

**DATE:** July 25, 2013**SUBJECT:** East Tennessee State University, Master of Arts – Appalachian Studies**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Master of Arts in Appalachian Studies will formalize East Tennessee State University’s 30-year commitment to Appalachian Studies. The proposed program is an outgrowth of research and programming initiated in the Center of Excellence in Appalachian Studies and Services, which will be a strong partner for this academic program.

The proposed interdisciplinary program is designed to have an impact on all aspects of the Appalachian region and its communities including heritage, economics and public health. Students will have the option to pursue one of two proposed concentrations in Appalachian Studies: (1) Appalachian Culture and Heritage and (2) Appalachian Communities. The program will produce graduates who will be able to connect academic-based research with real world situations to shape the Appalachian regional policy and economics.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Fall 2013

**1.1.20A MISSION:** The proposed program supports ETSU’s mission of “providing strong, comprehensive educational, research, and service programs in the health sciences that advance the health and wellness of people throughout Tennessee and Southern Appalachia and of rural populations around the world.” ETSU, located in central Appalachia, is the natural site for this proposed program because its faculty are widely recognized as leaders in Appalachian-related research.

The Appalachian Studies MA program is in alignment with the goals outlined in the THEC 2010-15 Public Agenda for Higher Education, specifically the focus on strengthening Tennessee’s Knowledge Economy and increasing the number of graduate degrees awarded to the state’s citizens. Additionally, the program will raise the profile of Appalachian-related issues and help educate the region’s citizens with a view toward improving high school and college completion rates.

**1.1.20B CURRICULUM:** The MA degree program will require completion of 30-33 semester credit hours, including 9 hours of major field core, 9 hours in concentration, and 9-15 hours in electives. The program will have both a thesis and non-thesis option. Students will also have the option of an elective internship which will be aligned with their area of concentration.

The program will be delivered using the traditional delivery method with course content grounded in community and region-based research and interaction.

The faculty will assess the appropriateness of online-assisted delivery in the future.

**1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** Program admission requires a bachelor’s degree; acceptable undergraduate GPA (3.0 preferred); scores on the Graduate Record Examination; personal essay, and three letters of recommendations.

Students must meet progression and graduation standards as required by the ETSU Graduate School.

**Projected Program Enrollment and Productivity**

Students will have the option to attend the program on either a full-time or part-time basis. Enrollment projections were based on survey results and expressed interest from prospective students.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Headcount</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
<b>2013</b>	6	--
<b>2014</b>	8	2
<b>2015</b>	10	3
<b>2016</b>	11	4
<b>2017</b>	12	5

**1.1.20D FACULTY:** As an interdisciplinary program, the Appalachian Studies MA program will utilize existing faculty from three colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology, and Public Health) as well as the School of Continuing Studies and Academic Outreach. Four faculty members in the Department of Appalachian Studies will serve as the core faculty.

**1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES:** Existing library and information technology resources are adequate for program implementation. Students will also have access to the unique research collections of the Archives of Appalachia. The Archives collections include primary resources documenting all aspects of life in Appalachia, from the 1700s to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION:** This program will be offered through the Department of Appalachian Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. A departmental faculty member will receive course reassignment to serve as the graduate program coordinator for the proposed MA program.

**1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES:** Students will have access to a wide range of support resources, including advising support from the graduate program coordinator. The Appalachian Studies Department publishes *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine*, which will offer its MA students opportunities to collaborate with faculty in advancing scholarship through research and creative activity.

**1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** Current facilities and instructional equipment are adequate to support the program.

**1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND:** The proposed Appalachian Studies MA degree augments a broad variety of careers, not specific occupations. The program will help prepare individuals to perform their jobs more effectively and advance in their careers because they understand the social and cultural areas of the Appalachian region. The *2008-2018 Academic Program Supply and Occupational Demand Projections* identified high-need areas for fields to which the Appalachian Studies MA program adds value and support for effective employment. These career pathways include human resources, marketing, and tourism. For example, in travel and tourism, the proposed MA degree has great potential for job enhancement and revenue generation in cultural and heritage tourism.

The MA degree will build partnerships with communities, businesses, civic and community organizations. The proposed program is aligned with the Public Agenda's call for higher education "to collaborate with industry, government, and communities to build a future for Tennessee." For example, students in the *Documenting Community Traditions* course will work with farmers and food suppliers in Unicoi County to explore sustainable community approaches to agriculture and food.

**1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION:** The proposed program will be the only Appalachian Studies MA program in Tennessee. The only other Appalachian Studies graduate program is at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Effective fall 2012 semester, North Carolina has withdrawn its participation in the Academic Common Market, which allowed Tennesseans to attend ASU for that program at in-state tuition rates.

**1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS:** N/A

**1.120L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS:** ETSU aspires to be an institution that celebrates diversity by welcoming all students, faculty, administrators and staff as respected and valued participants in the University's educational mission.

**1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION:** The MA program will be evaluated on student success indicators such as their capstone (e.g. thesis or comprehensive examination) performance, exit interviews and alumni surveys. Additionally, the program will be evaluated externally every seven years. Assessment results from both external and internal evaluations will be used for program improvements.

**1.1.200 EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT:** External review of the proposed program was conducted during an institution site visit on February 14-15, 2013. Dr. Ronald Eller, Distinguished Professor of History at University of Kentucky served as the external reviewer. He stated that the University has a rich and long history of leadership and commitment to Appalachian Studies.

Dr. Eller stated the program strengths included "a strong undergraduate Appalachian Studies curriculum, an enthusiastic faculty, a supportive administration, and

excellent technical/research services. ETSU faculty are recognized throughout the region for their knowledge and scholarship and regularly play leadership roles in the annual Appalachian Studies Association conference. The Archives of Appalachia is one of the leading research collections in Appalachia and draws scholars from around the nation and world to examine its manuscript, music, video, and photographic collections.”

**1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT:** The proposed Master’s program will be funded through additional tuition revenues generated by the program and no institutional reallocation of funds is necessary for program implantation.

**1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING:** An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost; progress toward accreditation and other metrics set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.