

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

February 23, 2018
Johnson City, Tennessee

The quarterly meeting of the East Tennessee State University Board of Trustees was held at 1:15 p.m. on Friday, February 23, 2018, in the East Tennessee Room of the D.P. Culp University Center on ETSU's main campus in Johnson City, Tennessee. The meeting was also livestreamed for those who could not be in attendance.

I. Call to Order

Chair Scott Niswonger called the meeting to order.

In his opening remarks, Chair Niswonger welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of the ETSU Board of Trustees. Chair Niswonger also noted that new student enrollment has increased by 10 percent while the university also realized the highest freshman retention rate in its history. Applications for the Fall 2018 semester are encouraging, with significant increases in transfer applications, he said. He noted that ETSU put forth a significant effort to have enrolled 357 Tennessee Promise students in Fall 2017. He said it demonstrates willingness to partner with other institutions and a commitment to student success. Next, Chair Niswonger recognized faculty and staff working at ETSU's Olympic Training Site, which opened at ETSU in 2012. Six athletes who have trained at the site were currently in South Korea competing in the Olympics, he said.

II. Roll Call

Secretary David Linville called the roll, and the following Trustees were in attendance:

Fred Alsop
Janet Ayers
Nathan Farnor
David Golden
Dorothy Grisham
Linda Latimer
Scott Niswonger
Jim Powell
Ron Ramsey

Following the official roll call, Chair Niswonger presented an agenda amendment to include on the agenda a report of the Executive Committee and to ratify a decision that committee would be putting forth. Trustee Powell made a motion to amend the agenda as proposed. Trustee Ayers seconded the motion, which unanimously passed. The item became the new Item VIII on the agenda.

III. Approval of the Minutes of November 10, 2017

Trustee Grisham made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2017, Board of Trustees meeting. It was seconded by Trustee Ramsey and unanimously approved.

IV. Consent Agenda

Items included on the consent agenda are:

- A. Minutes from the Nov. 10, 2017, Finance and Administration Committee
- B. Minutes from the Nov. 10, 2017, Academic and Student Affairs Committee
- C. Minutes from the Nov. 10, 2017, Audit Committee
- D. Policies from the Finance and Administration Committee
- E. Policies from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Chair Niswonger asked if there were any items that any trustee wanted to pull for separate consideration. There were none. Trustee Alsop made a motion for the adoption of the consent agenda. It was seconded by Trustee Latimer and unanimously approved.

V. Report from the Finance and Administration Committee

With Committee Chair Steve DeCarlo absent, Trustee Ramsey presented the report noting three items:

- (1) Approval of the anti-nepotism policy to send to full Board of Trustees;
- (2) Discussion of salaries and fee increases related to the budget process (contingent on the governor's budget passing and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's binding limit); and
- (3) Reviewed quarterly reports of agreements over \$250,000

VI. Report from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Committee Chair Latimer reported that the committee approved a number of items that were in the full board's consent agenda, heard a number of informational items on topics such as quality assurance and had a very robust discussion about research opportunities related to the merger. Additionally, one of the action items regarding a tenure appointment would be heard by the full board shortly, she said.

VII. Report from the Audit Committee

Committee Chair Golden reported that the Audit Committee met that morning and reviewed audit services rendered. He noted that the audit plan is on schedule with a slight modification. He also noted that the committee was briefed on an investigation into a Parking Services issue in which \$1,325 was stolen by an attendant entering false data into the system. The committee also reviewed the recommendation log provided by Internal Audit.

VIII. Executive Committee Report

Chair Niswonger explained that the Board of Trustees had received an appeal from a tenured faculty member who was dismissed on June 8, 2017. He said the petition for an appeal went to the Executive Committee, which addressed it during an executive session on Aug. 1, 2017. After that meeting, committee members requested additional information from both the university and the faculty member appealing the dismissal. The Executive Committee then met again on February 21, 2018, to further discuss the issue. At that time, the Executive Committee members voted unanimously to deny the petition for appeal. Chair Niswonger explained neither a motion nor a second are required by the full board, but the full board must ratify the Executive Committee's decision. Prior to taking a voice vote, Chair Niswonger asked if anyone wished to abstain from the vote. Trustee Alsop said he wished to abstain. All of the other trustees voted in favor of ratifying the Executive Committee's decision.

