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2021

UPDATE REPORT



INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Mission

Information Technology Services (ITS) will provide reliable and efficient services, innovation, technology leadership, and strong collaboration to strengthen the future of teaching, learning, research, and service at East Tennessee State University.

Vision

Information Technology Services (ITS) provides the highest quality technology services to students, faculty, and staff and delivers technologies that advance the University's academic, research, and administrative goals.

LETTER FROM *the* CIO

Information Technology Services and East Tennessee State University looked very different a year ago, and now it feels like a lifetime ago. A global pandemic, social injustice and upheaval, economic crisis, and the rapid transformation to remote teaching, learning, and working makes the experiences of the past year truly unique. Any one of these things alone would have a major impact on our campus so it is with great pride that I can say the commitment of those in ITS to serve the ETSU community remained constant throughout these unexpected times. We never really know how we will respond to tragic circumstances until we are tested. ITS may not be perfect, but I can tell you for sure that we are tried and true and we all care about ETSU. And when the dust settled, we discovered that nothing has really changed except our opportunities.

We began the year with strategic assessments, hires, and organizational adjustments that aligned us with best practices and helped release our collective potential. As the pandemic hit, ITS provided the infrastructure and support for the university to seamlessly transition to remote operations. We packed three years of transformation into two weeks. With each new challenge, ITS staff exceeded expectations again and again. While I cannot mention all accomplishments here, in addition to the support for remote work and instruction, our team also launched the inaugural ETSU Esports Team, created new internal processes to manage IT projects, leveraged technologies to create efficiencies, increased data security, improved outdoor WiFi, and provided virtual compute spaces for our students. I believe the knowledge that each of us in ITS plays an equally critical role became clear over the past year and learning that about ourselves has led to the creation of an impressive and forward thinking team.

As you will see in this report, our team has many accomplishments. But, it is important to stress that every accomplishment in this report is the product of alliances, connections, and collaborations. This report will provide twelve months of reasons why I am intensely proud of our team and why I am honored to be a part of the ETSU family.

Go Bucs,



Karen King, CIO



SPECIAL PROJECTS



The Special Projects team was instrumental in assisting with the technology phase during the renovation of the Model Mill site. This project was unlike most other projects in that ETSU Facilities was not involved with the project, so ITS staff worked directly with contractors on-site to ensure everything went smoothly. The Model Mill site has exciting new technology in their conference and meeting spaces. Portions of the D.P. Culp Center renovation were also completed during this time, including the finishing touches on the ETSU Esports video wall. ITS worked with the vendor to design and install the massive 16' x 32' foot wall located in the Cave. This state of the art wall is an incredible venue where the team can play and students can gather to view Esports competitions.

