ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 10, 2022

Roaden University Center, Room 282

8:00 AM

AGENDA

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes of December 2, 2021

III. Provost's Report

IV. SACSCOC Update

V. New Academic Programs Update

VI. Proposal for Academic Program Modification for B.S. in Design Studies

VII. Intercollegiate Athletics Update

VIII. Overview of Admissions and Marketing Initiatives

IX. Adjournment

ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

December 2, 2021
Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

AGENDA ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee met on December 2, 2021, in Roaden University Center Room 282. Chair Rhedona Rose called the meeting to order at 8:13 a.m.

Chair Rose asked Mr. Lee Wray, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

- Dan Allcott
- Rhedona Rose
- Hannah Willis
- Trudy Harper

In Trustee Wilmore's absence, Trustee Harper, as Chair of the Board, served as an ex officio voting member of the Academic & Student Affairs committee.

Other board members also in attendance were Tom Jones, Fred Lowery, Thomas Lynn, and Johnny Stites. A quorum was physically present.

Tennessee Tech faculty, staff and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Rose asked if there were any recommendations or changes to the minutes. There being none, Trustee Allcott moved to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2021, Academic & Student Affairs Committee meeting. Trustee Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

Dr. Cynthia Polk-Johnson, Vice President for Student Affairs, introduced Dr. Christina Mick, Interim Director of the Counseling Center, who provided an update on mental health services on campus.

Dr. Mick provided information about the number of students that received services at the counseling center and the number of counseling sessions per academic year from 2007-2020. She stated there was a steady increase until 2020, the year of the pandemic, in which a slight decrease in both these numbers occurred. She also shared information about the number of counseling appointments by academic school, by age, and by academic level.

Dr. Mick also stated that due to three recent staff retirements, the Counseling Center had only two full-time counselors and a couple clinical interns seeing clients; a ratio of 1 to 4,500 students. Per the International Association of Counseling Services Standards, the recommended ratio was 1 counselor per 1500 students. If the three recent retirees were replaced and an additional counselor was added, the ratio would be 1 to 1900, slightly under the recommended ratio.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – UPDATE ON RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Dr. Jennifer Taylor, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, provided an update on the Office of Research. She stated that through November, a total of 106 research projects were activated for a total of $17,400,000, $1,600,000 more than last year at this time. She stated that Tennessee Tech's goal is to reach $40,000,000 by 2025. Dr. Taylor stated she would provide more detailed information at an upcoming information session.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – FACULTY WORKLOAD POLICY 208

Provost Lori Bruce stated that Policy 208 was a new university policy required as part of Tennessee Tech's SACSCOC accreditation. The policy was drafted by a task force of faculty members from various colleges and chaired by Senior Associate Provost, Dr. Mark Stephens. It was vetted by campus stakeholders, the Provost's Office, Human Resources, and Academic Council, Administrative Council, University Assembly, and Faculty Senate.

Dr. Bruce stated the policy helped ensure equity in workload assignments. It was typical for a workload policy across the state and nation, and established a framework based on a 15-credit hour per semester nominal load. The policy reflects practices already in place that have been used for many years to establish faculty workload norms across the university.

There being no additional questions, Trustee Harper moved to send Policy 208 to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board's consent agenda. Trustee Allcott seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ONLINE EDUCATION

Provost Bruce explained there were two primary motivators why Tennessee Tech had been working on the expansion of online education: first and foremost, to grow enrollment at the university, and second, to diversify that enrollment. Student enrollment declined over the last 10 years and that trend must be disrupted. While trying to disrupt that trend, we would also be faced with fewer high school graduates, due to a significant decline in birth rate beginning in 2007. For these reasons, we need to attract, recruit, and retain nontraditional students. Online education was a way to address these challenges anticipated in the next few years. Dr. Bedelia Russell, Interim Associate Provost for Online Education and Faculty Excellence, led the development of the strategic plan to include program gap analysis and student demographic data analysis.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY 223

Provost Bruce stated that revisions to this policy were made to align with Tennessee Tech's current institutional practices and organizational structure coming out of COVID remote learning and, more importantly, to align Tennessee Tech with the best practices in online education. The revisions were also necessary for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission (SACSCOC) recertification and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) affiliation.

There being no additional questions, Trustee Allcott moved to send Policy 223 to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board's consent agenda. Trustee Harper seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – B.S. IN ANIMAL SCIENCE

Provost Bruce explained this program modification was being presented as it had been indicated that animal science and pre-vet programs in the School of Agriculture would be more advantageous if the B.S. degree was in Animal Science, as opposed to a B.S. in Agriculture. The School of Agriculture currently provides one Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with 11 concentrations. This proposal was to pull two of those concentrations – animal science and pre-veterinary science – from that umbrella degree program and to create a standalone degree program in agriculture. The change was expected to improve recruiting efforts and enhance graduate career opportunities. The next step would be to seek approval from THEC.

Trustee Allcott moved to send this academic program modification for a B.S. in Animal Science to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board's regular agenda. Trustee Harper seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – EXPEDITED LETTER OF NOTIFICATION FOR THE B.S. IN INTERDISCIPLINARY COMPUTING AND INNOVATION

Provost Bruce stated that she was excited to share information about the new B.S. program in Interdisciplinary Computing and Innovation. She also stated that in recent years THEC developed an expedited process to support universities in new academic areas of high demand. She stated this program was eligible for the expedited process and she wanted to share the information with the Board as an informational item.

The program was designed to address the growing need to create a workforce that can apply computing solutions across multiple disciplines. Students will study three core areas: computing, innovation and entrepreneurship, and then choose a cognate area, an area of expertise such as biology, animal science, or nursing. This would be a degree program for students who want careers where they could apply state of the art computing solutions to a field of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – QUALITY ASSURANCE FUNDING

Provost Bruce stated that during a May informational session, she provided an in-depth presentation about how success in Academic Affairs was defined and measured, how hundreds of metrics are tracked and rolled up into four primary metrics: degrees awarded, externally funded R&D expenditures, quality assurance, and gain. All of these metrics collapse into the quality assurance score. All data is submitted to THEC and we are provided a score. Tennessee Tech's latest score was 95 out of 100, which was considered to be a very high score. This score would result in $2,500,000 funding to the university.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Approved,

_____

Lee Wray, Secretary

Agenda Item Summary

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: Provost's Report

☐ **Review** ☐ **Action** ☒ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: Provost Bruce

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Provost will provide updates on recent activities in Academic Affairs, including highlights of faculty and staff achievements.

Agenda Item Summary

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: SACSCOC Update

☐ **Review** ☐ **Action** ☒ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: Provost Bruce

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Provost Bruce will provide an update on Tennessee Tech's SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report.

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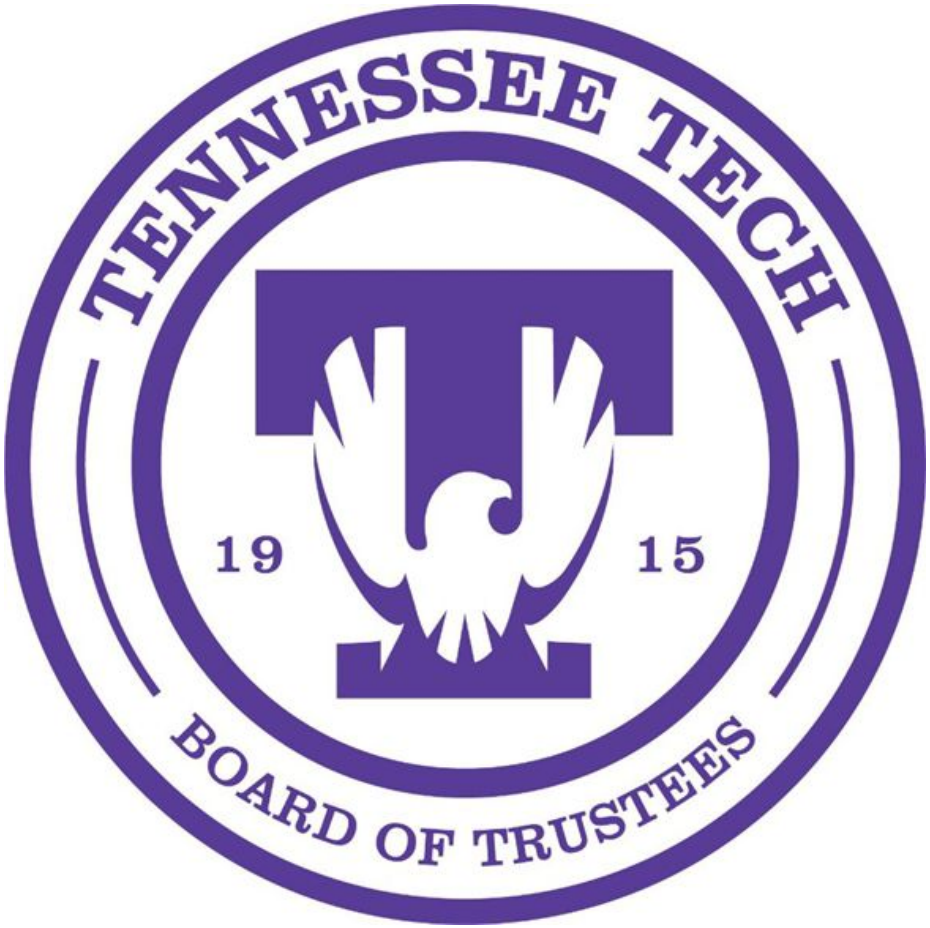

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Tennessee TECH

SACSCOC Updates
5th Year Interim Report

A Presentation to the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees

March 10, 2022

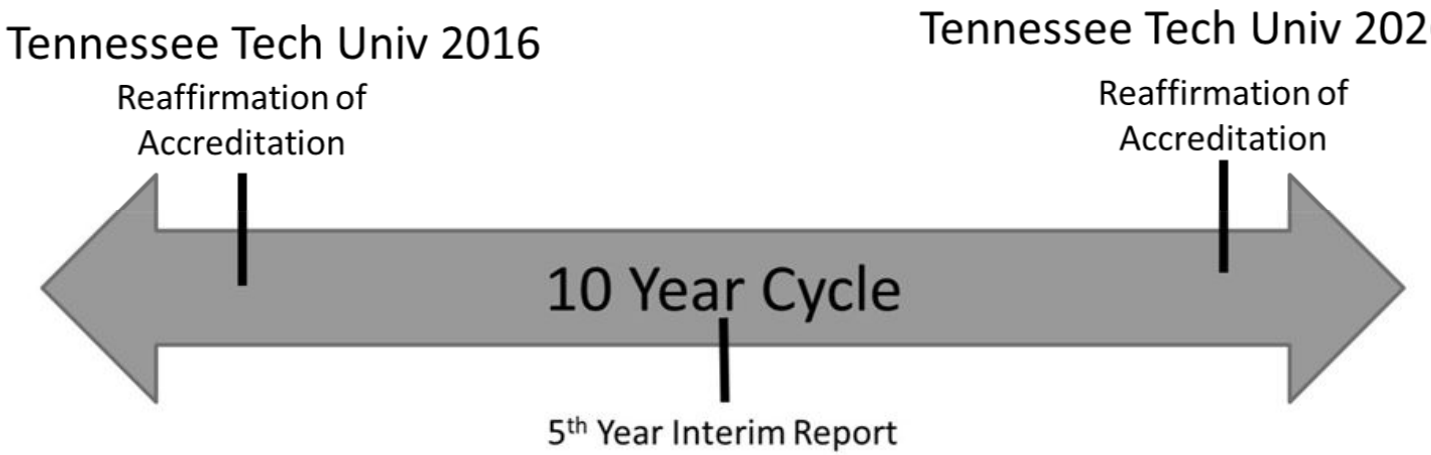
2

SACSCOC – Accreditation Principles & Standards

- Institutional Mission
- Governance and Administration
- Educational Programs
- Faculty
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Library & Learning Support
- Student Affairs and Services
- Resources, including Fiscal and Physical
- Policy Compliance, including Federal Standards

Two key written documents
- Compliance Certification (~100 principles in 14 categories)
- Quality Enhancement Plan

Three reviews
- Off-site review
- On-site review
- SACSCOC Board of Trustee review



Two key written documents
- Compliance Certification (subset of 22 principles)
- Quality Enhancement Plan Impact Report

One review
- Off-site review

Tennessee TECH

March 2022

Fifth-Year Interim Report
SACSCOC

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R - 5.4

Qualified Administrative/Academic Officers

The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

All Tennessee Tech administrative and academic officers possess the experience, competence, and capabilities for the positions they hold. Furthermore, there are systems in place to evaluate all Tennessee Tech administrative and academic officers on a regular basis. They are qualified to lead the institution.

Administrative and Academic Officers' Employment and Qualifications

The University Provost and five vice presidents manage Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Enrollment Management and Career Placement, Research, and University Advancement and report directly to the President. Additionally, the Chief Communication Officer, Chief of Staff, Chief Government Affairs Officer, Athletics Director, University Counsel, and Director of Internal Audit also report directly to the President. Each of them has broad professional experience and extensive experience in higher education. The Tennessee Tech Organizational Chart shows the University administration and reporting structure [1].

Employment of a qualified institutional executive officer (President) is the duty of the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees [2]. Policy 003 sets the general parameters that delineate administrative and academic officers whose appointments require the approval of the President and/or Tennessee Tech's Board of Trustees [3]. All academic and administrative officers at Tennessee Tech meet the qualifications specific to their responsibilities (see Table 5.4) [9]. Procedures for determining required qualifications for faculty and administrative positions, except those for the President, are outlined in the Tennessee Tech Human Resources Policies and Procedures [4] [5]. The University's procedures for the search, employment, and retention of qualified administrative and academic officers are defined by the employment, promotion, and evaluation policies of the University [6] [7].

Position descriptions that specify required qualifications for all administrative and academic officers are on file with the Tennessee Tech Human Resources office. The curriculum vitae of each administrator, which demonstrates appropriate credentials for his or her respective job description, can also be found at the Tennessee Tech Human Resources office. A list of current senior administrative officers, including information pertaining to their responsibilities, can be found at the Tennessee Tech President's Cabinet website [8].

Table 5.4 includes the title, primary responsibilities, and educational and professional qualifications of the Tennessee Tech administrative and academic officers [9]. The curriculum vitae of each officer and job description (i.e., Job Analysis Questionnaire [JAQ]) for each position are also attached in the table [9]. The review of Table 5.4 clearly indicates that Tennessee Tech has talented and experienced chief administrative and academic officers who are well qualified to lead the University and its various colleges.

Regular Evaluation of Administrators

Tennessee Tech annually evaluates all administrative and academic officers to ensure that they continue to provide the leadership necessary to administer their units and colleges.

The President conducts the annual performance evaluations of his Cabinet members. Each Cabinet member completes a self-evaluation and submits an annual accomplishment report to the President. To conduct the evaluation and complete the performance evaluation form, the President meets with each Cabinet member in a one-on-one meeting to discuss his or her performance in the current year and the goals for the next year. The evaluation forms are then forwarded to Human Resources for that respective administrator's personnel file. Redacted evaluations for all senior administrators by the President can be found in document [10].

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs evaluates the Senior Associate Provost, Associate Provost, all academic deans, and the other administrators who directly report to the Provost following the same performance evaluation process. One-on-one meetings are held to discuss the performance evaluation, and the Provost submits the performance evaluation forms to the President for his review and then to Human Resources for the respective administrator's personnel file. Redacted evaluations for all senior administrators by the Provost can be found in document [10].

Other administrative and academic officers are evaluated by their vice presidents using the same process. Redacted evaluations for those administrative and academic officers can be found in document [10].

As part of the annual process, all full-time faculty members are given an opportunity to evaluate senior administrators, the Dean and Associate Dean(s) of their college, their department Chairperson, and all non-academic administrative units and offices. The process is described in the Policy 209 Faculty Evaluation of Administrators [11], Policy 210 Appointment and Evaluation of Academic Deans [7], and Policy 211 Evaluation and Reappointment of Chairpersons [12]. If the Chairperson is being considered for reappointment, then that aspect is included in the Chairperson evaluation form. The evaluation is conducted via an electronic survey and administered by an external vendor, ensuring the anonymity of the respondents. Faculty members receive an email from the President when the evaluation period opens [13]. Then the external vendor sends a login email. The three-week evaluation period is scheduled so as not to overlap with the annual evaluation of faculty. Results are compiled by the vendor and are not distributed until after the annual faculty evaluations have been completed. The results are sent directly from the vendor to the administrator being evaluated, his or her immediate supervisor, the Provost, and the President. A copy of the evaluation instruments for the administrator evaluation is attached [14]. A sample of redacted faculty evaluations of senior administrators can be found in document [15].

Other administrators at Tech are evaluated by their supervisors following the same performance evaluation process. The 2020-21 process began on March 1, 2021 [16].

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees evaluates the President's job performance on an annual basis, following procedures approved by the Board [2]. The most recent review was completed in Fall 2021 [17].

Table 1 provides a summary of performance evaluations for University administrative positions.

Table 1. Evaluations of Administrators.

Position	Frequency of Evaluation	Evaluator(s)
President	Annual	Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees and Tech Faculty
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Annual	President and Tech Faculty
Vice Presidents and President's Cabinet Members	Annual	President and Tech Faculty
Deans	Annual	Provost and the Faculty in Dean's Respective College
Other Administrators	Annual	Supervisor

Conclusion

Tennessee Tech's policies and procedures are designed to employ and regularly evaluate administrative and academic officers with experience and qualifications to lead Tennessee Technological University. Based on their qualifications displayed in Table 5.4, Tennessee Tech is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 5.4, Qualified administrative/academic officers.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Organization Chart
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 002 - Selection Evaluation Retention of the President
[03] Tennessee Tech Policy 003 - Board Reservation and Delegation of Authority
[04] Tennessee Tech Policy 662 - Employee Credentials Documentation
[05] Human Resources List of Policies
[06] Tennessee Tech Policy 601 - General Employment
[07] Tennessee Tech Policy 210 - Appointment Evaluation of Academic Deans
[08] Office of the President - Presidents Cabinet
[09] Table 5.4 - Qualified Administrative Academic Officers Final
[10] Redacted Evaluations Final
[11] Tennessee Tech Policy 209 - Faculty Evaluation of University Administrators
[12] Tennessee Tech Policy 211 - Appointment and Evaluation of Chairpersons
[13] Administrator Evaluation President Email Text 2021
[14] Administrator Evaluation Form
[15] Redacted Summary of Faculty Evaluations of Administrators - Samples
[16] 2020-2021 Annual Performance Evaluation
[17] Board of Trustees Fall 2021 Agenda Item of Presidents Evaluation

CR - 6.1

Full-Time Faculty

The institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Tech employs an appropriate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution as the state's technological university. Tennessee Tech determines that the number of faculty is adequate through a variety of processes including the following:

- Strategic planning and budgeting to accomplish the Tennessee Tech mission
- Documentation of and adherence to policies for faculty roles, responsibilities, workload, program oversight, and hiring
- Evaluation of metrics used to assess the adequacy of the number of full-time faculty, including national benchmarking through the Delaware Study
- Participation in regular external reviews of faculty number adequacy, including discipline-specific accreditation activities, academic audits, or other external peer reviews
- Ongoing internal assessment led by the Office of the Provost but occurring at all levels of the University community

These processes ensure that Tennessee Tech effectively addresses Core Requirement 6.1.

Faculty Definitions

Tennessee Tech Policy 203 on Faculty Roles and Responsibilities [1] "delineates and defines the primary roles and responsibilities of Tennessee Tech faculty." For the purposes of Policy 203, the term "faculty" does not include "instructional personnel defined as adjuncts, part-time instructors, one-year appointments, postdoctoral fellows, visiting lecturers, and graduate students" [1].

Faculty and Full-Time Faculty. Policy 203 defines "faculty" as follows:

Full-time benefitted personnel whose principal activities include teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and/or service/outreach and who hold academic rank as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, tenured or tenure-track instructor or as lecturer, senior lecturer, or master lecturer.

If not otherwise included within the above definition of "faculty," the term "faculty" may include academic deans, academic vice presidents, and the president, provided they hold academic rank. In addition, the term "faculty" may include persons previously designated as members of the faculty who are assigned to other positions at Tennessee Tech [1].

Policy 203 also defines "full-time faculty":

Benefitted Tennessee Tech faculty employed on a continuing basis, expected to exceed one academic year, and who have a regular work week of 37.5 hours or who carry a full teaching load or its equivalent (to include modified fiscal year [nine-month] employees) [1].

Although not specified in this policy, the term "part-time faculty" refers to temporary, non-tenurable faculty, who are designated as adjunct faculty.

Types of Faculty Appointments. Tennessee Tech Policy 204 [2] defines the types of faculty appointments at the University. These include tenure-track, tenure, lecturer, clinical-track, research-track, temporary instructor, and adjunct appointments, as summarized below:

- Tenure-track appointments are appointments for full-time faculty with academic rank who are employed in a probationary period prior to consideration for tenure. These appointments may be for the academic or fiscal year.

- Tenure appointments are appointments of full-time faculty who have been awarded tenure by the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees within the provisions of Tennessee Tech Policy 205 on Faculty Tenure [3]. To protect academic freedom, tenure appointments include the assurance of continued employment for the academic year for an indefinite period, subject to the requirements in Policy 205.

- Lecturer appointments are full-time, non-tenurable faculty appointments at the rank of lecturer, senior lecturer, or master lecturer, normally set for a fixed three-year period, but may be for a period ranging from two to six years depending on the specific needs of the position. These appointments are automatically renewed, given satisfactory performance reviews.

- Clinical-track appointments are full-time faculty appointments that are non-tenurable, renewable appointments for fixed terms; permit promotion in rank; and are dependent on funding availability and faculty performance. Faculty members in this classification participate in the academic programs by providing professional services, guiding students in their area of expertise, and directing students' experiences in clinical/professional settings.

- Research-track appointments are full-time faculty appointments; are non-tenurable, renewable appointments for fixed terms; permit promotion in rank; and are dependent on funding availability and faculty performance. Faculty in this classification participate in the academic programs by conducting independent research projects and by mentoring students involved in the research process.

- Temporary instructor appointments are full-time faculty appointments for a specific purpose and for a time appropriate for that purpose, normally not exceeding one full academic year. The provost may approve a second academic year. Temporary instructor appointments may be approved where the permanent and continued need for the position has not been established.

- Adjunct faculty appointments are temporary, non-tenurable, part-time appointments based on demand each semester for instructional needs only. Adjuncts do not hold

academic rank; are employed for a single term at a time; and may not teach more than a total of 10 credit hours per semester in all departments. Adjunct faculty are not eligible for employment benefits such as insurance benefits, annual and sick leave, holiday pay, retirement credit, or longevity credit.

Faculty Ranks. Tennessee Tech Policy 206 on Faculty Promotions [4] provides the requirements for progressing through the ranks for the various types of faculty appointments. As seen in Policy 206, the University has some tenure-track and tenured instructor positions that were created under Tennessee Board of Regents policies prior to the University becoming a Locally Governed Institution (LGI). Other than these currently employed instructors in tenure-track and tenured positions, the term instructor now refers to temporary instructors as explained above.

