

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 21, 2018  
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee met at 10:15 a.m. on Friday, September 21, 2018, in the Reece Museum on ETSU's main campus in Johnson City, Tennessee.

I. Call to Order

Dr. Linda Latimer, chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Deputy Secretary Mr. Nathan Dugger called the roll. Committee members in attendance were:

Dr. Linda Latimer, Chair  
Janet Ayers  
David Golden  
Dr. Fred Alsop

Guests in attendance included: Dr. Gordon Anderson, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Bert Bach, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Joseph Bidwell, Chair/Professor, Department of Biological Sciences; Dr. Wilsie Bishop, Vice President for Health Affairs; Dr. William R. Duncan, Vice Provost for Research; Dr. Susan Epps, Professor of Allied Health Sciences; Dr. Mike Hoff, Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Chief Planning Officer; Dr. Jeff Howard, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement; Dr. Karen King, Chief Information Officer and Senior Vice Provost for Information Technology Services; Dr. Sam Mayhew, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Scott Niswonger, Chair, Board of Trustees; Dr. Brian Noland, President; Dr. Robert Price, Chair/Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics; Dr. Robert Standaert, Chair/Professor, Department of Chemistry; Ms. Kristen Swing, Director, Communications; and Ms. Jennifer Hill of University Relations (taking minutes).

III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from April 27, 2018

Trustee Alsop made a motion that the minutes of the April 27, 2018, meeting of the committee be approved and submitted. Trustee Ayers seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Tenure Appointment with the Rank of Professor in the Department of Literature and Language for Dr. Sharon McGee

Dr. Bert Bach recommended that the Committee approve President Brian Noland's recommendation of tenure upon appointment with the rank of professor in the Department of Literature and Language for Dr. Sharon McGee, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Trustee Golden moved that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approve the recommendation of tenure as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Alsop and approved unanimously.

V. Academic and Student Policies

Dr. Bach presented and recommended for approval as a block the following nine policies, which have been revised to reflect current operations of the university and approved internally:

- A. Academic Integrity and Misconduct
- B. Academic Retention Standards – Undergraduate
- C. Determining Grade Point Average (GPA) – Undergraduate
- D. Determining Grade Point Average (GPA) – Graduate
- E. Study Abroad Programs
- F. Transfer and Acceptance of Undergraduate Credit
- G. Transfer and Acceptance of Graduate Credit
- H. Undergraduate Reverse Transfer
- I. University Catalogs

Dr. Bach noted that these nine policies can be classified under four types of action. Three – A, B, and E – were all Tennessee Board of Regents policies that were converted to Board of Trustees policies with no substantive revisions. Two others – C and D – were created through pulling relevant information from other existing policies to better communicate with various publics; these were originally part of other policies but were separated because they were difficult for students and others to find. Policies F and G were pulled into stand-alone policies. Policy H is an existing policy but is being presented in the new format. Policy I is new and is related to recent changes in Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Committee

on Colleges (SACSCOC) recommendations; it makes it clear how standards related to production and implementation in archiving of student catalogs are handled.

Trustee Alsop made the motion that the Committee recommend adoption of these policies to the Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded by Trustee Golden and approved unanimously.

## VI. Academic Programming and Program Delivery: A Report of the Advisory Work Group

Dr. Bach told the committee that this report is a major initiative that came as a result of issues and opportunities brought up during the Board of Trustees' 2018 Summer Retreat. The discussion focused on types of programs that were or were not in the pipeline, and those that should be in the pipeline. President Noland issued a charge to look at protocol and communication to the Board at this meeting about particular programs you might anticipate seeing moving forward for proposals in the next two years.