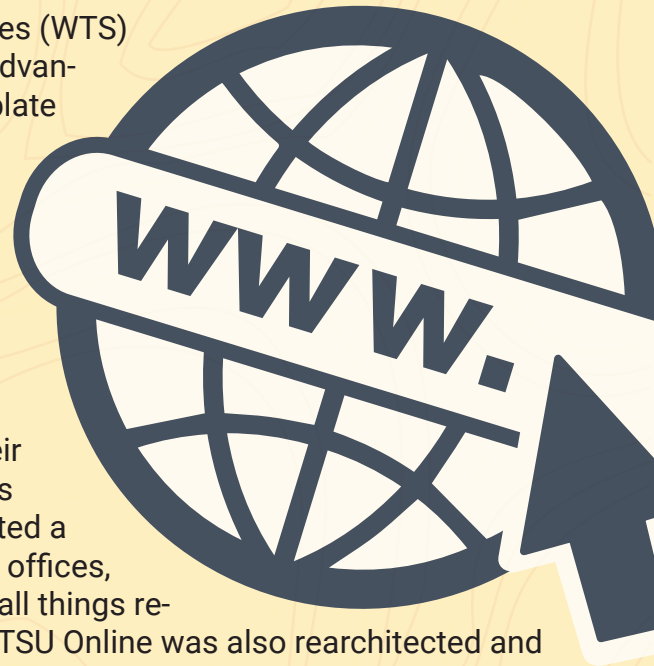


WEB TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

In the 2019/2020 financial year, Web Technology Services (WTS) designed and implemented a new web template which takes advantage of the latest standards and best practices. The new template is lighter and more agile, facilitating pages that rank higher in Google search results and render impressively on any device. WTS created a robust set of components and snippets for the new template, which allow site builders to create advanced styles and layouts with minimal drag-and-drop functionality.

WTS completed several specialized websites to improve the user experience across the web. An easy-to-use cost calculator was built to allow prospective students and their parents to easily determine the cost of attendance. The offices of financial aid and scholarships were combined, so WTS created a new website that merged the content and functionality of both offices, providing a fresh and inclusive experience for students to find all things related to their financial aid and scholarships. The website for ETSU Online was also rearchitected and redesigned to better advertise online programs for current and prospective students.

WTS continues the process of cleaning up and migrating all ETSU websites into this new template. As of December 2020, approximately 185 sites have been completed and another 142 are in process.



WEB AND ELECTRONIC FORM TRAININGS

Dynamic Forms

50

People Trained

New Feature Training

75

People Trained

CMS Training

90

People Trained

DIGITAL ASSETS

140

Google Tags Firing

200

Data Studio Reports

55

Digital Publications

To enhance our ability to measure web statistics, WTS implemented Google Tag Manager (GTM) and created and transitioned to a different Google Analytics property to be more precise with our tracking. There are approximately 140 unique tags firing and over 200 personalized analytics and traffic reports were created on demand through Data Studio. Additionally, WTS has provided marketing support to various units on campus through consulting and pixel placement through GTM. We have expanded our digital publishing efforts through Issuu, with 55 digital publications on site.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

TEAMDYNAMIX IMPLEMENTATION

We have implemented a new project management software tool that has allowed us to consolidate the various project tracking software across ITS into one single platform. This has allowed us to gain greater visibility as well as manage more efficiently all project work being accomplished within ITS.

Also, the use of one project management tool has allowed us to have one consistent end-user interface for requests, increasing transparency and interaction of project work throughout the project life-cycle.

This tool has also allowed ITS to increase and more efficiently collaborate across all ITS units and improve cross-campus support.

We are now able to prioritize projects based on criteria such as how they meet the university's strategic goals and cost savings to the university. We are also able to create reports based on data from all ITS instead of a limited view of units only.

15+ Project Management Users

19 Departments Assisted

26 Projects Completed Since July

30+ Reports Created

55+ Technician Users

5500+ Clients

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

- Completed ETSU Information Systems Audit
- Medical Education Assistance Corporation
- Worked with procurement on ITS work-flow and the purchases of new software and technology for the university
- Projects and change request completed in AirTable-115 before July

CREATED DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES:

- Project Tiers
- IT Request form
- Acceptance form
- Project Intake Documents
- Project Status Update
- Project Charter
- Change request
- Project Matrix & Weight Worksheet
- Lessons Learned
- Risk Management
- PMO Procedures
- Project Surveys
- Project Kick off Meeting

SWITCHBOARD

As with every department, the switchboard had to adapt with the events of the 2019/2020 financial year. The usage of cloud phones facilitated a smooth transition to working from home. After a few growing pains with getting the necessary equipment home to work with and coordinating with the other departments at ETSU in order to make contact when needed, we were able to work almost uninterrupted. Effort was required to obtain email addresses for the faculty and staff that were unable to answer the phone numbers provided due to work from home conditions and to find other contact information for when phones routed back to the switchboard, but with the help of the administrative assistants we were able to continue uninterrupted. We added another switchboard operator in November and have been successfully onboarding as well as expanding completion rates of other duties, such as computer replacement forms.



COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Staff members remained present on campus during the entire lockdown period. Several members of the department were particularly essential as they service the laptops and desktops used by ETSU administrative staff, faculty, and ETSU Health staff. They devised creative ways to drop-off and receive computing equipment while trying not to come into direct contact with each person. Power outages, broken computers, and physical restarts were all handled confidently by ETSU's CTS team.



DIGITAL SIGNAGE



ITS launched a new project in 2020 to expand and improve digital signage capabilities on the ETSU campus. This upgraded digital signage project will improve the student experience on campus as various departments will be able to communicate news and events in a coordinated way through strategically placed digital signs. The project will be comprehensive, incorporating existing digital signage and purchasing new signage for multiple buildings across allowing across campus ETSU to have a unified signage solution for the first time. Erin Simpson is already on board as the new Digital Content Specialist to drive the project and help create a unified digital communication platform. This project is currently underway in its earliest stages with new signs already installed in some areas with a total of 72 new displays coming this summer. Stay tuned for updates in 2021!

BUDGET

Working remotely requires significant creativity. Our budget process in the past required our leadership team to come together in a conference room to discuss actual historical spending, spending plans for the new budget year, and reconciling differences as a team. Thanks to Zoom, we were able to carry out that same process while social distancing and working in the safety of our individual offices or remotely. Funding is another area that comes to mind. While ITS did not receive any new money from State appropriations, TAF fee increases, and even a waiver of online fees in Summer Session, new funding was available & utilized from the CARES act and the Coronavirus Relief Fund, with a lot of COLLABORATION as a part of creativity.

Internally in ITS, the budget unit collaborated closely with the Project Management Office in reporting how that funding was utilized to meet financial reporting

requirements of ETSU and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). Creativity has been key to our success.

Working in a pandemic requires optimism. ETSU, as many of our higher education institutions across the nation, was required to make significant budget cuts in response to lower enrollment in the Fall Semester. But the response was our choice and our executive team set the tone by strategically choosing not to eliminate positions or furlough employees. In ITS, our leadership team chose to reduce operating expenses not positions. The optimism that guided this choice was that these difficult times are temporary & programs like Online Education will continue to grow, revenue will continue to grow, and enrollment will continue to grow. The vacant positions will be needed to ensure success on the other side of COVID. Optimism and the belief that things will be better has been key to our continued success.

The ITS Help Desk is a crucial component in the ITS services equation. The Help Desk is the key to providing excellent service to the campus community, but they do so much more through the growth in activities and support they provide. After several months of evaluation, preparation, and training, ITS launched a new IT service management tool in January 2020. The new tool, TOPdesk, offers a more comprehensive experience at a comparable price. Not only has TOPdesk been a massive improvement for ITS internally but the additional functions of the tool have provided opportunities for collaboration with the Central Receiving and Human Resources departments.

ITS has realized many internal benefits from the implementation of TOPdesk including: enhanced reporting and tracking features, time-saving automation scripts that process and perform routine requests, integration with internal communication tools allowing for faster notification of issues, the ability to record major incidents that improve communication and response time for widespread problems, and Kanban boards that help improve efficiency. These tools

ultimately improve the customer service experience for the campus community, but end users are typically not aware of those details.

There have been several improvements that ETSU students, staff, and faculty will notice right away, such as: student dorm information is imported into the system for improved communication, allowing ITS staff to track problems to a specific dorm or room. ITS has created a searchable knowledge base within TOPdesk that contains extensive support and help information, allowing end users to find help for common issues and problems without the need to enter a request or call the Help Desk. Enhanced email communication has been integrated so that end user responses are automatically added to support incidents and both the requester and the ITS staff member are aware of any changes or updates. All ITS forms have been moved into a fully digital process available through the new Services portal, eliminating the need for paper forms and initiating a work-flow process in minutes rather than days.

