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Faculty Senate Agendas and Minutes

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10-25-2021

### 2021 October 25 - Faculty Senate Agenda and Minutes

Faculty Senate, East Tennessee State University

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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Faculty Senate

*October 25, 2021, 2:45 p.m. | Virtual Zoom Meeting*

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### **Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda**

1. Celebrations
2. Introductions of Guests
3. Announcements
4. Guest Speaker
  - a. Dr. Sam Mayhew and Ms. Kari Albarado – Student Wellness
5. Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2021
6. Action Items
7. Information Items
  - a. Senate Resolution concerning Sars-CoV-2 – Dr. Trogen
  - b. Handbook Committee Update – Dr. Epps
  - c. Board of Trustees Report – Dr. Foley
  - d. Standing Committee Need – Dr. Epps
  - e. Notes from Meetings with the Provost and President – Mr. Hendrix
  - f. Reports from University Committees
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Comments from Guests
11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators
12. Adjourn

## **Spring 22 Faculty Senate Meeting Dates**

- January 24<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- February 7<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- February 21<sup>st</sup> – Virtual
- March 7<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- March 21<sup>st</sup> – Hybrid
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Hybrid
- April 18<sup>th</sup> – Hybrid



## FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10/25/2021	<b>Time:</b>	14:45 – 16:30	<b>Location:</b>	Zoom
<b>Next Meeting:</b>	11/08/2021	<b>Scribe:</b>			Ashley Sergiadis
<b>Present:</b>	Blackhart, Ginni; Blackwell, Roger; Bray, Sheree; Burns, Bracken; Byington, Randy; Cherry, Donna; Daniels, Jean; Dowling-McClay, Karilynn; Ecay, Thomas ; Elangovan, Saravanan; Ellis, Jon; Epps, Susan; Evanshen, Pam; Fisher, Stacey; Frye, Stephanie; Funk, Bobby; Garris, Bill; Gentry, Retha; Gomez Sobrino, Isabel; Gray, Jeffrey; Hauldren, Kacie; Hawthorne, Sean; Hendrix, Stephen; Herrmann, Andrew; Hounshell, Jonathan; Johnson, Michelle; Kim, Sookhyun; Lyons, Renee; Mackara, Fred; Mamudu, Hadii; McGarry, Theresa; Mitchell, Holly; Nivens, Ryan; O'Neil, Kason; Park, Esther; Ramsey, Priscilla; Schroder, Laurie; Sergiadis, Ashley; Stevens, Alan; Tai, Chih-Che; Thigpen, Jim; Thompson, Beth Ann; Trogen, Paul; Uddin, Mohammad; Walden, Rachel; Waters, Susan; Youngberg, George; Zahner, Matt				
<b>Absent:</b>	Beatty, Kate; Chakraborty, Kanishka; De Oliveira Fiuza, Felipe; Digavalli, Siva; Foley, Virginia; Hemphill, Bill; Hemphill, Jean; Khan, Shoeb; Kruppa, Michael; Landis, Ryan; Weyant, Emily				

### Agenda Items

Meeting called to order

1. Celebrations

2. Introductions of Guests

3. Announcements

4. Guest Speaker

5. Approval of Minutes

6. Action Items

7. Information Items

8. Old Business

9. New Business

10. Comments from Guests

11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators

11. Adjourn

### DISCUSSIONS

1. Celebrations

None.

2. Introductions of Guests

2.1 Amy Johnson, Associate Provost for Faculty & Director of Center for Teaching Excellence

2.3 Jonathan Brewster and Sydney Tabor, 4<sup>th</sup> year students in the College of Pharmacy

3. Announcements

None.

4. Guest Speaker – Dr. Sam Mayhew and Ms. Kari Albarado – Student Wellness

4.1 Dr. Mayhew and Ms. Albarado presented on student wellness initiatives.



**DISCUSSIONS**

- Student wellness initiatives came from the strategic planning process of the Division of Student Life and Enrollment (SLE) as well as SGA's support for student wellness. A session ago, SGA passed a student fee that went into effect this fiscal year related to student wellness. This year, the fee was used to provide additional support within the counseling center to hire additional counselors as well as help with equity gaps. The next academic year, we are looking to on-board a full-time employee to lead wellness across the institution.
- SLE saw an opportunity to collaborate with campus recreation to create a wellness center on the first floor of the CPA. They also collaborate with others across campus within the academic space, Counseling Center, and faculty (in Clinical and Rehabilitative Health, Public Health, etc.). They are also investigating how to incorporate current peer mentoring opportunities across the institution into the wellness program.
- Contact SLE if you are interested in being involved with the hiring process, collaborating with them on these initiatives, and/or being a connection point.

5. Approval of Minutes

**Hendrix** questioned whether there was an objection to approving the minutes from the 09/27/2021 meeting. **Sergiadis** stated that Senator Epps and McGarry had minor corrections to the minutes.

**No Objection: Minutes Approved**

6. Action Items

None.

7. Information Items

7.1 Senate Resolution concerning Sars-CoV-2 – Dr. Trogen

**Trogen:** COVID can spread by aerosol as well as by droplets from sneezes, which means that the droplets can remain suspended in the air for over an hour. An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggested that the air in places like classrooms be changed or replaced with outdoor air at least four to six times. In the resolution, I put the bottom limit of four times. The article also recommends using better filters than we are using at ETSU. Until we can get up to those standards, the resolution recommends that faculty have discretion to use safer formats. Since spreading by droplets is still possible, we should not put more chairs in a classroom than can be spaced out six feet apart, and N95 grade masks should be reimbursable. So far, our resolutions have talked about the responsibilities of faculty. I also believe that the university has a responsibility to provide a safe working environment before it brings us back to campus. We have no idea what the future is going to hold. We find out that the vaccines are losing their effectiveness due to time and variants. We should do what we can to reduce the danger from COVID-19.

**Garris:** Do we have a sense of the relative effect of environmental filtration on limiting the spread compared with wearing masks?

**Trogen:** Wearing masks is something that we can do. Masks will definitely filter out all droplets; it might not filter out all aerosols. Some of us have seen the videos of people breathing with a mask and aerosols getting out. The idea is that depending on one thing is not as good as depending on several defenses. Some of the masks that we have in our classrooms I hear are 32% effective. A lot of us are using N95 masks, which will not filter out all particles as small as viruses. They will filter out around 95% of the particles that are about three times the size of a virus. Therefore, those are not perfect solutions. We assumed that if we got the vaccine we were safe. Now we find out, there are still breakthroughs. We feel that if we wear a mask we are safe, but it is not perfect. Therefore, we should do more than just being vaccinated and wearing a good mask. We should do several things to reduce the chance of spreading COVID as much as possible. I attached an article to the motion, which suggests that filtering the air is a good step. One defense is not as good as two or three layers of defense.

**Byington:** One of the things that is occurring this week is the October 27 special legislative session. It is possible that the state legislature would outlaw the mandating of masks. If that were to become the case,



## DISCUSSIONS

then this would be your primary defense against COVID in an indoor environment.

**Epps:** The resolution does not indicate where our buildings are now and how much this would cost. Some constituents may have questions on the difference between where they are now and what Senator Trogen is recommending as well as the cost to implement the recommendations.