IX. Tenure Appointment with the Rank of Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (Dr. Brian Noland)

Dr. Bert Bach presented the agenda item, noting that ETSU policy stipulates recommendations for or against tenure come from the department for which the individual is assigned. He said the recommendation to grant tenure to Dr. Brian Noland emerged from the ELPA department in a letter from Dr. Bill Flora and was also recommended by the dean. The recommendation received a unanimous vote of active department members in support of Dr. Noland receiving tenure. Supporters cited his experience and his work in the department as well as his membership on regional, statewide and national professional organizations. The Board of Trustees policy enumerates a number of steps candidates for tenure must normally meet (including time in rank and time for full-time teaching), however there have been a number of precedents in which tenure has been awarded without those things for individuals with a distinctively strong resume. Dr. Bach said the recommendation also has his support and noted that Dr. Noland was not aware of the proposal until he had told him it was forthcoming. A motion was not required. All trustees voted unanimously in a voice vote to approve the tenure and rank of Dr. Noland. Following the vote, Dr. Noland thanked them for the honor, noting that it is a dream for many to be elevated to the rank of professor.

X. Schedule for Future Board of Trustees Meetings

Secretary Linville told trustees that the calendar has been set through April 27, 2018, but needed to be agreed upon past that. He said the proposed dates provided in the meeting materials were based on the ability to coordinate with trustees' schedules. Trustee Alsop made a motion to accept the schedule as proposed. It was seconded by Trustee Latimer and unanimously approved.

XI. Impact of Tennessee Promise

Dr. Mike Hoff provided an overall review of the features of Tennessee Promise, noting it is a last dollar scholarship program that offers tuition-free assistance with five semesters of eligibility. The program also provides participants with mentors that impact completion abilities. Participants have to be recent high school graduates and

must be enrolled full time. They must complete eight hours of community service per semester and also maintain satisfactory academic practice.

In sharing additional slides, Dr. Hoff showed that students are not being weeded out through the steps of Tennessee Promise, which is a good thing. He also noted that Tennessee is leading the nation in FAFSA applications and pointed out that the bulk of students dropping out of ETSU are non-Promise students. The university's dropped out/stopped out rate improved by 4 percent in a single Tennessee Promise cohort, which is also impressive, Dr. Hoff said.

According to Dr. Hoff's data, 59 students who started at community college in Fall of 2015 enrolled at ETSU in Fall 2016. Of those, 81 percent were retained into Fall 2017. A total of 311 Tennessee Promise students from 2015 enrolled at ETSU in Fall 2017. An additional 46 Promise students enrolled in Fall 2017 and, that same semester, a total of 357 enrolled at ETSU from the Fall 2016 co-hort. Promise students are, for the most part, enrolling after the second year at community college. That is important because it speaks to credit accumulation, which, in studies, is the one thing that, once a student starts college, determines whether they are going to make it, according to Dr. Hoff.

The average age of a Tennessee Promise student at ETSU is 19.8 years. Fifty-five percent are female; 92.7 percent are white and 97 percent are attending full time. The most common majors include pre-programs, psychology, social work, computer science and more. Fifty-four percent come from Sullivan, Washington, Knox, Hamblen and Hawkins counties. In terms of what institutions they come from, 68 percent come from one of the following schools: Northeast State, Walters State, Pellissippi State or Roane State. Now, Dr. Hoff said, the institution needs to reach from a little bit farther away.

In summary, Dr. Hoff said Tennessee Promise is having a positive impact on students' persistence, but he noted that more needs to be done regarding the diversity of incoming Tennessee Promise co-horts. He also noted that ETSU has been able to support those Promise students seeking a four-year degree and that these students tend to enroll full time.

XII. President's Report

Dr. Noland noted that the April meeting of the Board of Trustees will have different dynamics as the trustees work to approve items including tuition, fees, tenure and promotion. He said a lot of things are going on across the campus and he welcomed members' thoughts on building communication and engagement between the board and the institution. He made note of continuing plans to schedule a formal retreat.