HELP DESK OPERATIONS

The ITS Help Desk is physically located on the first floor of the Sherrod Library. During a normal semester, lab technicians are prepared to help students using lab computer and printers, and Help Desk staff are answering phones, email, live chats, and support walk-in traffic. When the university moved to remote work in March 2020, ITS was one of the last offices to transition staff away from campus. We were committed to ensuring the campus was technologically prepared for remote work. The ITS Help Desk staff moved to remote operations but never experienced a single day of downtime and the only support method removed was the walk-in service as the library was closed.

The Help Desk staff got to work as soon as the university re-opened its doors to students and put processes in place to protect the safety of both students and staff. The Help Desk set up a remote computer station so that students could speak with someone on camera and display issues they were having with a personal mobile device or laptop. ITS staff members operated these remote displays during the first two days of the fall semester in lieu of normal lawn tents. The Help Desk staff worked with library staff to provide adequate physical distance between computer stations. They also set up Plexiglas shields with assistance from the Facilities staff so that student lab workers could provide touchless printing services for all students using library printing facilities. ITS remains committed to providing top-notch customer service to all ETSU members regardless of challenges.

CLASSROOM AND ONLINE

TRANSITION TO REMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING


ETSU was in a very fortunate position when the university made the decision to convert all classes to online or remote in March 2020. ITS had made decisions regarding web conferencing, lecture recording, and video content management that positioned us for online course development and delivery growth. ITS had made the transition to Zoom for online synchronous courses and was transitioning into Panopto as the lecture capture replacement. These decisions were made with no idea what March would bring, but both decisions would prove to be invaluable as every function at the university moved to remote delivery. Additionally, ITS created a specific site for HIPAA usage and with special approval from the HIPAA Compliance Officer, the Zoom product can serve all ETSU units and functions safely and securely.

Both products are more user-friendly and provide features and functionality that did not previously exist but are conducive to teaching online/remote courses. We saved money on both contracts and have integrated Zoom with Panopto saving further money on video storage. The unified video platform allows for ETSU course videos, lecture capture, and Zoom recordings to be stored in one convenient location. Both products integrate with D2L and have enhanced accessibility features, making remote learning more attractive than ever for all students.

EQUIPMENT CHECKOUT

Working with the Dean of Students and Sherrod Library, ITS purchased laptops and wireless hotspots for students to check out for the semester through the Sherrod Library. Students from all colleges have checked out the equipment for use either from their home or on campus. The Dean of Students reviews all requests and makes recommendations to ITS regarding equipment and appropriateness of the request. Students are given administrative access to the laptop so that they can install any items they need to be successful in their courses. The laptops are returned at the end of the semester so that ITS can clean the hard drives and physical surfaces and prepare them for the next student. The wireless hotspots have unlimited data so that students can participate in all the activities they need without worrying about overage costs for their personal devices or home wireless units that may be already overloaded with family use.

With all classes staying remote or online over the summer, ITS had unlimited access to the classrooms and was able to accomplish several projects that would allow for much more flexible teaching options in Fall 2020. ITS installed 50 cameras in multimedia classrooms across campus to help support faculty teaching remotely from classrooms. Instructional Television (ITV) rooms at the Kingsport Center – Allandale and Sam Wilson Hall - were upgraded with newer technology to support teaching synchronously through the Zoom software platform. This change makes it possible for instructors to teach synchronous online classes without assistance from ITS. New multimedia classrooms were installed in Hutcheson Hall and the Bud Frank Theatre, and a new iMac lab in Mathes 105 was configured to allow instructors to listen to student material without physically visiting each station. All these updates were instrumental in ensuring a successful Fall 2020 semester for students and faculty, but they also support ITS's long-term goal of providing updated and flexible technology options in teaching spaces.

