East Tennessee State University

Interim Strategic Plan, 2015-25

Approved by the University Planning Committee
TBD

Strategic Priorities and Major Objectives

Access

ETSU will increase access to and participation in its educational programs while providing the human, financial and infrastructure resources needed to support these programs. By 2025, ETSU will receive 12,000 freshmen applications each year, and have an enrollment of 18,000 students

Student Success

ETSU will increase persistence to graduation and the number of graduates while maintaining high academic standards, with a goal of an 85% year-to-year retention rate and a 60% graduation rate.

Scholarship

ETSU will support and enhance scholarship through research, service, and creative activity, with a goal of having $100 million in externally sponsored research annually by 2025.

Stewardship

Through a reputation for responsible stewardship of resources, the delivery of excellent, regionally-relevant programs, and constructive engagement with donors, ETSU will received $25 million in annual giving and a 15% participation rate by alumni by 2025.

Diversity and Inclusion

ETSU will foster a university community that enhances and supports diversity of people, thought and culture. ETSU will increase progression to graduation among minority students by 25% by 2025.

> **Commented [WR1]:** I think that we need a measurable goal to be consistent with the other headings.

Community Engagement

> **Commented [WR2]:** This seems out of place. "Arts and Culture" are one vehicle for Community Engagement, and I would suggest changing the title to reflect this.

ETSU will expand engagement in the arts and culture among students, faculty, staff, and the community. Community participation in on-campus arts programs will increase by 25% by 2025.

> **Commented [WR3]:** As above

Sustainability

ETSU will create a university community that is aware of, engaged in, and committed to advancing sustainability. ETSU will maintain a Composite Financial Index score of at least 3.0, calculated using a three year average, per TBR policy 4:01:00:02 *Institutional Financial Performance Review.*

> **Commented [WR4]:** I have no idea what this means, but it comes from later in the plan.

Objectives Supporting Priorities
Click an objective to go to it.

ACCESS

ETSU will increase access to and participation in its educational programs while providing the human, financial, and infrastructure resources needed to support these programs; with a 2025 goal of generating 12,000 freshmen applications and an enrollment of 18,000 students enrolled on-campus, on-line, or at remote locations.

1.1   Expand the recruitment area for ETSU

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With a significant portion of its mission committed to serving central Appalachia, ETSU will work with a direct marketing firm to customize a recruitment pool of potential applicants beyond the current catchment area, with a goal of increasing the annual number of applications from first-time freshman to 12,000 by 2025.

1.2   Restructure undergraduate and graduate scholarships

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ETSU will endeavor to improve access to higher education by revising its merit-based scholarships. ETSU will expand scholarship offerings to out-of-state students within a 250-mile radius of the main campus. ETSU will also increase graduate-student stipends to allow for more competitive recruitment and retention of graduate students.

1.3   Increase distance education enrollment

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ETSU has a long and successful history of offering on-line and other distance education opportunities. ETSU will focus on specific marketing efforts to increase the number of new students engaged in on-line and other distance education programming.

Commented [WR5]: Historically, the emphasis on "other campuses" has waxed and waned. I think that this option is adequately covered in the goal, above as "other distance education programming."

STUDENT SUCCESS

ETSU will increase persistence to graduation and the number of graduates while maintaining high academic standards, with a 2025 goal of an 85% year-to-year retention rate and a 60% 6-year graduation rate.

2.1 Provide students with a "first year experience" course appropriate to their academic background and interests

In order to ensure that students are provided the best possible start, ETSU will progressively develop first year experience opportunities that serve the maximum number of freshmen.

> **Commented [WR6]:** There has been some discussion about whether ALL students would benefit from 1020, or whether OTHER courses might be appropriate for certain students.

2.2 Use technology to aid early identification and support of at-risk students

ETSU will use technology to identify and provide vigorous follow-up assistance to at-risk students. ETSU will expand existing programs and explore other programs to support student success.

2.3 Use Intercollegiate Athletics to engage current and prospective students

College students who are engaged in the university community are more likely to stay in school and graduate. Because of the high visibility of intercollegiate athletics on campus, in the community, and in the media, ETSU athletics can strengthen students' identification with the university, bring attention to student success, and increase community, regional and national awareness of the university's excellence. The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics will partner with Enrollment Services, Student Affairs, and ETSU's academic colleges and departments to promote and recognize student success in all areas of university life.

2.4 Improve students' ability to track their progress toward graduation

Degree Works and Transfer Works are a set of online academic planning tools used to identify courses and requirements that native and transfer students need to complete in order to graduate. Degree Works provides degree progress advising worksheets, degree completion audits, student education plans, academic curriculum planning analytics, and "what if?" scenarios. These tools allow both native and transfer students to experiment with changing majors and degree plans. Consistent with Tennessee Promise, deployment of these tools support statewide efforts to improve student progression and degree production by helping ETSU students and advisors track their progress toward graduation and make informed decisions about how to meet remaining curricular requirements. These graduation success tools have to date been embraced by campus broadly.

