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

MINUTES

September 11, 2026
Johnson City, Tennessee

The East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees' Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee met on Friday, September 11, 2026, at 9:04 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 9:04 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 Charles Allen, Thomas Bales, Dorothy Grisham, Ron Ramsey, Dr. Bert Smith, and Grant Summers.

III. Approval of the Committee Minutes from May 21, 2026

The minutes from the May 21, 2026, meeting of the Academic, Research, and Student Success Committee were approved as submitted with Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark making the motion and Trustee Tony Treadway seconding the motion. The committee approved the motion by voice vote.

ACTION ITEMS

IV. Recommendation for Promotion and Tenure of Faculty Member

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Kimberly McCorkle recommended to the committee that Dr. Lynette Hamlin be granted promotion and

tenure. She said that Dr. Hamlin was hired, after a national search, to be Associate Dean of Research and Professor in the ETSU College of Nursing. Dr. Hamlin comes to ETSU from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland, where she worked for over nine years, most recently as Professor and Director of the Center for Military Women's Health Research, in the graduate school of nursing. Dr. Hamlin is the recipient of almost $18 million in grant funding and has authored over 35 peer-reviewed publications and two books.

Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark moved that the recommendation be approved, and Trustee Jon Lundberg seconded the motion. The committee approved the motion by voice vote.

V. Approval of the ETSU Mission Profile

Dr. Michael Hoff, Vice Provost for Planning and Decision Support, summarized the purpose of the mission profile, noting that annual review of the profile is required by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. He indicated that ETSU's revised mission profile includes one editorial change and one substantive change. The editorial change involves a modification of the Carnegie classification language to: "Professional-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate-Medium." The substantive change involves the university's new elective classification for Community Engagement. ETSU is among approximately 10 percent of American universities with that classification.

Trustee Jon Lundberg made a motion that the revised mission profile be approved, and Trustee Dr. Steph Frye-Clark seconded the motion. The committee approved the motion by voice vote.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

VI. Academic Notification for Period of January 1, 2026, through July 31, 2026

Provost McCorkle reported that during the first seven months of 2026, ETSU completed 64 academic actions. Twenty-nine of those are required to be reported to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and 35 were approved at the university level. Among the items submitted to the commission were eight new concentrations in areas that include the Health Sciences, Intelligent Enterprise, Filmmaking, Digital Media, and Communications. In addition, there are new certificates in Surveying and Mapping Science and Intelligent Enterprise. Also added is a minor in surveying and mapping science.

Provost McCorkle highlighted the commission's recent approval of the Master of Science degree in Environment, Health, and Disaster Sciences, which will begin this year. She also described a new online pathway toward the Doctor of Public Health degree.

In the second part of her report, Provost McCorkle told the committee that 14 programs have revised admission requirements and that ETSU continues to update existing

curricula to meet changing accreditation standards and workplace needs. Seven programs underwent substantial curricular revisions, including Nursing and Respiratory Therapy. Other programmatic changes focused on student progression and completion. Several policy and curricular changes resulted in the removal of unnecessary credits and the clarification of progression requirements to provide students with more flexibility in completing their degrees. As part of the curriculum revision, Provost McCorkle reported that concentrations were closed or inactivated in programs with low enrollment, including the Master of Science in Allied Health.

Provost McCorkle concluded her presentation by updating the committee on future expansion of engineering programs at the university. With the help of an outside consultant, the university is developing a five-year plan for new engineering programs.

VII. Enrollment Update

Dr. Joe Sherlin, Senior Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment, reported to the committee that fall 2026 enrollment increased by 118 students, for a total enrollment of 14,506. Dr. Sherlin indicated that first-time freshman enrollment stands at 2,288 students, which is the largest freshman class in history. He cited several reasons for the record enrollment figures, including ETSU's academic portfolio, competitive tuition rates, reputation as a low-debt institution, and an engaged and connected student community.