**Trogen:** The article recommended MERV 13 filters. Right now, ETSU is putting in MERV 8s and MERV 11s, which are less effective. It might be like screening out mosquitoes with a chain link fence. These are filters that you can put into ventilation systems just as we put in furnace filters. Some of the steps are fairly small. ETSU is doing some things like increasing the ventilation, using the Culp auditorium for classroom space, and investigating changes that would make 1.5 air exchanges per hour. However, more can be done.

**Walden:** One of the things we need to ask for is more transparency on the building-by-building status. That could be language somebody could come with next time for inclusion in the resolution.

**Trogen:** I think there is one point on the resolution that asks that this information be posted in the building,

**Hendrix:** We will take action on this at our November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate. I encourage you to take time to reach out to your constituents, share the resolution, gather any feedback, and prepare to have a discussion.

**Nivens:** I would like to make a comment as parliamentarian. If you have edits or substantial changes, those replacements should be well crafted ahead of time so that it can be immediately posted. We can vote on whether to keep that change or dismiss it. Have those discussions between now and our meeting, so we do not spend an hour working on it like last time.

**McGarry:** It is a good idea to be prepared as we can and try to save time. At the same time, discussions evolve in real time and people get ideas in response to other ideas. I do not think people who cannot put their finger on the exact words should feel that they cannot speak up. The last thing we need to do is intimidate the speakers of English as a second language.

**Hendrix:** That is a fair point. I think Senator Nivens's point is that details such as looking up a statistic could happen on the front end to help move the process faster. All comments are valued and welcomed. That is why we follow Robert's Rules process so we do not stifle anyone.

7.2 Handbook Committee Update – Dr. Epps  
None.

7.3 Board of Trustees Report – Dr. Foley  
The Board of Trustees does have a new member, Charles Allen Jr. He was recently appointed by the governor. He is replacing Scott Niswonger.

7.4 Standing Committee Need – Dr. Epps  
Beth Thompson volunteered to serve on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

7.5 Notes from Meetings with the Provost and President – Mr. Hendrix

**McGarry:** What is the abbreviation IP?

**Hendrix:** Intellectual Property. There was a discussion around the Intellectual Property Policy coming out over the summer months. Currently, the IP Policy is being reviewed by a committee, which includes Faculty Senators, Council of Chairs members, and a dean.

7.6 Reports from University Committees

7.6.1 Quality and Effectiveness Sub-Council (QESC) – Dr. Byington

QESC met last week and the meeting topic was the SACS QEP. A QEP centering on student engagement will be coming forward, and there are plans to present that topic to various campus



## DISCUSSIONS

constituencies including Faculty Senate. Those presentations will likely be in November.

7.6.2 University Research Advisory Council (URAC) – Dr. Herrmann  
No update.

7.6.3 Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) – Mr. Hendrix  
TUFS is a gathering of the presidents of Faculty Senates from the various public institutions across Tennessee. They had some discussions related to COVID response. There was a range of responses: no mask mandates, mask requirements only in classrooms, and ETSU's mask requirements in all indoor locations. Many of the institutions mentioned that they had requirements of courses to be taught online. Most institutions were back to normal capacity of on-ground courses. Many of them were driven by senior leaders or boards to make modality choices. There will be a meeting in January. If anyone is interested in attending, it will be virtual. The first physical meeting since the pandemic will happen in April 2022. If you are interested in participating, please let Senator Hendrix know.

8. Old Business  
None.

9. New Business  
None.

10. Comments from Guests

10.1 IP Policy Working Group

**Johnson** clarified that the IP Policy Working Group is only looking at the language in the IP Policy related to course materials. Faculty Senate has three representatives on that group. There are also two Council of Chairs members, one of whom used to be a Faculty Senate Member and put forward the IP Policy Resolution that the Senate passed last year. We have suggested some language to legal and are working with them right now. We plan to meet again in November and do a preliminary presentation to this group.

11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators

11.1 SGA Resolution

**Hendrix:** I shared the SGA Resolution relating to fatal attendance policy. Having spoken with President Moser, students are concerned where fatal attendance policies are still in place. They asked the university to develop a policy that forbids fatal attendance requirements. Given academic freedom, the institution does not have the capability or desire to create such a policy. I encourage you to work with your colleagues in this area. If there are fatal attendance policies that may not need to exist, it may be worth discussing why that is there. Feel free to share that resolution with your colleagues.

**Epps:** They are concerned with how these policies relate to illness, especially with COVID. They had a couple of examples, but could not indicate if it was widespread. Examples included where faculty failed students who either contracted COVID, were in quarantine, or had family members who were sick. They were also concerned about students going to class sick because they did not want to fail the class.

11.2 Data on Students

**McGarry:** Since the beginning of the semester, we have been told that students want to be back on campus. I am trying to find data we have on students wanting to be back on campus. If anybody knows how this was determined, email Senator McGarry.

12. Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn: Epps**  
**Second: Thompson**  
**Meeting Adjourned**



**DISCUSSIONS**

Please notify Senator Ashley Sergiadis ([sergiadis@etsu.edu](mailto:sergiadis@etsu.edu), Faculty Senate Secretary, 2020-2021) of any changes or corrections to the minutes.

Note: Meeting minutes are not a word-for-word transcript. Statements and questions by Senators may be edited and summarized for clarity.



Whereas Sars-CoV-2 is spread both by droplets and aerosols,

Whereas 6-foot social distancing can reduce the inhalation of droplets, distancing alone is not effective for aerosols, which can remain suspended in the air for over an hour and can float farther than 6 feet;

Whereas to reduce the concentration of viruses like Sars-CoV-2 in indoor areas, indoor air should be replaced four to six times per hour by either outdoor air or by air passed through an air filter with at least a Minimum Efficiency Rating Value 13 (MERV 13);

Whereas ETSU teaching facilities do not meet these minimum benchmarks;

Whereas ETSU has a responsibility to protect employees and students from unnecessary hazards;

And whereas ETSU has already called faculty and students onto campus, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate Recommends that

- 1) That ETSU makes it the top priority to increase ventilation in teaching and research buildings until those buildings reach the minimum benchmark of four exchanges with outdoor air per hour.
- 2) That no new classes be scheduled in buildings that do not meet the benchmark.
- 3) Those faculty members scheduled to teach classes in buildings that do not meet the benchmark have the option to teach these classes remotely.
- 4) Those steps to prevent aerosol transmission of Sars-CoV-2 do not eliminate the need to protect faculty and students from droplet transmission, including the need to schedule no more people in a classroom or lab than can remain six feet apart.
- 5) The cost of N95 masks for face-to-face teaching assignments should be reimbursed.
- 6) That ETSU increase transparency by displaying in each building that building's outdoor and indoor air exchange rates, current MERV filtration levels, and the date of last HVAC filter change.