- **Improved ticket and change request submissions through ETSU TOPdesk.**
 - **Increased outdoor wireless to access points across campus with more increases planned for the next year.**
 - **Upgraded switch infrastructure in academic and administrative buildings for increased wireless coverage.**
 - **More than double bandwidth to numerous remote sites.**
 - **Participated in renovation and infrastructure builds of Model Mill, Martin Center for the Arts, and Millennium Center.**
 - **Numerous phone system upgrades to allow faculty and staff an ETSU Cloud Phone for remote computers and handheld devices.**
 - **Provided data jacks, wireless network, phone service and connectivity for the ETSU Health Covid-19 testing site.**
- 

ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

When ETSU made the decision to move to fully remote instruction in March 2020, Academic Technology Services was quickly pushed to the frontline and tasked with assisting faculty to transition their entire teaching plan for the semester. The need for immediate support was massive, but ITS had the infrastructure for remote learning already in place. ATS routinely provides on-demand assistance, recommendations, and demonstrations to faculty and staff. Furthermore, ATS provides workshops and asynchronous guides on various technologies and techniques to assist faculty and staff in the use of technology.

ATS was well-positioned to assist with accelerated remote learning with experienced service professionals, a library of recorded seminars, and detailed guides. In March of 2020, ATS transitioned workshops and support entirely online and increased the number of synchronous workshops to help instructors who were new to the remote technology available to them, primarily D2L, Zoom, Panopto, and the best instructional design practices for these tools.

Throughout 2020, ATS provided personal phone numbers to be completely accessible to all faculty and staff. Every workshop was recorded, and ATS released all resources publicly to assist the largest number of people. These public resources are freely available to anyone globally, providing insights to other institutions, helping to fulfill ETSU's regional stewardship values. One ATS resource that has been used heavily is the accelerated guide to online course development. Created by ATS team members specifically for instructors required to move an on-ground course to remote delivery quickly, this free, self-contained mini-course has been accessed almost 600 times since May 2020.

ATS has also collaborated with other administrative units on projects such as the summer virtual graduation video, the Center for Teaching Excellence Best Practices in Remote Instruction documents, the accessible syllabus templates for remote learning, and the official COVID-19 dashboards for ETSU and University School.

The demand for ATS support will only grow into 2021 as the demand for online course development increases. ATS will be ready to help the university transition to the next phase!

1,793

COMPLETED INCIDENTS

71

SEPARATE WORKSHOPS

285

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED

55

CHANGE REQUESTS

17,800

ATS RESOURCES ACCESSED

Upon leaving Campus due to Covid-19, ITS-RCS provisioned and optimized virtual delivery of computer lab software to over 1,300 unique ETSU students via Amazon Web Services AppStream. We worked with the Department of Biostatistics & Epidemiology to develop student-ready instructions. We frequently worked directly with students and the ITS Help Desk to assist students accessing AppStream with a wide variety of mobile, table, and laptop devices.

All ITS-RCS members successfully completed the AWS Academy Cloud Foundations Educator course; one has passed the AWS Cloud Practitioner Certification exam and the others are scheduled to take the exam. AWS provides pay-as-you-go cloud compute services with the potential to dramatically reduce capital expenditures at any university.

Upon successful completion of the AWS Academy Cloud Foundations Educator course, we developed and implemented an online Cloud Computing course in partnership with the AWS Academy and the ETSU Department of Computing (CSCI-4657/5657-901 Cloud Computing). The first online offering (Spring 2021) through ETSU D2L is underway.

David Currie and Janet Keener completed the AWS Cloud Practitioner exam and have been certified as AWS Cloud Practitioner instructors by the AWS Academy, the internal training division of AWS. Certification by the AWS Academy permits us to use AWS Academy materials to train ETSU students.

We worked with various ITS groups (Security, HelpDesk, CTS, and Networking) and academic departments to reduce the number of vulnerable computers on the network by 25% over last year. We continued to monitor critical but vulnerable WIN7 machines, implement extended security licenses and updates, and worked with departments toward elimination of these vulnerable machines.