Dr. Sherlin summarized the ETSU Strategic Enrollment Plan and its goals for 2030. Dr. Sherlin noted the growth in military-affiliated students as well as progress in the institution's retention and graduation rates. Dr. Sherlin then pointed to areas for improvement, including enrollment of transfer students and international students. He said strategies are being developed to address both those challenges, as well as the need to increase enrollment of older adults.

Dr. Sherlin reported on the recent opening of the Mary V. Jordan Center, which he described as our "front door to student support and success." In November, Buc Central will open as a one-stop shop for financial aid, the bursar's office, and registration. Dr. Sherlin reiterated the fact that ETSU's 78 percent first-year retention rate is the highest in the history of the university. He added that our four-year graduation rates continue to climb, placing ETSU in the top quartile among regional public institutions in the country in the percentage of students finishing degrees in four years.

Dr. Sherlin refences the work of staff such as Ethan Hutchinson, Executive Director of the Office of Academic Advisement, who guided the institution's progress in advising. He highlighted the professional advising that all undergraduate students have access to, as well as mentorship from faculty advisors and the coordinated program of care across campus. Dr. Sherlin then praised the work of Kelvin Tarukwasha, Resident District Manager for Sodexo. Dr. Sherlin said that a decade ago, students were not pleased with the university's food services program. In partnership with the Student Government Association, the administration re-envisioned the food service model. In 2016, 850

students, faculty, and staff were on meal plans. Now, that number is over 3,500. This past year, ETSU set a national record for the greatest increase in voluntary student meal plans. Kelvin Tarukwasha, Dr. Sherlin said, embodies ETSU's value of service, noting that he served hundreds of free meals to responders and those in need during Hurricane Helene and that he has been responsible for the donation of thousands of meals and thousands of pounds of food to families and students experiencing food insecurity. During the pandemic, he delivered meals to students by himself.

VIII. Faculty Research Update

Dr. Aaron Polichnowski, Associate Professor in the Quillen College of Medicine's Department of Biomedical Sciences and an ETSU alumnus, updated the committee on his research into kidney disease and his support from the National Institutes of Health. Since 2016, Dr. Polichnowski said, he and his colleagues at ETSU have been working to identify the mechanics of kidney injury and to develop new approaches to prevent kidney injury and improve recovery.

Dr. Polichnowski noted that kidney disease and hypertension are especially prevalent in the Appalachian region. Some of the questions he is addressing in his research include: Why are some kidneys more susceptible to high blood pressure? What determines injury and recovery? How do forever chemicals affect kidney health? Dr. Polichnowski said the unifying theme among all his funded grants is trying to determine how kidney injury happens and how to prevent it.

Dr. Polichnowski's first NIH-funded project involves studying the ability of blood vessels in the kidney to protect it from hypertensive injury. He indicated that he has developed a novel method to assess the function of blood vessels in the kidney and determine how quickly blood vessels respond when blood pressure changes. His second NIH-funded project involves acute kidney injury and is an effort to understand why anemia develops after such injuries. He reported that he and his colleagues have likely identified the additional mechanism responsible for the development of anemia after acute kidney injury. The third NIH-funded grant is an exploration of forever chemicals and evidence that they are associated with high blood pressure and kidney disease. He said there is very little knowledge of how these chemicals affect renal and cardiovascular function.

Dr. Polichnowski then described the broad impact of funding from the National Institutes of Health on our campus. He noted that having several people within one department or college supported by funding from the NIH improves our ability to apply for and receive instrumentation grants for cutting-edge equipment. NIH funding can lead to building infrastructure, he said. It drives collaboration and team science, both on campus and with colleagues around the country. And, he said, NIH funding creates tremendous opportunities for students. Dr. Polichnowski pointed out that over the past five years, 20 students have been engaged in research in his laboratory, and NIH funding has allowed

him to hire four outstanding research technicians. He concluded his presentation by saying that externally-funded research has an impact far beyond the classroom.

GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

IX. Committee Discussions

There was no further discussion.

X. Other Business

There was no other business to come before the committee.

XI. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Green
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its November 6, 2026 meeting.