Dr. Bach said that the Advisory Work Group, which is comprised of the associate deans who work with programming in each of the colleges and has been meeting biweekly under the leadership of Dr. Susan Epps, has identified 15 types of proposed actions in academic program development and program delivery modalities to consider, including some new majors, new minors, concentrations, and more. He named some highlights from the report:

- One is new majors. The report indicates six potential new B.S. degrees – one in Facilities Management in the Department of Engineering, Engineering Technology and Surveying in the College of Business and Technology, another in Elementary and Special Education in the Clemmer College's Department of Curriculum and Instruction, and four in the College of Public Health in Human Health, Microbiology, Public Health, and Health Administration, which are conversions from undergraduate concentrations. Dr. Bach noted that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has indicated that it will look at conversions from concentrations to major programs if those concentrations have strong enrollment.
- Four new undergraduate concentrations within the B.A. program in Theatre in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Theatre and Dance – Acting, Design/Production, Musical Theatre, and Physical Theatre – along with a concentration in Cybersecurity and Advanced Networking within the B.S. program in Computing in the College of Business and Technology's Department of Computing, are proposed. Two other possible concentrations include Mechatronics in the B.S. program in Engineering Technology in the Department of Engineering, Engineering Technology and Surveying and Certified Family Life Educator in the Clemmer College's Department of

Counseling and Human Services. Dr. Bach noted that the concentrations in Theatre are consistent with the ongoing ETSU Arts Initiative and construction of the new Performing Arts Center, and the Mechatronics concentration would build on the department's strengths in mechanical and electrical engineering and recognize the potential market for new students.

- The B.S. Program in Sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the College of Arts and Sciences, which already has significant online components, could go fully online.
- Among eight potential new graduate degree majors that have been identified is an M.F.A. in Digital Media in the College of Business and Technology's Department of Digital Media; Dr. Bach noted that ETSU already has an M.F.A. in Art, and the university's undergraduate program in Digital Media is strong, with approximately 400 students, and could easily build an M.F.A. These also include a possible doctorate of occupational therapy in the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences' planned new Department of Occupational Therapy. In that same college, the Department of Rehabilitative Sciences could implement both an M.S. in Prosthetics and Orthotics and a Ph.D. in Rehabilitative Sciences, and collaborate with the Clemmer College's Department of Sport, Exercise, Recreation, and Kinesiology on an interdisciplinary M.S. in Sports Nutrition and Sports Science.
- Some programs that could convert in modality from on-ground to online are the master's degree programs in Criminal Justice in the College of Arts and Sciences, Financial Economics and the M.B.A. in the College of Business and Technology, and the Health Data Analytics Certificate Program in the College of Public Health.

Dr. Bach said all of the programs for which the colleges have made those particular commitments are on the list presented in the Committee's materials. He emphasized that work is ongoing and proposals for these and other programs listed are in various stages of completion, and this list may be amended as time goes by.

In discussion, Trustee Alsop expressed concern that some of these potential programs may reflect the new budget model, with deans having more control over funding, which could escalate into credit-grabbing from one department to another. He asked for assurance that Dr. Epps and the Working Group are conscious of this.

Dr. Bach said yes, he understood that there was an observation that ETSU's pipeline of academic programs was not as robust as might be expected, and that there was also the observation that these were concurrent with implementation of the new budget model. He noted that Dr. Epps has convened the Working Group regularly to address questions, discuss opportunities for collaboration and cooperation, and work out any issues that might arise. He assured the Committee that the ongoing process would provide opportunities for these issues to be discussed, and that discussion would also take place at a forthcoming meeting of the Academic Council.

Dr. Epps added that the Working Group has identified exactly what Trustee Alsop has described and is meeting with Dr. Mike Hoff and speaking with Dr. Bach about the group's process to make sure it is focused on how we can work with what we already have in a cooperative manner. The group is looking at how the different units can work together to make what ETSU has even better.

Trustee Golden said the mission of ETSU is preparing students to enter the real world, and an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving is usually what helps. He said that in the real world, there is often tension between domain expertise and the ability to work in an interdisciplinary manner. He asked how to ensure that the structure encourages and facilitates interdisciplinary courses of study so students who graduate will be prepared for the real world.

Dr. Bach said discussions have taken place regarding that concern and that ETSU has opportunities for improvement, as there is a greater awareness now than in the past, as well as room for a number of venues for interdisciplinary study.

