

East Tennessee State University

Proposal Statement: East Tennessee State University requests approval to extend the in-state maintenance fee rate to students who meet the university's admission standards and live in any out-of-state county within a 100 mile radius of ETSU.

Proposed Effective Date: Upon Approval

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this proposal is aimed at expanding the University's geographical enrollment footprint beyond its historical service region in Tennessee. This proposal recognizes the role of ETSU as a regional university, with the obligation to impact the educational attainment, quality of life, economic development and workforce demands of the Appalachian Region we serve.

Rationale

The geographic location of ETSU in the northeast tip of Tennessee presents an impediment to increasing enrollment since the current level of out-of-state tuition serves as a barrier to a large portion of our regional market area. For instance, ETSU is located 20 miles from the border of Virginia and 13 miles from the North Carolina border. Because of this location, the only way to expand the service area would be to be to the west. The impetus for this action is also recent actions taken by other states bordering ETSU's current service area. For example, the North Carolina Promise tuition plan allows Western Carolina University to offer out-of-state students a tuition rate of \$2,500 per semester.

Border restrictions truncate ETSU's regional impact and adversely affects higher education decisions by not affording prospective students the opportunity to consider ETSU as their university of choice. At the same time, we recognize that issues of proximity and location have been identified as an influential factor in students' selection of an institution of higher education. The reports cited in Appendix A (p. 3) indicate that a majority of students attend institutions within 50-100 miles of their hometowns.

ETSU, with its strong mission of dedicated service to the Appalachian Region, provides an important opportunity for positively impacting the proposed five-state area. The population of the region is underserved by higher education and has a low percentage of the population who are college educated. The ETSU Mission states:

East Tennessee State University prepares students to become productive, enlightened citizens who actively serve their communities and the world. Education is the university's highest priority, and the **institution is committed to increasing the level of educational attainment in the state and region**. The university conducts a wide array of educational and research programs and clinical services and is the only Academic Health Sciences Center in the Tennessee Board of Regents System. Through research, creative activity and public service **ETSU advances the cultural, intellectual and economic development of the region** and the world.

The growth of industry, commerce, educational attainment and the quality of life within this region are directly related to the services and educational offerings provided by ETSU to its multi-state region. In addition, the University believes it can—by this action—capitalize on recognition of the

distinctiveness of its programs.

The University's governing board has previously approved proposals addressing this geographical border barrier. In recognition of the need to better serve the residents within our region, The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) previously approved four separate requests (2005, 2007, 2010, and 2011) to extend the in-state maintenance for specified contiguous counties close to ETSU.

- 2005 TBR approved East Tennessee State University to charge Tennessee in-state maintenance fees to undergraduate and graduate students who met established standards and reside outside the State of Tennessee in eight specified North Carolina and Virginia counties that are contiguous to ETSU's historical service area. North Carolina counties included in this approval were Avery, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, and Yancey. Virginia counties included Lee, Scott, and Washington.
- 2007 TBR approved the request to extend the in-state maintenance rate to students who reside in two additional North Carolina counties: Ashe and Haywood.
- 2010 TBR approved the request to extend the in-state maintenance rate to include the Quillen College of Medicine to approved county residents who attended ETSU as undergraduates.
- 2011 TBR approved the request to extend the in-state maintenance rate to students who reside in Virginia's Greyson County.

Currently, therefore, ETSU can admit residents of eleven counties in North Carolina and Virginia at in-state maintenance rates. **The current request is to extend the in-state maintenance rate to counties within a 100 mile radius of ETSU.** The action proposed would extend ETSU's current geographical footprint and would include the following states and counties (see Appendix B for potential service map).

- KY Bell, Breathitt, Clay, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Owsley, Perry Pike, Whitley
- NC Alexander, Alleghany, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Henderson, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Surry, Transylvania, Wilkes, Yadkin
- SC Cherokee, Greeneville, Oconee, Spartanburg, Pickens, Rabun
- VA Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Russell, Smyth, Tazewell, Wise, Wythe
- WV Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Wyoming

Impact

These earlier decisions to expand the in-state maintenance fee rate to students from the eleven (11) Virginia and North Carolina counties proved to have a very positive impact on ETSU's enrollment and on the realization of its regional mission. The current request to extend the in-state tuition rate to students who live in any county within 100 mile radius of ETSU would allow us to expand our geographic footprint in the region and also to enhance enrollment at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. **The risk for taking this action is minimal in that an analysis of the financial impact of creating the 100 mile radius indicates that we would only need to enroll an additional 88 students (12 hours each term) for two semesters in to cover the loss of out-of-state tuition that students within this radius are currently**

paying. Using our previous decision to extend the rate to the eleven border counties, the enrollment impact would generate revenue far in excess of the amount at risk. Our analysis is that we would have a positive enrollment and revenue impact even if we were less than 30% as successful as we were with the earlier actions.

Appendix A
Influence of Location to University Choice

- [58 percent of students go to a college within 100 miles of their hometown; the median distance traveled is 72 miles.](#)
- [33% of freshmen attend college within 50 miles of home](#)
- [Half of all college students attend schools less than 100 miles from home.](#)
- [The median distance students go away for college is 94 miles.](#)
- [The idea of “going away to college” is taking a new meaning for incoming freshmen with many of them now attending schools within 100 miles of home.](#)
- [Most college freshmen attend school within 50 miles of home .](#)
- [Students travel an average of 91 miles from home to attend university.](#)
- [Over half of all college students attend a school within 100 miles of home.](#)
- [52% don’t wander more than 100 miles from home.](#)

Appendix B
Potential ETSU Service Area

