

**University Council  
September 8, 2025  
East Tennessee Room**

**1. Call to Order**

Provost Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Melissa Nipper led the roll call. Members present were: Ms. Bridget Baird, Dr. Ginni Blackhart, Dr. Bill Block, Dr. Cheri Clavier, Dr. Dena Evans, Dr. Joel Faidley, Mr. David Finney, Ms. Christy Graham, Dr. Adam Green, Dr. Nick Hagemeyer, Dr. Mike Hoff, Dr. Keith Johnson, Mr. John King, Ms. Tricia Korade, Dr. Dharendra Kumar, Dr. Sam Mayhew, Mr. Cody Morelock, Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle, Dr. Brian Noland, Dr. Rob Pack, Dr. Tony Pittarese, Mr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Richard Sander, Dr. Joe Sherlin, Dr. Alan Stevens, and Dr. Sarah Thomason.

**3. Standing Items**

*3.1 Approve Minutes of the August 11, 2025, meeting*

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded; the minutes were approved.

*3.2 Review Agenda*

*3.3 Consent Agenda Items*

A motion was made to approve the policy on the consent agenda (noted below). The motion was seconded and approved.

3.3.1 Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

*3.4 Call for Voluntary Reports of UC-Essential Action Items from Governance Organizations*

*Faculty Senate:* Dr. Alan Stevens reported that the Faculty Senate was excited to have new faculty on campus. They held their Faculty Senate Kick-off the week before classes began and were joined by President Noland and Provost McCorkle. The fall agenda includes working with the Office of the Provost on the new Tenure and Promotion and Faculty Workload policies. They are also working on a Faculty Survey to go out later this semester. Faculty Senate also thanked past Staff Senate President David Finney and noted they were looking forward to working with the new Staff Senate President Cody Morelock.

*Staff Senate:* New Staff Senate President Cody Morelock reported the new executive team for Staff Senate includes: Kari Albarado, vice president; William Cate, secretary; Vanessa Canter, treasurer; and Brook Garland, member at large. The main agenda item this fall is the annual holiday drive.

*Council of Chairs:* Dr. Sarah Thomason reported that the Executive Council of Chairs has not met since the last meeting, so there are no updates at this time.

*Athletics:* Dr. Richard Sander reported that Athletics' new season has begun, with a recent game against the University of Tennessee. This year is seen as pivotal for evaluating ETSU's athletic direction, investments, and recruiting strategy. ETSU is pleased with the addition of Tennessee Tech to the Southern Conference, which will help with scheduling challenges and strengthen both men's and women's athletics. The new member will officially join next year, and ETSU continues to advocate for further expansion.

### *3.5 Sub-Council Reports*

Dr. Ginni Blackhart noted that only four committee reports were submitted by the July 31 deadline. She plans to follow up again and will present a summary of the reports received at the next meeting.

## **4. Action Items**

### *4.1 Old Business*

There was no old business to come before the council.

### *4.2 New Business*

There was no new business to come before the council.

## **5. Information Items/Presentations**

### *5.1 Enrollment Update Post-Census*

Drs. Heather Levesque and Joe Chappell provided a post-census enrollment update, highlighting strong gains in new student enrollment, with the first-year student class approaching 2,300 students and transfer enrollment surpassing the internal goal, reaching 931. Dual enrollment also saw growth, and efforts are already underway to recruit for the Class of 2026, including free application campaigns and targeted outreach in new markets like Charlotte, North Carolina, and Northern Virginia. Enhancements to the transfer APS Scholarship were implemented, removing barriers and adding a new tier, and a centralized scholarship system is in development. The team

also conducted extensive outreach to support students at risk of being dropped for non-confirmation.

Dr. Levesque also updated the Council on Tennessee's Direct Admissions pilot program. ETSU is participating in this effort and sees it as an opportunity to bring more students into the pipeline to attend ETSU.

Dr. Chappell reported that undergraduate enrollment is up, driven by strong incoming classes over the past three years, while graduate enrollment is slightly down. Overall enrollment increased by just over 400 students, aligning with earlier projections. Retention remains steady at approximately 76%, and continued growth will depend increasingly on improvements in student success metrics. Compared to other Tennessee institutions, ETSU saw stronger growth than most. Community college enrollment, particularly at Northeast State, is up – signaling a healthy pipeline for future transfer students.

### *5.2 2025 ETSU Mission Profile*

Dr. Mike Hoff shared that no changes are being proposed this year to ETSU's mission profile, which remains an accurate reflection of the university's structure and focus. The profile is reviewed annually, as required by the FOCUS Act, though there is interest in shifting to a longer review cycle. He also previewed updates to the university's strategic agenda, clarifying that changes are refinements based on completed initiatives and evolving priorities — not a new strategic plan. ETSU will align future planning with upcoming guidance from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), which is working toward a statewide goal to be finalized in 2027. For now, leadership recommends maintaining flexibility while continuing progress on current priorities.

## **6. President's Report**

President Dr. Brian Noland updated the Council on the upcoming ETSU Board of Trustees' meeting on Friday, September 12. At the fall quarterly meeting, ETSU's Board of Trustees will welcome new Student Trustee Aashi Vora and appointees John Lundberg and Grant Summers, both longtime supporters of the university. The university's Strategic Enrollment Plan, which was shared with the University Council last month, will go before the Board of Trustees for their review at their meeting this week.

He celebrated the largest first-year class in ETSU history, crediting faculty and enrollment teams for their tireless efforts and highlighting the university's strong position compared to peer institutions facing declines. He also applauded staff for their efforts on move-in day. Due to unprecedented housing demand, planning has begun for a new residence hall, location and size still to be determined. Plans are also underway to bring Yoakley Hall back into student housing.

Dr. Noland expressed appreciation for the campus's continued patience with the new Voyager system and acknowledged the difficulties experienced during its rollout. He announced the formation of a Go-Live Evaluation Task Force to collect campus feedback and help guide improvements for smoother operations moving forward.

He highlighted ETSU's ongoing work in response to Hurricane Helene over the past year, including a new Founders Week project called ETSU Project Welcome Home. He encouraged continued campus involvement in regional service projects and noted the opening of a reflective art exhibit at the Tipton-Ashe Gallery at Tipton Courthouse.

## **7. Announcements**

Mr. John King reported that Alumni hosted a successful tailgate before the ETSU-UT football game last week, with approximately 500 people in attendance. They will host a similar event when ETSU plays at UT-Chattanooga.

Ms. Tricia Korade reported that ETSU had a record number of Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (TISL) applicants.

## **8. Adjournment**

Provost McCorkle adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

***The next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.***