Faculty Responsibilities

Principal Activities. The roles and responsibilities of full-time faculty members are described in Tennessee Tech Policy 203 [1]. The responsibilities generally include the three principal functions of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and/or service/outreach, as follows:

- *Teaching - any strategy in which information is imparted so that others may learn, and may include, but is not limited to, a variety of techniques including instruction, mentoring, development of course materials or courseware, and development of innovative approaches to instruction.*

- *Research/scholarship/creative activity – the studious inquiry, examination, or discovery that contributes to disciplinary and interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge and includes garnering internal and external resources to foster and develop such activities. Research/scholarship/*
creative activity may include, but is not limited to, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge, field-based scholarship, and creative activities.

- *Service/outreach – involvement within the community as defined by Tennessee Tech's role and mission, service to Tennessee Tech, and service within the bounds of the faculty member's discipline and budgeted assignment.*

In addition, some faculty members may have duties in advising and/or administration. The specific responsibilities expected of and assigned to a faculty member vary by department based on considerations such as number of degree programs, number of students in the programs, research projects, committee assignments, professional service commitments, and faculty expertise. For example, a faculty member in the Department of Biology may have more research and fewer teaching expectations as part of his or her system of differential teaching loads. Another example is the allocation of a significant percentage of effort in the service category to a faculty member for leading the preparation of an accreditation or academic program review self-study report.

Faculty responsibilities and assignments are determined collaboratively. Prior to the end of the spring semester, each faculty member and the administrator to whom he or she immediately reports determine in a cooperative fashion the activities and percentage of effort in each area of responsibility for the coming academic year. These duties are reported on the Agreement on

Responsibilities (AOR) form [5] and approved by the dean of the college or school. During the academic year, the AOR is to be updated when changes in a faculty member's responsibilities result in a different allocation of effort than originally planned.

Faculty Roles in Academic and Governance Matters. Policy 203 further specifies the faculty role in academic and governance matters.

1. *Academic matters – The creation, change, and approval of curricula and new programs begin with the faculty. Faculty participate in the creation and development of the curriculum through membership on appropriate department or school curriculum committees, college-level curriculum committees, and the University Curriculum Committee and/or the Graduate Studies Executive Committee in the case of changes in the curriculum that involve graduate credit. Each department, interdisciplinary major, or school assigns faculty to oversee curriculum development and review.*

2. *Governance matters – Tennessee Tech is committed to shared governance. The University recognizes that faculty participation in institutional governance is fundamental to the development and maintenance of effective academic policies. Through membership on University standing and special purpose committees, faculty members provide advice and expertise to administrators. The Faculty Senate conveys faculty concerns to administrators and advises administrative officers on University policy* [1].

Faculty Functions Being Carried Out in Nontraditional Ways. The types of faculty appointments mentioned previously affect the responsibilities of tenure-track and tenured faculty in various ways.

- The addition of lecturer appointments in Policy 203 has been used to provide more time for research/scholarship/creative activity by tenure-track and tenured faculty. Faculty in lecturer appointments have higher teaching loads than tenure-track and tenured faculty. Lecturers with no other program expectations such as serving as academic advisors; on department, college, or university committees; as graduate committee members; or as student organization advisors can teach up to 15 credit hours of undergraduate courses or 12 credit hours of graduate courses per semester. A typical semester load for a lecturer would be 12 credit hours of undergraduate courses or nine credit hours of graduate courses.

- Temporary instructors are used when the need for permanent faculty has not yet been established.

- Adjunct faculty appointments are often used for strategic instructional support when the adjunct brings significant expertise to the program.

- Librarians at Tennessee Tech hold faculty status. They contribute to the mission of the University by providing collections through careful selection and negotiated acquisition of materials. They provide services such as expert research assistance and instruction in the evaluation and use of information. In addition, they create and maintain physical environments that lead to intellectual discovery.

In addition to these faculty appointments, 34 professional advisors provide academic advising services to students through the various Student Success Centers that exist across campus; eight

of these advisors were hired in 2019-2020. Some of the advisors are part of a new advising initiative called Launchpad. The Launchpad Student Success Center is the home for freshman and undeclared student advising, transition assistance, and academic and personal support at Tennessee Tech. Professional, non-faculty advisors are dedicated to helping new students adjust to college life, navigate their first year on campus, and then transition into their academic program of study. Full-time faculty members continue to provide career advising and mentoring for students in their academic programs.

In short, these faculty and advisor appointments provide flexibility in staffing and help to improve the opportunities for tenure-track and tenured faculty members to meet the expectations for instruction, scholarly/creative activity, and service appropriate to their academic programs.

Overview of Faculty Size

Full-Time Faculty. Table 1 provides a summary of faculty at Tennessee Tech for Fall 2020. Tennessee Tech employed 559 faculty members during the semester. Of these, 446 were full-time, which represents 79.79% of the total faculty headcount.

Table 1. Summary of Fall 2020 Faculty at Tennessee Tech.

Fall 2020 Faculty	Full-Time	Part-Time	Total Faculty	% of Total Headcount	FTE Faculty	% of Total FTE Faculty
Tenured	273		273	48.84%	273	56.40%
Tenure-track	83		83	14.85%	83	17.15%
Non-tenure-track	90		90	16.10%	90	18.60%
Adjunct		113	113	20.21%	38	7.85%
Total	446	113	559	100.00%	484	100.00%

Source: *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Human Resources, Fall 2016-2020*. Washington, D.C., Table 3 of "Full-Time Equivalent Faculty by Tenure Status," Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Tennessee Tech, July 2021. [6]

Table 2 shows the percentage of full-time faculty over the past five years. The percentage of full-time faculty has been generally rising, corresponding with a stable number of full-time faculty and declining numbers of part-time faculty.

Table 2. Percentage of Full-Time Faculty at Tennessee Tech.

Faculty	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Full-Time Faculty	430	425	428	425	446
Part-Time Faculty	246	220	231	222	113
Total Faculty Headcount	676	645	659	647	559
Percent Full-Time Faculty	63.6%	65.9%	64.9%	65.7%	79.8%

Source: *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Human Resources, Fall 2016-2020*. Washington, D.C., Table 3 of "Full-Time Equivalent Faculty by Tenure Status," Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Tennessee Tech, July 2021. [6]

Faculty data for the past five years are available in the July 2021 Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness (IARE) report on Full-Time Equivalent Faculty by Tenure Status [6].

Full-Time Equivalent Faculty. Tennessee Tech determines the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty according to the general definition of FTE faculty used by the U.S. Department of Education in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The IPEDS general definition of FTE faculty is all full-time faculty plus one third of part-time faculty. Table 3 shows the FTE faculty at Tennessee Tech from 2015 through 2019 by category using the IPEDS definition.

Table 3. Tennessee Tech FTE Faculty Using the IPEDS Definition.

Faculty	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
FTE Full-Time Faculty	430	425	428	425	446
FTE Part-Time Faculty	82	73	77	74	38
Total FTE Faculty	512	498	505	499	484
Percent Full-Time FTE Faculty	84.0%	85.3%	84.8%	85.2%	92.1%

Source: *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Human Resources, Fall 2016-2020*. Washington, D.C., Table 2 of "Full-Time Equivalent Faculty by Tenure Status," Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Tennessee Tech, July 2021. [6]

As shown in Table 3, FTE faculty at Tennessee Tech for Fall 2020 totaled 484. The percentage of full-time faculty in the FTE faculty total is 92.1%, and the percentage of part-time faculty is 7.9%. Table 3 also shows that the percentage of full-time faculty within FTE total faculty has grown from 84.0% in Fall 2016 to 92.1% in Fall 2020.

Student-Faculty Ratio. The student-faculty ratio is calculated using the U.S. Department of Education's general definitions for FTE students and FTE faculty in IPEDS. The IPEDS general definition of FTE students is all full-time students plus one third of part-time students. Student FTE enrollment for Fall 2020 was 8,832, yielding an FTE student per FTE faculty of 18.26. These data, along with the student-faculty ratios for the past five years, are provided in Table 4. As shown, the student-faculty ratio has been relatively stable over the five-year period from 18.22 FTE students per FTE faculty in 2016 to 18.26 in 2020.

Table 4. Tennessee Tech Student-Faculty Ratio Using IPEDS Definition.

Faculty	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
Total FTE Faculty	512	498	505	499	484
FTE Students (Enrollment)	9,327	9,203	8,922	8,901	8,832
FTE Students Per FTE Faculty	18.22	18.47	17.67	17.84	18.26

Source: *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Human Resources, Fall 2016-2020*. Washington, D.C., Table 2 of "Full-Time Equivalent Faculty by Tenure Status," Report prepared by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Tennessee Tech University, July 2021. [6]

Tennessee Tech's Mission and Effect on Number and Type of Faculty

Mission. In 2018, President Oldham initiated a strategic planning effort that led to an update of the stated mission of Tennessee Tech. The following mission statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2018:

Tennessee's technological university creates, advances, and applies knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service [7].

Effect on Number and Type of Faculty Employed. The strategic planning initiative also resulted in the development of the Tech Tomorrow plan, which defines the directions for action to carry out Tennessee Tech's mission and establishes the priorities for budgetary decisions. The Tech Tomorrow plan [7] is founded on six core principles: academic excellence, community engagement, meaningful innovation, student success, supportive environment, and value creation. Along with these core principles, four strategic goals directly support achievement of the education, research, and service mission of Tennessee Tech:

1. Education for Life
2. Innovation in All We Do
3. Exceptional Stewardship
4. Engagement for Impact

Each of these goals is further supported by priority actions and tactics. Specifications for the type and an adequate number of faculty are distributed throughout the actions and tactics, as shown in the following examples:

- For the strategic goal of *Innovation in All We Do*, an identified priority action is that "every college will develop and implement technologically infused programs." A related tactic is to "review and refine departmental agreement of responsibilities to integrate substantive engagement activities and better reflect overall workload." This priority indicates that faculty are needed for developing and implementing technologically infused programs, and the tactic is aimed at ensuring an appropriate faculty number.

- Another priority action for the goal of *Innovation in All We Do* is to "increase research, scholarly activities, and intellectual and creative contributions aligned with university, college, and departmental strategic priorities." A related tactic is focused on refining existing processes to support these types of contributions. The identified priority for increases in scholarly and creative activities indicates a need for tenured and tenure-track faculty with such interests and capabilities and typically implies a corresponding growth in faculty in graduate programs.

- For the strategic goal of *Exceptional Stewardship*, a priority action is to "improve efficiency and effectiveness of operational/administrative processes and procedures," which is supported by the effort to "examine faculty workload and deployment." This tactic is focused on ensuring the right number of faculty for the University's programs.

- For the strategic goal of *Education for Life*, a priority action is to "develop innovative, stackable credentials, and associated pathways responsive to stakeholder needs and

entrepreneurial opportunities." A related tactic is to "evaluate and improve existing programs and develop new ones through rigorous determination of workforce demand, societal need, and financial viability." This priority indicates a need for faculty who are qualified in areas of workforce demand and societal need. Consideration of financial viability implies that the appropriate number of faculty needed for these programs will be considered in determining the programs' feasibility.

The tactics identified in the Tech Tomorrow plan have been further specified and prioritized by working groups for each of the four strategic goals, and implementation of many of the these is underway. For example, a policy on faculty workload was recently approved through the institutional approval process [8]. In addition, new programs are currently under development with consideration being given to the need for additional faculty as a requirement of the proposal process [9].

Tennessee Tech's mission to deliver enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service is being implemented through the Tech Tomorrow strategic plan. The examples above demonstrate how the plan specifies the type of faculty needed for the University's mission. Budget decisions related to faculty needs are prioritized based on the strategic plan. Thus, the number and type of faculty required are considered with respect to how they fulfill the University's mission.

Organizational Structure and Impact on Number of Faculty Needed

Organizational Structure of the Academic Functions. The Tennessee Tech organization chart can be seen in [10]. As shown, the President is the Chief Executive Officer of the University and reports to the Board of Trustees. The Provost, who is also designated Vice President for Academic Affairs, reports to the President and serves as the Chief Academic Officer of the University.

The Provost oversees academic units that include eight colleges, one school, and the Volpe Library, each led by a dean. Six of the academic units are organized by disciplines into departments or schools and staffed with communities of qualified faculty. The faculty members in these discipline-focused departments or schools oversee the curriculum of the programs in their units. The department chair or a qualified faculty member serves as program coordinator. Section 6.2.c provides documentation on the credentials for program coordinators. The following colleges are organized into discipline-focused departments or schools:

- College of Agriculture and Human Ecology
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Education
- College of Engineering
- College of Fine Art
- Whitson-Hester School of Nursing

The College of Interdisciplinary Studies is organized to serve students with interdisciplinary interests and utilizes disciplinary faculty within the College, as well as qualified faculty from across the University, to provide instruction and input on program requirements.

The College of Graduate Studies serves in a supporting role for the more than 60 graduate programs on campus, but faculty members in the various colleges, schools, and departments oversee the curriculum and graduate requirements specific to the programs in their areas of study.

In addition to academic units, Tennessee Tech has a number of standing committees to provide oversight for academic programs and related decisions. Policy 102 on University Committees states:

Tennessee Tech is committed to shared governance that includes representatives of all members of the University community. Various standing and ad hoc committees advise administrators in all areas of Tennessee Tech's mission and operations. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students are vital members of these committees and offer their time and expertise in service to Tennessee Tech. [11]

Effect of Organizational Structure on Number of Faculty. For the departments and schools that are discipline-based, the number of faculty must be adequate to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, as discussed earlier, related to academic and governance matters, as well as their primary activities of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service. For those units that oversee interdisciplinary programs, the organizational structure is flexible enough to allow support from qualified faculty in other units on campus. The workload for faculty in other units that is allocated to interdisciplinary programs is identified and documented as a part of the workload on the AOR form [5].

Processes Used to Evaluate Number of Full-Time Faculty Needed

Tennessee Tech determines that the number of faculty is adequate through a variety of processes including the following:

- Strategic planning and budgeting to accomplish the Tennessee Tech mission;
- Documentation of and adherence to policies for faculty roles, responsibilities, workload, program oversight, and hiring;
- Evaluation of metrics used to assess the adequacy of the number of full-time faculty, including national benchmarking through the Delaware Study;
- Participation in regular external reviews of faculty number adequacy including discipline-specific accreditation activities and academic audits or other external peer reviews; and
- Ongoing internal assessment led by the Office of the Provost but occurring at all levels of the University community.

Strategic Planning and Budgeting. The implementation of the University mission using the strategic plan was discussed previously, and examples were provided showing that faculty workload is considered. The budgeting process also requires that personnel decisions are budgeted in support of the University mission.

Tennessee Tech Policy 501.1 on Budget Principles [12] requires that "needs should be prioritized relative to Tennessee Tech's core mission and consistent with its strategic plan, with resources aligned accordingly. In situations where resources are constrained or limited, resources should be redistributed as needed to meet the highest priority needs of Tennessee Tech." Policy 501 on

Budget Control [13] specifies that "position control is a part of the personnel budget process" and lists the steps in the annual budget cycle that include consideration of faculty positions.

Tennessee Tech Policies on Faculty Roles and Workload. In addition to the strategic plan and budgeting process, Tennessee Tech policies ensure that decisions consider the number of full-time faculty members to fulfill the required faculty roles and responsibilities in support of the University mission. The overarching Policy 101 on Policies [14] requires that new policies and revisions to existing policies are to be reviewed by the appropriate University Council(s) or University Assembly "in light of Tennessee Tech's mission, priorities, and other obligations or considerations."

Policies 203 [1], 204 [2], 205 [3], 206 [4], and 102 [11] have previously been discussed and deal with the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of employment in a faculty position. Policy 638 on Extra Compensation, Dual Services, and Outside Employment [15] provides workload expectations and covers the circumstances and limitations under which faculty are considered for extra compensation during the academic year. Policy 208 on Faculty Workload defines University requirements and expectations regarding faculty workload, thereby helping to ensure equity in workload assignment and overload pay eligibility across campus [8].

All of these policies support the consideration of an adequate number of faculty to carry out the University mission.

Evaluation of Metrics. The percentage of full-time faculty and the ratio of FTE students to FTE faculty are typical metrics used to assess whether an institution has an adequate number of faculty to support its mission. Table 5 summarizes these metrics for Tennessee Tech and demonstrates that they are comparable to national and regional averages, as discussed below. Table 5 also provides a metric on the percent of undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) taught by full-time faculty in comparison to national norms reported in the Delaware Study on instructional costs and productivity.

Table 5. Key Indicators of Faculty Number Adequacy for Supporting University Mission.

Metric	Tennessee Tech Metric	Comparator Metric	Comparator
Percent full-time faculty	79.8%	54%[1]	National Average[1]
Student-faculty ratio	18.3	14-19	Tennessee Peers[2]
		15-22	National Peers[2]
		10-22	IPEDS Comparators[2]
Percent undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty (Median for 30 programs)	85.5%	75.5%	Delaware Study[3]

[1] National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty (May 2020, report for Fall 2018) [16]
[2] Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2019-20 Data, Search Results [17]
[3] National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, Fall 2018 Results [18]

Percentage of Full-Time Faculty. As shown in Tables 2 and 5, the percentage of full-time faculty for Fall 2020 for Tennessee Tech was 79.8% of the faculty headcount, well above the

national average reported by the National Center for Education Statistics, Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty report for Fall 2018 [16]. In addition, Table 2 shows that the percentage of full-time faculty at Tennessee Tech has generally been increasing over the past five years.

Student-Faculty Ratio. Adequacy of the number of full-time faculty to support instruction is commonly measured in higher education by means of the student-faculty ratio. Table 5 provides three comparator groupings for this metric. First, the student-faculty ratio for four Tennessee institutions previously identified as peers by Tennessee Tech ranges from 14 to 19 FTE students per FTE faculty. Second, for nine national institutions previously identified as peers by Tennessee Tech, the ratio ranges from 15 to 22 FTE students per FTE faculty. Finally, using an IPEDS-generated comparator grouping of similar institutions nationally based on type of institution (public), Carnegie classification, and size, the ratio of FTE students to FTE faculty ranges from 10 to 22. All results were obtained from the IPEDS database and represent ratios from 2019-20 data [17]. Tennessee Tech's student-faculty ratio is within each of the ranges for peer and comparator institutions. In addition, Table 4 shows that the Tennessee Tech student-faculty ratio has been stable over the past five years from 18.22 in Fall 2016 to 18.26 in Fall 2020.

Percentage of Undergraduate SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty. The University participates in national benchmarking through the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, i.e., the Delaware Study, which provides feedback by program in comparison to national data. Table 5 provides the median percentage of undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty for 30 programs at Tennessee Tech along with the median percentage for comparable programs nationally. The median percentage for the 30 Tennessee Tech programs, 85.5%, exceeds the national median percentage of 75.5% for those comparable programs. Twenty-two of the 30 Tennessee Tech programs (73.3%) exceed the national norm for SCH taught by full-time faculty as reported in the Delaware Study results for Fall 2018.

Percent of SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty by Location and Delivery Mode. Table 6 provides a summary of SCH taught by full-time faculty by location and delivery mode for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. This table shows that the percentage of SCH taught by full-time faculty across all courses is 82.6%. Although the percentages of SCH taught by full-time faculty are lower at off-campus sites and for courses in online programs, they are still a majority of the SCH taught and are considered satisfactory. Student credit-hours taught at offsite locations represent only 3.9% of all SCH, and online programs represent only 2.0%.

Table 6. SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty by Location and Delivery Mode.*

Location and Delivery Mode	SCH Taught by All Faculty	% SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty
All courses[1]	241,961	82.6%
On-Campus	227,753	83.7%
Off-Campus Sites	9,389	61.8%
Online Programs[2]	4,819	72.5%

Source: Institutional Data Files for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020

[1] Based on End of Term, which includes courses that started after the census date.
[2] Includes only those courses in degree programs that are offered 100% online only. Due to COVID a significant number of courses that would normally be taught face-to-face were delivered either online or as a hybrid course. It is not possible to identify those courses that are not a part of an online only program and are typically delivered online.

Tennessee Tech does not employ a separate faculty for its online programs. The faculty who are responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered via online and distance education modalities are the same faculty who ensure the quality and integrity of face-to-face academic programs.

Metrics Summary. The current metrics shown in Table 5 and the data in Table 6 demonstrate that Tennessee Tech has an adequate number of full-time faculty overall and for off-campus and online courses. Trends in the metrics indicate that effective processes are being used to assess the adequacy of faculty numbers for the institution as a whole. Additional discussion in Section 6.2.b addresses the adequacy for individual programs.

Participation in external reviews. To ensure that the number of adequate faculty is maintained, the University engages in oversight and maintenance processes that include participation in regular external reviews to ensure the quality and integrity of academic programs. Tennessee Tech participates in required and voluntary external reviews, as follows:

1. Discipline-specific accreditation activities involving self-studies and reviews by external evaluators are employed for most programs where recognized accrediting organizations exist. These reviews include consideration of whether the program has an adequate number of faculty. For example, the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET *Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs* [19] specifies Criterion 6 to ensure that each engineering program under review has sufficient faculty "to cover all of the curricular areas of the program" and "to accommodate adequate levels of student-faculty interaction, student advising and counseling," and other activities. Criterion 6 is similar for all of the natural science, computing, engineering, and engineering technology programs accredited by the four commissions of ABET.

2. For programs that do not have a recognized accrediting organization, the use of external academic audits or external program reviews is required by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission at least every five years. Tennessee Tech programs primarily use program reviews. These program reviews require a self-study report similar to those in accreditation evaluations and include an assessment of the program's faculty size to ensure the program's continued stability and quality. Expectations for faculty are addressed in the rubrics for graduate program reviews [20] and undergraduate program reviews [21].

Additional information on external accreditation evaluations and program reviews is provided in Section 6.2.b.

Participation in research and services. As an integral part of faculty role and responsibilities (policy 203), Tennessee Tech faculty are involved in *Research/scholarship/creative activity.* A few typical measures of research activities are scholarly publications, external funding proposals submitted, and external funding received. This table shows that the number of proposals submitted by faculty increased by 8.5% and the external funding received improved by 53%

[22]. This further demonstrates that faculty members are not only teaching classes, but have been actively engaged in seeking external funding in support of research, and broadly disseminating their findings through scholarly publications. In addition, per Policy 102 [11], Tennessee Tech University is committed to shared governance that includes representatives of all members of the university community. Faculty members are represented on each committee, including but not limited to University Assembly, Academic Council, Administrative Council, and other University Standing Committees such as those report to the three listed above, the President, and the Academic Affairs.

Table 7. Research Productivity Trend.