We have all become members of the XSEDE Campus Champions (CC) network and regularly participate in CC chats and meetings. We received our first grant of 50,000 computational service units from XSEDE on Bridges-2, a

new HPC cluster in the Pittsburg Supercomputing Center jointly operated by Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. We have initiated a pilot project for benchmarking on XSEDE resources with Frank Hagelberg, Chair of the Computation and Research in Data Science group and leader of the interdisciplinary workgroup for development of a Masters in Data Science.

We maintain three REDCap Survey and Database servers (HIPAA, Standard, and Development) and support researchers including high school students at University School, undergraduate and graduate ETSU students, and ETSU faculty and staff. With REDCap account holders in all colleges at ETSU, an increasing number of presentations and publications cite the REDCap resources at ETSU. Additionally, the REDCap servers are used for a number of departmental exit exams, electronic applications for both TN Governor's Schools operated by ETSU, and at least one contracted TN State data collection project.

The ITS-RCS Summer Research Webinar Series featured 10 presentations hosted by support staff from a number of research-related offices and covered a broad range of digital research topics. The webinars were attended by over 300 ETSU faculty, staff, and students. Both graduate and undergraduate students attended nearly all sessions.

We provided the statistical analysis for "Thumb Metacarpophalangeal Joint Arthrodesis with Concomitant Ligament Reconstruction Tendon Interposition Outcomes," by Jonathan Byrant, David Currie, and Jeffrey Marchessault in The Journal of Hand Surgery. Submitted 2021. David Currie presented "Building Diversity in the 21st Century. Workforce and Virtual Cloud Computing," at the 2020 Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics Annual Meeting (AN20).

ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

- We continue to move the university forward in function and architecture of the enterprise resource planning and student information systems.
- Several functional units have been deployed in the latest version of the Enterprise Resource Planning and many of the ancillary systems have been upgraded to improve functionality and security.
- The software providing the underlying functionality for the enterprise resource planning software also underwent a major upgrade to keep the system running securely and at peak performance.
- Upgrades continue across all functional areas. Some examples include course programs of study and Jobx/timesheetx systems which were implemented in financial aid.
- Our Degree Works system, which allows students to map out their academic journey from their first class to graduation day, underwent a major version upgrade and a move to the cloud environment.
- ESS also continues to write, implement and support enterprise level software used across the university.
 - University Customer Relationship Manager
 - Tenure and Promotion System
 - University Timekeeping
 - Contracts System with Complete Workflow

IN 2019 & 2020 ESS HAS COMPLETED

537

Programming Requests

656

ERP Access Requests

13

Projects within TDX

INFORMATION SECURITY

- **Migrated ETSU and MEAC networks to Cisco's New Generation Advanced Security Firewalls**
- **Deployed MyDevices portal for allowing student devices an easier way to connect to Wi-Fi in dormitories**
- **Deployed Advanced Endpoints Security (Cisco-AMP) for campus computer systems**
- **Started a campus wide Patch and Vulnerability management program through scanning and remediation**
- **Streamlined the vendor procurement and security management questionnaire process**



SECURITY CAMERAS

- **Established a new roadmap for security improvements for ETSU**
- **Completed migration from legacy Cisco identity management solution to new Identity Services Engine (ISE) which allows for many more use cases of secure logins to remote access and device administration**
- **A concerted effort has been put forth to respond to the concerns of students by increasing the safety on campus with the update and addition of 350+ surveillance cameras. This has resulted in an overall increase in safety awareness and deterrent to unlawful behavior.**



ESPORTS



Last year was an exciting time for ETSU Esports. During a time where many places were downsizing or delaying growth, esports at ETSU saw explosive growth that led to founding a team that received national recognition right out of the gate. A state-of-the-art training facility was built, a viewing arena was added to the Culp Center, and uniforms were designed and ordered.

The early success of ETSU Esports meant that expansion was on the horizon and a third sport, Rocket League, was announced. With the addition of 6 new varsity athletes for 2021/2022, it has already attracted top players from across the country to the University.