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

Endorsed by

\_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021

Mr. Stephen Hendrix, MBA  
President, ETSU Faculty Senate

Joseph G. Allen, DSc, MPH; Andrew M. Ibrahim, MD, MSc. Indoor Air Changes and Potential Implications for SARS-CoV-2 Transmission *JAMA*. 2021;325(20):2112-2113.  
doi:10.1001/jama.2021.5053

## Meeting with Provost McCorkle

10/19/2021

### Questions submitted by Senators

1. When will the academic related policies that went out for public comment this summer be re-posted? In the grad coord meeting today, the grad school staff mentioned a policy that was out for review (it's not currently on the request for comment page).
  - The only policies that were out for public comment during or near the summer were the policy on IP and policies on admissions. The IP policy was pulled and is being reevaluated by a task force. The policies on admissions were out for public comment in April and have been passed and posted on the policy page. Some HR policies went out for public comment during the summer.
2. President and Provost: The cash prize for University Distinguished Faculty Awards has been at \$5K for a quarter of a century or more. I would like to inquire whether the Foundation would consider increasing the amounts. I might suggest \$10K as a target. Perhaps the Foundation might consider stair stepping to an increased target amount, and even consider a longer-term schedule for regular slight increases to keep better pace with salary growth.
  - Provost McCorkle will explore ways to increase the amount of the award. One of her priorities is looking at ways to acknowledge the work of faculty.
3. Updates concerning the interim Deans
  - The search for CAS and CBAT deans will commence this fall. They are currently working on getting input from colleges' faculty on the announcements as well as determining the composition of the committees. They are considering using search firms to help fill the positions. They are costly, but they help with recruitment and alleviating the burden on search committee members.

### Other

- Amy Johnson requested feedback from Senators regarding a proposal from Student Life and Engagement (SLE). SLE proposed an program in which students could retake early exams if they attended a 2 hours workshop about study skills. CFAA offered to proctor the exams and conduct the workshop. This would be an optional program in which faculty could decide if students had the ability to retake the exams in the course. SLE has mentioned that they received double the amount of referrals from faculty of at-risk students. (SLE has been sending more emails regarding referrals, which could have increased the numbers.) This proposal would be a way to help the students who are struggling.
  - Senators, Johnson, and McCorkle agreed that students are struggling. They are having to learn how to be students again, so retention will be a challenge. However, the optional program proposed by SLE would not be the best way to combat the program. Senators discussed several reasons. (1) Conflict may arise when faculty from some sections opt-in and faculty from other sections teaching the same course opt-out. (2) Faculty are experiencing flexibility fatigue. This would be difficult to manage. We have been dealing with the pandemic for several semesters now, so we do not need large institutional interventions. (3) While coming from a good place, the proposal seems to be overstepping and micromanaging the faculty.
  - Senators provided some alternative suggestions. (1) STRONG Brain institute may have resources for faculty regarding trauma informed care. (2) ETSU could hold focus groups or town halls with students for faculty to hear about the experiences of students.

- CTE would like to conduct a workshop that would provide a forum for faculty to discuss their experiences with their students this semester as well as to learn and think about what recovery options are available that do not disadvantage students who already are doing what they need to do to succeed. This type of programming had support from the Senators. In addition to programming from CTE, Senators were supportive of CFAA offering workshops on study skills.
- Provost McCorkle provided context on the SGA resolution on fatal attendance policies. The resolution was drafted after SGA received many complaints from students in courses with fatal attendance policies. The complaints generally came from lecture courses not labs or clinics. ETSU had strongly encouraged faculty not to use fatal attendance policies during previous semesters due to the pandemic. Provost McCorkle also relayed the chain of command (faculty, chair, dean) when students needed to report these types of issues. Senators mentioned that fatal attendance policies may not be the best route, but faculty have the freedom to have such policies in their courses. It was suggested that ETSU should look into this issue to determine if it is widespread.
- Invitations to serve on work teams for SACSCOC have been emailed. They are working on finalizing the QEP. It most likely will be on community engagement. They would like to present the QEP to Faculty Senate at some point.
- Provost McCorkle has visited all the colleges. She plans to follow-up in some areas such as clinics.
- This semester, there will be two graduation ceremonies.

## Meeting with Dr. Noland

10/18/2021

### Questions submitted by Senators

1. Opportunity for conversation about the Faculty Senate Resolution from Sept 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Provost McCorkle sent a response to the Faculty Senate resolution.
  - The plan is to keep the mask mandate through the close of the semester (unless anything changes regarding state requirements).
  - The same course delivery flexibility during the fall semester will be afforded in spring. Faculty may work with their chairs and deans to alter course delivery modes due to COVID-19 concerns. ETSU does not have any ratio thresholds regarding on ground versus online courses.
  - ETSU administration is determining what the Executive Orders [14042](#) and [14043](#) mean for higher education, specifically employees whose salaries are through contracts (not grants). The presidents of Tennessee LGIs are meeting to discuss how this works for TN colleges and universities. Legislature that Tennessee passes in the near future may also affect these decisions. (See updates from Nashville for additional comments.) Dr. Noland referred to the article "[Biden Ordered Federal Contractors to Get Employees Vaccinated. Universities Have Begun to Comply](#)" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to provide context.
  - Faculty and staff have indicated significant levels of stress, so ETSU administration is discussing with HR the possibility of additional vacation days. Dr. Noland asked Faculty Senate their opinion on when the best time to offer the additional vacation days, specifically in terms of extending Thanksgiving or extending Winter break (either on the front-end or back-end). Senators preferred extending Winter break or providing vacation days that staff and faculty could use during a certain date range. They suggested speaking with the registrar (who may have requests to send transcripts) and admissions who may have conflicts before or after Winter break. They remarked that extending Thanksgiving may disrupt courses.
2. Updates from Nashville
  - There is a possibility that TN legislatures will call a special session on COVID-19 in which legislation will be passed that further limits our ability to mandate masks and vaccines.
3. Campus Projects Updates
  - THEC is meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> to take action on capital projects, maintenance, and funding for next year. We will know how our projects (Brown Hall and Integrated Health Sciences Building) will score. Brown Hall is ~\$90 million project that will be split into two phases. The first phase will focus on labs. ETSU plans on asking for operational support (~3 million/year) for the Gatten College of Pharmacy. It is currently a private institution, which means that Tennesseans have to pay out-of-state tuition. In the event THEC does not support it, we will also send it to the governor.
  - Construction on Lamb Hall is moving forward. Prices are locked, which is good considering the rising cost of construction.
  - The Bud Frank Theatre will have new technology.
  - The new humanities building is in the schematic design phase, which should be completed by the close of the academic year. The plan is for the Campus Center to come down next December/January. Right now, they are looking for a permanent home for the train museum.

## Other


- ETSU's enrollment for first-time freshman increased 13.9% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021. All other LGIs enrollment numbers decreased. UT enrollment numbers also decreased except for Knoxville (7.9% increase) and Southern (15.0%) campuses. (Note: UT, Southern has small enrollment numbers in general so the percentage is skewed.) University Marketing and Communications as well as Admissions played a role in increasing these numbers. Senator Blackhart asked how faculty could help with recruitment. Dr. Noland noted that faculty could talk to potential students about their department when they are referred by admissions. Faculty could also give master lectures in high schools, which has not been possible due to COVID. Senator Blackhart noted that it was difficult making connections with high schools so they can give master lectures. Senator Stevens noted that students often rely on their high school teachers to get advice on where to go (based on his experience as a high school teacher), so reaching out to teachers in addition to students may be helpful.
- There will be Town Halls on October 22 and 28 to discuss Chapter 125. Dr. Noland will also be conducting small focus group sessions in October and November. Updates on Chapter 125 was originally to be presented to the Board of Trustees in November, but more time is needed to get feedback. It will be presented in February.
- Dr. Noland is considering creating a temporary pool for students and staff to work different types of positions.
- Dr. Noland will be meeting with Provost McCorkle to finalize the committees and plans for the CAS and CBAT dean searches.