Year[1]	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Number of Proposals Submitted	198	180	168	194	215
External Funding Received	$16,910,722	$16,371,900	$20,228,105	$20,051,317	$22,770,651

1 The date ranges represent the University's fiscal year from July 1 through June 30.

Assessment by the Office of the Provost. In addition to external reviews and benchmarking, the adequacy of full-time faculty numbers to ensure quality programs receives ongoing internal assessment by the Office of the Provost. The Provost's Office reviews a variety of metrics including the percent undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty as reported in the Delaware Study, with the understanding that the latest Delaware report lags the current environment. Student credit hours, degrees produced, research expenditures, performance funding outcomes, accreditation review outcomes, and revenue and cost data are examined to understand the relative performance of the departments and colleges in support of the University mission and in accordance with the Academic Affairs definition of success [23]. The Provost's Office defines success for Academic Affairs as meeting the needs of the State in (1) educating and graduating students in disciplines needed by the State and (2) supporting government, industry, and the citizens of the State through the application of expertise [23].

When a faculty vacancy occurs due to retirement, resignation, or an internal move, the Provost's Office evaluates the vacated faculty position for reassignment with respect to faculty needs among all programs on campus to support the University mission. The metrics and data described above are used to guide the conversation with programs in determining whether to add, relocate, or modify faculty lines.

The University organizational structure and budgeting process ensure that internal reviews examine the needs within organizational units. The Provost works with deans, department chairs, directors, and various constituencies on campus to strategically determine the need for replacement and creation of faculty positions. For example, in response to enrollment growth, state and regional needs, and an increased University emphasis on the research/scholarship/creative activity mission, the Provost supported a "cluster hire" of five tenure-track faculty in the Department of Computer Science in Fall 2019. The cluster hire had a focus on cybersecurity, and all of the newly hired faculty have impressive cybersecurity backgrounds and experience at prominent institutions, as reported to the Board of Trustees [24]. The faculty hiring process [25] provides a high-level overview of steps for faculty hires.

Conclusion

Benchmarking metrics show that the full-time faculty size at Tennessee Tech, as represented by the percentage of full-time faculty, student-faculty ratio, and percentage of undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty, is comparable to national or peer institutions. Section 6.2.b will offer further evidence that each degree program has an adequate faculty size. Furthermore, data indicate that off-campus courses and courses in fully online programs are adequately staffed by full-time faculty. These results provide evidence that the strategic planning and budget processes, University policies, external accreditation and program reviews, and internal reviews by the Office of the Provost are effective in ensuring that the number of full-time faculty is sufficient to carry out the University mission. Therefore, Tennessee Tech is in compliance with Core Requirement 6.1.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 203 - Faculty Roles and Responsibilities
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 204 - Faculty Appointments
[03] Tennessee Tech Policy 205 - Faculty Tenure
[04] Tennessee Tech Policy 206 - Faculty Promotion
[05] Agreement on Responsibilities Form
[06] IARE Fall 2020 FTE Faculty by Tenure Status
[07] Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan Overview
[08] Tennessee Tech Policy 208 - Faculty Workload
[09] THEC Letter of Notification and New Academic Program Proposal Checklist
[10] Tennessee Tech Organization Chart
[11] Tennessee Tech Policy 102 - University Committees
[12] Tennessee Tech Policy 501.1 - Budget Principles
[13] Tennessee Tech Policy 501 - Budget Control
[14] Tennessee Tech Policy 101 - Policy on Policies
[15] Tennessee Tech Policy 638 - Extra Compensation Dual Services and Outside Employment
[16] NCES - The Condition of Educational Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty May 2020
[17] Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - 2019-20 Data Search Results
[18] Delaware Study - Percent Undergraduate SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty - Fall 2018
[19] Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs 2019-20
[20] THEC Graduate Rubric Form for Program Reviews
[21] THEC Baccalaureate Rubric Form for Program Reviews
[22] Tennessee Tech University Office of Research Annual Report 2020-21
[23] Success in Academic Affairs
[24] Board of Trustees Minutes of the 2019-09-24 Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
[25] Faculty Hiring Process Rev 09-18-2020

R - 6.2.b

Program Faculty

For each of its educational programs, the institution:

b. employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

This section expands upon the report for Core Requirement 6.1, which focuses on evidence that Tennessee Technological University has an adequate number of full-time faculty overall to support the mission of the University and provides additional evidence that Tennessee Tech has sufficient full-time faculty members for the appropriate delivery, oversight, and quality of each of its programs. This report includes the following information:

- Definitions for academic programs and faculty
- Description of the organizational structure and its impact on faculty numbers
- Roles of full-time faculty within academic programs
- Workload policy
- Evidence of an adequate number of faculty for each program
- Special training programs for part-time faculty

This narrative presents details on the processes for determining that each program has sufficient faculty.

Academic Programs and Organizational Structure

Tennessee Tech defines academic programs as those that lead to a bachelor's, professional, or graduate degree. Academic units are typically structured as departments or schools housed within colleges, as shown in Table 1. Organizationally, the departments and schools are led by department chairs and directors, respectively, who report to college deans, who report to the Provost. The Whitson-Hester School of Nursing is an exception with a dean reporting directly to the Provost.

Table 1: Structure of Academic Units at Tennessee Tech

Colleges or School (Each Led by a Dean)	Schools (Each Led by a Director) or Departments (Each Led by a Chairperson)
College of Agriculture and Human Ecology	School of Agriculture School of Human Ecology
College of Arts and Sciences	Department of Biology Department of Chemistry Department of Earth Sciences Department of English Department of Foreign Languages Department of History Department of Mathematics Department of Physics Department of Sociology and Political Science
College of Business	Department of Accounting Department of Decision Sciences and Management Department of Economics, Finance, and Marketing
College of Education	Department of Counseling and Psychology Department of Curriculum and Instruction Department of Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness
College of Engineering	Department of Chemical Engineering Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Department of Computer Science Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Department of General and Basic Engineering Department of Manufacturing and Engineering Technology Department of Mechanical Engineering
College of Fine Arts	School of Art, Craft, and Design School of Music
College of Graduate Studies	
College of Interdisciplinary Studies	Department of Communication School of Environmental Studies School of Interdisciplinary Studies School of Professional Studies
Whitson Hester School of Nursing	

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Organization Chart [1]

Academic programs are housed within these units, and faculty are responsible for program development and oversight in various ways including program design, delivery/teaching, evaluation, and improvement. A list of programs within colleges and schools is provided later in this narrative with information on the number of faculty. Some programs are interdisciplinary and rely on faculty from several departments or schools for program oversight and delivery.

Tennessee Tech does not employ a separate faculty for its online programs. The faculty who are responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered via online and distance education modalities are the same faculty who ensure the quality and integrity of face-to-face academic programs.

Faculty Definitions, Roles, and Responsibilities in Programs

Full-time and Part-time Faculty. Policy 203 on Faculty Roles and Responsibilities defines full-time faculty as follows:

Benefitted Tennessee Tech faculty employed on a continuing basis, expected to exceed one academic year, and who have a regular work week of 37.5 hours or who carry a full teaching load or its equivalent (to include modified fiscal year [nine-month] employees) [2].

Although not specified in this policy, the term "part-time faculty" refers to temporary, non-tenurable faculty who are designated as adjunct faculty.

Faculty Members' Role in Academic Programs. According to Policy 203 Section V.A.1: Academic matters

The creation, change, and approval of curricula and new programs begin with the faculty. Faculty participate in the creation and development of the curriculum through membership on appropriate department or school curriculum committees, college-level curriculum committees, and the university Curriculum Committee and/or the Graduate Studies Executive Committee in the case of changes in the curriculum that involve graduate credit. Each department, interdisciplinary major, or school assigns faculty to oversee curriculum development and review.

Because the organizational structure of the units is so well defined, faculty are hired within departments of their expertise and leveraged for their strengths within the programs. Each unit makes decisions about their programs and their use of full-time faculty, lecturers, adjuncts, and graduate students in the delivery of those programs. For example, in the School of Nursing, tenured full-time faculty often take on heavier teaching loads (in a rotation among the faculty) to allow junior faculty more opportunities to engage in research/scholarship early in their careers. Adjuncts, lecturers, and graduate students are used as needed, based on their qualifications and expertise, to share the load with full-time faculty to ensure high-quality program delivery. For interdisciplinary programs, a team of faculty from appropriate supporting departments serves as the "program faculty" that would typically be associated with a specific department.

Tennessee Tech carefully tracks the number of full-time faculty in each program, including faculty by location, to ensure program quality, integrity, review, and oversight. As explained in the narrative for Core Requirement 6.1, the Office of the Provost evaluates faculty vacancies due to retirement or an internal move and determines whether the position should be filled or reassigned to address needs for full-time faculty among all programs on campus. In addition, requests for new faculty positions must be approved by the Provost. Over the past five years, the distribution of full-time faculty has been adjusted to account for program enrollment growth (e.g., in Computer Science) and for new academic programs (e.g., the M.S. in Engineering Management). This approach helps to ensure that each program has an adequate number of full-time faculty.

Principal Responsibilities of Faculty Members. Policy 203 [2] summarizes the responsibilities of full-time faculty members and the process for determining faculty work assignments:

The responsibilities of full-time faculty members generally include the following three principal functions: teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and/or service/outreach. In addition, some faculty members may have duties in advising and/or administration. Prior to the end of the spring semester, each faculty member and the administrator to whom he/she immediately reports shall determine in a cooperative fashion the activities and percentage of effort in each area of responsibility for the coming academic year.

At Tennessee Tech, most teaching assignments involve on-campus, in-person courses. While the recent pandemic resulted in the move to online teaching and service starting in March 2020, it is

expected that most of the new online approaches will return to the typical in-person methodologies by Fall 2021. Other supporting activities related to teaching include participation in departmental, college, or university committees; program oversight; student organization advising; academic advising; and professional development. In addition, the faculty members in a program are responsible for developing, assessing, and improving the program, as described in the next section.

In terms of research, Tennessee Tech houses several research centers, including the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Center; the Center for Energy Systems Research (CESR); the Center for Manufacturing Research (CMR); the Center for the Management, Utilization, and Protection of Water Resources (Water Center); and the Cybersecurity Education, Research, and Outreach Center (CEROC). These on-campus centers are important resources for bringing together cooperating interdisciplinary research teams of faculty and students from various departments, schools, and research units. Each center strives to achieve academic excellence; to support economic development in the state; to enhance the intellectual, cultural, and social climate for Tennessee citizens; to use external sources to improve research; and to attract nationally and internationally recognized faculty to Tennessee Tech. Administrative staff in the centers support budgeting and navigating the administrative approval processes for research grants.

For advising, the University's Launchpad Student Success Center is a relatively new centralized unit for freshman and undeclared student advising, transition assistance, and academic and personal support at Tennessee Tech. Professional, non-faculty advisors are dedicated to helping new students adjust to college life and navigate their first year on campus, and then to support their transition into their academic program of study. Starting in the 2021–2022 academic year, all freshmen and transfer students at Tennessee Tech will be advised by the Launchpad Student Success Center. After their first year, students transition to their corresponding college, school, or department for advising and mentoring from college-specific advising centers or faculty members.

Beyond the first year, each college/school at Tennessee Tech has its own centralized student success center that provides students in the college/school with a resource for academic advising, helps students with accessing academic and non-academic campus resources, and fosters student development through engagement opportunities inside and outside of their major. Depending on the college/school, either professional advisors, faculty, or both assist students with academic planning, provide guidance to help students make informed decisions about their college education, and ensure students are progressing towards graduation.

Role of Full-Time Faculty in Program Oversight and Supervision. The faculty members for an academic program have primary responsibility for the oversight of that program. Processes are in place to enable the faculty to propose new courses, modifications or deletions of existing courses, and curriculum revisions. The program's faculty members regularly assess the quality of the program and determine when changes are needed.

Program quality and effectiveness are assessed in part through participation in either an external accreditation review or an external program review if program accreditation is not available. In addition, each department or unit collects data annually and reports to the University on the effectiveness of the faculty's efforts to achieve program goals and learning outcomes. In particular, the report addresses the extent to which student learning outcomes are met, and program improvements are derived from the assessment process. These topics are inputs to the campus Institutional Effectiveness (IE) system. An example is the 2019-20 IE Report for the B.S.

program in Mathematics [3]. The program's assessment processes led the program faculty to focus on improving the student learning outcome that "other majors [are] able to use math appropriately." According to the IE report:

The Praxis Content Knowledge test in Mathematics is designed to assess the mathematical knowledge and competencies necessary for a beginning teacher of secondary school mathematics. . . . The PRAXIS II test results indicate that Secondary Education Mathematics students are struggling to pass the math content test on their initial attempt.

In spring 2019 the department offered a Special Topics course based on a curriculum for future high school mathematics teachers developed by the Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership [3].

The IE report further shows that the first-attempt pass rate for Tennessee Tech students taking the PRAXIX II Math Content Knowledge Test improved to 80% for 2019-20 in contrast to a pass rate of from 0% to 50% for each of the previous five years. The Mathematics Department also reported their plan to create a new upper-division mathematics course for Secondary Education Mathematics majors that "will utilize portions of the curriculum developed by the partnership and materials developed by departmental faculty" [3].

For undergraduate programs, curriculum changes may be proposed by the program's Curriculum Committee or the program faculty as a whole. Approval is first obtained from the program faculty, then the college or school curriculum committee, and finally the University Curriculum Committee for undergraduate proposals or the Graduate Studies Executive Committee for graduate proposals. Program changes other than curriculum are proposed by the program or unit faculty. The program faculty work with the college or school as appropriate to identify and secure support for any additional necessary resources.

Role of Full-time Faculty in Delivering Programs at Off-Campus Locations. In addition to programs on campus, Tennessee Tech offers distance programs in the College of Business; College of Education; Department of Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness; Whitson-Hester School of Nursing; School of Interdisciplinary Studies; and College of Engineering. Table 2 represents all the distance programs with 25% to 49% of credit hours offered at off-site locations by Tennessee Tech. At some of these sites, other programs offer selected courses but less than 25% of the degree program. Some programs use both full-time faculty and adjuncts for their distance components.

Table 2: Off-Campus Instructional Sites and Programs

Name of Site	Educational programs offered with 25% to 49% credit hours offered at each site
Motlow State Community College, Main Campus	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Motlow State Community College, TTCM Higher Education Partnership	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Roane State Community College, Main Campus	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Roane State Community College, Oak Ridge Higher Education Center	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
	Bachelor of Science in Education in Secondary Education (B.S.E.D.)[2]
Roane State Community College, Scott County Higher Education Center	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Pellissippi State Community College, Main Campus	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Tennessee Tech Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Craft	Bachelor of Fine Arts: Art Education; Clay; Design; Fibers; Glass; Metals; Painting; Wood (B.F.A.)[3]
Chattanooga State Community College (ChSCC) East Campus, Center for Education and Human Services	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)[1]
Oak Ridge National Laboratory	Ph.D. in Engineering
East Tennessee State University	TTU-ETSU Joint Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.S.E.)

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Office of the Provost

1. Upper-division courses leading to the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (B.S.)
2. Upper-division courses leading to the Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (B.S.E.D.). No students were enrolled in this program at this site during the Fall 2020-Spring 2021 academic year.
3. Undergraduate courses leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)

Distance education programs where 50 percent or more of the credit hours are delivered through electronic distance education modes are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Tennessee Tech Online Degree Programs (50-100 Percent Via Distance Education)

Unit Offering Degree	Degree Program
College of Business	Master of Business Administration
College of Business, Department of Accounting	Master of Accountancy
College of Education, Department of Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness	Master of Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness
College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction	Master of Curriculum and Instruction - Applied Behavior Analysis Concentration - Curriculum Concentration - Early Childhood Education Concentration - Educational Technology Concentration - Elementary Education Concentration - Family Consumer Science Concentration - Library Science Concentration - Literacy Concentration - Special Education Concentration
	Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction - Applied Behavior Analysis - Curriculum Concentration - Early Childhood Education - Educational Technology Concentration - Elementary Education - Exercise Science - Family Consumer Science - Library Science - Literacy - Special Education
College of Engineering	Master of Science in Engineering Management
College of Interdisciplinary Studies, School of Professional Studies	Master of Professional Studies - Corporate Communication Concentration - Healthcare Administration Concentration - Human Resources Leadership Concentration - Media and Strategic Communication Concentration - Public Safety Concentration - Strategic Leadership Concentration - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Concentration - Training and Development Concentration
Whitson-Hester School of Nursing	Master of Science in Nursing
Whitson-Hester School of Nursing, Joint Program with ETSU	Doctor of Nursing Practice

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Office of the Provost

Some of Tennessee Tech's online degree programs include courses from the TN eCampus as part of the program. TN eCampus was developed through the Tennessee Board of Regents to offer courses online from higher education institutions across Tennessee, including Tennessee

Tech. Courses offered through TN eCampus are fully online although some courses may have proctored midterm and/or final exams.

Faculty Workload

A new policy on faculty workload has recently been approved [4]. The policy defines University requirements and expectations regarding faculty workload, thereby helping to ensure equity in workload assignment and overload pay eligibility across campus. Currently, Tennessee Tech Policy 638 [5] on Extra Compensation, Dual Services, and Outside Employment states:

All full-time employees, including nine-month faculty, are required to devote a minimum of 37.5 hours per week to the institution and be available for on-site work unless the university is officially closed.

The development, oversight, delivery, and improvement of the academic programs are the primary responsibilities of the faculty. Faculty workload is measured in terms of credit hours. A full teaching load is defined as 15 credit hours or equivalent per term for undergraduate courses or 12 credit hours or equivalent per term for graduate courses. However, the actual teaching workloads are typically, at most, 12 credit hours of undergraduate courses or nine credit hours of graduate courses. The remaining credit hours not allocated for instruction during a given semester are available for faculty participation in activities such as departmental, college, or university committees; program oversight; student organization advising; academic advising; and professional development. In addition to instruction, faculty workload may be allocated for research or service activities.

In support of their teaching duties, faculty members are expected to set aside hours for conferences with students. Guidelines for setting office hours and publicizing them are determined by individual departments.

How faculty time/effort is allocated to meet the needs of the programs is carefully monitored by chairs, deans, and the Provost. Funded research/scholarship/creative activity projects and professional service activities may reduce the assigned teaching credit hours for a faculty member. To encourage the development of a research program, some units give tenure-track faculty a reduced teaching load during the first year or two of employment. Faculty members may also be supported in a professional service activity that enhances professional development or program outreach. Thus, faculty workloads in a particular program can be adjusted to support the research/scholarship/creative activity and service/outreach missions of that program. For example, 43 faculty members and administrators were identified to develop the Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan to better define the University's plan for accomplishing the University's vision and mission. Members of the four working groups (Education for Life, Innovation in All We Do, Exceptional Stewardship, and Engagement for Impact) have dedicated a significant number of hours to this University service work since 2019. In response to the additional responsibilities of one of the working group chairs, the Accounting Department revised the teaching load and scholarship expectations for that faculty member so that she could focus her efforts on leadership of the group. Other departments have done the same.

Also, in response to enrollment growth and an increased University emphasis on the research/scholarship/creative activity mission, the hiring of 21 new tenure-track faculty was reported in academic year 2020–21. For example, a recent increase in the quantity of research at Tennessee Tech focused on cybersecurity, along with the establishment of the CEROC, has

resulted in seven new hires in Computer Science in the last three years, growing their department substantially (from 12 to 19 total faculty).

The University recognizes that, in some circumstances, faculty may need to perform additional assignments as an overload for which extra compensation may be warranted. These assignments are to be reported on the annual Agreement on Responsibilities form. Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-5-410 "Teachers – Moonlighting" limits full-time university faculty members to receiving at most six credit hours of overload pay in either semester during the academic year, with a 10.67 credit hours maximum for the entire academic year. Overload assignments are expected to require only a reasonable time commitment and must not constitute a conflict of interest with the University. Additional requirements, along with compensation guidelines for faculty teaching credit courses as an overload, are available in Tennessee Tech Policy No. 638 on Extra Compensation, Dual Services, and Outside Employment. Some overload decisions at the college levels are based upon their accreditation guidelines. Any faculty overload assignment must be approved by the Provost.

Evidence of an Adequate Number of Faculty for Each Program

Faculty Distribution by Program. Table 4 lists the number of full-time, full-time-equivalent (FTE), part-time, and part-time FTE faculty for each program. The table was developed by reviewing the personnel for all courses taught during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters (based on end-of-term data for fall and spring semesters), and categorizing the courses and faculty by program.

In Table 4, full-time faculty (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, tenured and tenure-track instructors, and lecturers) were counted for the programs in departments from which they were paid, whereas part-time faculty (e.g., adjuncts and administrators) were counted for the programs in which they taught. For full-time faculty in departments with multiple programs, (e.g., B.S. and M.S.), an individual faculty member was counted only for the program(s) in which he or she taught. The full-time-equivalency of part-time faculty was calculated by dividing the load of each part-time individual by 15 or 12, the University-defined full-time credit-hour load for teaching undergraduate and graduate courses respectively, and counted for the program in which the course was taught. For example, an adjunct faculty member who taught both a three-credit-hour undergraduate chemistry course and a three-credit-hour undergraduate biology course would appear as 0.2 FTE in the Chemistry B.S. program and 0.2 FTE in the Biology B.S. program with a headcount of "1" in each program.

The totals in Table 4 include all faculty teaching for a program during the 2020-2021 Fall and Spring terms, whether delivering courses on the Tennessee Tech campus or participating in distance courses or courses at a 2+2 site. Because some faculty may have had other, non-teaching assignments, the full-time faculty numbers shown in Table 4 may represent, in some cases, fewer than the actual number of full-time faculty teaching regularly in a program. This result is especially evident in programs that are interdisciplinary in nature. Table 5 provides explanations for programs with fewer than four full-time faculty. These programs are highlighted in Table 4 and are primarily either new or interdisciplinary programs. Interdisciplinary programs are typically served by full-time faculty members whose headcounts are associated with other programs.

Table 4. Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Distribution (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021).