Next, Dr. Noland addressed the discussion that occurred earlier that day in the Academic and Student Affairs Committee regarding the structure of research at ETSU. He called it a "critical time" at ETSU, noting that timeframes are tight and

work around the merger is occurring at a rapid pace. He said ETSU is ready to move at that pace, but said communication goes two ways. He said things are a little chaotic at Ballad and believes ETSU could benefit from the chance to frame a vision together. He said leadership will provide deliverables to the Board that outline the vision for the institution as it relates to research. He called it a “once in a generation opportunity” for funds upwards of \$80-100 million to flow to the institution and its faculty and staff to address public health issues in this region.

Dr. Noland then turned his attention to providing a construction update for the trustees, telling them that the April meeting of the Board of Trustees will be the last to take place in the East Tennessee Room because it will cease to exist after that with the renovation project at the Culp Center set to begin. He also noted that the last academic building built on the campus was constructed more than 20 years ago, and the last academic classroom building that opened on campus was the Mini-Dome. He said a lot of “making up” would be done in the next two years. Lamb Hall will be renovated and an addition constructed. That process is in the design phase. Last fall, ETSU broke ground on the Martin Arts Center, which will open next year. Renovations to the Culp include the relocation of more than 200 people who work inside the Culp Center. He commended the staff for keeping first the goal of serving students throughout that process of determining where to locate. In terms of the Millennium Centre, Dr. Noland said we remain in active conversations with the city and that work is being led on our end by Dr. David Collins in a consultant capacity. He said the hope is to move the university’s computer science program there. Dr. Noland added that Building 60 on the VA campus will be completed this summer. In total, there is \$250 million in capital construction going on at ETSU, the largest volume of construction to move through at one time in the history of the university.

Next, Dr. Noland provided an update on fraternities moving to campus. He said leadership is working to put a plan together to present to the Board of Trustees that presents the opportunity to move fraternities to campus. It’s a proposal he believes will strengthen the Greek system and university as a whole.

Dr. Noland then shifted gears to note his desire to have the term “interim” removed from the titles of senior staff members Dr. B.J. King and Mr. Jeremy Ross. There were no objections from the board, so Dr. Noland said that within the next couple of weeks the “interim” would be removed to make them permanent in their roles. Also on the topic of staff, Dr. Noland thanked Mr. Scott Carter, athletics director, for his work to position a contract extension for men’s basketball Head Coach Steve Forbes. He also noted that women’s basketball Head Coach Brittney Ezell won her 200th career game last evening. Additionally, the university is actively searching for a new soccer coach as well as deans for the libraries and Graduate Studies.

Work is being led by Dr. Richard Sander to create a white paper regarding ETSU’s Title IX plans and will be completed by the April deadline for the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Noland thanked Drs. Bill Kirkwood and Angela Lewis. In the past couple of months, the university was awarded a TIE (Talent, Innovation, Equity) grant from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for a summer bridge program for African American students.

Dr. Noland then updated trustees on the legislative session, noting that the budget process at the university has been closely linked with the session, where budget hearings have gone well and it is a strong year for higher education. The governor has recommended a salary enhancement, funding for the formula and funding for deferred maintenance. Two pieces of legislation related to ETSU still are in discussion. One is a request for a supplemental budget appropriation of \$500,000 for the university's Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment. The other is related to the ETSU Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy and a request for \$2.5 million to address tuition discontinuity in the state. The \$2.5 million would be for a financial aid program to help equalize that discontinuity. Dr. Noland also noted that legislators are looking at restructuring the University of Tennessee's Board of Trustees, a process that we are on the outside of but certainly watching. He thanked Ms. Bridget Baird, ETSU government relations, for her efforts this session.

Next, Dr. Noland noted that he and his wife, Donna, host students a lot at Shelbridge and this week, he was able to talk with some graduating students about their favorite memories of their time at ETSU and what makes them want to come back. He said it was amazing to see how much several of the students had grown during their time here at ETSU. He thanked many of the trustees, including Trustee Ayers, for the things that they do to help make scholarships available to these students.

In closing, Dr. Noland shared the story of faculty member Dr. Chris Dula, who has not missed a day of work despite having brain cancer. He said Dr. Dula passes along the gift of learning that was conveyed to him and cares about his students in ways that can't be conveyed. Chair Niswonger thanked Dr. Noland and said he felt it was always good to end meetings with stories that bring us back to why we are here.

XIII. Other Business

None.

XIV. Adjournment

Chair Niswonger adjourned the meeting

Respectfully submitted,



David Linville
Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Approved by the Board of Trustees at its April 27, 2018 meeting.