2.5 Increase participation in student activities, organizations and leadership opportunities

ETSU has over 200 student organizations and a diverse program of student activities. ETSU leadership will explore a range of approaches to encourage active student involvement in these clubs and organizations.

2.6   Increase participation in living-learning communities

Over two-thirds of ETSU's on-campus residents are first- or second-year students, many of whom would benefit from participating in living-learning communities. Growing more living-learning programs in partnership with academic colleges and other university departments will provide opportunities to enrich student experience outside of the classroom. Establishing living-learning programs will allow residents to engage with fellow students and explore their academic fields. The plan will also promote opportunities for mentoring, tutoring, job-shadowing, and interaction with faculty and staff.

2.7   Expand participation in campus recreation programs

ETSU's highly popular Campus Recreation programs will expand commensurately with student enrollment growth. Therefore, ETSU will create additional programming and actively promote students' use of the expanded facilities and participation in recreational programming.

2.8   Reduce systemic obstacles to students' timely progress toward degrees

To navigate their college careers efficiently and make timely progress toward their degrees, students must (a) understand their degree requirements, (b) know which courses to take each term to meet these requirements, (c) be able to register for the courses they need when they need them, and (d) identify their chosen academic path as early as possible during their time in College. Skillful academic advisement is essential to this process. ETSU will explore and implement a range of options to identify and remove any systemic obstacles to timely progress toward graduation.

2.9   Promote student success and the overall student experience

In addition to the specific programs and strategies through which ETSU will seek to increase degree completion over the next strategic planning cycle, it is important to create a university culture that reinforces student success and enhances the overall student experience. ETSU will explore a range of options that will promote student success and enhance the student's overall experience. There will be a focus on increased use of traditional and social media messages, enhanced on-campus communication, and a commitment by ETSU leadership—at all levels—to develop a student-first culture.

2.10   Strengthen ETSU identity of students, faculty, staff and alumni

ETSU will continue to explore and implement a range of activities that will promote ETSU pride and identification with the university. These emotional components of the college experience play a key role in students' decisions to choose ETSU and to stay in school and graduate. These students and, ultimately, these alumni, are essential for future recruitment, fund-raising and engagement activities.

SCHOLARSHIP

ETSU will support and enhance scholarship through research, service, and creative activity.

3.1   Expand and enhance research productivity

ETSU will develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan that will increase research productivity, enhance funding for research activities and build both internal and external partnerships to support a research enterprise.

3.2   Expand and enhance community service-related activities

To increase community service-related activities ETSU will establish extramural service priorities consistent with college, department, and unit missions; provide assistance and mentoring for faculty submitting proposals for community service; recruit faculty with interest in extramurally funded service activities; provide awards for excellence; encourage student participation in extramurally funded service projects; and develop strategic partnerships that expand service activity.

3.3   Expand and enhance creative and scholarly activities

ETSU will use several strategies to support scholarship in research, service, and creative activity. These will include establishing priorities for creative or scholarly activities consistent with college, department, and unit missions; providing assistance and mentoring for faculty submitting proposals for extramural support; supporting travel to conferences, exhibitions, and other events; aiding access to technology, facilities, tools, and materials; providing awards for excellence in creative and scholarly activities; encouraging student participation in exhibitions and performances; and enhancing both internal and external partnerships.

3.4   Promote and Award the Teaching Mission of ETSU

ETSU has established an ad hoc work group that will provide direction for defining and improving aspects of teaching and other activities within the classroom.

DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

ETSU will foster a university community that enhances and supports
diversity of people, thought, and culture.

4.1   Integrate and coordinate efforts to support diversity

To support cohesive efforts to enhance diversity at ETSU, the university will seek ways to improve the integration and coordination of diversity-related activities. Specific efforts will focus on enhancing on-campus diversity through strategic recruitment and targeted retention activities.

4.2   Explore how best to use the multicultural center to enhance the on-campus experience of current students.

The university will explore how best to utilize the recently created Multicultural Center to enhance the on-campus experience of students from diverse backgrounds.

4.3   Expand opportunities for education, dialogue, and reflection on diversity and inclusion

To provide greater opportunities for education, dialogue, and reflection about diversity, the university will charge a Diversity Programming Committee with increasing diversity-related partnerships, programming, and activities. ETSU will also continue to provide support for its Student Diversity Educators Program.