Programs, by College and Department or School (Number of Full-time Faculty)	Degree	Full-Time Faculty		Part-Time Faculty	
		Head-count	FTE	Head-count	FTE
College of Agriculture and Human Ecology					
School of Agriculture (12)					
Agriculture	B.S.A.G.	12	12	7	2.20
School of Human Ecology (10)					
Human Ecology	B.S.H.E	10	10	3	0.67
Arts and Sciences					
Department of Biology (17)					
Biology	B.S.	17	17	5	0.93
Biology	M.S.	14	14	2	2.42
Wildlife and Fisheries Science	B.S.	10	10	1	0.25
Department of Chemistry (22)					
Chemistry	B.S.	22	22	4	0.53
Chemistry	M.S.	12	12	0	0.00
Department of English (26)					
English	B.A.	26	26	23	19.80
English	M.A.	11	11	0	0.00
Department of Foreign Languages (9)					
Foreign Languages	B.A.	8	8	2	0.80
International Business and Cultures	B.S.	1	1	0	0.00
Department of Earth Sciences (8)					
Geosciences	B.S.	8	8	2	1.00
Department of History (11)					
History	B.A./B.S.	11	11	5	1.80
Department of Mathematics (24)					
Mathematics	B.S.	24	24	10	5.27
Mathematics	M.S.	11	11	0	0.00
Department of Physics (9)					
Physics	B.S.	9	9	0	0.00
Department of Sociology and Political Science (4 and 11)					
Political Science	B.S.	4	4	1	0.20
Sociology	B.S.	11	11	12	4.40
Business					
Business Administration	M.B.A.	14	14	1	0.25
Department of Accounting (9)					
Accounting	B.S.B.A	9	9	4	2.40
Accountancy	M.A.C.C.	6	6	0	0.00
Department of Decision Sciences (7) and Management (8)					
Business Information and Technology	B.s.B.A.	15	15	15	6.87
Business Management	B.S.B.A.	15	15	15	6.87
Department of Economics (6), Finance (4), and Marketing (4)					
Economics	B.S.	6	6	3	1.60
Finance	B.S.B.A.	4	4	1	0.80
Marketing	B.S.B.A.	4	4	2	1.00
International Business and Cultures*	B.S.	1	1	0	0.00
Education					
Department of Counseling and Psychology (18)					
Psychology	B.S.	11	11	0	0.00
Counseling and Psychology	M.A.	16	16	0	0.00
Counseling and Psychology	Ed.S.	9	9	0	0.00
Counseling and Supervision	Ph.D.	4	4	0	0.00
Department of Curriculum and Instruction (40)					
Curriculum and Instruction	M.A.	28	28	11	7.25
Curriculum and Instruction	Ed.S.	20	20	9	3.08
Early Childhood Education	B.S.	9	9	13	3.93
Elementary Education	B.S.	22	22	20	7.00
Exceptional Learning	Ph.D.	12	12	6	2.83
Multidisciplinary Studies	B.S.	14	14	12	3.07
Secondary Education	B.S.E.D.	10	10	12	3.07
Special Education	B.S.	10	10	17	4.27
Instructional Leadership	M.A.	3	3	0	0.00
Instructional Leadership	Ed.S.	3	3	0	0.00
Department of Exercise Science (11)					
Exercise Sci, Phys Educ and Wellness	B.S.	11	11	48	16.47
Exercise Sci, Phys Educ and Wellness	M.A.	4	4	7	6.42
Engineering					
Engineering	Ph.D	48	48	1	0.75
Department of Chemical Engineering (10)					
Chemical Engineering	B.C.H.E.	10	10	0	0.00
Chemical Engineering	M.S.	8	8	0	0.00
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (14)					
Civil Engineering	B.S.C.E	14	14	5	1.80
Civil Engineering	M.S.	12	12	0	0.00
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (13)					
Computer Engineering	B.S.C.M.P.E.	13	13	11	3.40
Electrical Engineering	B.S.E.E.	13	13	11	3.40
Electrical and Computer Engineering	M.S.	12	12	1	0.08
Department of Computer Science (20)					
Computer Science	B.S.	20	20	6	2.40
Computer Science	M.S.	12	12	1	0.25
Department of General and Basic Engineering (6)					
Engineering (Joint with ETSU)	B.S.E.	2	2	4	0.73
Engineering Management	M.S.	1	1	0	0.00
Department of Manufacturing and Engineering Technology (6)					
Engineering Technology	B.S.E.T.	6	6	3	1.87
Department of Mechanical Engineering (19)					
Mechanical Engineering	B.S.M.E.	19	19	4	1.93
Mechanical Engineering	M.S.	13	13	1	0.25
Fine Arts					
School of Art, Craft, and Design (13)					
Fine Arts	B.F.A.	12	12	11	7.53
School of Music (23)					
Music	B.M	23	23	7	4.33
Interdisciplinary Studies					
Department of Communication (10)					
Communication	B.S.	10	10	6	1.00
School of Environmental Studies (4)					
Environmental and Sustainability Studies	B.S.	3	3	1	0.20
Professional Science Master's, Environmental Informatics	P.S.M.	1	1	1	0.40
Environmental Sciences	Ph.D.	15	15	1	0.50
School of Interdisciplinary Studies (4)					
Interdisciplinary Studies	B.S.	4	4	22	7.47
School of Professional Studies (1)					
Professional Studies	B.S.	1	1	2	0.40
Professional Studies	M.P.S.	1	1	5	2.00
Whitson-Hooter School of Nursing (35)					
Nursing	B.S.N.	23	23	44	14.87
Nursing	M.S.N.	15	15	9	6.33
Tn Joint Doctor of Nursing Practice	D.N.O.	11	11	27	14.17

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Institutional Data Files

Table 5. Explanations for Programs with Fewer than Four Full-Time (FT) Faculty

Program (Number of FT Faculty)	Explanation
International Business and Cultures, B.S.(1)	The International Business and Cultures (IBC) program has two tracks, both of which utilize many courses that are also used either by programs in the Department of Foreign Languages or by programs in the College of Business. The department chairs of the Department of Foreign Languages and the Department of Economics, Finance, and Marketing jointly oversee the program. Only one unique IBC course exists, and it is regularly taught by the department chair of Economics, Finance, and Marketing, who is the only FT faculty included in Table 4. The students in the IBC program take courses that are taught primarily by the full-time faculty teaching required courses in Business and Foreign Languages. In those programs, a large majority of courses are taught by full-time faculty.
Instructional Leadership, M.A. (3) Instructional Leadership, Ed.S. (3)	These programs are served by three full-time Instructional Leadership (INSL) faculty. One is a full professor and two are lecturers with higher teaching load expectations than tenured or tenure-track faculty. The courses tend to be team-taught since the design and requirement from the State of Tennessee is that half of the six-hour course will be class-based instruction with the other half taught as field experience. Other full-time faculty also teach in these programs. In the M.A. program, six of eight courses are INSL courses, and the other two courses are CUED courses taught by full-time research faculty. Similarly, in the Ed.S. program, five of seven courses are INSL, and two are CUED courses taught by full-time research faculty.
Engineering, Joint with ETSU, B.S.E. (2)	Although only two full-time faculty from the General and Basic Engineering Department taught courses in the B.S.E., five full-time Tennessee Tech faculty in either Mechanical Engineering or Civil Engineering also taught in the program, along with four part-time faculty. In addition, at least four full-time faculty from ETSU taught in this joint program.
Engineering Management, M.S. (1)	Fall 2020 was the initial semester for this degree program. Since the program is designed to be part-time and online for cohorts of working professionals only two EMGT (Engineering Management) courses were planned for the regular 2020-21 academic year. Another faculty member has been hired to assist with the courses added during the second year of the program. In addition, four full-time faculty in the College of Business, with headcounts allocated to College of Business programs, teach courses required by this program.
Environmental and Sustainability Studies, B.S.(3)	This B.S. program is an interdisciplinary program utilizing full-time faculty from Chemistry, Biology, Earth Sciences, Economics, Agriculture, Communication, Sociology, and others, in addition to faculty from the School of Environmental Studies (SOES). The program allows students to choose one of three focused concentrations: Environmental Science concentration with study in either environmental biology, environmental chemistry, or natural resources; Environmental Technology concentration; and Society, Culture, and Communication concentration with study in either communications and media, social science and policy, or leadership and environmental management.
Professional Science (Environmental Informatics), P.S.M. (1)	The P.S.M. is an interdisciplinary program that specifies courses (and utilizes faculty) from Accounting, Marketing, Business Management, Mathematics, and Earth Sciences, as well as from the School of Environmental Studies (SOES). At least seven full-time faculty in programs outside of SOES plus one full-time faculty member in SOES taught courses during the 2020-21 academic year for the 19 students (9 FTE) enrolled in the P.S.M. program.
Professional Studies, B.S. (1) Professional Studies, M.P.S. (1)	These programs are interdisciplinary, utilizing courses and faculty from Nursing, Sociology, Psychology, Computer Science, Communication, Biology, Math, and others.

Table 6 shows the number of full-time faculty for the B.S. in Elementary Education teaching at 2+2 sites where 25% to 49% of the program's credit hours are offered.

Table 6. Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Distribution at 2+2 Sites

Site Code	Site Location	Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSEED)			
		Full-Time Faculty		Part-Time Faculty	
		Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
T60	Motlow State Community College	3	3	3	1.27
T64	Roane State Community College	2	2	0	0.00
T65	Chattanooga State Community College	3	3	1	0.60
TBM	Scott County Higher Education Center	2	2	0	0.00
TPI	TTC – McMinnville	3	3	5	1.87
TPK	Roane State Community College - Oak Ridge	6	6	0	0.00
TPL	Pellissippi State Community College	7	7	1	0.13

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Institutional Data Files

The number of faculty at each alternate 2+2 site is based on the number of students and demand for classes at that site. The full-time faculty members who teach at the 2+2 sites include faculty primarily based on the Tennessee Tech campus as well some faculty who are based at the alternate location or who serve multiple alternate locations. All of the full-time faculty based at 2+2 sites participate fully with faculty based on the Tennessee Tech campus in the oversight and development of the academic program. Thus, the faculty who ensure the quality of the program at 2+2 sites are the same faculty who ensure the quality and integrity of the campus-based academic program.

Delaware Study Norm for Percent Undergraduate SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty. Tennessee Tech participates in national benchmarking through the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, i.e., the Delaware Study, which provides feedback by CIP Code in comparison to national data. In particular, the percentage of undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty is compared for undergraduate academic disciplines at Tennessee Tech with national norms for the same metric determined for comparable undergraduate academic disciplines with the same highest degree awarded, as shown in Table 7. The discussion of Core Requirement 6.1 reported that 22 of 30 Tennessee Tech programs exceed the national norm. At Tennessee Tech, the threshold for reaching the benchmark is achievement of a percentage that is at least 95% of the national norm. Only five of the 30 academic disciplines at Tennessee Tech compared through this study are below the threshold. The five programs are highlighted in Table 7, and Table 8 provides an explanation of the results for the five programs.

Table 7. National Study on Instructional Costs and Productivity (Delaware Study)
Results for Fall 2018

CIP Code	Academic Discipline	Highest Degree Awarded	Percent of Undergraduate SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty		Tennessee Tech Percent of National Norm
			Tennessee Tech	National Norm	
1.0000	Agriculture	B	84%	92%	91%
9.0100	Communication	B	74%	72%	103%
11.0701	Computer Science	BMD	93%	71%	131%
13.0301	Curriculum and Instruction	BMD	65%	55%	118%
13.1101	Counseling and Psychology	BM	98%	50%	196%
14.0701	Chemical Engineering	BMD	100%	90%	111%
14.0801	Civil and Environmental Engineering	BMD	86%	83%	104%
14.1001	Electrical and Computer Engineering	BMD	93%	86%	108%
14.1901	Mechanical Engineering	BMD	90%	86%	105%
15.0000	Manufacturing and Engineering Technology	B	60%	75%	80%
16.0101	Foreign Languages	B	96%	60%	160%
19.0101	Human Ecology	B	85%	51%	167%
23.0101	English	BM	69%	59%	117%
26.0101	Biology	BM	100%	57%	175%
27.0101	Mathematics	BM	91%	64%	142%
31.0501	Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness	BM	57%	67%	85%
40.0501	Chemistry	BMD	99%	82%	121%
40.0601	Geosciences	B	93%	81%	115%
40.0801	Physics	B	100%	80%	125%
45.1001	Political Science	B	100%	82%	122%
45.1101	Sociology	B	89%	74%	120%
50.0702	Fine Arts	B	59%	67%	88%
50.0901	Music	B	64%	64%	100%
51.3801	Nursing	B	81%	84%	96%
52.0201	Decision Sciences	BM	73%	74%	99%
52.0301	Accounting	B	95%	85%	112%
52.0601	Economics	B	76%	89%	85%
52.0801	Finance	B	88%	78%	113%
52.1401	Marketing	B	79%	76%	104%
54.0101	History	B	84%	76%	111%

Source: Tennessee Tech University, Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness, Delaware Report for 2018

Table 8. Explanations for Programs with Percent Undergraduate SCH Taught by Full-Time Faculty Less Than 95% of Delaware National Norm

Unit (Percent of National Norm)	Explanation
Agriculture (91%)	New or changes in faculty responsibilities of three faculty members in the School of Agriculture in 2018 required that adjunct instructors teach a higher-than-average percentage of the students. One new faculty member in a newly acquired position, Poultry Science, was allowed a higher percentage of her responsibility for development of a research program in the poultry science discipline. Another faculty member in the Agribusiness concentration devoted a larger proportion of his responsibility to the development of a vegetable production program at a new farm given to the University. An additional member of the faculty from the animal and pre-veterinary science concentrations (representing a large portion of the students in the School of Agriculture) was given the responsibility of serving as Interim Dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology. These three changes in faculty responsibilities required that the School of Agriculture offer courses taught by five adjunct instructors as compared to three adjuncts hired in 2017 and 2019. One new Agribusiness faculty member and one Agribusiness lecturer have been hired to alleviate the shortage of Agribusiness faculty members to teach courses in that concentration. A search is underway to hire three new animal/poultry science positions for Fall 2021.
Engineering Technology (80%)	The Engineering Technology program relies on selected, well-qualified adjunct faculty from industry because these individuals bring a unique and valuable perspective to a degree program that is focused on preparing students for industry jobs. However, during the Fall 2018 semester, the number of adjunct faculty members was higher than usual for the following reasons. One of the faculty had a research grant, which released him from teaching one of his regular courses. A full-time lecturer in another program, not counted as full-time in the Engineering Technology program, taught one of the required courses; that faculty member has since been hired as a full-time lecturer for the Engineering Technology program. The former department chairperson assigned one of the courses he typically taught to an engineering PhD candidate; that course is now taught by a full-time lecturer in the Engineering Technology program. To provide the program with greater full-time faculty teaching capacity, two tenured faculty who recently retired were replaced by two full-time lecturers.
Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness (85%)	With eight full-time faculty members (five tenured or tenure track and three lecturers), the Department of Exercise Science offered six different undergraduate concentrations to a diverse population of approximately 360 students in Fall 2018. Additionally, the department chair taught several classes that semester. Because of the number of students, courses, and topic specializations needed to keep students on track in their program of study and for timely graduation, and because the department was down at least one full-time faculty member, several qualified adjunct faculty members were hired. Approximately 20 adjunct faculty hires covered approximately 45 hours for undergraduate students and 26 graduate hours in the Fall and Spring semesters. Undergraduate courses being taught by qualified adjunct faculty helped to alleviate teaching overloads by full-time faculty and allowed the department to offer courses in a manner to meet student needs and facilitate timely graduation. This adaptation resulted in the percent of undergraduate SCH being taught by full-time faculty to be lower than the national norms. In hiring additional faculty (filling the vacant position), Exercise Science will fall within the national norms moving forward. A request to fill the vacant position is under review.
Fine Arts (88%)	A significant number of non-art majors take courses in art to satisfy general education requirements. This greatly increases student credit hours generated in the School of Art, Craft & Design. These required General Education courses are mostly taught by adjunct faculty.
Economics (85%)	The higher-than-average use of adjunct professors was due to the retirement of one full-time professor. This was a temporary issue, and a new full-time professor has been hired to replace the retired faculty member.

The discussion in Table 8 indicates that several of these programs missed the threshold because of unique issues that have since been resolved. The Bachelor of Fine Arts will likely continue to be low because of the high General Education service course load taught by adjuncts. In addition, the B.S. in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness (EXPW) will likely continue if the new position is not approved. The department offering EXPW courses uses

adjunct faculty to manage a high demand for one-credit and two-credit activity-based courses, often taken by students as extra credit hours and not required for the degree program.

Courses and Credit Hours Taught as Overload Assignments. To ensure that each program has an adequate number of faculty, the Provost tracks the number of courses and number of credit hours taught and paid as an overload assignment for each course type. A table showing the number of course and credit hour overloads for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 is provided in [6]. The data are available by course descriptor, e.g., CHEM, so the data for some descriptors represent combined overloads for baccalaureate and master's degrees. However, a listing of courses is also available to provide the necessary detail to understand the overload demands for each program.

Overloads must be approved by the Provost and are expected to be used only in exceptional circumstances, e.g., the non-instructional leave, unexpected departure, or death of a faculty member. The overload numbers of courses and credit hours reported in [6] represent a larger-than-normal total. Tennessee Tech offered classes in person in both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters, but classroom capacities were capped in accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidelines for social distancing to reduce the potential of exposure to COVID-19. The limitation on classroom capacity led to additional sections being offered and some of those sections being offered as an overload assignment. Programs with smaller classrooms and/or specialized laboratory facilities, as well as interdisciplinary programs dependent upon faculty shared with other programs, were affected to a greater degree than other programs. However, the overload numbers for the campus are still quite low, representing 1.77% of all course sections and 1.57% of all credit hours on campus for the academic year.

In normal circumstances, programs are expected to offer their courses in a way to minimize the need for overloads. If repeated overloads are necessary as a routine for a program and the program is operating efficiently in support of its mission, the Provost will request a new faculty line for the program.

Regular Reviews. Tennessee Tech participates in regular external and internal review activities to assess the sufficiency of the number of full-time faculty to ensure the quality and integrity of the academic programs. These reviews include (1) discipline-specific accreditation activities involving periodic self-studies and external reviews, (2) periodic external program reviews, and (3) ongoing internal reviews.

***Discipline-Specific Accreditation Reviews*.** Many of Tennessee Tech's academic programs are accredited by specialized professional accrediting agencies. These nationally recognized programmatic accrediting agencies include the following:

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International)
- American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)
- ABET - formerly Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc.
- American Chemical Society (ACS)
- Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) - formerly National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC)
- Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) - formerly National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
- National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)

A list of the accredited programs and related accrediting bodies is provided in [7]. Baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs are among the accredited programs at Tennessee Tech. The accreditation criteria typically include consideration of an adequate number of faculty. For example, Criterion 6 of the 2020-21 *Criteria for Accrediting Computing Programs* [8] established by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET states:

The faculty serving in the program must be of sufficient number to maintain continuity, stability, oversight, student interaction, and advising. The faculty must have sufficient responsibility and authority to improve the program through definition and revision of program educational objectives and student outcomes as well as through the implementation of a program of study that fosters the attainment of student outcomes.

External Program Reviews. In accordance with the Quality Assurance Funding guidelines of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), each program not accredited by an external programmatic accrediting body undergoes an external program review at least every five years according to a pre-approved review cycle. The schedule for these reviews is provided in [9]. These program reviews require development of a self-study report and evaluation, including an on-campus visit by an external reviewer with appropriate credentials in the academic discipline under review. The reviewer evaluates the academic program based on a pre-defined rubric provided by THEC. One of the items in the rubric is faculty, which includes consideration of having an adequate number for the program. For example, the rubric for baccalaureate programs [10] includes item 4.2, which states: "The faculty are adequate in number to meet the needs of the program with appropriate teaching loads."

The complete program review rubrics for baccalaureate and graduate programs are provided in [10] and [11], respectively. Tennessee Tech's funding is affected by the academic programs' performance on accreditation and external program reviews. These systematic reviews are considered seriously by the program faculty and ensure that faculty needs for each program are addressed.

Internal Reviews. In addition to the external accreditation and program reviews that evaluate the adequacy of faculty numbers on a periodic basis, each academic program submits an annual report as part of the Institutional Effectiveness plan for the University. The annual reports focus on progress on program goals and learning outcomes and identify strategies for improvement of the program. Identified improvements are sometimes related to the need for faculty.

As noted previously, the Office of the Provost considers faculty needs across all programs and departments at Tennessee Tech on an ongoing basis. When a faculty vacancy occurs due to retirement, resignation, or an internal move, the vacated faculty position is evaluated for reassignment with respect to faculty needs among all programs on campus. The Provost works with deans, department chairs, directors, and various constituencies on campus to strategically determine the need for replacement and creation of faculty positions. The annual budgeting process provides an opportunity to reassign open faculty positions or create new faculty positions to meet the needs of the academic programs. Consideration is given to program factors such as limitations on class sizes due to accreditation requirements, new program start-ups, enrollment growth trends, funded research expenditure trends, coverage of curricular requirements, and

program metrics as compared to national norms, among others. New or reassigned faculty lines are allocated to the programs where the lines will have the greatest impact.

These external and internal reviews ensure that each academic program has an adequate number of full-time faculty to maintain program quality and integrity.

Special Programs to Strengthen Part-time Faculty (and Graduate Assistant) Involvement and Pedagogy

To strengthen part-time faculty, Tennessee Tech's Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) has online training for the campus learning management system, iLearn, in two modules. The basic level is designed to teach the fundamental mechanics of how to use iLearn. Completion of this module opens access to iLearn and enables access to building a course. The next level (Level 1 certificate) provides training on a variety of additional elements including course development.

The CITL is adding two new trainings in Summer 2021: Adjunct Academy and GTA training. These trainings, which are modified versions of the online iLearn training, will include pedagogical fundamentals of course design based on Online Learning Consortium Course Design Fundamentals. In addition, department chairs are encouraged to partner new faculty members with mentors and provide internal departmental training. Some departments, schools, and/or colleges offer special programs to aid part-time faculty and graduate students with their teaching. For example, the Department of English offers workshops at the beginning and during the semester for part-time faculty and graduate assistant instructors of composition, as well as in-semester workshops for instructors of the general education professional communications course. In the Chemistry Department, graduate assistants meet weekly during the fall and spring semesters for professional development and discussion of upcoming laboratory activities.

The College of Graduate Studies provides an orientation to all incoming graduate students. The CITL's new online module mentioned above will be included in the Fall 2021 orientation session.

Conclusion

This narrative has provided the following evidence:

- Faculty workloads are considered on an annual basis, or more often if needed, and are governed by Policy 203 and Policy 638. A new draft workload policy is under development.
- Faculty responsibilities include curriculum development, oversight, and improvement of academic programs.
- The distribution of full-time and part-time faculty at Tennessee Tech shows an adequate number of full-time faculty with few exceptions, and those exceptions are related primarily to new programs in the start-up phase and to the fact that the full-time faculty teaching in interdisciplinary programs are from a variety of academic disciplines, with headcounts in those other disciplines.

- Twenty-two of 30 of Tennessee Tech's undergraduate programs exceed the Delaware national norm for percent of undergraduate SCH taught by full-time faculty, and only five programs are below the threshold of 95% of the norm. With one exception, the programs below the norm have added or requested additional full-time faculty, and three will likely be within the threshold in the next Delaware report. One exception is a program that teaches a large service load to non-majors and uses adjuncts to support the service load. The other is a program that also uses a large pool of adjuncts for service courses.

- Programs are periodically reviewed by an external accrediting organization or an external qualified reviewer, and adequacy of the number of faculty is a factor in those reviews.

- The Office of the Provost conducts ongoing internal reviews when faculty positions are open to ensure that the position is used to serve the greatest need among all programs at Tennessee Tech. Any faculty overloads must be approved by the Provost.