Looking forward, the recruiting class of 2021/2022 will help grow the team's skill level with young, fresh talent to build upon the culture of excellency established by the inaugural team and provide an avenue for continued growth that will last for years to come.

IN THE SOUTH RANKINGS

Top 15

LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

Top 16



OVERWATCH

Top 16

HEARTHSTONE
HEROES OF WARCRAFT

CERTIFICATIONS

GABRIEL THOMAS

Registered Telecommunications Project Manager



JANET KEENER

AWS Cloud Practitioner Instructor



DAVID CURRIE

AWS Cloud Practitioner Instructor



WOODROW J. WOLFF JR.

BICSI Installer 1



STAFF

Adkins, Patrick

Technology Development
Coordinator
Ext: 98244
Email: adkinsp@etsu.edu

Archer, Robert

DevOps Engineer
Ext: 93609
Email: archerr@etsu.edu

Barnwell, Kim

Manager of Marketing for
Online Programs
Ext: 98602
Email: barnwellk@etsu.edu

Bauer, Thomas

Information Security
Engineer
Ext: 93605
Email: bauert@etsu.edu

Belcher, Steven

Systems Analyst 2
Ext: 93689
Email: belchers@etsu.edu

Bowman, Russell

Web Developer
Ext: 98538
Email: bomanro@etsu.edu

Brown, Leisa

Executive Aide
Ext: 94137
Email: brownlr1@etsu.edu

Brown, Shannon

Electronic Technician
Ext: 98444
Email: browsd01@etsu.edu

Broyles, Rhonda

Office Manager
Ext: 96809
Email: broylesrk@etsu.edu

Buck, Trey

Information Security
Engineer
Ext: 93667
Email: buckf@etsu.edu

Call, Kevin

Web Developer
Ext: 98613
Email: callkw@etsu.edu

Carey, Nicole

Technical Clerk
Ext: 93255
Email: careyn@etsu.edu

Church, Steve

Help Desk Technician
Ext: 94648
Email: churchs@etsu.edu

Counts, Sam

Online Student Liason
Ext: 94919
Email: counstsm@etsu.edu

Currie, David

Director of Research
Computing
Ext: 96457
Email: currie@etsu.edu

Davenport, Keith

Business Manager
Ext: 96858
Email: davenportkc@etsu.edu

Echols, Ben

Senior Software
Engineer
Ext: 9660
Email: echolsb@etsu.edu

Engle, Brad

Analyst 3
Ext: 94246
Email: brad@etsu.edu

Fawver, Dustin

Help Desk Technician
Ext: 94648
Email: fawver@etsu.edu

Ferguson, Tim

Manager, Special Projects
Ext: 94132
Email: fergusot@etsu.edu

Fields, Stephen

Web Developer
Ext: 96610
Email: fieldss@etsu.edu

Frakes, Lee

Systems Administrator
Ext: 93607
Email: frakesl@etsu.edu

Greever, Adam

Help Desk Manager
Ext: 93614
Email: greever@etsu.edu

Hodges, Jennifer

Executive Aide
Ext: 98611
Email: hodgesjn@etsu.edu

Jennings, Elizabeth

Customer Support
Specialist
Ext: 98615
Email: jenningsel@etsu.edu

Johnson, Anthony

Online Student Specialist
Ext: 98644
Email: johnsonad2@etsu.edu

Jones, Jason

Media Specialist
Ext: 95873
Email: jonejc01@etsu.edu

Jones, Myra

Associate CIO/ Chief of
Staff
Ext: 98614
Email: mjones@etsu.edu

Katko, Jacob

Customer Support
Specialist
Ext: 93613
Email: katkoj@etsu.edu

Keener, Janet

Research Computing
Consultant
Ext: 94142
Email: janet@etsu.edu

Kiech, Anthony

Director- Academic
Technology Services
Ext: 98565
Email: kiech@etsu.edu