OFFICE of the PROVOST  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: ETSU Student Government Association

From: Kimberly D. McCorkle   
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Re: Response to SGA Resolution SSR-21-006

Date: October 20, 2021

We have received and reviewed the SGA Resolution SSR-21-006 A Resolution for the University to Mandate the Ban of Fatal Attendance Policies for the 2021 Fall Semester dated October 6, 2021. In accordance with the current [university attendance policy](#) faculty may adopt attendance policies that are most appropriate for their course content, disciplinary requirements, and pedagogical style. As the policy states, the University affirms that class attendance is a significant factor in student success. All course attendance policies must comply with the policy. The policy advises instructors to exercise professional judgment when students are absent for reasons not outlined in the excused class absences section. While there is no University policy that gives administrators the ability to rescind or forbid faculty from using fatal course attendance policies, the University has *encouraged* and will continue to encourage faculty to adopt flexible policies during this term. Through communications with faculty and academic leaders, we have consistently shared the following guidance regarding the unique challenges of teaching this semester:

· *Faculty should consider adopting attendance policies that encourage students to stay home when they are sick or if they have to quarantine. Fatal attendance policies (e.g. 9 absences = failure) should be abandoned during this term.*

· *Faculty should consider providing students with opportunities to make up or complete alternate assignments when student health circumstances require them to avoid face-to-face classes.*

In addition, the Center for Teaching Excellence has hosted a number of events and authored a number of teaching tips that encourage faculty to approach their teaching with increased grace and flexibility during the pandemic. This peer-to-peer approach is often the most effective way to encourage faculty to embrace more flexible policies. The University has also provided lecture capture technology in all classrooms that enables faculty to record lectures and to give opportunities to attend lectures remotely when appropriate.

I recently shared the resolution at meetings with both deans and department chairs, and they are aware of the concerns outlined in the resolution. We plan to share the resolution with faculty leaders as well. The University sincerely appreciates the efforts of the Student Government Association to raise important issues that impact students. The well-being of our students is our top priority. We believe that faculty have shown flexibility and care in working with students during this challenging time for everyone.





**Statement of Need**

*Mason Mosier, President*

*COVID-19 is still very much present within our world and at our University. Seeing that restrictions remain in place for the student body surrounding COVID, we believe it to be in the interest of students and our larger ETSU community to enforce further restrictions to protect everyone at this time. Seeing that fatal attendance policies have a history- even before the beginning of the pandemic- of disenfranchising those with disabilities and illnesses, the Student Government Association finds it necessary to request the bare minimum in enforcing a blanket policy surrounding fatal attendance at this time. For the safety of faculty, staff, and students, it is imperative students have the ability to miss class, without fear of repercussion, during the era of COVID-19. If this legislation is instituted, fear of students attending class sick will be heavily reduced.*

**Sample Budget and Cost Breakdown**

The cost of this legislation would be \$0. In fact, passage and enforcement of said legislation could prevent expenses related to the spread of COVID (i.e. contact tracing expenses, quarantine dorms, etc.).

**Committee Recommendation**

*N/A, Emergency Legislation*

*The senate deemed the passage of this legislation imperative to the well-being of our campus community. Therefore, passage of this resolution was moved into "emergency" status by a 2/3 majority.*

**Final Vote: N/A      Date: N/A**

**Senate Recommendation**

*VPFA Ramirez*

*Senator Popper motioned for Resolution SSR-21-006 to be moved into emergency legislation status. The motion was seconded by Senator Keaton, followed by a 2/3 majority by the full senate. Senate moved directly to vote during New Business. Unanimous Passage.*

**Final Vote: 20 in Favor, 0 in Opposition, 0 in Abstention      Date: 9-28-21**

**Executive Recommendation and Feedback**

*President Mosier*

Approved:

Date: 10/06/21



**STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

**Student Senate**

*of the*

**East Tennessee State University**

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**SSR-21-006**

Student Body President Mason Mosier, Vice President Becker, VPFA Ramirez, and Chief of Staff Crabtree presents the following legislation to the East Tennessee State University Student Government Association on behalf of the Student Body.

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO MANDATE THE BAN OF FATAL  
ATTENDANCE POLICIES FOR THE 2021 FALL SEMESTER.**

**WHEREAS**, the Student Government Association has continuously heard that the greater student body largely favors this decision,

**WHEREAS**, Fatal Attendance Policies be defined as any policy that requires attendance with the threat of reduction of grade or failure within an in-person class,

**WHEREAS**, the current approach of University Administration is to suggest faculty follow protocol related to attendance leniency during a substantial rise in COVID-19 cases, as opposed to directly removing fatal attendance policies,

**WHEREAS**, the University has reported the deaths of staff members due to COVID and acknowledges that students, faculty, and staff, alike, must be unified in combatting this virus,

**WHEREAS**, the Mission Statement of our University begins with, "PEOPLE COME FIRST...", and it is the responsibility of administration to ensure the livelihood of its students first and foremost,

**WHEREAS**, fatal attendance policies may encourage students come to class with COVID symptoms, in order to avoid a reduction in grade, putting students and faculty at risk of exposure,

**WHEREAS**, fatal attendance policies, even before COVID, disadvantage students with illnesses and disabilities.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE 2021 STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION SENATE OF EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:**

Section 1. A. The Student Government Association requests University

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Administration mandate the rescindment of all in-person fatal attendance policies during the Fall 2021 semester.

B. The Student Government Association requests Deans of Colleges and Chairs of Departments oversee and enforce this mandate for the betterment of the student body.

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C. The Student Government Association requests that faculty who insist upon implementing a fatal attendance policy receive special approval from the Dean of their college.

A RESOLUTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO MANDATE THE BAN OF FATAL ATTENDANCE POLICIES FOR THE 2021 FALL SEMESTER.

WHEREAS the Student Government Association has continuously been the greatest student body faculty favor this decision.

WHEREAS fatal Attendance Policies be defined as any policy that requires attendance with the threat of reduction of grade or failure within an in-person class.

WHEREAS the current approach of University Administration is to suggest faculty follow protocol related to attendance leniency during a substantial rise in COVID-19 cases as opposed to directly removing fatal attendance policies.

WHEREAS the University has reported the deaths of staff members due to COVID and acknowledges that students, faculty, and staff alike, must be unified in combating this virus.

WHEREAS the Mission Statement of our University begins with "PEOPLE COME FIRST" and it is the responsibility of administration to ensure the livelihood of students first and foremost.

WHEREAS fatal attendance policies may encourage students come to class with COVID symptoms in order to avoid a reduction in grade, putting students and faculty at risk of exposure.