These policies and processes ensure that the University has a sufficient number of full-time faculty members for each program to maintain curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review. Thus, the institution is in compliance with SACSCOC requirement 6.2.b.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Organizational Chart
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 203 - Faculty Roles and Responsibilities
[03] IE Linked Report 2019-2020 for Mathematics BS
[04] Tennessee Tech Policy 208 - Faculty Workload
[05] Tennessee Tech Policy 638 - Extra Compensation - Dual Services and Outside Employment [06] Courses and Credit Hours Offered Through an Overload Assignment
[07] Accredited Programs and Accrediting Organizations 2019
[08] 2021-22 ABET Computing Accreditation Commission Criteria
[09] QAF Program Review Schedule Updated
[10] THEC 2020-25 Rubric Form for Baccalaureate Program Reviews
[11] THEC 2020-25 Rubric Form for Graduate Program Reviews

R - 6.2.c

Program Coordination

For each of its educational programs, the institution:

c. assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University assigns responsibility for program coordination and curriculum development and review, regardless of delivery mode or instructional site, to qualified faculty members for each of its educational programs. Tennessee Tech defines an academic program as a degree with a defined major in a specialized area, as approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). A full list of THEC-approved current programs can be found on the institution's website [1]. This narrative includes Tennessee Tech's practices regarding program coordination and a roster of program coordinators in 2020-21 and their qualifications for the designated program(s).

Program Coordination Responsibilities

All academic degree programs at Tennessee Tech are housed in an academic department or school led by a chairperson or director with an appropriate terminal degree and academic expertise in at least one of the department/school's major programs. Individual departments are responsible for the coordination and oversight of their programs, including the initiation of course-level and program-level changes and assessing their impact for continuous improvement. The chairperson/director is responsible for assigning qualified faculty to teach courses, for evaluating performance in teaching, advising, research/scholarship/creative activities, and service activities, and for overseeing and coordinating his or her unit's major program curricula [2]. The chairperson/director is also responsible for providing oversight of the curriculum including managing the annual assessment and evaluation of the program outcomes and objectives. In units with multiple distinct disciplines the chairperson/director works closely with faculty in each discipline area and may formally designate certain faculty members with relevant expertise and terminal degrees to oversee the integrity and development of its major programs and/or concentrations, as indicated in the table of department chairs and coordinators [3]. Further, coordination and oversight of graduate programs is the purview of departmental faculty with graduate faculty status.

Program Coordination Procedures

Duties associated with program coordination, regardless of delivery mode or instructional site, are determined by the organizational structure of each individual academic unit. Chairpersons/directors ensure the quality and integrity of programs, working closely with their departmental faculty colleagues, especially those with delegated responsibility to coordinate particular programs. In some units the faculty acts as a "committee of the whole" in this regard, whereas in others there may be designated undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees.

Undergraduate curricular proposals are reviewed by faculty in the initiating department or school and then by a college-level faculty curriculum committee. Upon approval the proposal is then reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee. All department chairpersons and school directors serve on this committee, where they present for approval all curricular additions, deletions, and modifications, and represent the role of their unit's teaching disciplines in the curricula of other degree programs [4]. Graduate curriculum and policy changes follow the same process but are reviewed at the University level by the Graduate Studies Executive Committee, which has representatives from all colleges with graduate programs [5]. The Academic Council must also review and approve all new degree programs or substantive changes to existing degree programs, further ensuring the integrity and implementation of Tennessee Tech academic programs [6]. In addition, many programs are subject to review by discipline area external accrediting agencies (e.g., ABET or ACS, among others). Online programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level have been established in several units and are coordinated in the same ways, and by the same personnel, as traditional programs.

The chairperson or director of an academic department or school is responsible for reviewing and approving all exceptions to University academic requirements for majors in their unit [7], and all course substitutions in the curricula of all students, undergraduate [8] and graduate [9]. For those programs for which there is not an appropriate external accrediting agency, approximately every five years, the chairperson or director leads the department faculty in a comprehensive Academic Audit [10] or Program Review [11] of their degree program(s), conducted by external reviewers.

Examples from the College of Arts and Sciences illustrate the different ways that units ensure appropriate responsibility for program coordination. For six of the nine departments in the College, the department chair coordinates all programs, with the department faculty acting as a "committee of the whole" to approve revisions and changes. The Department of Sociology and Political Science is an exception, since it has programs in two distinct disciplines. As the chair is qualified in political science, she coordinates programs in that discipline, with programs in sociology being coordinated by faculty qualified in that discipline. In the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Earth Sciences, the coordination of their various programs has been delegated to other qualified faculty members. The only programs within the college that are reviewed and endorsed by an external agency are three B.S. programs in Chemistry (by the American Chemical Society). All other programs undergo a five-year academic audit or program review as described above.

Qualifications of Program Coordinators

Program coordinators at Tennessee Tech generally hold the terminal degree in the field or in a related field of the educational program for which they are responsible, regardless of delivery mode or site of instruction. (In the School of Art, most coordinators hold the MFA degree, which is commonly understood to be the terminal degree in that discipline.) The Graduate School further requires that a Graduate Program Director or Coordinator must hold the status of a Graduate Faculty.

In some instances, the highest degree of a faculty member is not the terminal degree in the discipline corresponding to a program that he or she oversees [12]. In several of these cases, the program coordinator holds a master's degree that is directly relevant to the academic program and a doctoral degree based on research within the relevant field. In most such cases, the coordinator's relevant professional experience is also a key factor. A program may also be coordinated on an interim basis by a faculty member while a permanent coordinator is identified;

in all such cases, care is taken to identify interim coordinators who are experienced in administrative and curricular matters, to ensure appropriate guidance for students, effective relations with faculty, and continuity in the academic program.

Special Programs

College of Interdisciplinary Studies. Many interdisciplinary programs at Tennessee Tech are housed in the dedicated College of Interdisciplinary Studies. Within this college, programs in the School of Environmental Studies and the Department of Communication are coordinated in the same way as most other units, by their respective directors/chairs, who are qualified specifically in these areas. The faculty within these areas act as "committees of the whole" when considering curriculum issues. The diverse programs in the Schools of Professional Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies are coordinated by the directors, who have a broad background in adult education. As relevant to each program, the director engages faculty in the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Nursing in the evaluation and revision of curricula. They also work closely with advisors in the Student Success Center to ensure that students are academically prepared and successful. The College as a whole also has a curriculum committee that evaluates course and program revisions before they are moved forward to university-level committees.

Other Interdisciplinary Programs. Other interdisciplinary programs at Tennessee Tech are coordinated by a combination of the relevant departments. For example, while the degree program in International Business and World Cultures is housed in the Department of Foreign Languages, this program is coordinated jointly by the chair of that department and the chair of the Department of Economics, Finance, and Marketing in the College of Business. Similarly, for the MS program in Engineering Management, the coordinator in the College of Engineering chairs an advisory council composed of designated qualified faculty from both the College of Engineering and the College of Business.

2+2 Programs. Both the College of Education and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies offer 2+2 undergraduate programs. In these programs, students complete their first two years of study enrolled as students at a local community college. They then officially enroll at Tennessee Tech to complete the rest of their program by taking courses instructed by Tennessee Tech faculty offered either at the same community colleges or on the Tennessee Tech campus. (For the three 2+2 programs in teacher education, all instruction is by Tennessee Tech faculty based at the community colleges.) Though most or sometimes all instruction in these programs occurs at the community colleges, the programs themselves are coordinated in the same way, and by the same personnel, as the equivalent on-campus programs.

Joint Program in Engineering. Tennessee Tech is a partner with East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in a joint program leading to a B.S. in Engineering (B.S.E.). This program adheres to the SACSCOC requirement for a joint degree of at least 32 hours being taken at each institution. Joint elements of this program are coordinated by qualified co-directors (one for each campus) and an Administrative Council consisting of faculty on both campuses.

Program Coordinator Roster

A roster of program coordinators for 2020-21 has been assembled for review [3]. The roster includes the program name and degree level, the name of the program coordinator(s), and the

coordinator's highest degree earned. In some cases, a coordinator has a second degree that relates to the program for which he or she is responsible. These credentials are also listed after the highest degree earned. A summary of additional coordinator information on licensures, certifications, related work experience, professional publications, and research that relates to program responsibilities, when further explanation of the coordinator's credentials is deemed to be necessary, is provided in [12].

Conclusion

Academic program coordination is entrusted to faculty members with appropriate terminal degrees and/or professional expertise in their discipline to oversee the proper implementation of curricula, in cooperation with department colleagues, chairpersons or directors, and college-level committees, within the process of curricular oversight vested in the University Curriculum Committee and the Academic Council. Tennessee Technological University is therefore in compliance with Standard 6.2c.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] THEC Academic Program Inventory - Excluding Certificates
[02] Job Descriptions
[03] Coordinators for Academic Degree Programs and Concentrations 8-3-2021
[04] University Curriculum Committee Procedures
[05] Graduate Studies Executive Committee Procedures
[06] Academic Council Procedures
[07] Request for Exception to University Requirements
[08] Undergraduate Course Substitution Form
[09] Graduate Substitution Form
[10] Academic Audit Handbook
[11] Program Review Self-Study Report Guidelines
[12] Academic Coordinators with Nonstandard Terminal Degrees 7-28-2021

CR - 8.1

Student Achievement

The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to its mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered regardless of student location or mode of delivery. The University employs multiple measures to document student success. The narrative has the following sections:

- Overview of Mission, Strategic Plan Goals, Nature of Students Served, and Kinds of Programs Offered
- University's Student Achievement Criteria, Measures, Thresholds of Acceptability, Targeted Goals, and Data
- Student Success Improvement Initiatives and Programming
- Student Service Learning and Community Engagement Initiatives
- Publication of Student Achievement Criteria, Measures, Thresholds of Acceptability, Aspirational Goals, and Data

Overview of Mission, Strategic Plan Goals, Nature of Students Served, and Kinds of Programs Offered

Tennessee Tech holds the enviable position of having a name, reputation, and history marked by technological excellence that results in outstanding student success and outcomes. As stated in the University's mission, "Tennessee's technological university creates, advances, and applies knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service" [1].

Based on the mission, the University casts a vision that leverages its strengths: "Tennessee Tech will achieve national prominence and impact through its engaged students, dedicated faculty, and career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving" [1].

Tennessee Tech's core principles are based on academic excellence, community engagement, meaningful innovation, student success, a supportive environment, and value creation. Tech Tomorrow, the University's strategic plan, asserts that "Tech is Tennessee's best university for a real education for real people who seek real careers." Tech consistently has the best educational return on investment in the state, based on its affordable tuition coupled with successful career placement for graduates [2].

The aspirational components of the strategic plan are organized into four goals:

Goal One of the strategic plan is to provide students with an *Education for Life*, which is defined as education that unleashes the potential and passion within students and prepares them for successful careers and culturally enriched lives.

Goal Two calls for *Innovation in All We Do*, embracing and deploying the University's technological foundation in its education, research, service, and stewardship.

Goal Three focuses on *Exceptional Stewardship* through a commitment to optimize resources and continuously improve effectiveness, efficiency, and return on investment for students.

Goal Four emphasizes *Engagement for Impact* by fostering partnerships with government, business, and non-profit organizations to advance economic and workforce development, create and disseminate knowledge, serve the public good, and generate a cultural impact.

In Fall 2021, Tennessee Tech enrolled 9,840 students (8,394 undergraduate and 1,446 graduate students). The full-time equivalent equaled 8,392. Females made up 48.6% of the student population, with males at 51.4%. Just over 17% of students identified as non-white. Engineering was the top major by enrollment with 27% of Tennessee Tech's students. Education was the next highest at 19%. The average ACT score for first-time freshmen was 24.0, and the average high school GPA was 3.69 [3] [4].

The nature of the students served leads to a focus on undergraduate education, especially by providing extensive opportunities for undergraduate research. The programs offered strive for multidisciplinary approaches to undergraduate research, and they foster experiences in real-world problem solving. Programs promote community engagement and service learning, through a practical, hands-on approach. In addition, the nature of the University's students leads to encouragement of early career development awareness. To meet student needs, Tennessee Tech programs encourage specific training and exposure to skills and information needed to achieve career success.

The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 includes a provision for an Outcomes-Based Funding Formula model focused on productivity measured by degree production, student progression, transfer activity, and research/service. While all four-year institutions are measured on the same outcomes, the measures are calibrated to reflect differentiated institutional missions. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) uses the Funding Formula model to quantify student progression and success and also uses Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) to assess program quality. Tennessee Tech has performed well in the outcomes-based formula and on QAF evaluations, bolstered by its consistently having the highest graduation rates and retention rates of all locally governed universities (LGIs) in Tennessee and excellent academic performance as evidenced by students' licensure exam pass rates [5].

University's Student Achievement Criteria, Thresholds of Acceptability, Targeted Goals, and Outcomes

Tennessee Tech evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Student achievement is measured using relevant indicators. The University identifies five key measures to assess student achievement: (1) undergraduate graduation rates (six-year and four-year graduation rates), (2) undergraduate retention rates, (3) licensure pass rates, (4)

performance on senior exit exams, and (5) performance on major field tests. These five criteria illustrate the institution's mission, strategic plan, goals, and student body the University serves. The measures also align with THEC's evaluation criteria of student success. The narrative presented for each criterion herein includes the description of a measure, threshold of acceptability and targeted goal identified, the rationale for the threshold and goal, and evaluations of outcomes for each measure.

A. Undergraduate Graduation Rates

Student graduation rates are common student success indicators. Successfully completing degree requirements is an important step for students in meeting academic and career goals. Tennessee Tech has identified six-year graduation rates and four-year graduation rates to measure student completion and achievement. The University President's Cabinet sets the threshold of acceptability and targeted goal for the six-year and four-year graduation rates [6].

1. Six-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time undergraduate students

- **Threshold of Acceptability: 50%**
- **Targeted Goal: 60%**
- **Outcome:** Table 1 shows the longitudinal data of Tennessee Tech's six-year graduation rates (cohorts 2010-2015) as well as corresponding average graduation rates of Tennessee Locally Governed Institutions, excluding Tennessee Tech [3] [7] [8].

Table 1. Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen.

Cohort	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
TTU 6-Year %	51.2%	49.4%	55.2%	54.4%	57.0%	59.9%
Tennessee LGIs	40.5%	39.0%	41.8%	45.6%	53.1%	

Tennessee LGIs - Average of Tennessee Locally Governed Institutions Excluding TTU

2. Four-year graduation rate of first-time, full-time undergraduate students

- **Threshold of Acceptability: 35%**
- **Targeted Goal: 50%**
- **Outcome:** Table 2 shows the longitudinal data of Tennessee Tech's four-year graduation rates (cohorts 2010-2017) as well as corresponding average graduation rates of Tennessee Locally Governed Institutions, excluding Tennessee Tech [3] [7] [8].

Table 2. Four-Year Graduation Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen.

Cohort	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
TTU 4-Year %	24.7%	25.2%	29.3%	31.3%	34.6%	37.2%	39.5%	35.4%
Tennessee LGIs	18.2%	18.3%	22.5%	24.7%	25.8%			

Tennessee LGIs - Average of Tennessee Locally Governed Institutions Excluding TTU

The determination of the threshold of acceptability for graduation rates was based on a review of available data, the University's continuous improvement initiatives on student success, as well as the mission and vision of the University. Noticeably, the targeted goal for a four-year graduation rate of 50% was also one of the University's 2025 goals.

The six-year graduation rate for the 2015 cohort is 59.9%, which is higher than the 50% threshold of acceptability for six-year graduation rates. Similarly, the four-year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort is 35.4%, which is also higher than the threshold of acceptability of 35% for four-year graduation rates. The most recent three-year average of the six-year graduation rates, 57.1%, and the most recent three-year average of the four-year graduation rates, 37.4%, show that graduation rate measures remain above the respective threshold of acceptability.

Table 3 shows the longitudinal data of the University's six-year graduation rate profile. The data are disaggregated to include graduation rates by gender, race/ethnicity, Pell-eligibility, and first-generation student population characteristics for the 2010–2015 cohorts. Table 4 shows the University's four-year graduation rate profile that includes disaggregate graduation rate data for the 2012–2017 cohorts.

Table 3. Six-Year Graduation Rate Profile.

Cohort	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	N	6-Yr %	N	6-Yr %	N	6-Yr %	N	6-Yr %	N	6-Yr %	N	6-Yr %
Total	**1,898**	**51.1%**	**1,959**	**49.4%**	**2,043**	**55.2%**	**2,158**	**54.4%**	**1,874**	**57.0%**	**1,577**	**59.9%**
Gender												
Male	1,052	49.5%	1,108	46.7%	1,199	52.5%	1,232	49.7%	1,020	53.3%	890	54.8%
Female	846	53.1%	851	52.9%	844	58.9%	926	60.6%	854	61.4%	687	66.4%
Race/Ethnicity												
Alaska Native	2	50.0%	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
American Indian	3	66.7%	7	28.6%	4	25.0%	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	100.0%
Asian	27	59.3%	24	58.3%	20	70.0%	29	65.5%	25	64.0%	25	52.0%
Black or African American	85	45.9%	91	34.1%	87	39.1%	103	36.9%	82	46.3%	73	60.3%
Ethnicity and Race Unknown	7	85.7%	1	0.0%	8	62.5%	4	25.0%	7	57.1%	3	66.7%
Hispanic	48	43.8%	51	31.4%	52	34.6%	61	54.1%	57	50.9%	53	37.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	50.0%	0	-	3	33.3%	0	-	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Nonresident Alien	40	47.5%	72	51.4%	155	67.7%	144	48.6%	39	59.0%	47	44.7%
Two or More Races	22	31.8%	27	44.4%	96	47.9%	96	47.9%	83	44.6%	112	51.8%
White	1,662	51.6%	1,686	50.7%	1,618	55.8%	1,720	56.2%	1,578	58.4%	1,262	62.2%
Pell-Eligible[1]	952	46.4%	969	46.4%	932	52.3%	1,023	50.3%	863	53.3%	740	54.3%
First-Generation[1]	683	43.2%	751	44.6%	681	51.4%	759	49.1%	619	51.7%	475	53.1%

[1] Pell-Eligibility and First-Generation Status are pulled from the FAFSA. Graduation rates are only based off of the students who completed the FAFSA.

Table 4. Four-Year Graduation Rate Profile.

Cohort	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	N	4-Yr %	N	4-Yr %	N	4-Yr %	N	4-Yr %	N	4-Yr %	N	4-Yr %
Total	**2,043**	**29.3%**	**2,158**	**31.3%**	**1,874**	**34.6%**	**1,577**	**37.2%**	**1,586**	**39.5%**	**1,750**	**35.4%**
Gender												
Male	1,199	23.7%	1,232	23.6%	1,020	26.0%	890	27.6%	882	34.0%	1,010	29.6%
Female	844	37.2%	926	41.5%	854	45.0%	687	49.5%	706	46.4%	740	43.2%
Race/Ethnicity												
Alaska Native	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
American Indian	4	25.0%	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	2	50.0%	2	100.0%
Asian	20	40.0%	29	31.0%	25	32.0%	25	36.0%	25	44.0%	16	37.5%
Black or African American	87	18.4%	103	16.5%	82	19.5%	73	34.2%	79	24.1%	92	20.7%
Ethnicity and Race Unknown	8	37.5%	4	25.0%	7	28.6%	3	0.0%	8	37.5%	1	0.0%
Hispanic	52	15.4%	61	31.1%	57	24.6%	53	18.9%	48	29.2%	70	32.9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	0.0%	0	-	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	-	0	-
Nonresident Alien	155	47.7%	144	22.9%	39	25.6%	47	31.9%	47	31.9%	23	21.7%
Two or More Races	96	13.5%	96	13.5%	83	22.9%	112	33.0%	91	33.0%	105	21.0%
White	1,618	29.4%	1,720	33.9%	1,578	36.8%	1,262	38.8%	1,286	41.5%	1,441	37.6%
Pell-Eligible[1]	932	22.6%	1,023	27.0%	863	27.9%	740	30.7%	709	35.1%	815	30.6%
First-Generation[1]	681	25.4%	759	27.0%	619	28.4%	475	30.5%	486	34.4%	526	32.9%

[1] Pell-Eligibility and First-Generation Status are pulled from the FAFSA. Graduation rates are only based off of the students who completed the FAFSA.

The disaggregated graduation rates by gender, race and ethnicity, Pell-eligibility, and first-generation populations show differences among various student groups. While the University's main efforts focus on increasing the overall graduation rates, Tennessee Tech is also making a greater effort to increase completion for students who currently track below average and to improve their achievement.

As part of the effort to increase completion rates, in March 2020, the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees approved two new ways to help Tennessee Tech students and their families: the Tech Promise scholarship and a flat-rate tuition model. Using the flat-rate model, undergraduate students admitted in Fall 2020 and afterward pay in-state tuition or a mandatory fee charged per hour for hours 1-11. Once students reach 12 credit hours, they are charged a flat rate for in-state tuition. The new Tech Promise scholarship is a last-dollar scholarship to help make sure high-achieving, low-income students have access to the opportunity that a Tennessee Tech education represents. The scholarships are available to Tennessee Tech incoming freshmen and new transfer students. President Phil Oldham addressed the Board of Trustees and explained that the combination of students leaving with the lowest debt of any public university in Tennessee and earning the highest average starting salaries places graduates on track for success. These recent University initiatives – flat-rate tuition, Tech Promise scholarship, and reduced out-of-state tuition – form a simple message that benefits students: graduate sooner, pay less, and earn more [9].

First generation and Pell-eligible students' graduation rates have been volatile, but the trajectory of graduation rates with visible improvement and healthy growth in outcomes is very promising. Also noted are low graduation rates in Black/African-American and Hispanic students. Several initiatives have been designed to support student populations that are less prevalent on Tennessee Tech's campus. Another example of the University's intentional effort to support and improve the completion of these students is the Reaching Achievement and Committed to Excellence (R.A.C.E.) program offered through Multicultural Affairs [10]. The section of Student Success Improvement Initiatives and Programming includes details of University initiatives in advising, supplemental instruction, and scholarships that have been designed to support the student populations that are less prevalent.

Key Student Completion Indicator Submitted to SACSCOC. In June 2017, Tennessee Tech identified the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Completion Rate (150 Standard Time) as the Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI) and submitted it to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission (SACSCOC) along with a list of 11 selected peer institutions that are in the same Carnegie Classification as Tennessee Tech in the region [11]. For the 2009 first-time, full-time student cohort, Tennessee Tech's graduation rate is 53%, which is higher than 46.8%, the average 6-year graduation rate of selected peers [12]. When comparing most recently available data, Tennessee Tech's six-year graduation rate for the 2014 cohort is 57.0%, which is again higher than 46.9%, the average six-year graduation rate of the selected peers for the 2014 cohort [13].

B. Undergraduate Retention Rates

Tennessee Tech has identified first-year retention rates for freshmen as a measure of student achievement. The President's Cabinet set the threshold of acceptability for first-year retention rates for freshmen at 75% and the targeted goal at 82%. In addition, President Oldham shared his vision for what Tennessee Tech will accomplish by 2025. Goals related to enrollment, diversity, and graduation and the desire to see the University reach an 82% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate (first-year retention rate) were announced in August 2019. Accomplishing that goal would put the University above the rates of all its Tennessee peers (LGI institutions) [14].