## VII. STEM at ETSU Report

Dr. Gordon Anderson delivered a presentation on "Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at ETSU." He noted that while STEM-related programs exist throughout the university, he would focus primarily on those within the College of Arts and Sciences. He introduced Drs. Robert Price, Joseph Bidwell, and Robert Standaert, chairs of the departments of Mathematics and Statistics, Biological Sciences, and Chemistry, respectively.

Dr. Anderson showed the numbers of undergraduate and graduate student majors and graduates of various STEM-related departments. He noted that Biological Sciences is the second largest department in the College behind Psychology, while some of the smaller programs include Geosciences and Physics. He pointed to five STEM graduate programs that are modest in size, and a doctoral program shared between Biological Sciences and the Quillen College of Medicine's Department of Biomedical Sciences. He noted the fluctuations in enrollment and said that enrollment is limited by the numbers of graduate assistantships, tuition scholarships and tuition waivers available.

Dr. Anderson pointed out that several STEM departments, such as Mathematics and Statistics, Biological Sciences, and Computing, have heavy enrollment in lower level, general education courses that are required of all students. He also described the external funding obtained and the numbers of publications and presentations given by STEM faculty in recent years.

Dr. Anderson shared some highlights of the educational and outreach activities by the STEM-related departments, including:

- Hosting the annual Governor’s School in Integration of Biological and Statistical Sciences.
- The Center of Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education offers Science Literacy in Education (SLICE), the Upper East Tennessee Early Mathematics Tournament for fourth through eighth graders, and Eastman MathElites and SciencElites.
- Ongoing collaborative involvement in math and science education at Johnson City’s North Side Elementary School that has continued even after the \$5 million National Science Foundation grant to establish this “Science First!” collaboration ended.
- Student research at the undergraduate and graduate levels is highlighted through the annual Southern Conference Undergraduate Research Forum, Tennessee’s Posters at the Capitol program, and ETSU’s Boland Symposium and Appalachian Research Forum. Dr. Anderson pointed out that the Department of Mathematics and Statistics is unusual in having an undergraduate research requirement for the bachelor’s degree. He also noted that each of the College’s mathematics and science departments has an Honors-in-Discipline program, and that the university has an undergraduate research office housed within the Honors College.
- The Center of Excellence in Paleontology features the Gray Fossil Site, ETSU Museum of Natural History, and Hands On! Discovery Center. Dr. Anderson noted that while fieldwork takes place on-site, visitors can view prep labs inside the building and enjoy interactive exhibits. Over 12,000 volunteer hours were spent at the site in the last year.
- The Department of Biological Sciences is constructing a new greenhouse beside University School, and its EagleCam, through which two American Bald Eagle nesting sites may be viewed, is garnering significant attention locally, nationally, and internationally.
- The Department of Geosciences is using drones for a variety of remote sensing activities.
- The Department of Physics and Astronomy hosts public events at both the Powell Observatory and the Planetarium.
- The Department of Chemistry frequently conducts demonstrations in area schools.

Dr. Anderson said that because of expressed student interest and workforce needs, the College is looking at developing interdisciplinary programs in Environmental Science, which would involve the areas of Chemistry, Geosciences, Biological Sciences, and Environmental Studies in Appalachian Studies; and Data Science, which would involve the areas of Physics and Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Computing, and Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

Dr. Anderson also shared the current needs within the STEM areas, including updates in facilities and equipment in the university's biology and chemistry labs. He said that the departments have strong faculty and programs, but the facilities sometimes do not match those of the high schools from which visiting prospective students come. Laboratory instrumentation is aging and in poor repair, and is in need of replacement. Dr. Anderson also pointed out that one of the biggest challenges is in recruiting and retaining graduate students due to stipends that are low compared to those offered at peer institutions.

In discussion, Trustee Alsop referred to Dr. Anderson's statement that graduate students are limited by the number and size of stipends and said that does not make ETSU very competitive. He thanked Dr. Anderson for letting the Committee know the needs of the STEM departments, and asked if there was a strategic plan built around the STEM portion of the College of Arts and Sciences and other STEM areas that would help the university move toward meeting those needs.