WHEREAS fatal attendance policies even before COVID, disadvantaged students with illnesses and disabilities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE 2021 STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SENATE OR EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT

Section I. A. The Student Government Association request University



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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Faculty Senate

*October 25, 2021, 2:45 p.m. | Virtual Zoom Meeting*

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### **Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda**

1. Celebrations
2. Introductions of Guests
3. Announcements
4. Guest Speaker
  - a. Dr. Sam Mayhew and Ms. Kari Albarado – Student Wellness
5. Approval of Minutes from September 27, 2021
6. Action Items
7. Information Items
  - a. Senate Resolution concerning Sars-CoV-2 – Dr. Trogen
  - b. Handbook Committee Update – Dr. Epps
  - c. Board of Trustees Report – Dr. Foley
  - d. Standing Committee Need – Dr. Epps
  - e. Notes from Meetings with the Provost and President – Mr. Hendrix
  - f. Reports from University Committees
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. Comments from Guests
11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators
12. Adjourn

## **Spring 22 Faculty Senate Meeting Dates**

- January 24<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- February 7<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- February 21<sup>st</sup> – Virtual
- March 7<sup>th</sup> – Virtual
- March 21<sup>st</sup> – Hybrid
- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Hybrid
- April 18<sup>th</sup> – Hybrid



## FACULTY SENATE MINUTES

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10/25/2021	<b>Time:</b>	14:45 – 16:30	<b>Location:</b>	Zoom
<b>Next Meeting:</b>	11/08/2021	<b>Scribe:</b>			Ashley Sergiadis
<b>Present:</b>	Blackhart, Ginni; Blackwell, Roger; Bray, Sheree; Burns, Bracken; Byington, Randy; Cherry, Donna; Daniels, Jean; Dowling-McClay, Karilynn; Ecay, Thomas ; Elangovan, Saravanan; Ellis, Jon; Epps, Susan; Evanshen, Pam; Fisher, Stacey; Frye, Stephanie; Funk, Bobby; Garris, Bill; Gentry, Retha; Gomez Sobrino, Isabel; Gray, Jeffrey; Hauldren, Kacie; Hawthorne, Sean; Hendrix, Stephen; Herrmann, Andrew; Hounshell, Jonathan; Johnson, Michelle; Kim, Sookhyun; Lyons, Renee; Mackara, Fred; Mamudu, Hadii; McGarry, Theresa; Mitchell, Holly; Nivens, Ryan; O'Neil, Kason; Park, Esther; Ramsey, Priscilla; Schroder, Laurie; Sergiadis, Ashley; Stevens, Alan; Tai, Chih-Che; Thigpen, Jim; Thompson, Beth Ann; Trogen, Paul; Uddin, Mohammad; Walden, Rachel; Waters, Susan; Youngberg, George; Zahner, Matt				
<b>Absent:</b>	Beatty, Kate; Chakraborty, Kanishka; De Oliveira Fiuza, Felipe; Digavalli, Siva; Foley, Virginia; Hemphill, Bill; Hemphill, Jean; Khan, Shoeb; Kruppa, Michael; Landis, Ryan; Weyant, Emily				

### Agenda Items

Meeting called to order

1. Celebrations

2. Introductions of Guests

3. Announcements

4. Guest Speaker

5. Approval of Minutes

6. Action Items

7. Information Items

8. Old Business

9. New Business

10. Comments from Guests

11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators

11. Adjourn

### DISCUSSIONS

1. Celebrations

None.

2. Introductions of Guests

2.1 Amy Johnson, Associate Provost for Faculty & Director of Center for Teaching Excellence

2.3 Jonathan Brewster and Sydney Tabor, 4<sup>th</sup> year students in the College of Pharmacy

3. Announcements

None.

4. Guest Speaker – Dr. Sam Mayhew and Ms. Kari Albarado – Student Wellness

4.1 Dr. Mayhew and Ms. Albarado presented on student wellness initiatives.



**DISCUSSIONS**

- Student wellness initiatives came from the strategic planning process of the Division of Student Life and Enrollment (SLE) as well as SGA's support for student wellness. A session ago, SGA passed a student fee that went into effect this fiscal year related to student wellness. This year, the fee was used to provide additional support within the counseling center to hire additional counselors as well as help with equity gaps. The next academic year, we are looking to on-board a full-time employee to lead wellness across the institution.
- SLE saw an opportunity to collaborate with campus recreation to create a wellness center on the first floor of the CPA. They also collaborate with others across campus within the academic space, Counseling Center, and faculty (in Clinical and Rehabilitative Health, Public Health, etc.). They are also investigating how to incorporate current peer mentoring opportunities across the institution into the wellness program.
- Contact SLE if you are interested in being involved with the hiring process, collaborating with them on these initiatives, and/or being a connection point.

5. Approval of Minutes

**Hendrix** questioned whether there was an objection to approving the minutes from the 09/27/2021 meeting. **Sergiadis** stated that Senator Epps and McGarry had minor corrections to the minutes.

**No Objection: Minutes Approved**

6. Action Items

None.

7. Information Items

7.1 Senate Resolution concerning Sars-CoV-2 – Dr. Trogen

**Trogen:** COVID can spread by aerosol as well as by droplets from sneezes, which means that the droplets can remain suspended in the air for over an hour. An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggested that the air in places like classrooms be changed or replaced with outdoor air at least four to six times. In the resolution, I put the bottom limit of four times. The article also recommends using better filters than we are using at ETSU. Until we can get up to those standards, the resolution recommends that faculty have discretion to use safer formats. Since spreading by droplets is still possible, we should not put more chairs in a classroom than can be spaced out six feet apart, and N95 grade masks should be reimbursable. So far, our resolutions have talked about the responsibilities of faculty. I also believe that the university has a responsibility to provide a safe working environment before it brings us back to campus. We have no idea what the future is going to hold. We find out that the vaccines are losing their effectiveness due to time and variants. We should do what we can to reduce the danger from COVID-19.

**Garris:** Do we have a sense of the relative effect of environmental filtration on limiting the spread compared with wearing masks?

**Trogen:** Wearing masks is something that we can do. Masks will definitely filter out all droplets; it might not filter out all aerosols. Some of us have seen the videos of people breathing with a mask and aerosols getting out. The idea is that depending on one thing is not as good as depending on several defenses. Some of the masks that we have in our classrooms I hear are 32% effective. A lot of us are using N95 masks, which will not filter out all particles as small as viruses. They will filter out around 95% of the particles that are about three times the size of a virus. Therefore, those are not perfect solutions. We assumed that if we got the vaccine we were safe. Now we find out, there are still breakthroughs. We feel that if we wear a mask we are safe, but it is not perfect. Therefore, we should do more than just being vaccinated and wearing a good mask. We should do several things to reduce the chance of spreading COVID as much as possible. I attached an article to the motion, which suggests that filtering the air is a good step. One defense is not as good as two or three layers of defense.

**Byington:** One of the things that is occurring this week is the October 27 special legislative session. It is possible that the state legislature would outlaw the mandating of masks. If that were to become the case,



## DISCUSSIONS

then this would be your primary defense against COVID in an indoor environment.

**Epps:** The resolution does not indicate where our buildings are now and how much this would cost. Some constituents may have questions on the difference between where they are now and what Senator Trogen is recommending as well as the cost to implement the recommendations.