Fall-to-Fall Retention for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen

- **Threshold of Acceptability: 75%**
- **Targeted Goal: 82%**
- **Outcomes:** Table 5 lists Tennessee Tech's retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen. The table also includes average retention rates of Tennessee LGIs excluding TTU [3] [15] [8].

Table 5. Retention Rates for First-Time, Full-Time Freshman Cohort.

Retention Cohort	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Tennessee Tech	1,577	79%	1,589	79%	1,750	75%	1,875	77%	1,683	78%	1,712	73%
LGIs Average	9,875	70%	10,710	71%	10,928	70%	10,343	70%	10,535	74%		

The average first-year retention rates of the five Tennessee peers, LGI institutions, are in the range of 70-74% in 2015-2020. Tennessee Tech's threshold of acceptability of 75% is higher than the average of LGIs' first-year retention rates. The University's fall-to-fall retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen ranged from 75% to 79% for the 2015 to 2019 cohorts, rates which are consistently at or higher than the threshold of acceptability. One exception can be noted in Table 5 is that the first-year retention rate for the 2020 first-time, full-time freshman cohort fell below the threshold of acceptability, although the most recent three-year average of the first-year retention rates of 76% remains above the threshold of acceptability. The undesired drop was largely due to economic and social impacts of the pandemic along with obstacles related to the change of instructional modalities from in-person to online teaching, such as Internet availability, justification for remote learning environment, etc. Noticeable decline in first-year retention rates were observed across the nation during the pandemic years. The University has made intentional efforts to improve the persistence of students and implemented various

initiatives and programs pertaining to advising, maintaining freshman attendance, and mentoring minority students, etc. Examples of initiatives described under the Undergraduate Graduation Rates also help enhance retention for students, including students who are underrepresented. The section of Student Success Improvement Initiatives and Programming provides details of various initiatives.

C. Licensure Exam Pass Rates

Pass rates on professional licensure exams are a key assessment of student achievement at Tennessee Tech. The exams demonstrate students' abilities to synthesize knowledge gained in coursework and apply it to meet standards set by professionals in their field. The thresholds of acceptability and targeted goals are set and monitored by the appropriate unit in each college.

1. Education

Teacher education candidates in the College of Education are required to complete professional licensure exams for program completion at Tennessee Tech and for licensure by the State of Tennessee. During this report's time frame, the State of Tennessee and Tennessee Tech required either the Praxis Subject Assessments (2016-2018) or edTPA Teacher Performance Assessment (2019-2020) exams for all licensure areas.

The ETS Praxis Subject Assessments measure general teaching and subject-specific professional skills and knowledge in a traditional testing format. Comparatively, the edTPA measures teaching skills and knowledge in a performance-based assessment portfolio based upon the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards. The Pearson edTPA Assessment Portfolio completed by teacher candidates is a subject-specific performance assessment based upon the culminating grade level placement and content area of the test taker. For example, an Elementary Education K-5 major may be placed in a 5th grade science classroom for the full duration of his or her placement. After consultation with the mentor teacher, this teacher candidate may complete the Middle School Science edTPA Assessment Portfolio for licensure requirements.

Education (Praxis, edTPA) Exams

- **Threshold of Acceptability:** 92% -- For all licensure areas, established by academic departments
- **Targeted Goal:** 99% -- For all licensure areas, established by academic departments
- **Outcomes:** Table 6 shows the summary of College of Education licensure exam results. The licensure categories include (1) Early Childhood Education; (2) Elementary Education; (3) Secondary Education; (4) Special Education; and (5) Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness.

Table 6. Summary of College of Education Licensure Exam Results.

College of Education Licensure Pass Rates	2016-2017*			2017-2018**			2018-2019**			2019-2020**			2020-2021**		
	#Takers	%Pass	State %Pass	#Takers	%Pass	State %Pass	#Takers	%Pass	State %Pass	#Takers	%Pass	State %Pass	#Takers	%Pass	State %Pass
Early Childhood	20	100%	90%	11	100%	94%	9	100%	89%	10	100%	84%	19	95%	97%
Elementary Education	148	100%	94%	156	99%	97%	144	100%	97%	125	99%	95%	125	97%	98%
Exercise Science, Physical Education, & Wellness	6	100%	53%	9	100%	95%	10	90%	70%	7	29%	74%	8	63%	79%
Secondary Education	60	98%	94%	32	100%	91%	19	100%	87%	36	94%	87%	16	94%	93%
Special Education	3	100%	88%	10	90%	92%	11	100%	89%	15	100%	90%	14	100%	92%

*Praxis Subject Assessments
**edTPA Performance Assessments

The Praxis Subject Assessment scores and edTPA Performance Assessment scores are based on candidates' first-time pass rates. All teacher education licensure programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the national accreditor for teacher education programs. CAEP recommends an overall pass rate of 90%; however, the College of Education exceeds those expectations by requiring an internal threshold of 92% for all licensure areas. The College also has an aspirational threshold of 99% on the exams, acknowledging there is always potential for improvement. Details of individual program licensure exam results are also available [16].

Overall, Tennessee Tech students performed well on all licensure exams in the past five years. The average program pass rates ranged from 94% to 100% in 2015-2021, consistently exceeding the threshold of acceptability, and most of them are higher than the state pass rates. An outlier is the EXPW test scores in the last two years. Although the number of test takers was small, the college was making efforts to address the issue. These scores were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting P-12 and higher education's sudden move to virtual learning. The State of Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) provided a provisional license for the candidates who did not pass the edTPA on the first attempt during this event. These candidates had one year to successfully remediate their scores on the edTPA to obtain a regular, professional license. The College's Office of Teacher Education (OTE) provided individualized support for the candidates to aid in their success in this process. A majority of the repeat test takers successfully passed and obtained a professional license during the TDOE's remediation year.

The College of Education implemented several processes to provide study resources, review teacher candidates' success on the exams, and aid struggling test takers. For example, the OTE designed an online Praxis Exam course in Tech's Desire2Learn system that all teacher candidates are enrolled in during their licensure program. The course contains full access to study guides, practice exams, and other resources provided by ETS, licensure program faculty, and the OTE. All licensure program faculty participate in Data and Assessment Forum (DAF) meetings six times per academic year to review key assessment assignment, placement, and licensure pass rates by program, race, ethnicity, and gender. The DAF meetings provide opportunities for data-driven curriculum decisions to ensure teacher candidates' continued success in their programs. The OTE provides professional seminars while teacher candidates are in their culminating field experience to provide dedicated writing time, peer reviews of portfolios, and consultation with an assigned edTPA coach. The OTE also provides remediation support for candidates who do not pass the exam on the first attempt. The candidates meet with the OTE to determine the next steps to re-submit, and the office aligns its support to the candidate's specific need.

2. Engineering

Civil Engineering students are required to take the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES) Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Exam prior to graduation. Passing this exam is the first step toward professional licensure as an engineer. The requirement is that Civil Engineering students take the exam during the semester prior to graduation, but passing the exam is not required. Students in other engineering majors are encouraged to take the exam, but are not required to do so.

Civil Engineering (FE) Exams

- **Threshold of Acceptability:** 80% -- Civil Engineering FE Exam Pass Rate Ratio (TTU CE Pass Rate/National CE Pass rate), established by the department
- **Targeted Goal:** 90% -- Civil Engineering FE Exam Pass Rate Ratio (TTU CE Pass Rate/National CE Pass rate), established by the department
- **Outcomes:** Table 7 presents Tennessee Tech Civil Engineering students' NCEES FE results.

Table 7. NCEES Fundamental Engineering Exam (FE) - Civil Engineering.

Fundamentals of Engineering Exam		2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
TTU CE Pass Rate	# Takers	60	57	38	35	62
	% Pass	43%	67%	66%	66%	50%
National CE Pass Rate	% Pass	68%	69%	69%	70%	70%
Ratio of TTU to National	% Pass	64%	96%	96%	94%	72%

The Civil Engineering program has defined the threshold of acceptability as achieving a performance ratio of at least 80% between Tennessee Tech's Civil Engineering students and those of their national ABET peers. The targeted goal is 90%. Since many peer programs do not require all graduating seniors to take the exam as Tennessee Tech does, the national pass rate is likely skewed to be representative of more motivated and higher achieving students than representative of all graduates. The threshold of acceptability and targeted goal were set to acknowledge that the students taking the exam at Tennessee Tech represent the entire graduating class.

In 2015-2016, the pass rate declined significantly because of a large enrollment of international students who did not see any value in taking the first step toward professional licensure in the U.S. The faculty worked to reinforce the importance of passing the FE Exam and made changes in CEE 4940 Fundamentals of Civil Engineering, the review course taken by students to prepare for the exam. As a result, the ratio moved above the threshold and above target in the excellent range as defined by the faculty for the 2017-18 through 2019-20 academic years [17].

However, in the 2020-21 academic year, the pass rate again declined to a level below the threshold of acceptability. Because of COVID-19, the CEE 4940 review course had migrated, beginning in March 2020 and continuing through the 2020-21 academic year, from in-person to online and digital delivery. The course was offered in an asynchronous online format with course grades based on one end-of-semester comprehensive examination. The faculty studied the

situation and concluded that the course changes in response to the pandemic were the cause of the FE Exam pass rates falling below threshold. In response, the faculty designed and are implementing a revised class format as an improvement plan to increase student accountability for studying the material on the FE Exam. Course grades are to be based on 15 quizzes plus one comprehensive exam. The program faculty members expect that acceptable FE pass rates will result from these changes.

3. Nursing

Graduates from the baccalaureate degree in the Nursing program are eligible to apply for licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN) through the State Board of Nursing. Graduates must sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) to become licensed as an RN.

Nursing (NCLEX-RN) Exams

- **Threshold of Acceptability:** 85% - Established by the Tennessee Board of Nursing
- **Targeted Goal:** 95% -- Established by Nursing faculty
- **Outcomes:** Table 8 shows Nursing graduates' first-attempt NCLEX-RN pass rates in 2017-2021.

Table 8. NCLEX-RN Licensure Exam Results.

NCLEX-RN		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TTU School of Nursing	# Takers	108	115	126	139	130
	% Pass	95%	99%	96%	99%	94%
National	% Pass	87%	88%	88%	87%	84%

The threshold of acceptability for the NCLEX-RN exam pass rate is set at 85%, which is the same as the Tennessee Board of Nursing's requirement for a pass rate. The Whitson-Hester School of Nursing faculty voted to exceed these requirements and set the School's targeted pass rate as 95% or above. The program consistently exceeds both state and national benchmarks on the NCLEX-RN. Tennessee Tech Nursing School's students performed well in licensure exams. The average program pass rates ranged from 95% to 99% in 2017-2021, and were consistently higher than national pass rates [18].

The School of Nursing provides individualized support for students who do not pass the exam on the first attempt. The students work with the program's advisor to address study and test-taking skills, time management, etc. An improvement plan is created to approach their next steps towards success on the NCLEX, including getting tutoring in the library, studying NCLEX Q&A Review books, and attending Student Success workshops by the Counseling Center.

D. Performance on Senior Exit Exams

As a graduation requirement, all Tennessee Tech graduating seniors take a Senior Exit Exam during their senior year. The University uses the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) for the Senior Exit Exam to assess the critical thinking skills of Tennessee Tech's graduating students. Striving to deliver enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service as

described in the University's mission, the University is committed to increasing students' critical thinking skills and producing career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving. The CCTST test objectively and reliably measures core reasoning skills for reflective decision making, including analysis, inference, evaluation, induction, deduction, interpretation, explanation, and numeracy. The exams are implemented fall and spring semesters in the academic year at the college level. The comparison for this facet of student achievement is based on the ratio of Tennessee Tech graduating seniors' scores versus national average scores.

- **Threshold of Acceptability:** 90% - Ratio of Tennessee Tech CCTST average score/national CCTST average score
- **Achievement Goal: 100**% - Ratio of Tennessee Tech CCTST average score/national CCTST average score
- **Outcomes:** Table 9 shows the comparisons of CCTST results in 2016-2021.

Table 9. Senior Exit Exams (CCTST) Results.

CCTST Results	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
# Test Taker	1904	1528	1552	1452	1445
TTU Average	17.1	17.2	16.8	16.2	74.4
CCTST National Average	16.2	16.2	16.4	15.4	74
Ratio of TTU Score/National Score	106%	106%	102%	105%	101%

CCTST is also an approved standardized exam for one of the THEC Quality Assurance Funding's (QAF) standards: General Education Assessment. The standard evaluates the overall performance of graduating seniors on an approved standardized foundation test. Tennessee Tech uses the exam to meet the QAF requirement [19]. The performance for this standard is evaluated by dividing the institutional average by the national average from the same Carnegie Classification as the institution. The same comparison approach is used for this criterion. To determine the thresholds of acceptability and targeted goals for the CCTST, the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee reviewed the results for the past five years. Based on an analysis of the variance in scores across colleges, the Committee agreed that a ratio of 100% should be the targeted goal, and a ratio of 90%, which is within one standard deviation of the University's five-year average ratio, should be an appropriate threshold of acceptability [20].

As shown in Table 9, results of Tennessee Tech's CCTST scores consistently exceeded the threshold of acceptability from 2016 to 2021. Tennessee Tech graduating seniors have achieved an average score higher than CCTST national averages in the last four years. The University is committed to achieving scores greater than the national average. The 2015-20 THEC QAF Report and a sample of Tennessee Tech graduates' CCTST exam results are also available [21].

E. Performance on Major Field Tests

For programs that do not have licensure requirements, no matter whether they are programmatically accredited or not, the University uses standardized major field tests to assess the quality of academic programs as evaluated by the performance of graduates. The major field tests employed for this purpose are through the Educational Testing Service (ETS) [22] and Area Concentration Achievement Test (ACAT) [23]. Students take major field tests during their final

semester/year of study after they successfully complete most of their major's required courses. The tests can be in paper-and-pencil and/or online formats. All tests are proctored either through on-campus administration or off-campus online administration. ETS and ACAT test results are compared by dividing the Tennessee Tech program score by the national comparison average.

- **Threshold of Acceptability:** 90% - Ratio of Tennessee Tech graduating senior major field test score/national norm
- **Targeted Goal: 100**% - Ratio of Tennessee Tech graduating senior major field test score/national norm
- **Outcomes:** Tables 10 and 11 show the comparisons of ETS and ACAT major field tests of academic programs in 2016-2021, respectively.

Table 10. Major Field Tests – ETS (2016-2021).

Program	Type of Exam	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
		TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %
ACCOUNTING	ETS	149	152	98%	153	152	101%	153	152	101%	159	152	105%	158	152	104%
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ETS	143	152	94%	148	152	98%	153	152	101%	151	152	99%	151	152	100%
CHEMISTRY	ETS	146	150	98%	145	149	97%	154	149	104%	147	148	99%	146	148	99%
COMPUTER SCIENCE	ETS	159	148	107%	166	148	112%	157	148	106%	145	148	98%	144	148	97%
ENGLISH	ETS	156	153	102%	150	153	98%	148	153	97%	155	153	101%	149	153	97%
FINANCE	ETS	153	152	101%	150	152	99%	153	152	101%	158	152	104%	157	152	103%
MARKETING	ETS	140	152	92%	146	152	96%	153	152	101%	146	152	96%	149	158	94%
MATHEMATICS	ETS	161	157	103%	172	157	110%	173	157	110%	166	158	105%	159	152	105%
PHYSICS	ETS	163	150	109%	157	150	105%	162	150	108%	xx	150		148	150	99%
POLITICAL SCIENCE	ETS	147	153	96%	149	152	98%	147	152	97%	146	152	96%	147	152	96%
PSYCHOLOGY	ETS	151	156	97%	151	156	97%	153	156	98%	154	157	98%	154	156	98%
SOCIOLOGY	ETS	143	148	97%	142	148	96%	145	148	98%	143	148	97%	142	148	96%
AVERAGE		**151**	**152**	**99%**	**152**	**152**	**100%**	**154**	**152**	**102%**	**152**	**152**	**100%**	**150**	**152**	**99%**

Table 11. Major Field Tests – ACAT (2016-2021).

Program	Type of Exam	2016-2017			2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
		TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %	TTU	National	TTU/ National %
AGRICULTURE	ACAT	510	500	102%	505	500	101%	494	500	99%	503	500	101%	517	500	103%
BIOLOGY	ACAT	456	500	91%	483	500	97%	457	500	91%	462	500	92%	473	500	95%
COMMUNICATION	ACAT	562	500	112%	575	500	115%	530	500	106%	562	500	112%	548	500	110%
GEOSCIENCES	ACAT	514	500	103%	487	500	97%	555	500	111%	464	500	93%	474	500	95%
HISTORY	ACAT	496	500	99%	500	500	100%	489	500	98%	543	500	109%	486	500	97%
WILDLIFE & FISHERIES SCIENCE	ACAT	502	500	100%	477	500	95%	505	500	101%	497	500	99%	485	500	97%
AVERAGE		**507**	**500**	**101%**	**505**	**500**	**101%**	**505**	**500**	**101%**	**505**	**500**	**101%**	**497**	**500**	**99%**

The Major Field Assessment is one of the THEC Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) standards. As mandated by the QAF, each program was scheduled to report its major field exam results to THEC once during a five-year cycle [24]. Although QAF only requires once every five years reporting, the University requires graduating seniors in all programs to take the exams annually. Major field tests have also been widely used in program assessments for institutional effectiveness reviews. The comparison approach for this measure is consistent with the THEC QAF scoring criteria for major field tests. The Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee reviewed the results disaggregated by program of major field tests (ETS and ACAT) for the past five years. Based on an analysis of the variance in score, the Committee concluded that programs should have a ratio no more than one standard deviation below the University's overall ratio. This

translated to a threshold of acceptability of 90%. As for the targeted goal, the Committee agreed that the University and its individual programs should strive for achievement that was equal to or greater than the national average, resulting in a goal of 100% [20].

As shown in Table 10, the average ratios of Tennessee Tech ETS test scores/national norms vary in the range of 99%-102%. All academic programs listed on the table have achieved the comparison ratios above the threshold of acceptability of 90%. Several programs have consistently attained results exceeding the targeted goals. Very similar to the ETS results, academic programs that use ACAT exams have achieved the comparison ratios exceeding the threshold of acceptability of 90%. The average ratios of Tennessee Tech program test scores/national norms vary in the range of 99%-107%, which are also higher than the targeted goal of 100%, see Table 11.

Student Success Improvement Initiatives and Programming

Tech Tomorrow, the University's strategic plan, serves as a blueprint guiding Tennessee Tech's path forward [2]. The plan identifies strategic goals, priority actions, and specific tactics to advance the University through continued success in the future. The University's core principles call for high academic achievement; empowerment of students to realize their potential, craft individualized experiences, and discover their passion; a supportive environment for a diverse and welcoming community; and a high return on investment from state, tuition, and donors. The student success improvement initiatives and programming described below exemplify the University's actions to support and enhance student achievement.

- ***New Tech Promise Scholarship***

  The Tech Promise is a four-year scholarship and covers tuition and mandatory fees at Tennessee Tech for eligible students. It is a last-dollar scholarship, meaning it covers the cost of tuition and mandatory fees not met by other financial aid. To be eligible, a student must be a full-time undergraduate, receive the Tennessee HOPE scholarship, receive any level of federal Pell grant, and have a family adjusted gross income under $40,000.

  Tennessee Tech is one of the top schools in the state with regard to social mobility, and President Oldham encourages the Board of Trustees to focus on alleviating some of the financial concerns faced by low-income students. Tech Promise ensures these talented students are not kept away from the promising future a Tennessee Tech degree will open up to them. Often high-achieving students from a low-income situation will assume that a Tennessee Tech education is unavailable to them, even though that is not the case for so many. As a result, they do not apply. The Tech Promise removes this barrier to make sure these students know they have access to a high-quality Tennessee Tech education that will help them change their lives [9].

- ***New Flat-Rate Tuition Model***

  When the Board of Trustees approved a flat-rate tuition model in March 2020, the University could then offer a single price for full-time tuition, letting students take 12 credit hours or more per semester at the same flat rate. This is a key component of Tennessee Tech's desire to make college costs as transparent as possible, so that

students and families can better predict college costs and better prepare. Other parts of this simplified pricing initiative include two items approved by the Board of Trustees last December: reduced and flat out-of-state tuition and a simplified mandatory fee structure. Along with making it easier to budget for college, the change should help more students graduate on time.

Students need to average 15 credit hours per semester to stay on track in their programs. However, the federal definition of full-time student is 12 credit hours per semester, which gives students an incentive to meet the minimum requirements. Many students need a fifth or even sixth year to graduate. Research has shown that students who take 15 credit hours or more each semester tend to be more successful in their classes, and they also are more likely to graduate on time in four years. Tennessee Tech has set a goal to increase four-year graduation rates to 50% by 2025 and sees this new tuition model as a new, powerful tool to help achieve this goal [9].

- ***Diversity Scholarship Initiative***

  The Tennessee Tech Diversity Scholarship Initiative is an effort to increase and enhance the overall diversity of the student population. The intent of the initiative was to establish diversity scholarships through fundraising. The initiative was launched in 2019 with a goal of earning $2 million. Currently, the largest minority group at Tennessee Tech is the African-American student population—a group that has made up less than 4% of the overall student population and has never reached 5%. The new scholarships will help recruit and retain minority students and improve the representation of minority students on campus. Currently the University has raised over $2 million, and two scholarships have been established under the Diversity Initiative/Endowment. In 2021-22, the University was able to award a total of 16 Diversity Scholarships: four Tennessee Tech African-American Endowed Scholarships and 12 Tennessee Tech Ethnic Diversity Scholarships [25].

- ***R.A.C.E and R.A.C.E Plus Programs***

  The R.A.C.E. Peer Mentoring Program began 10 years ago to support first-time minority students in their transition to life at Tennessee Tech and to increase their chances of succeeding through graduation. Developed by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, this peer mentoring program is designed to provide social and intellectual support for students in an effort to help them become positively involved academically, socially, and culturally as a part of the community. The program includes peer mentoring, group activities, study sessions, a freshman year experience course, professional and personal development workshops, and Sneak Peek Week. Sneak Peek Week is a five-day program that allows the first-time freshmen to get acclimated to campus about a week prior to the first day of classes so they can meet their peer mentor as well as faculty and staff, move in early, and participate in various activities or workshops designed to help them have a healthy transition into college life at Tennessee Tech [10].

  Built upon the current R.A.C.E program, the new R.A.C.E. Plus program is open to minority sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The program emphasizes professionalism and leadership for undergraduate student success and assists students in streamlining their transition from freshman to sophomore and, then, to upperclassmen. The program includes workshops on professional development and graduate school

preparation; an Advanced Connections Course on professional development; research and campus event planning with Admissions this year; and a stipend for all participants. The program began in 2020-21, and is sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents [26]. To date, a total of 510 students have participated in R.A.C.E. (366 students) and R.A.C.E. Plus (44 students) programs. Both programs have demonstrated that they are effective in assisting minority students and improving their retention and graduation rates.