Dr. Anderson said the College would continue to do what it can with the resources available. He noted that the teaching lab in Physics and Astronomy has been updated. He said one of the primary ways of dealing with research instrumentation is through grants from federal agencies, which usually require matching funds from the university. He noted that ETSU has a lot of catching up to do; resources are scarce, and there is a 10-year gap between major equipment purchases. Dr. Anderson said the university needs to talk more to regional companies about obtaining equipment they may be replacing, and look at partnering with industry and other areas on campus.

Trustee Niswonger asked how often the viability of programs is evaluated. He mentioned Surveying, which runs from five to eight students per year, and Physics. He asked how ETSU can afford to teach that program in surveying.

Dr. Bach noted that Surveying is in the College of Business and Technology and is a baccalaureate program recognized through the Academic Common Market in more states than any other program. He said citizen advocates come to the Academic Affairs Office. One of the recurring issues with the Surveying Program, he said, has to do with the degree to which the credential itself is reflected in the employees they are hiring. That has been an ongoing question because of fact it is recognized through the Academic Common Market. Trustee Niswonger asked if the Surveying Program is self-sustaining, or if industries would be willing to help fund it because of the quality of ETSU's graduates. Dr. Bach noted that Trustee Niswonger was pointing to an opportunity the university would need to look into.

Trustee Niswonger asked if the programs are reviewed annually for their ability to be self-sufficient. Dr. Bach said they are reviewed every year by the university relative to its own cycle and every four to five years by the state. If programs are mature, they are looked at to make sure they have not fallen below established benchmarks. There is a formal review and a statement of approach to addressing problems, and the same applies to master's and doctoral programs.

Trustee Niswonger asked when the last time a program was reviewed and taken out as a result. Dr. Bach said that Art History was taken to establish a Brand and Media Program.

Dr. Anderson said that Physics and Philosophy are always the last two lowest-producing departments, but it is self-evident that a university needs a Philosophy Program, and Physics is basic to all the sciences and engineering. He said that undergraduate programs in these disciplines are small across the country, but ETSU got a commendation recently from the American Physical Society for reaching 10 graduates in one year. The quality of the faculty and the education they provide is much higher because they have opportunities to work with students at a higher level.

Trustee Niswonger stated that the point he was trying to make was to not let outliers take resources away that should be invested in programs with 21<sup>st</sup> century job potential. Trustee Alsop reiterated that Physics is not just for Physics majors but is required for Biology majors.

Trustee Ayers described a “disconnect” between the presentations the Board is seeing on ETSU's research focus, its impact on the community, and the opportunities of the Ballard Health merger and the state of the university's science labs as presented during this meeting. She asked what strategic plan is in place for this area.

Chair Latimer noted that the Ballard merger has taken place and Board meetings are still being steered toward that. She indicated that several members are thinking that they see good presentations at the university but do not understand how the vision, goals, strategies, and metrics are going to get us to the area we are trying to accomplish. She said when the Board sees these facilities, they would like to hear what can be done. She suggested, as an example, that Microbiology students might be able to use labs at the Quillen College of Medicine at times when those labs are not in use by medical students. She said the Board members want the university to succeed and are there to help in any way they can.

Trustee Golden indicated he would like to see vision with strategy to take advantage of the opportunities that will be presented by the Ballard merger. He said that a synthetic biology lab is a fraction of the cost it used to be, and he suggested looking at the latest and best technology available. He suggested that what the university used

to do is not what it needs to continue to do and noted that the cost of laboratories has decreased. He said the university could also use the “MacGyver Principle” and find ways to use the resources it has now in new ways.

Trustee Niswonger asked university officials to give a presentation on the laboratory needs of the university and solutions at the next meeting.

Trustee Ayers said she was not speaking of more money, but of strategy. She said she wants to see ETSU ahead of Middle Tennessee State University and other institutions instead of ETSU chasing them.

Trustee Golden said he does not believe there are any iGEM (International Genetically Engineered Machine) universities in Tennessee. He said iGEM is a synthetic biology competition at the university and advanced high school level. He described it as taking genetically engineered organisms to solve real-world problems, and said it is fairly low cost and takes faculty support. ETSU could be the only institution in Tennessee that would be doing that. There are open-source materials available related to this.