**Trogen:** The article recommended MERV 13 filters. Right now, ETSU is putting in MERV 8s and MERV 11s, which are less effective. It might be like screening out mosquitoes with a chain link fence. These are filters that you can put into ventilation systems just as we put in furnace filters. Some of the steps are fairly small. ETSU is doing some things like increasing the ventilation, using the Culp auditorium for classroom space, and investigating changes that would make 1.5 air exchanges per hour. However, more can be done.

**Walden:** One of the things we need to ask for is more transparency on the building-by-building status. That could be language somebody could come with next time for inclusion in the resolution.

**Trogen:** I think there is one point on the resolution that asks that this information be posted in the building,

**Hendrix:** We will take action on this at our November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Faculty Senate. I encourage you to take time to reach out to your constituents, share the resolution, gather any feedback, and prepare to have a discussion.

**Nivens:** I would like to make a comment as parliamentarian. If you have edits or substantial changes, those replacements should be well crafted ahead of time so that it can be immediately posted. We can vote on whether to keep that change or dismiss it. Have those discussions between now and our meeting, so we do not spend an hour working on it like last time.

**McGarry:** It is a good idea to be prepared as we can and try to save time. At the same time, discussions evolve in real time and people get ideas in response to other ideas. I do not think people who cannot put their finger on the exact words should feel that they cannot speak up. The last thing we need to do is intimidate the speakers of English as a second language.

**Hendrix:** That is a fair point. I think Senator Nivens's point is that details such as looking up a statistic could happen on the front end to help move the process faster. All comments are valued and welcomed. That is why we follow Robert's Rules process so we do not stifle anyone.

7.2 Handbook Committee Update – Dr. Epps  
None.

7.3 Board of Trustees Report – Dr. Foley  
The Board of Trustees does have a new member, Charles Allen Jr. He was recently appointed by the governor. He is replacing Scott Niswonger.

7.4 Standing Committee Need – Dr. Epps  
Beth Thompson volunteered to serve on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

7.5 Notes from Meetings with the Provost and President – Mr. Hendrix

**McGarry:** What is the abbreviation IP?

**Hendrix:** Intellectual Property. There was a discussion around the Intellectual Property Policy coming out over the summer months. Currently, the IP Policy is being reviewed by a committee, which includes Faculty Senators, Council of Chairs members, and a dean.

7.6 Reports from University Committees

7.6.1 Quality and Effectiveness Sub-Council (QESC) – Dr. Byington

QESC met last week and the meeting topic was the SACS QEP. A QEP centering on student engagement will be coming forward, and there are plans to present that topic to various campus





## DISCUSSIONS

constituencies including Faculty Senate. Those presentations will likely be in November.

7.6.2 University Research Advisory Council (URAC) – Dr. Herrmann  
No update.

7.6.3 Tennessee University Faculty Senates (TUFS) – Mr. Hendrix  
TUFS is a gathering of the presidents of Faculty Senates from the various public institutions across Tennessee. They had some discussions related to COVID response. There was a range of responses: no mask mandates, mask requirements only in classrooms, and ETSU's mask requirements in all indoor locations. Many of the institutions mentioned that they had requirements of courses to be taught online. Most institutions were back to normal capacity of on-ground courses. Many of them were driven by senior leaders or boards to make modality choices. There will be a meeting in January. If anyone is interested in attending, it will be virtual. The first physical meeting since the pandemic will happen in April 2022. If you are interested in participating, please let Senator Hendrix know.

8. Old Business  
None.

9. New Business  
None.

10. Comments from Guests

10.1 IP Policy Working Group

**Johnson** clarified that the IP Policy Working Group is only looking at the language in the IP Policy related to course materials. Faculty Senate has three representatives on that group. There are also two Council of Chairs members, one of whom used to be a Faculty Senate Member and put forward the IP Policy Resolution that the Senate passed last year. We have suggested some language to legal and are working with them right now. We plan to meet again in November and do a preliminary presentation to this group.

11. Final Comments/Announcements from Senators

11.1 SGA Resolution

**Hendrix:** I shared the SGA Resolution relating to fatal attendance policy. Having spoken with President Moser, students are concerned where fatal attendance policies are still in place. They asked the university to develop a policy that forbids fatal attendance requirements. Given academic freedom, the institution does not have the capability or desire to create such a policy. I encourage you to work with your colleagues in this area. If there are fatal attendance policies that may not need to exist, it may be worth discussing why that is there. Feel free to share that resolution with your colleagues.

**Epps:** They are concerned with how these policies relate to illness, especially with COVID. They had a couple of examples, but could not indicate if it was widespread. Examples included where faculty failed students who either contracted COVID, were in quarantine, or had family members who were sick. They were also concerned about students going to class sick because they did not want to fail the class.

11.2 Data on Students

**McGarry:** Since the beginning of the semester, we have been told that students want to be back on campus. I am trying to find data we have on students wanting to be back on campus. If anybody knows how this was determined, email Senator McGarry.

12. Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn: Epps**  
**Second: Thompson**  
**Meeting Adjourned**



**DISCUSSIONS**

Please notify Senator Ashley Sergiadis ([sergiadis@etsu.edu](mailto:sergiadis@etsu.edu), Faculty Senate Secretary, 2020-2021) of any changes or corrections to the minutes.

Note: Meeting minutes are not a word-for-word transcript. Statements and questions by Senators may be edited and summarized for clarity.

Whereas Sars-CoV-2 is spread both by droplets and aerosols,

Whereas 6-foot social distancing can reduce the inhalation of droplets, distancing alone is not effective for aerosols, which can remain suspended in the air for over an hour and can float farther than 6 feet;

Whereas to reduce the concentration of viruses like Sars-CoV-2 in indoor areas, indoor air should be replaced four to six times per hour by either outdoor air or by air passed through an air filter with at least a Minimum Efficiency Rating Value 13 (MERV 13);

Whereas ETSU teaching facilities do not meet these minimum benchmarks;

Whereas ETSU has a responsibility to protect employees and students from unnecessary hazards;

And whereas ETSU has already called faculty and students onto campus, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Faculty Senate Recommends that

- 1) That ETSU makes it the top priority to increase ventilation in teaching and research buildings until those buildings reach the minimum benchmark of four exchanges with outdoor air per hour.
- 2) That no new classes be scheduled in buildings that do not meet the benchmark.
- 3) Those faculty members scheduled to teach classes in buildings that do not meet the benchmark have the option to teach these classes remotely.
- 4) Those steps to prevent aerosol transmission of Sars-CoV-2 do not eliminate the need to protect faculty and students from droplet transmission, including the need to schedule no more people in a classroom or lab than can remain six feet apart.
- 5) The cost of N95 masks for face-to-face teaching assignments should be reimbursed.
- 6) That ETSU increase transparency by displaying in each building that building's outdoor and indoor air exchange rates, current MERV filtration levels, and the date of last HVAC filter change.