- ***Student Equity***

  The 2020-25 THEC QAF program includes a new standard: Student Equity. The Student Equity standard is designed to incentivize institutions to qualitatively and quantitatively improve outcomes for populations historically underserved in higher education in alignment with the Tennessee Higher Education Master Plan [27]. The standard directs institutions to enhance the quality of student services and institutional support to increase equity in student outcomes. THEC requires that each institution select a population of undergraduate students that has been historically underserved by higher education and that is important to their mission and then work to increase the equity of outcomes for these students. Tennessee Tech has selected Students of Color as the targeted population for student equity. As defined by THEC, Students of Color include students who self-identify as Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/American Indian, and two or more races.

  The University is committed to maintaining an inclusive community that recognizes and values the inherent worth of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his/her own potential. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Tennessee Tech's commitment to improving student diversity is demonstrated in one of five priority actions for Goal One: Education for Life, in the Tech Tomorrow strategic plan. The current population of Students of Color at Tennessee Tech is 13.2% in headcount and 12.2% in full-time FTE. Selecting Students of Color as the targeted population for the QAF student equity standard aligns with the University commitment to maintain an inclusive and diverse campus. During 2020-21, the University conducted a self-assessment of the students in the targeted population that evaluated the current state of target-student access and success, including baseline quantitative and qualitative measures. Based on the assessment results, the University has been developing strategies and action plans to enhance strengths and address areas needing improvement. The University continues to enhance the quality of student services and institutional support for Students of Color to ensure that they have a successful and enriched learning experience at Tennessee Tech. It is anticipated that Tennessee Tech's actions and initiatives will improve the graduation rate and retention rate of the targeted population [28].

- ***Flight Path Freshman Attendance Initiative***

  The primary focus of the Flight Path is to encourage consistent class attendance and participation by freshmen. Regular class attendance and participation (in-person or online depending on course delivery) is a major factor in determining the academic

success of freshmen. This initiative represents a collaborative effort between multiple offices within Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and student services including faculty, Residential Life, academic support staff, and Student Success teams.

First-year students with documented course absences or course participation concerns receive early intervention contacts from trained members of the Residential Life staff, as well as Student Success staff to ensure they are connected with faculty, staff, and services specifically allocated to facilitate their success [29].

- ***Launchpad Student Success Center (Opened in June 2020)***

  The Launchpad Student Success Center is student-focused and welcomes all first-year, General Curriculum, General Health Studies, and undecided transfer students. The Center fosters positive professional relationships between students, advisors, faculty, and staff; encourages academic exploration; and empowers students to take ownership of their educational experiences. Working collaboratively with all members of the campus community, the Center ensures each student has a smooth transition and the direction needed to meet his or her goals [30].

- ***TechConnect***

  Tennessee Tech has teamed with the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) to access technology, research, and predictive analytics that support and enhance Tennessee Tech's student experience to support higher graduation rates and reduced student debt. The Student Success Collaborative (SSC) Navigate, also called TechConnect, is an early alert and communication platform that is easy to use for both students and faculty/staff. As an online student support system, TechConnect brings Tennessee Tech students, faculty, and staff closer together by providing a one-stop shop for student services and academic advising information. Advisors and faculty use TechConnect to support students in many ways. It can be used to initiate meeting campaigns, which allow students to schedule an appointment during a specific timeframe; document interactions with students; send emails or text messages to students; generate reports on student appointments; and issue alerts when there are student concerns. Students can use TechConnect to schedule a meeting with a tutor and may also connect with their professional advisor, faculty advisor, or instructor, if that staff member has added his or her availability to the platform [31].

- ***Supplemental Instruction***

Library – Class+ is Tennessee Tech's approach to Supplemental Instruction offered through the Volpe Library Learning Center. In it, an upper-class student is hired to attend a course he or she has previously completed. Each week, that student offers a post-class study session, where the content can be reviewed through activities and success strategy brainstorming; and current students can ask questions. The sessions are voluntary and benefit students who are enrolled in the class. In addition, the University provides free tutoring to all Tennessee Tech students. Tutoring is available for any class or subject as well as help in writing; preparing for tests; increasing study skills; learning to do library research; and creating resumes, presentations, and posters. Due to the pandemic, the University-wide tutoring program through the library has moved online. Students continue to schedule appointments through TechConnect [32].

College of Engineering Supplemental Instruction – Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic assistance program that utilizes peer-assisted study sessions. These regularly scheduled sessions provide informal reviews in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items. Students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together. The sessions are facilitated by "SI leaders," students who have previously done well in the course and who attend all class lectures, take notes, and act as model students. SI is a free service offered to all students in targeted, high-risk courses. Participation is voluntary, but all students are encouraged to attend. Students with varying levels of academic preparedness and diverse ethnicities can participate [33].

- ***Student Workshops***

Launch Workshop Series – Launchpad's *Launch Workshop Series* is designed to further support new students with their adjustment and transition into college life. The workshop series represents a partnership and collaboration between departments and resources to provide first-year students with tools to be successful at Tennessee Tech. The workshop series focuses on academic success, self-improvement, development opportunities on and off campus, and preparation of students to graduate career ready [34].

E.N.C.O.R.E. (Empower. Network. Connect. Overcome. Reach. Educate.) Workshop Series – When it comes to academic, civic, and professional development, the College of Education strives to provide its students with effective programs to better support and elevate them. In hosting E.N.C.O.R.E. seminars, the College of Education promotes student success by

- Empowering its students to become independent and self-governing learners;
- Allowing its students to build self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn, communicate, and engage in curriculum;
- Educating its students on how to identify and articulate individual academic goals and needs;
- Providing its students with a peer mentor and seminar leader to develop and implement an action plan to achieve academic goals and needs; and,
- Promoting the understanding of students' individual strengths and areas needing improvement through a multitude of personal, academic, and career-based areas [35].

Student Service Learning and Community Engagement Initiatives

The importance and influence of high-impact practices like service- and community-based learning, in terms of benefit to college students, is well-documented through researchers [36] [37]. Tennessee Tech's Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge has taken high-impact practices to the next level. Tech Tomorrow, the University's strategic plan, promotes the Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge, which offers a unique approach among universities that have adopted a Grand Challenge. In addition to in and outside of classroom initiatives on service learning, Tennessee Tech students have further opportunities to get involved early in their academic careers with campus and community engagement, while assisting the University in meeting its own strategic initiatives and community engagement goals [3].

- ***Service Learning Activities***

  Service Learning enriches students' overall learning experience and positively impacts students' achievement at the University. Tennessee Tech began its Service Learning/Community Engagement initiative in the early 2000s. The University encourages faculty to build in service learning assignments to their curriculum and provide opportunities to increase visibility of service learning and community engagement to student clubs and organizations. From 2017 to 2020, the number of academic service learning students (course affiliated) increased from 1,368 to 2,209, and the number of academic courses with service learning component increased from 133 to 160 [38].

- ***The Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge Initiative***

  In March 2019, Tennessee Tech expanded its goals of student engagement, service learning, and community engagement through the creation of its Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge, which harnesses science, technology, and innovation to transform rural living. Born out of the Tech Tomorrow strategic plan, RR was created to develop and support the success of rural areas throughout Tennessee in a way that can be replicated to help rural areas across the nation and beyond [39]. Since its implementation, over 3,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members have become involved with the initiative.

  Tennessee Tech students play a large role in the success of RR, and student involvement includes performing service learning and student club service projects; incorporating rural needs into required coursework and research; interning or receiving academic service hours, graduate assistantships, or practicum hours through leveraging their study skill sets in rural communities; and creating ideas or devices to solve rural problems through University innovation and entrepreneurship competitions. In 2019-2020, over 600 students conducted service learning in rural areas for a total of over 50,000 service learning and volunteer hours.

  Faculty and Centers of Excellence participate in RR through developing rural-related curriculum, research, and grant proposals that focus on challenges in rural communities. Research ranges from solving problems in the following areas: fresh food, energy, and water (FEW); the need for a high-quality STEM workforce and assisting STEM students with demonstrated financial need; agriculture needs/shortages; rural education; and data science uses and implementation. RR research provides the opportunity for students, faculty, and staff across all nine colleges to collaborate on innovative solutions to assist rural areas.

  Examples of community partners in which RR students, faculty, and staff engage with and aid include community chambers of commerce, institutions, businesses, libraries, schools, museums, individual members, and more. Accordingly, the University sees RR students returning to work in and serve these rural areas and community partners upon graduation. RR has impacted over 40 counties since its implementation, and the University is confident that the initiative will continue to expand its outreach through the above involvement of faculty, students, and the community.

Publication of Student Achievement Criteria, Measures, Thresholds of Acceptability, Aspirational Goals, and Data

The University publishes the student achievement measures, thresholds of acceptability, targeted goals, and outcomes on the University's SACSCOC accreditation web page [40].

Conclusion

Tennessee Tech University is proud of the accomplishments of its students. The University evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission and the students it serves. One of the core principles in the Tech Tomorrow strategic plan is Student Success, in that it explicitly indicates that "we empower students to realize their potential, craft individualized experiences, and discover their passion." The student achievement is assessed on a variety of performance indicators. The thresholds of acceptability and targeted goals adopted by the institution and academic programs are appropriate to demonstrate student achievement. The University and academic units evaluate outcome data and use this information in ongoing planning and assessment activities that guide improvement efforts, as directed by the University's strategic plan. The overall goal of the University is to achieve its vision: "Tennessee Tech will achieve national prominence and impact through its engaged students, dedicated faculty, and career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving." Tennessee Tech is in compliance with standard CR - 8.1 Student Achievement.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Mission and Vision Statement
[02] Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan
[03] TTU Quick Facts Fall_2021_Rev
[04] Current Student Body Fall 2021_Rev
[05] Tennessee Higher Education Commission Quality Assurance Funding Summary
[06] Presidents Cabinet_Rev
[07] Graduation Rates Report - Fall 2021 - Unsuppressed_Rev
[08] THEC Fact Book 2020-2021_Full Draft_Suppressed_Rev
[09] News on Promise Scholarship and Flat-Rate Tuition Model March 12 2020
[10] R.A.C.E. Program Reaching Achievement and Committed to Excellence
[11] SACSCOC Completion Information Submission Confirmation
[12] 2009 Cohort 6-yr Grad Rates of SACSCOC Peers
[13] 2014_Cohort_6_yr_Grad_Rates_of_SACSCOC_Peers_Rev
[14] President Oldham Blog - August 2019
[15] Retention Rates Report - Fall 2021_Rev
[16] 2017-2021 Education Program Licensure Exam Result
[17] 2017-2020_EAC_Enrolled_CE_FE_Results_Rev
[18] 2017-2021 TTU NCLEX-RN Results
[19] CCTST THEC 2020-25 Quality Assurance Funding
[20] IEAC Meeting Minutes 2021-02-08
[21] 2015-20 THEC QAF Report and 2020 TTU CCTST Final Results
[22] Educational Testing Service Website
[23] Area Concentration Achievement Test Website
[24] Major Field Tests THEC 2020-25 Quality Assurance Funding
[25] Tennessee Tech Ethnic Diversity Initiative Scholarship
[26] R.A.C.E. Plus Program
[27] THEC Master Plan 2025 0418 - NEW

[28] Student Equity - THEC 2020-25 Quality Assurance Funding Guidebook 3
[29] Flight Path Freshman Attendance Initiative
[30] Launchpad Student Success Center
[31] Tech Connect
[32] Library Class Supplemental Instruction
[33] College of Engineering Supplemental Instruction
[34] Launch Workshop Series
[35] E.N.C.O.R.E. Workshop Series
[36] High-Impact Practices - George D. Kuh Association of American Colleges and Universities
[37] High-Impact Educational Practices - Association of American Colleges and Universities
[38] Tennessee Tech Service Learning and Community Engagement
[39] Grand Challenge Outcomes Tech Tomorrow Strategic-Plan
[40] Tennessee_Tech_SACSCOC_Accreditation_Webpage_v3_Rev

R - 8.2.a

Student Outcomes: Educational Programs

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

All educational programs at Tennessee Technological University have identified student learning outcomes, assess the extent to which students achieve those outcomes, and provide evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results. The assessment process is the same for all undergraduate and graduate programs for all modes of instruction by which a program is offered via a fully face-to-face, a fully online, or a hybrid modality.

Institutional Process

The institutional effectiveness (IE) process at Tennessee Tech is facilitated and supported by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness (IARE). This office is responsible for assuring that student outcomes, assessment methods and results, and evidence of modifications for continuous improvement are documented and archived. The *IARE website* [1] provides resources and support for programs and units engaging in the IE process. The University also uses Anthology as a repository for all IE reports and supporting documentation. Led by their department chair, program faculty are responsible for the identification of student learning outcomes (SLOs), collection and analysis of assessment data, and determination and implementation of any needed modifications for continuous improvement. Additional guidance and support are provided by the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee (IEAC), which is charged with overseeing the continuous improvement of the IE process at the departmental level. The IEAC and IARE staff collaborate to provide training on the IE process as needed (e.g., faculty turnover, changes to SLOs and goals, revisions to assessment tools, and changes in accreditation requirements).

For over a decade, the University has implemented an IE process based on a model of continuous improvement (See Figure 1). This process follows an annual cycle that aligns with the University's fiscal year of July 1st to June 30th. As with any ongoing IE process, there is overlap across the four phases as faculty may simultaneously be reporting on the previous cycle, implementing modifications and assessing outcomes in the current cycle, and planning for the upcoming cycle. This report includes assessment reports for each of Tennessee Tech's educational programs, including programs that were recently created, distance learning programs, and programs with components at off-campus locations.

Figure 1. Continuous Improvement Cycle

All educational programs are required to complete an annual IE report documenting their institutional effectiveness activities throughout the year. A table containing links to the annual IE reports for all degree programs for the past three cycles can be found in *Annual IE Report for Academic Degree Programs (FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021)* [2]. The document also details some of the modifications each program has initiated to improve student learning outcomes.

Each IE report is comprised of a set of templates within the Anthology Planning module that mirror the continuous improvement cycle. Figure 2 presents the timing of this annual cycle. A brief description of the process and specific templates used to document each phase are provided below. More detailed information on the IE process at Tennessee Tech can be found in the *Guide to Completing Institutional Effectiveness Reports* [3] and *A Tutorial on Institutional Effectiveness at Tech* [4].

Figure 2. Timeline for Annual IE Cycle

Institutional Effectiveness Cycle and Annual Report. At the beginning of the fiscal year, program faculty review their mission statement, program goals, and student learning outcomes. These IE elements are documented on the *Definition of Unit* [5] and *Goals and Objectives/Outcomes* [6] templates. Alignment of program goals and learning outcomes to the University's strategic plan is also noted. The *Assessment Methods* template [7] for each program goal and learning outcome to be assessed that year is also completed at this time. This template includes the type of assessment tool, a description of the instrument, when and how assessment data will be collected, and the criteria or target for determining whether or not an expected outcome was achieved. These three templates constitute what is often referred to as an IE plan.

The assessment of student learning outcomes and collection of assessment data are carried out by faculty throughout the fall and spring semesters. During this time, faculty also implement any action plans for improving student outcomes identified in a previous assessment cycle. Analyses of assessment data and the results are recorded on the *Results* template [8]. At the end of the academic year, faculty review their assessment results, comparing them to previous outcomes data and the intended target. Discussion focuses on areas where improvement is needed and what actions should be taken. This discussion and the resulting action plan(s) are documented on the *Modifications for Continuous Improvement* template [9]. An annual IE report is comprised of the three planning templates completed at the beginning of the cycle and the *Results* and *Modifications for Continuous Improvement* templates completed at the end of the cycle.

Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee. Additional oversight and support for the IE process at the departmental level is provided by the IEAC. This committee is comprised of faculty and staff who are well versed in assessment practices and includes representation from each college at the University [10]. Members work closely with the IARE staff to support the IE process across both educational programs and administrative and support units of the University.

The IEAC meets regularly to review and discuss the IE reports from the most recently completed cycle and provide targeted feedback. A standard rubric [11] is employed for evaluating the quality of each element of an IE report on a three-point scale – Developing, Acceptable, and Exemplary. Results are recorded on the *IE Report Reviewer Sheet* [12], a copy of which is sent to the program. IARE staff work with individual programs to modify their IE reports as needed based on the IEAC's review and feedback.

Based on the results of the IEAC review, the annual IE report for each program is rated as follows:

Exemplary – These programs have identified measurable student learning outcomes, comprehensive assessment tools (both direct and indirect), and processes for analysis and discussion of data. Assessment results are used to continually monitor progress on outcomes and make changes accordingly.

Acceptable – These are programs that have the appropriate IE components, but the reporting language may be vague or need revision. Adjustments to student learning outcomes, assessment tools, and/or modifications for continuous improvement are recommended.

Developing – These programs have identified student learning outcomes, but need to add and/or improve the quality of the outcomes, assessments, and modifications.

A summary of the IEAC ratings for the three most recent IE cycles are presented in Table 1. Overall, 72% of program IE reports were rated as "Acceptable" or "Exemplary" in FY 2019. With the guidance and support of the IEAC, 22 of these programs have improved, moving up at least one category on this scale. In FY2021, 100% of program IE reports were rated as "Acceptable" or "Exemplary". A complete listing of the IE report ratings by program is provided in the supporting documents [13].

Table 1: Summary of IEAC Ratings of IE Reports

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Exemplary	26%	29%	36%
Acceptable	50%	56%	64%
Developing	24%	15%	0%

Identifying Student Learning Outcomes

Program faculty are responsible for identifying appropriate student learning outcomes that describe what students are expected to know, think, and do upon successful completion of their degree program. Degree programs with discipline specific accreditation have student learning outcomes that align with the expectations of their accrediting agency. Learning outcomes are included in the initial proposal for all degree programs, then reviewed annually during the planning phase of the IE process. Each educational program is also required to submit a curriculum map with their annual IE report that demonstrates where the program level-student learning outcomes are addressed and level of instruction (categorized for example as Introduced, Reinforced, or Advanced) within the courses that comprise the program. Examples of student learning outcomes from the 2020-21 IE reporting year are listed below. Sample curriculum maps for Environmental Studies B.S. [14], Human Ecology B.S.H.E. [15], Fine Arts B.F.A. [16], Physics B.S. [17], Psychology B.S. [18], Chemistry M.S. [19], Nursing M.S.N. [20], and Engineering Ph.D. [21] demonstrate how these learning outcomes are addressed within each program's curriculum.

Environmental Studies B.S.

- Students will communicate scientific information effectively in writing, orally, and visually.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate social, economic, biological, chemical, and physical science knowledge to identify, formulate, and solve environmental problems.

Fine Arts B.F.A.

- Students will have a broad understanding of art movements, artists, and historical context to deepen understanding.
- Students will be familiar with non-Western art forms, which provides them with greater sources of inspiration and understanding of the various purposes, perspectives, and motivation for creating art.
- Students will comprehensively develop as an artist with a competent understanding of process, concept, professional practice, context, and problem solving.

Human Ecology B.S.H.E.

- Students will be prepared for life-long success in their careers and for graduate study as evidenced by their critical thinking and communication skills, and their ability to work effectively with others.
- Students will demonstrate competent knowledge in the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge.

Physics B.S.

- Students completing calculus-based and algebra-based introductory physics courses will demonstrate increased understanding of foundational basic concepts in mechanics.
- Students graduating in physics will demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles and foundations of physics.

Psychology B.S.

- Students completing the baccalaureate program in psychology will develop knowledge of psychology.
- Students completing the baccalaureate program in psychology will be capable of planning, implementing, and presenting an original research project.
- Students completing the baccalaureate program in psychology will demonstrate the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, learn on their own, and work effectively with others.

Chemistry M.S.

- Students will employ critical thinking skills to analyze a chemical problem.
- Students will collect background information through the effective use of the scientific literature.
- Students will prepare a hypothesis, design and execute experiments to test the hypothesis, keeping complete experimental records.
- Students will apply appropriate statistical analysis to collected research data.
- Students will apply critical thinking skills to further refine the hypothesis based on experimental evidence.
- Students will effectively communicate scientific knowledge and ideas through both oral and written communication skills.

Nursing M.S.N. (Distance Learning Program)

- Students will demonstrate knowledge and competencies in advanced nursing practice, nursing education, and nursing administration.
- Students will integrate specialized knowledge and theories from nursing and related disciplines into advanced nursing roles.
- Students will use research to validate and refine knowledge relevant to advanced nursing roles.
- Students will practice advanced nursing roles in collaborative relationships across disciplines and in partnership with communities (nursing education, nursing administration, and advanced clinical practice).
- Students will manage the healthcare of clients within legal, ethical, and professional standards.
- Students will improve the health of clients among diverse population groups.
- Students will promote positive changes in health care delivery, health policies, and nursing practice.

Engineering Ph.D.

- The student should demonstrate breadth of knowledge in the discipline and depth in the specific area of his/her research topic.
- The student should gain experience in doing independent academic work and research.
- The student should demonstrate his or her ability to identify and define the research topic.
- The research work performed by the student should contribute to the existing knowledge in the engineering field.
- The student should demonstrate the ability to clearly communicate complex engineering and research topics in both verbal and written format.

Assessing the Extent to which Student Learning Outcomes are Achieved

Faculty employ a variety of direct and indirect appropriate measures to assess student learning outcomes, including standardized tests, departmental tests, faculty-developed rubrics for evaluating student artifacts such as capstone projects or theses, exit interviews, and advisory boards [22]. Specific examples of the different assessment tools faculty employ and the targets set to determine the extent to which students have achieved the specified learning outcomes for their degree program are provided below.

Communication B.S. The Area Concentration Assessment Test (ACAT) for Communication is administered as an exit exam to all majors. The ACAT tests students' knowledge in the following areas of the discipline: Interpersonal Communications, Laws and Ethics, Mass Communication/Mass Media, and Public Speaking/Debate. Students are expected to score at least as well as the average score in their reference group. Students' overall performance score should be above the 50th percentile [23].

English B.A. Faculty developed a rubric to assess student oral presentations in the departmental capstone course, English 4995 Senior Colloquium. The threshold of acceptability is 85% of students will score Excellent or Very Good in each category of the rubric [24].

Human Ecology B.S.H.E. To assess students' knowledge of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Body of Knowledge, the department administers a faculty developed Core Exit Exam in the Senior Seminar course. The benchmark for this exam is a mean score of 70% [25].

Music B.M. The final exam in Harmony and Aural Training 4 is used as a direct measure to assess student's ability to hear, identify, and work conceptually with the elements of music. The achievement target is 75% of students will meet the minimum standards on the comprehensive final in Harmony IV [26].

Nursing B.S.N. All program graduates must sit for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) to become licensed as an RN. Nursing faculty have set two annual benchmarks: a pass rate above 90% and consistent scoring above the national average for first attempt on the exam [27].