Chair Latimer told Dr. Anderson that he leads a very important college, and that she found it interesting that both the sciences and the arts are under one college. She suggested the possibility of separating the two so that each could get more attention and take advantage of the opportunities that could be presented by both the Ballard merger and the new arts facility. Trustee Alsop said that concept has been mentioned from time to time over several decades. He said the College of Arts and Sciences is critically important because of the size of the college as it exists now, and to make it two entities would take a lot of planning on the part of the university and the deans who would be involved. He said that with the new initiatives mentioned and the movement going on with the new governing board, he believes it is time to look at new concepts, including this. Trustee Niswonger voiced support for the idea of splitting the sciences and the arts, and said he was not sure the arts is a part of opportunities available in the health sciences and research.

President Noland noted that during the work of the Committee of 125, there were conversations about the creation of a College of Arts and Letters or a College of Creative Arts, and another that would focus attention on the sciences. He said this input from the Committee gives the university an opportunity to focus on developing a new program matrix of what has been talked about historically, and added that the institution would need to look at colleges across the university and not just one. He said staff will bring a report on this to the next meeting.

## VIII. Peer Evaluation

Dr. Mike Hoff referred Committee members to the meeting documents showing kinds of accreditation and peer review activities taking place at the university this year, which provide a look at the agencies that will be visiting or communicating with campus. Several undergraduate and graduate program reviews will happen.

Dr. Hoff also informed the Committee that in March 2019, the fifth year report is due to SACSCOC, which is a process required to maintain accreditation. As part of that review, a site visit to off-campus instructional sites by reviewers from other institutions will take place. He noted that staff are working very hard to report on all the principles and standards required for this, and ETSU's success in this will impact its ability to make other changes at the institution.

Dr. Hoff also noted that there will be some specialized accreditation activities for around 80 programs that are accredited. He said the university had good responses last year and he expects this to continue, as ETSU has a lot of committed faculty who want to see their programs succeed and achieve this recognition.

Dr. Hoff told the Committee that a review of ETSU's Chairs of Excellence and Centers of Excellence will take place in 2019 and will be reported to the Board. This review will make sure the financial support and recognition the university has gotten for those meets what ETSU is trying to do in recruiting.

Trustee Niswonger asked if there is any place within the institution where accreditation is in question, and Dr. Hoff said that he did not believe so, and added that engineering is going through the process to get accreditation.

President Noland said there is not an entity in jeopardy of losing accreditation, and the bulk of reviews go extremely well and are a strong affirmation of the work the university is doing. He noted that residency programs are handled differently from academic programs and sometimes go on or off warning status.

Dr. Wilsie Bishop said that there are currently concerns about one area related to leadership, faculty and clinical placement, and these are being addressed. Sometimes questions arise about medical residents' experiences. If there are warnings, unscheduled site visits may take place. Dr. Hoff added that this is not an uncommon thing, and the university responds quickly and clearly any time this happens.

## IX. Academic Action Notifications for the Period of January 1, 2018, through July 31, 2018

Dr. Bach presented a series of action notifications that are required to be reported to THEC and elsewhere. These are reported quarterly. In reference to the earlier discussion about program development over the next two years, Dr. Bach pointed committee members to an appendix to that listing that named programs that were implemented this fall for the first time.

X. Other Business

In follow up to discussion earlier in the meeting, Chair Latimer noted that the Ballard merger represents the potential for funding and opportunities that could help ETSU reach the next level across the entire institution. She said the Board would like to hear more about objective targets, including departmental rankings and data about publication rates, conference presentations, and grants. She noted that the Board will soon do a self-evaluation, and that she personally is having trouble with vision, goals, strategy and metrics. She said other institutions are changing the name of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee to Academic, Research and Student Success. She said that because research is such an important area, the Board needs to have a good understanding of what researchers are doing and how they are doing it, and to know the results. She indicated that Board members would like to find more online than the financials related to research, but more details on the research itself. Trustee Golden agreed and referred to a point made in Committee feedback earlier in the year that speed matters.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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David Linville  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

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