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

Endorsed by

\_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021

Mr. Stephen Hendrix, MBA  
President, ETSU Faculty Senate

Joseph G. Allen, DSc, MPH; Andrew M. Ibrahim, MD, MSc. Indoor Air Changes and Potential Implications for SARS-CoV-2 Transmission *JAMA*. 2021;325(20):2112-2113.  
doi:10.1001/jama.2021.5053

## Meeting with Provost McCorkle

10/19/2021

### Questions submitted by Senators

1. When will the academic related policies that went out for public comment this summer be re-posted? In the grad coord meeting today, the grad school staff mentioned a policy that was out for review (it's not currently on the request for comment page).
  - The only policies that were out for public comment during or near the summer were the policy on IP and policies on admissions. The IP policy was pulled and is being reevaluated by a task force. The policies on admissions were out for public comment in April and have been passed and posted on the policy page. Some HR policies went out for public comment during the summer.
2. President and Provost: The cash prize for University Distinguished Faculty Awards has been at \$5K for a quarter of a century or more. I would like to inquire whether the Foundation would consider increasing the amounts. I might suggest \$10K as a target. Perhaps the Foundation might consider stair stepping to an increased target amount, and even consider a longer-term schedule for regular slight increases to keep better pace with salary growth.
  - Provost McCorkle will explore ways to increase the amount of the award. One of her priorities is looking at ways to acknowledge the work of faculty.
3. Updates concerning the interim Deans
  - The search for CAS and CBAT deans will commence this fall. They are currently working on getting input from colleges' faculty on the announcements as well as determining the composition of the committees. They are considering using search firms to help fill the positions. They are costly, but they help with recruitment and alleviating the burden on search committee members.

### Other

- Amy Johnson requested feedback from Senators regarding a proposal from Student Life and Engagement (SLE). SLE proposed an program in which students could retake early exams if they attended a 2 hours workshop about study skills. CFAA offered to proctor the exams and conduct the workshop. This would be an optional program in which faculty could decide if students had the ability to retake the exams in the course. SLE has mentioned that they received double the amount of referrals from faculty of at-risk students. (SLE has been sending more emails regarding referrals, which could have increased the numbers.) This proposal would be a way to help the students who are struggling.
  - Senators, Johnson, and McCorkle agreed that students are struggling. They are having to learn how to be students again, so retention will be a challenge. However, the optional program proposed by SLE would not be the best way to combat the program. Senators discussed several reasons. (1) Conflict may arise when faculty from some sections opt-in and faculty from other sections teaching the same course opt-out. (2) Faculty are experiencing flexibility fatigue. This would be difficult to manage. We have been dealing with the pandemic for several semesters now, so we do not need large institutional interventions. (3) While coming from a good place, the proposal seems to be overstepping and micromanaging the faculty.
  - Senators provided some alternative suggestions. (1) STRONG Brain institute may have resources for faculty regarding trauma informed care. (2) ETSU could hold focus groups or town halls with students for faculty to hear about the experiences of students.

- CTE would like to conduct a workshop that would provide a forum for faculty to discuss their experiences with their students this semester as well as to learn and think about what recovery options are available that do not disadvantage students who already are doing what they need to do to succeed. This type of programming had support from the Senators. In addition to programming from CTE, Senators were supportive of CFAA offering workshops on study skills.
- Provost McCorkle provided context on the SGA resolution on fatal attendance policies. The resolution was drafted after SGA received many complaints from students in courses with fatal attendance policies. The complaints generally came from lecture courses not labs or clinics. ETSU had strongly encouraged faculty not to use fatal attendance policies during previous semesters due to the pandemic. Provost McCorkle also relayed the chain of command (faculty, chair, dean) when students needed to report these types of issues. Senators mentioned that fatal attendance policies may not be the best route, but faculty have the freedom to have such policies in their courses. It was suggested that ETSU should look into this issue to determine if it is widespread.
- Invitations to serve on work teams for SACSCOC have been emailed. They are working on finalizing the QEP. It most likely will be on community engagement. They would like to present the QEP to Faculty Senate at some point.
- Provost McCorkle has visited all the colleges. She plans to follow-up in some areas such as clinics.
- This semester, there will be two graduation ceremonies.

## Meeting with Dr. Noland

10/18/2021

### Questions submitted by Senators

1. Opportunity for conversation about the Faculty Senate Resolution from Sept 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Provost McCorkle sent a response to the Faculty Senate resolution.
  - The plan is to keep the mask mandate through the close of the semester (unless anything changes regarding state requirements).
  - The same course delivery flexibility during the fall semester will be afforded in spring. Faculty may work with their chairs and deans to alter course delivery modes due to COVID-19 concerns. ETSU does not have any ratio thresholds regarding on ground versus online courses.
  - ETSU administration is determining what the Executive Orders [14042](#) and [14043](#) mean for higher education, specifically employees whose salaries are through contracts (not grants). The presidents of Tennessee LGIs are meeting to discuss how this works for TN colleges and universities. Legislature that Tennessee passes in the near future may also affect these decisions. (See updates from Nashville for additional comments.) Dr. Noland referred to the article "[Biden Ordered Federal Contractors to Get Employees Vaccinated. Universities Have Begun to Comply](#)" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* to provide context.
  - Faculty and staff have indicated significant levels of stress, so ETSU administration is discussing with HR the possibility of additional vacation days. Dr. Noland asked Faculty Senate their opinion on when the best time to offer the additional vacation days, specifically in terms of extending Thanksgiving or extending Winter break (either on the front-end or back-end). Senators preferred extending Winter break or providing vacation days that staff and faculty could use during a certain date range. They suggested speaking with the registrar (who may have requests to send transcripts) and admissions who may have conflicts before or after Winter break. They remarked that extending Thanksgiving may disrupt courses.
2. Updates from Nashville
  - There is a possibility that TN legislatures will call a special session on COVID-19 in which legislation will be passed that further limits our ability to mandate masks and vaccines.
3. Campus Projects Updates
  - THEC is meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> to take action on capital projects, maintenance, and funding for next year. We will know how our projects (Brown Hall and Integrated Health Sciences Building) will score. Brown Hall is ~\$90 million project that will be split into two phases. The first phase will focus on labs. ETSU plans on asking for operational support (~3 million/year) for the Gatten College of Pharmacy. It is currently a private institution, which means that Tennesseans have to pay out-of-state tuition. In the event THEC does not support it, we will also send it to the governor.
  - Construction on Lamb Hall is moving forward. Prices are locked, which is good considering the rising cost of construction.
  - The Bud Frank Theatre will have new technology.
  - The new humanities building is in the schematic design phase, which should be completed by the close of the academic year. The plan is for the Campus Center to come down next December/January. Right now, they are looking for a permanent home for the train museum.

## Other

- ETSU's enrollment for first-time freshman increased 13.9% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021. All other LGIs enrollment numbers decreased. UT enrollment numbers also decreased except for Knoxville (7.9% increase) and Southern (15.0%) campuses. (Note: UT, Southern has small enrollment numbers in general so the percentage is skewed.) University Marketing and Communications as well as Admissions played a role in increasing these numbers. Senator Blackhart asked how faculty could help with recruitment. Dr. Noland noted that faculty could talk to potential students about their department when they are referred by admissions. Faculty could also give master lectures in high schools, which has not been possible due to COVID. Senator Blackhart noted that it was difficult making connections with high schools so they can give master lectures. Senator Stevens noted that students often rely on their high school teachers to get advice on where to go (based on his experience as a high school teacher), so reaching out to teachers in addition to students may be helpful.
- There will be Town Halls on October 22 and 28 to discuss Chapter 125. Dr. Noland will also be conducting small focus group sessions in October and November. Updates on Chapter 125 was originally to be presented to the Board of Trustees in November, but more time is needed to get feedback. It will be presented in February.
- Dr. Noland is considering creating a temporary pool for students and staff to work different types of positions.
- Dr. Noland will be meeting with Provost McCorkle to finalize the committees and plans for the CAS and CBAT dean searches.






