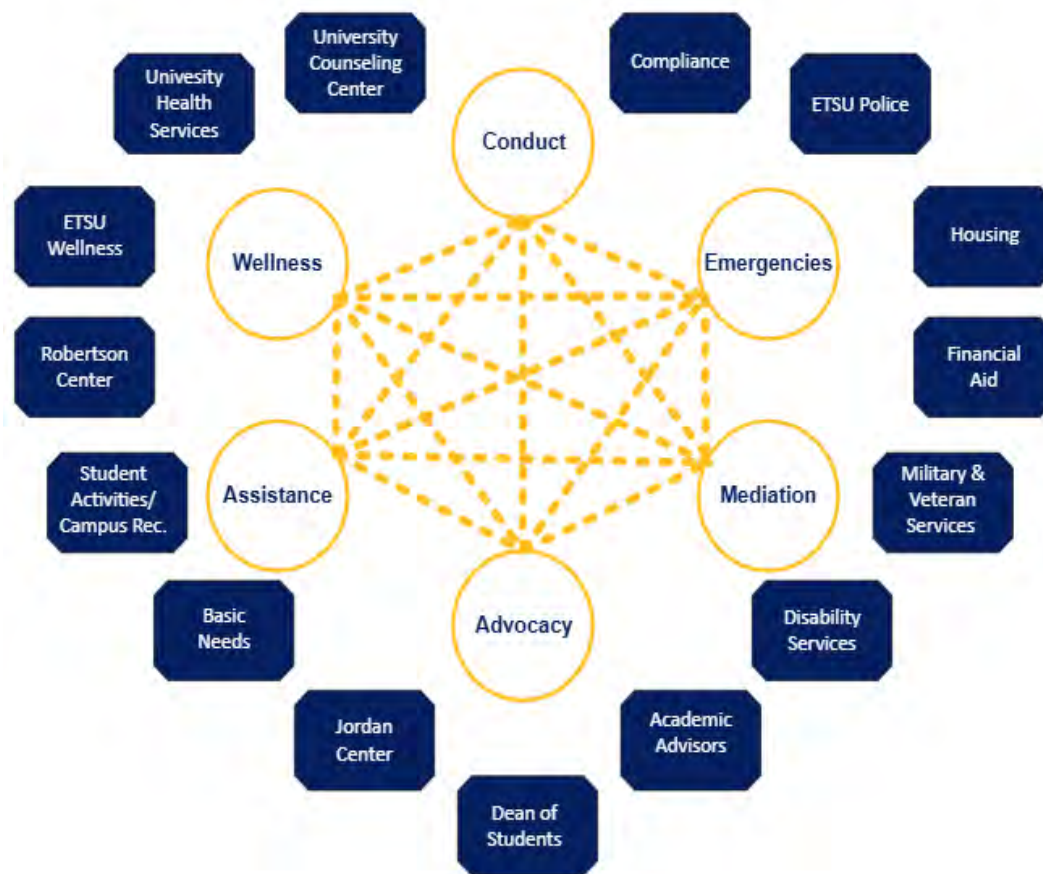


# EVOLUTION OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

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# DEAN OF STUDENTS SERVICES

- CARE case management
  - Coaching and support; referrals to mental health services
  - Review for community and campus assistance
  - Reviewed 1331 CARE reports in 2024/2025
  - The number of unique CARE reports (1331) is the highest it has ever been, outpacing FY 2021 when we recorded 1313 during the COVID epidemic.
- Emergency Funding
  - Crisis Grants 2024/2025
    - \$12,675 to 28 students
    - Helene related- \$43,000 to 62 students
  - Tuition Grants 2024/2025
    - \$120,021 in retention grants to 64 students
    - \$11,339 in returner grants to 11 students
    - Helene related- \$52,200 to 21 students
  - Textbook Grants
    - Partner with FA for Follett waivers
    - Bucs for Books Fund

# DEAN OF STUDENTS SERVICES

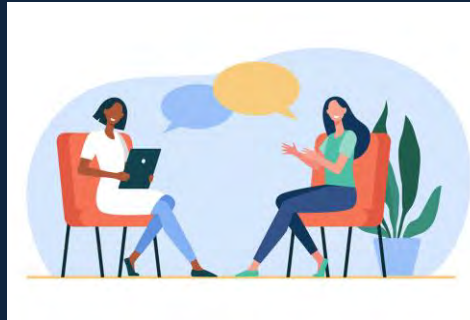
- Childcare resources and subsidies

Little Bucs Childcare Funding was able to assist 36 students parents in funding childcare for 42 children during 2024/2025. This was made possible through the federal CCAMPIS grant and student fee funds. Providing childcare subsidies removes barriers that many student parents face. Our agency agreement with Ballard and other licensed childcare agencies allow us to place children in a variety of childcare locations across the region and state.