4.4   Support global awareness and appreciation of diversity of thought and culture in curricula

The university will charge each college and operating unit to explore how to enhance cultural awareness, open-mindedness, diversity, and inclusion in both class-room and non-class-room-based activities.

4.5   Increase enrollment, retention, and graduation of traditionally underrepresented students

ETSU recognizes that students from underrepresented groups come not only from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic heritages, but also from other less recognized backgrounds, including religious and gender minorities. Additionally, ETSU recognizes that diversity-based enrollment patterns vary by program of study (for example, women are underrepresented in STEM disciplines and overrepresented in many health professions). ETSU will explore and implement evidence-based approaches to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups across all programs of study.

4.6   Recruit and retain diverse faculty, administrators, and staff

ETSU is committed to recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, and administrators who reflect diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and other cultural perspectives. The first step in attaining this objective is the creation of a plan for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. To this end, ETSU will form a university committee charged with establishing annual or biennial diversity progress targets.

4.7   Build partnerships with communities, businesses, civic, and community organizations

ETSU's community extends beyond the campus, and ETSU will endeavor to work with community partners to support programs that address the needs of diverse populations across the region. For example, the 2010 census noted that the Hispanic population in northeast Tennessee doubled over the previous ten years and was the fastest growing segment of the population. To address ongoing changes in the diverse demographic makeup of the its community, ETSU will establish a coordinated workgroup to identify and grow existing partnerships, as well as to establish and nurture new ones.

STEWARDSHIP

ETSU will advance a culture of stewardship that promotes the wise use of resources.

5.1 Exploit capacity for program growth

ETSU will identify programs which can accommodate enrollment growth without additional commitment of resources; programs in which enrollment growth will require no more than 20% of revenue to be derived from that growth; and programs for which demand would support growth, but insufficient capacity would require more than 20% of revenue the institution to be derived. Following identification of these opportunities ETSU will analyze the costs and benefits of the actions needed to expand each program, then invest in programs to be expanded.

5.2 Achieve efficiencies in administrative and academic support required by enrollment growth

ETSU will seek to grow enrollment responsibly during the strategic planning cycle. To this end, the university will endeavor to provide instructional and academic support, as well as administrative services, that meet academic standards while remaining cost effective. Academic colleges, departments, and other units will develop and monitor the pursuit of staffing plans reflecting these criteria.

5.3 Maximize use of classrooms and other campus facilities

ETSU will use its Physical Facilities Inventory to assess, monitor, and maximize the use of university space. ETSU will implement data-driven space management practices to aid decisions about the use of space so as to maximize the use of facilities, and will refine the strategic space request process to assure ease of use, accuracy of information, and timely responsiveness.

5.4 Attract, develop, and retain a highly qualified and committed cadre of faculty and staff

ETSU will refine faculty and staff compensation plans to address issues of equity and salary compression/inversion. Other quality-promoting efforts could include more targeted national recruitment, and addressing "barrier" issues that sometimes arise with spousal employment and prejudicial impressions of the region.

5.5 Maintain a fiscally sound institution

ETSU will strive to maintain a Composite Financial Index score of at least 3.0, calculated using a three-year average, per TBR policy 4:01:00:02 Institutional Financial Performance Review. Scores at this level indicate that sufficient liquid resources are available to meet unforeseen circumstances, that net operating revenues are adequate, that expendable net assets exceed the level of debt, and that the return on net assets is reasonable. Scores of 1.0 or less call into question the university's ability to carry out existing programs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ETSU will expand engagement in the arts and culture among students,
faculty, staff, and the community.

6.1   Increase public display of the arts on campus, including interior and exterior locations

The arts enhance the overall quality of life by beautifying public spaces, promoting exploration and discovery, and stimulating dialogue. Permanent and temporary displays of the arts in public places will broaden the educational experience for ETSU students, faculty, staff, and the general community.

6.2   Engage the community in discussions about how the Performing Arts Center can enhance the region's quality of life

ETSU will actively engage the community in discussions about how the new Performing Arts Center can enhance the region's overall quality of life.

6.3   Increase the number of faculty, staff, and students involved in community-based activities

ETSU will actively explore mechanisms to increase the extent to which its faculty, staff, and students are involved—both as volunteers and as part of academic programs—in activities that enhance the quality of life for the region.

6.4   Continue to explore ways to build effective partnerships between the university's health science programs and regional health providers

ETSU will actively explore mechanisms to increase the extent to which its health science programs are integrated with the wide range of healthcare providers in the region. At the same time, ETSU will explore how to use its educational resources to enhance and advance the quality of healthcare services provided in the region.

SUSTAINABILITY

ETSU will create a university community that is aware of, engaged in and committed to advancing sustainability.

7.1   Attain a silver rating in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System

ETSU will participate in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) with a goal of advancing to silver rating by 2020.