OFFICE of the PROVOST  
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: ETSU Student Government Association

From: Kimberly D. McCorkle   
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Re: Response to SGA Resolution SSR-21-006

Date: October 20, 2021

We have received and reviewed the SGA Resolution SSR-21-006 A Resolution for the University to Mandate the Ban of Fatal Attendance Policies for the 2021 Fall Semester dated October 6, 2021. In accordance with the current [university attendance policy](#) faculty may adopt attendance policies that are most appropriate for their course content, disciplinary requirements, and pedagogical style. As the policy states, the University affirms that class attendance is a significant factor in student success. All course attendance policies must comply with the policy. The policy advises instructors to exercise professional judgment when students are absent for reasons not outlined in the excused class absences section. While there is no University policy that gives administrators the ability to rescind or forbid faculty from using fatal course attendance policies, the University has *encouraged* and will continue to encourage faculty to adopt flexible policies during this term. Through communications with faculty and academic leaders, we have consistently shared the following guidance regarding the unique challenges of teaching this semester:

· *Faculty should consider adopting attendance policies that encourage students to stay home when they are sick or if they have to quarantine. Fatal attendance policies (e.g. 9 absences = failure) should be abandoned during this term.*

· *Faculty should consider providing students with opportunities to make up or complete alternate assignments when student health circumstances require them to avoid face-to-face classes.*

In addition, the Center for Teaching Excellence has hosted a number of events and authored a number of teaching tips that encourage faculty to approach their teaching with increased grace and flexibility during the pandemic. This peer-to-peer approach is often the most effective way to encourage faculty to embrace more flexible policies. The University has also provided lecture capture technology in all classrooms that enables faculty to record lectures and to give opportunities to attend lectures remotely when appropriate.

I recently shared the resolution at meetings with both deans and department chairs, and they are aware of the concerns outlined in the resolution. We plan to share the resolution with faculty leaders as well. The University sincerely appreciates the efforts of the Student Government Association to raise important issues that impact students. The well-being of our students is our top priority. We believe that faculty have shown flexibility and care in working with students during this challenging time for everyone.



**Statement of Need**

*Mason Mosier, President*

*COVID-19 is still very much present within our world and at our University. Seeing that restrictions remain in place for the student body surrounding COVID, we believe it to be in the interest of students and our larger ETSU community to enforce further restrictions to protect everyone at this time. Seeing that fatal attendance policies have a history- even before the beginning of the pandemic- of disenfranchising those with disabilities and illnesses, the Student Government Association finds it necessary to request the bare minimum in enforcing a blanket policy surrounding fatal attendance at this time. For the safety of faculty, staff, and students, it is imperative students have the ability to miss class, without fear of repercussion, during the era of COVID-19. If this legislation is instituted, fear of students attending class sick will be heavily reduced.*

**Sample Budget and Cost Breakdown**

The cost of this legislation would be \$0. In fact, passage and enforcement of said legislation could prevent expenses related to the spread of COVID (i.e. contact tracing expenses, quarantine dorms, etc.).

**Committee Recommendation**

*N/A, Emergency Legislation*

*The senate deemed the passage of this legislation imperative to the well-being of our campus community. Therefore, passage of this resolution was moved into "emergency" status by a 2/3 majority.*

**Final Vote: N/A      Date: N/A**

**Senate Recommendation**

*VPFA Ramirez*

*Senator Popper motioned for Resolution SSR-21-006 to be moved into emergency legislation status. The motion was seconded by Senator Keaton, followed by a 2/3 majority by the full senate. Senate moved directly to vote during New Business. Unanimous Passage.*

**Final Vote: 20 in Favor, 0 in Opposition, 0 in Abstention      Date: 9-28-21**

**Executive Recommendation and Feedback**

*President Mosier*

Approved:

Date: 10/06/21



**STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION**

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

**Student Senate**

*of the*

**East Tennessee State University**

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**SSR-21-006**

Student Body President Mason Mosier, Vice President Becker, VPFA Ramirez, and Chief of Staff Crabtree presents the following legislation to the East Tennessee State University Student Government Association on behalf of the Student Body.

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO MANDATE THE BAN OF FATAL  
ATTENDANCE POLICIES FOR THE 2021 FALL SEMESTER.**

**WHEREAS**, the Student Government Association has continuously heard that the greater student body largely favors this decision,

**WHEREAS**, Fatal Attendance Policies be defined as any policy that requires attendance with the threat of reduction of grade or failure within an in-person class,

**WHEREAS**, the current approach of University Administration is to suggest faculty follow protocol related to attendance leniency during a substantial rise in COVID-19 cases, as opposed to directly removing fatal attendance policies,

**WHEREAS**, the University has reported the deaths of staff members due to COVID and acknowledges that students, faculty, and staff, alike, must be unified in combatting this virus,

**WHEREAS**, the Mission Statement of our University begins with, "PEOPLE COME FIRST...", and it is the responsibility of administration to ensure the livelihood of its students first and foremost,

**WHEREAS**, fatal attendance policies may encourage students come to class with COVID symptoms, in order to avoid a reduction in grade, putting students and faculty at risk of exposure,

**WHEREAS**, fatal attendance policies, even before COVID, disadvantage students with illnesses and disabilities.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE 2021 STUDENT GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION SENATE OF EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:**

Section 1. A. The Student Government Association requests University

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Administration mandate the rescindment of all in-person fatal attendance policies during the Fall 2021 semester.

B. The Student Government Association requests Deans of Colleges and Chairs of Departments oversee and enforce this mandate for the betterment of the student body.

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C. The Student Government Association requests that faculty who insist upon implementing a fatal attendance policy receive special approval from the Dean of their college.

### A RESOLUTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO MANDATE THE BAN OF FATAL ATTENDANCE POLICIES FOR THE 2021 FALL SEMESTER.

WHEREAS the Student Government Association has continuously been the greatest student body faculty favor this decision.

WHEREAS fatal Attendance Policies be defined as any policy that requires attendance with the threat of reduction of grade or failure within an in-person class.

WHEREAS the current approach of University Administration is to suggest faculty follow protocol related to attendance leniency during a substantial rise in COVID-19 cases as opposed to directly removing fatal attendance policies.

WHEREAS the University has reported the deaths of staff members due to COVID and acknowledges that students, faculty, and staff alike, must be unified in combating this virus.

WHEREAS the Mission Statement of our University begins with "PEOPLE COME FIRST" and it is the responsibility of administration to ensure the livelihood of students first and foremost.

WHEREAS fatal attendance policies may encourage students come to class with COVID symptoms in order to avoid a reduction in grade, putting students and faculty at risk of exposure.

WHEREAS fatal attendance policies even before COVID, disadvantaged students with illnesses and disabilities.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE 2021 STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SENATE OR EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:

Section I. A. The Student Government Association request University