- Conduct/complaint resolution

The number of unique Incident reports (535) has significantly dropped. We had 802 and 803, respectively, in the two prior FYs. The current number mirrors that of FY 2019 (pre-Covid) when we recorded 563 unique reports.

# EMBEDDED COUNSELOR/S



- Our first foray into utilizing embedded counselors is taking place in the Jordan Center.
  - Khia Hudgins-Smith
  - Meets with students in that area as they are referred from the specialists or students can schedule an appointment through an online portal
  - Demand is increasing
  - Assists staff with understanding trends and ways to support students
- Future opportunities

# WELLNESS

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- The Assistant Director of Wellness has moved from Campus Rec to the Dean of Students office team (July 2025)
  - Wellness to Go seminars
  - Mental Health First Aid training (a partnership with the Counseling Center)
  - Wellness ambassadors
  - Events and engagements
  - The future: Building out and up

## DR. PATRICIA E. ROBERTSON CENTER

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The Robertson Center (RC) empowers students to thrive by offering space for connection, community, and growth. Through meaningful relationships and experiences, the Center helps students build capacity for well-being, develop self-efficacy, and navigate challenges with confidence and purpose.

*We are here for all students!*





# THE RC VISION:

- Graduates who are
  - Forward-thinking
  - Well-resourced
  - Service-driven
  - Advocates for self and others
  - Breaking barriers and unlocking possibilities



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# BASIC NEEDS



- Bucky's Pantry
  - 5,321 total visits in 2024
  - 1,602 visits August-October 15, 2025
  - ~200 more than last year in same period

- Personal Hygiene Items
- Weekly tabling
- Period Product Distribution Project
- Digital Media Center, Satellite Campuses
- Swipe Out Hunger
- Winter Coat Drive



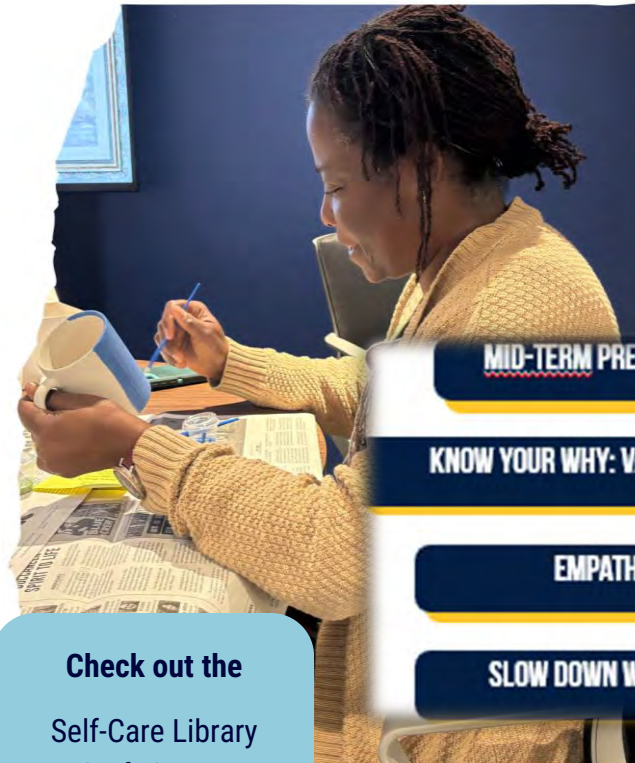
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## SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SPACE



Check out the  
Self-Care Library  
Craft Corner  
Coffee Bar & More!

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



MID-TERM PREP: GOAL GETTER

KNOW YOUR WHY: VALUES DISCOVERY

EMPATHY LAB

SLOW DOWN WITH SAMIRA



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## BUCKY'S PANTRY & RC ENGAGEMENT

- RC Tabling– 231 students
- Center Visits: 112 Weekly Average
- 9 Events, 158 participants
- Pantry Weekly Averages
  - Fall 2024-- 137 students
  - Spring 2025--156 students
  - Summer 2025-- 101 students
- From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, Bucky's brought in 36,857.6 lbs. of grocery store donated food.  
Retail value = \$154,042.45.
- 36 volunteers for a total of 1808 service hours for the year.

# MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

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# BECOMING A JED CAMPUS



The Jed Foundation

- The Jed Foundation (JED) is a non-profit organization that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for teens and young adults in the United States.
- This partnership focuses on reviewing current mental health services, preventing substance abuse, and bolstering suicide prevention efforts.
- Our JED strategic plan will help identify students at risk; align peer mentoring efforts to support wellness; encourage students to develop life skills and increase knowledge around well-being; design and implement health promotion initiatives; promote trauma-informed care; and assess environmental risks.

# ACHIEVING COUNSELING CENTER ACCREDITATION



- International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS)
- IACS is the premier leader in setting the benchmark for the full range of professional counseling services on college and university campuses.
- Accreditation validates professional excellence and distinguishes standout counseling centers with its accreditation seal of approval. An IACS accreditation assures the community of quality services.