King, Karen

CIO and Senior Vice
Provost
Ext: 97068
Email: kingk@etsu.edu

Lambert, Alderson

Network Administrator
Ext: 95845
Email: lambertaf@etsu.edu

Lane, John

Multimedia Technician
Ext: 94105
Email: lanejp@etsu.edu

Laws, Michaele

Manager of Web
Technology Services
Ext: 98245
Email: lawsm@etsu.edu

Lazarov, Borce

Customer Support
Specialist
Ext: 94104
Email: borce@etsu.edu

Lewis, Chris

Senior Software Engineer
Ext: 93621
Email: lewiscb1@etsu.edu

Loveland, James

Network Technician
Ext: 94143
Email: loveland@etsu.edu

Madden, Phillip

Multimedia Technician
Ext: 94119
Email: maddenp@etsu.edu

Martinez, Sherry

Web Coordinator
Ext: 98249
Email: martines@etsu.edu

Massey, Candy

Project Management
Coordinator
Ext: 94101
Email: masseyc@etsu.edu

McCann, Teresa

Technical Clerk
Ext: 93254
Email: mccanntj@etsu.edu

McDaniel, Dawn

Tellecommunications Technician
Temporary
Ext: 93612
Email: mcdanied@etsu.edu

Miller, Joseph

Customer Support Specialist
Ext: 93616
Email: millerjd@etsu.edu

Montgomery, Mark

Technology Development
Coordinator
Ext: 94724
Email: montgomeryma@etsu.edu

Moreno, Eddie

Customer Support Specialist
Ext: 94814
Email: morenoe@etsu.edu

Nelson, Robert

Executive Director
Ext: 98365
Email: nelsonr@etsu.edu

Olson, Andy

Electronic Content Developer
Ext: 98247
Email: olsona@etsu.edu

Palmer, Robert

Network Support Specialist
Ext: 93611
Email: palmerrd@etsu.edu

Pleasant, Gary

Business & Systems Senior
Software Engineer
Ext: 96608
Email: pleasantg@etsu.edu

Schreiber, Rachel

Instructional Design Coordinator
Ext: 98606
Email: schreiberr@etsu.edu

Shell, Jeff

Esports Head Coach
Ext: 93776
Email: shellja@etsu.edu

Simpson, Erin

Digital Content Strategist
Email: simsone1@etsu.edu

Smith, Daniel

Senior Software Engineer
Ext: 94021
Email: smithdr2@etsu.edu

Stallard, Jathan

Enterprise Application Developer
Ext: 94022
Email: stallardc@etsu.edu

Standifer, Brandon

Technology Development
Coordinator
Ext: 93617
Email: standife@etsu.edu

Stiegler, Erik

Analyst 3
Ext: 94403
Email: erik@etsu.edu

Sturdivant, Reed

Analyst 3
Ext: 94138
Email: reed@etsu.edu

Thomas, Gabriel

Project Manager
Ext: 93706
Email: thomasgs@etsu.edu

Thompson, Kyle

Technology Development Coordinator
Ext: 96874
Email: thompsonka1@etsu.edu

Thompson, Vincent

Research Computing Consultant
Ext: 94492
Email: thompsonv@etsu.edu

Townsend, David

Senior Software Engineer
Ext: 94136
Email: townsenddg@etsu.edu

Ward, Richard

Network Engineer
Email: wardv@etsu.edu

Webb, Ray

Manager, Computer Technology
Services
Ext: 94145
Email: webbr@etsu.edu

Webb, Steve

Manager, Systems Support
Ext: 93606
Email: steve@etsu.edu

White, Timothy

Network Engineer
Ext: 93601
Email: whitet@etsu.edu

Whitlock, Joshua

DevOps Engineer
Ext: 94127
Email: whitlocj@etsu.edu

Wolff, Woody

Communications Support
Specialist
Ext: 97019
Email: wolffw@etsu.edu

WWW.ETSU.EDU/ITS



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