Business Administration M.B.A. (Distance Learning Program) Students complete the CAPSIM Business Simulation and the accompanying COMP-XM exam. The simulation measures overall integrative knowledge through a balanced scorecard approach. The COMP-XM exam uses questions tailored to student decisions during the simulation. At least 75% of the students are expected to attain a CAPSIM Balanced Scorecard score of at least 70% and a COMP-XM Functional Knowledge score of at least 70% [28].

Electrical and Computer Engineering M.S. Students who select the thesis option must write and successfully defend a thesis. The student's Advisory Committee examines the candidate on the details of the thesis, as well as any other relevant material. Each member of the committee completes a common rubric, discusses the candidate's performance, and then votes to pass or fail the candidate. The student must pass the defense by three positive votes or three-fourths of the committee members eligible to vote [29].

Exceptional Learning Ph.D. Ph.D. students are expected to submit two or more presentation proposals and/or publication manuscripts, or to continue work on accepted conference proposals and manuscripts for submission and collaborate with faculty and staff on scholarly activities. This assessment data are collected from the students' scholarly activity reports which are submitted annually [30].

Using Results to Seek Improvements

Assessment results are reviewed by program faculty annually. Faculty reflect not just on the level of achievement but also on the trends in student outcomes over time. Discussions center on where improvement might be needed, rather than whether or not a target was met. Faculty also identify what program modifications will be implemented to address needed improvements. The impact of these modifications and whether or not there is a resulting improvement in student outcomes is addressed in a future IE cycle, typically within one to two years of when the needed modification was identified.

As part of the dissemination of assessment findings, IARE staff generate an annual report, compiling evidence of how each program is using assessment results to seek improvement. This report is shared with the broader University community to demonstrate how the institution is engaged in a process of continuous improvement. Specific examples of how faculty from different academic programs have utilized assessment results to improve student outcomes are described below. The *Annual IE Report for Academic Degree Programs (FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021)* [2] contains links to all academic program IE reports and a summary of how each program has used assessment results to improve student learning outcomes.

Agriculture (B.S.Ag.). Between 2016-17 and 2018-19, average scores on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) declined from 18.7 to 13.9 in 2018-19, an indication that there was a need to address students' problem-solving skills. At the same time, in response to one of the outcomes from the recently completed five-year program review, faculty were exploring how to provide students with more experiential learning opportunities. This need was also identified in the Fall 2019 Alumni Survey results, which found that whereas almost all respondents rated the program's practical agriculture experiences as adequate or higher (90%), many also commented that they would have liked to have had more hands-on experiences.

To address both concerns, faculty decided to add a capstone course to the curriculum for each major concentration. The first such course was implemented in Fall 2020 for students enrolled in the Agriculture Engineering and Technology concentration. In this course, AGET 4850 Engineering Technology Design for Agriculture, students are expected to participate in a supervised research project related to a real-world problem solicited from agricultural, engineering, or other client groups.

On the 2020-21 administration of the CCTST, seniors who successfully completed AGET 4850 had an average score 69.50 compared to an average score of 70.95 for seniors in all other concentrations, an indication that AGET had a similar impact on students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills as the traditional senior seminar. However, only six students were enrolled in the AGET and completed the CCTST. Faculty will continue to provide the new capstone course and push the capstone experience out to other concentrations. Any changes in the perception of alumni with regards to experiential learning opportunities will be assessed when this survey is next administered in Fall 2023 [31].

Civil and Environmental Engineering (B.S.C.E.). Faculty in the Civil and Environmental Engineering program used multiple measures to assess each student learning outcome. Assessment results for each measure are rated on a three-point scale – Unacceptable, Acceptable, or Excellent – based on the average score. These ratings are employed to help faculty determine when and where there is need for improvement. For example, multiple "Unacceptable" ratings across different measures or consecutive ratings of "Acceptable" on a single measure are indicators that student performance is falling below expected outcomes. A faculty member can also request further investigation into assessment results even when expected levels of achievement are being met consistently.

One such example of this is the action taken by faculty in 2018-19 regarding the assessment of students' ability to "establish goals, plan tasks, and meet objectives." An embedded course assignment in CEE 4950 Senior Design is used to assess how well students can apply these management design principles. Ratings of the measure have fluctuated between "Acceptable" and "Excellent" over the past four assessment cycles. As such, the faculty decided to add an assignment to support students' application of management principles and include the assignment as an additional assessment measure for this learning outcome. Starting Fall 2019, students were required to further apply management design principles by creating a project management schedule in Microsoft Project. Results from 2019-20 and 2020-21 showed improvement in students' performance on this learning outcome [32].

Music (B.M.). Faculty in the Music Department employ multiple measures to assess students' understanding and application of Music Theory concepts and skills. Two of these measures – an embedded course assignment and final exam – are administered in MUS 2130 Harmony IV. It is expected that at least 75% of students will meet the minimum standards on each measure. Over time student performance on these measures has consistently met or exceeded this target.

Although student achievement in Music Theory exceeds expectations, retention of students within the program has been lower than faculty would like. For the Fall 2018 cohort of first-time freshmen, 67.6% returned in the spring and 59.5% returned the following fall. In comparison, the retention rates for the University were 90.2% and 80.4%, respectively. Past analyses into the retention of first-time students who want to pursue a degree in Music has found that those who successfully complete MUS 1120 Harmony I, the first course in the four-course sequence in Music Harmony, are more likely to be retained within the program. During the 2019-20 assessment cycle, faculty decided to review the completion rates of the four courses in the Music Harmony sequence.

Results from this review revealed that the five-year average course completion rate for MUS 1120 Harmony I was 75%, between 12 and 17 percentage points lower that than other courses in this sequence. The discrepancy in the average successful course completion rates was even greater. Only 69% of students enrolled in MUS 1120 completed the course with a grade of C or better, 15 to 23 percentage points lower than the successful completion rates of the other three

courses. In response, faculty took the following actions aimed at improving student outcomes in MUS 1120:

1. The department chair worked with the University tutoring center to add two Music students who would provide tutoring in Music Harmony starting in Spring 2021.
2. An entrance exam was introduced in MUS 1120 to assess students' knowledge and skills at the beginning of the term. Students who scored below the minimum requirement were placed in a different section of the course specifically designed to address students' gaps in knowledge and skills of Music Theory.

Preliminary results reported in 2020-21 found that completion rates in MUS 1120 slightly improved with a course completion rate of 77% and a successful course completion rate of 71%. Moving forward, students will continue to be required to complete a placement test and receive remediation if needed. Tutors have been hired for the Tutoring Center to provide individual assistance to students in Harmony I. The impact of these changes on program retention will be examined in Fall 2021 when data for the Fall 2020 cohort become available [33].

Nursing (B.S.N.). Graduates of the Nursing B.S.N. program must pass the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN) in order to be licensed to practice nursing. Historically, the passing rates for the Whitson Hester School of Nursing (WHSON) have exceeded the state and national benchmarks. Faculty are aware, however, that the NCLEX-RN is undergoing significant revisions, focusing more on an assessment of clinical judgement rather than just safety. The revised exam will be implemented during the 2022-23 academic year, impacting students admitted to upper-division Nursing beginning Fall 2020.

In 2019-20, key faculty participated in the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) annual conference and other professional development activities to gain information needed for the upcoming NCLEX changes. During 2020-21 academic year, a professional development plan for all faculty was developed and the process of needed curricular and testing revisions began. Faculty development and curricular and testing revisions will continue in 2021-2, and the WHSON administration will start the process of collecting information on available testing software to accommodate the changes in testing. The effectiveness of these changes will be assessed when the Fall 2020 cohort takes the NEXGEN NCLEX in 2022-23 [34].

Physics (B.S.). The Force Concept Inventory (FCI) is administered as a pre/post-test in PHYS 2010 Physics I and PHYS 2110 Physics II to assess students' understanding of foundational basic concepts in mechanics (SLO1). The target is a normalized gain of 40% across all sections of each course. To control for large fluctuations in the data, faculty use a five-semester rolling average to track changes over time. After four years of steady improvement in the rolling semester average gain score for PHYS 2110, faculty observed a decline in student performance on the FCI in Spring 2018. To address this, several faculty members adopted more interactive teaching strategies. Assessment results from FY 2019 and FY 2020 indicated that these strategies have been effective in improving student outcomes. In FY 2019, seven of the nine sections met the target of a normalized gain score 40% with an overall average of 44%. The rolling semester average for that year was 41.6%, the highest to date at that point. Results from Fall 2019 showed continued improvement with an average gain score across all sections taught of 58% and a five-semester rolling average of 44.8% [35].

Accountancy (M.Acc.). (Distance Learning Program) One of the student learning outcomes of the Master's of Accountancy program is that students will demonstrate an awareness of the professional expectations with respect to ethical conduct. One of the measures used to assess this outcome is embedded questions in ACCT 6240 Ethics and the Professional Code of Conduct. These questions are presented in a quiz format and measure students' knowledge of general concepts of ethical conduct, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Code of Professional Conduct, and Circular 230. The target is an average score of 75% on all three topics. In 2019-20, the overall results indicated that students were performing at or above the desired levels of achievement. However, a more in-depth item analysis found that students were experiencing difficulty with the concept of professional independence as articulated in the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct. To address this, faculty implemented the following action in Spring 2021:

- Re-emphasized the concept across the curriculum through integration of independence in core upper-division accounting courses, not just in Auditing
- Focused on ethics during M.Acc. Weekend
- Encouraged Beta Alpha Psi (national honors business organization) to schedule professional speakers who will focus specifically on the topic of independence and the Code of Professional Conduct

Assessment results from 2020-21 found that students' understanding of the concept of professional independence improved slightly. As a result, in Spring 2022, faculty will continue to re-emphasize the concept in other core upper-division accounting courses and sponsor at least one virtual seminar early in each semester focused on the importance of professional independence [36].

Environmental Informatics (P.S.M.). (Distance Learning Program) As a part of the program curriculum, students seeking to obtain a degree in the Environmental Informatics P.S.M. program are required to complete an internship. During the internship, students work in an industry, utilizing knowledge and concepts learned from the curriculum to produce deliverables, which are presented in writing and during an oral examination. The oral examination and the written report are evaluated by the graduate student's advisory committee to assess whether the student has mastered program and concentration learning outcomes. Internship employers will provide a written evaluation of the respective intern's performance in achieving designated deliverables.

In 2018-19, faculty reported that all graduating students defended and presented their internship projects to their graduate advisory committees and other stakeholders, including internship supervisors and other personnel from the internship agencies. The students also completed written internship project reports. All six students passed their internship "defenses" and their committees approved their project reports, generally indicating successful communication skills. However, supervisor ratings on two items – "Produce effective written communications" and "Deliver effective oral presentations" – as well as written comments, indicated a need to improve students' written communication skills.

In response, the program director and associated faculty agreed to accept EVS 7900 Scientific Writing and Grantsmanship as an elective course on student programs of study and to make course substitutions in selected cases. The program director then worked with faculty advisors to encourage selected students (those who needed to improve writing skills) to consider taking EVS 7900 Scientific Writing and Grantsmanship as their elective course. In 2019-2020, faculty reported improvements in supervisor ratings on written communication skills. The faculty agreed to keep the EVS 7900 Scientific Writing and Grantsmanship course as an elective in the new

curriculum, and P.S.M.-EI students are actively enrolling in the class. Faculty continue to emphasize the importance of written and oral communication skills to the students in the capstone internship course and encourage them in advising sessions to take EVS 7900 if their writing skills are in need of improvement [37].

Exceptional Learning (Ph.D.). As part of their enrollment in the E.L.Ph.D. program, students are expected to present original scholarly work at academic/scholarly/professional conferences, seminars, and symposia. While students demonstrate a high level of participation in such events, some have been more productive than others. In addition, many students have asked faculty and/or the Director of Graduate Programs for additional assistance in preparing proposals for submission. In an effort to increase student scholarly research activity and move more students into the threshold of acceptability, two tactics have been implemented: 1) regular sharing of conference, seminar, and symposia calls for proposals to increase student awareness of these opportunities and 2) workshops for conference proposal submissions to help students learn discipline-specific protocols and language in support of sharing original research done as part of E.L.Ph.D. coursework. Assessment results from the 2019-20 IE cycle indicate that these initiatives have had a mixed impact on students' scholarly work. There was a decline in student presentations, partially a result of the COVID 19 pandemic that restricted travel and led to the cancellation of some conferences. There was, however, a significant increase in the number of grant proposals submitted from five in 2018-19 to 14 in 2019-20. Furthermore, half of the proposals submitted in FY 2020 were funded compared to only one the previous year.

During semi-structured interviews conducted at the end of the 2019-20 academic year, students mentioned the need for additional encouragement in sharing their work and in collaborating. In response to this informal, formative feedback, a pilot program highlighting opportunities to use high-quality coursework as ways for E.L.Ph.D. students to collaborate across concentrations on projects was implemented in the Fall of 2020. This program included 1) increased regular sharing of conference, seminar, and symposia calls for proposals, and calls for publication submissions to increase student awareness of these opportunities; 2) added workshops to support proposal submissions; and 3) provided feedback on proposal and publication submission drafts. With the exception of conference presentations which continued to be impacted by the pandemic, 2020-21 assessment results found a slight increase in students' activity, especially in grant proposals crafted and pending peer-reviewed publications. During qualitative program evaluation interviews conducted annually, students report that these measures help them feel more confident in finding opportunities for collaboratively participating in and presenting/publishing research with peers and faculty. The director will continue this program in the 2021–2022 academic year and regularly solicit feedback to evaluate the initiative's efficacy and ensure students' needs are met [38].

IE and Program Accreditation/Review

Multiple degree programs are accredited by discipline-specific program accreditation associations [39]. The ability of these programs to demonstrate that they meet the student achievement requirements of their specific program accreditor stems from the active engagement of program faculty in the University's IE process. Degree programs that are not accredited are required by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to undergo a program review every five years [40]. This process includes a review of student learning outcomes, the assessment of those outcomes, and the use of assessment results for program modification, all of which are drawn directly from a program's annual IE reports.

Distance Learning and Off-Campus Locations

Distance learning programs and programs with components at off-campus locations follow the same consistent planning and assessment processes as the on-campus programs. These programs identify measurable student learning outcomes, implement aligned assessment methods, monitor student results, and initiate improvement based on assessment results. Distance learning programs include Accountancy M.Acc., Business Administration M.B.A., Engineering Management M.S.E.M., Environmental Science P.S.M., Exercise Science, Phys. Educ., & Wellness M.A., Nursing M.S.N., Nursing D.N.P., Professional Studies B.S., and Professional Studies M.P.S. Programs with components at off-campus locations include Elementary Education B.S. and Interdisciplinary Studies B.S. The annual IE reports for these programs for the last three cycles are included in *Annual IE Report for Academic Degree Programs (FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021)* [2].

Conclusion

Faculty at Tennessee Tech are actively engaged in an ongoing institutional effectiveness process whereby each educational program identifies student learning outcomes, assesses the extent to which students achieve those outcomes, and utilizes the results to inform continuous improvement actions. The assessment process is the same for all undergraduate and graduate programs regardless of where the student is located or mode of instruction (fully face-to-face, online, or hybrid). The *Annual IE Report for Academic Degree Programs (FY2019, FY2020, and FY2021)* [2] highlights faculty efforts to improve student learning through the use of assessment results. The Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Effectiveness facilitates and supports the IE process with additional guidance and oversight provided by the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee. The establishment of this University-wide committee ensures the continuous improvement of the IE process and contributes to an overall culture of assessment at Tennessee Tech. As documented above, the University is in compliance with this standard.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] IARE website
[02] 2020-21 Annual IE Report for Academic Degree Programs
[03] Guide to Completing Institutional Effectiveness Reports
[04] A Tutorial on Institutional Effectiveness at Tennessee Tech
[05] Definition of Unit IE Template
[06] Goals and Objectives Outcomes IE Template
[07] Assessment Methods IE Template
[08] Results IE Template
[09] Modifications for Continuous Improvement IE Template
[10] 2020 IE Assessment Committee
[11] Rubric for Review of IE Report - Academic Degree Program
[12] IE Report Reviewer Sheet
[13] Summary of IEAC Review of IE Reports - FY2019 - FY2021
[14] Curriculum Map for Environmental Studies BS
[15] Curriculum Map for Human Ecology BSHE
[16] Curriculum Map for Fine Art BFA
[17] Curriculum Map for Physics BS
[18] Curriculum Map for Psychology BS

[19] Curriculum Map for Chemistry MS
[20] Curriculum Map for Nursing MSN
[21] Curriculum Map for Engineering PhD
[22] Matrix of Academic Programs and Assessment Tools Employed
[23] 2020-21 IE Report for Communication BS
[24] 2020-21 IE Report for English BA
[25] 2020-21 IE Report for Human Ecology BSHE
[26] 2020-21 IE Report for Music BM
[27] 2020-21 IE Report for Nursing BSN
[28] 2020-21 IE Report for Business Administration MBA
[29] 2020-21 IE Report for Electrical & Computer Engineering MS
[30] 2020-21 IE Report for Exceptional Learning PhD
[31] 2019-20 IE Report for Agriculture BSAG
[32] 2019-20 and 2020-21 IE Reports for Civil & Environmental Engineering BSCE
[33] 2019-20 and 2020-21 IE Reports for Music BM
[34] 2019-20 IE Report for Nursing BSN
[35] 2018-19 and 2019-20 IE Reports for Physics BS
[36] 2019-20 IE Report for Accounting MAcc
[37] 2018-19 and 2019-20 IE Reports for Environmental Informatics PSM
[38] 2019-20 and 2020-21 IE Reports for Exceptional Learning PhD
[39] Accredited Degree Programs
[40] Tennessee Tech Five Year Program Review Cycle

CR - 9.1

Program Content

Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University offers degree programs that are coherent programs of study, are connected to the University's mission and purpose, and are appropriate to higher education.

Coherence of Degree Programs

The coherence of the University's degree programs is established by A) degree requirements and B) regular program reviews and assessments.

(A) Degree Requirements

The coherence of degree programs is supported by defined degree requirements that are appropriate for the degree and residency requirements that ensure degree recipients complete sufficient coursework at the University.

Undergraduate degrees have a required general education/core curriculum, an advanced coursework requirement, and an academic residency requirement. Requirements for undergraduate degrees are set out in the Undergraduate Catalog and are governed by Policy 260-Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation [1]. The Catalog specifies the total number of credit hours to be earned (a minimum of 120), the general education requirements (41 credit hours from an approved list of courses) [2], and the requirements specific to each undergraduate degree. Prerequisite and corequisite requirements are listed in the course description sections of the Catalog. Policy 260 requires that a student complete at least 25% of the credit for the degree requirements, including a minimum of 24 semester hours of upper-division (3000- and 4000-level) course credit at Tennessee Tech. Policy 260 also requires that degree programs require a minimum of 36 credit hours of upper-division coursework.

Requirements for all graduate degrees are set forth in the Graduate Catalog and are governed by Policy 271-General Graduate Degree Requirements [3]. The Catalog specifies the requirements for each graduate degree and the rules regarding maximum time to degree and the awarding of transfer credit. All Tennessee Tech post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree programs require at least 30 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree with doctoral programs requiring at least 61 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Policy 271 requires that all graduate programs administer at least one Comprehensive Exam as an indicator of degree progression. Policy 271 also requires that at least 70 percent of the semester credit hours counted toward a master's degree must consist of credit for courses at the 6000-level or above (with the exception of those programs that fall under state-wide numbering schemes, specifically TNeCampus, MPS, MSN, and DNP 5000 level courses.)

Tennessee Tech uses the Ellucian Degree Works software to track completion of degree requirements in each of its undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The software allows students and advisors to easily track progress to degree. Graduation analysts in the Registrar's Office and the Office of Graduate Studies use the software to maintain approved course substitutions and to perform degree verification analyses for students nearing graduation.

(B) Program Reviews and Assessments

All of the University's degree programs are evaluated by either an accrediting body [4] or through a program review [5]. These regular evaluations help maintain degree program coherence.

The periodic self-study for accreditation requires that faculty members compare their degree programs with standards established for the discipline. Those reports generally require that the programs demonstrate appropriate sequencing and integration of coursework. It is evident from excerpts of recent accreditation reports for the B.S. in Mechanical Engineering (ABET) [6], the B.S. in Nursing (CCNE) [7], and graduate programs in Education (CAEP) [8] that the University's accredited degree programs embody a coherent course of study.

All degree programs at Tennessee Tech not accredited by a specialized or professional accreditation association are evaluated by either a Program Review or an Academic Audit on a regular cycle (typically 5 years). Departmental faculty write a self-study report after reviewing student success data for their programs, their degree program curricula, and the adequacy of resources. In both Program Reviews and Academic Audits, external evaluators submit an evaluation and a final written report on the program to the University after conducting a site visit. A significant part of the self-study involves an analysis of a degree program's curriculum, thus providing a review of its coherence. It is evident from excerpts of the program review self-study reports of the B.S. in Physics [9], the M.S. in Computer Science [10], and the Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning [11] that curricula coherence is routinely monitored.

Degree program coherence is also maintained by annual reporting on the assessment of student learning outcomes. The courses constituting a degree program are designed to address expected student learning outcomes for the course itself and collectively for the degree program. As part of their annual institutional effectiveness report, degree programs provide a curriculum map. Curriculum maps from undergraduate programs (BFA in Fine Art [12] and B.S. in Computer Engineering [13]) and graduate programs (M.S. in Biology [14] and Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning [15]) provide evidence of degree program coherence.

Degree Programs are Compatible with University Mission and Goals

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees approved the following mission statement on June 26, 2018:

Tennessee's technological university creates, advances, and applies knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service.

The University's Vision Statement references "career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving." The University's strategic plan, Tech

Tomorrow, calls for Tennessee Tech to provide an "education that unleashes the potential and passion within our students and prepares them for successful careers and culturally enriched lives."

All of the University's degree programs support the mission statement, vision statement, and strategic plan, as appropriate to each field of study. In particular, the foundation provided by the general education core and the specific degree requirements of all undergraduate degree programs help produce graduates who have the breadth and depth of knowledge to be successful in their careers.

The connection between each degree program and the institution's mission and goals is evident in the new program approval process and the institutional effectiveness assessment process.

New program proposals are developed and approved by faculty at the departmental level and then reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee (if undergraduate level) or the Graduate School Executive Committee (if graduate level). Approved proposals are submitted to the Academic Council and then to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Proposals approved by the Provost are submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) for review. Finally, proposals approved by the THEC are submitted to the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees for approval. Tennessee Tech Policy 225 affirms that the University follows Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) policy A1.0 regarding the approval of new academic programs [16]. As part of that approval process, new programs must show alignment with the state master plan "as well as the mission and strategic direction statement of the institution" [17]. An excerpt of the proposal for the recently approved M.S. in Community Health degree program provides an example of the required alignment of proposed degree programs with the institution's mission and goals [18].

All undergraduate and graduate academic programs are required to submit an annual institutional effectiveness report to the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Effectiveness, as described in the narrative for 8.2.a Student Outcomes: Educational Programs. The institutional effectiveness report requires the linkage of each academic program to the University's Mission, thus ensuring that each degree program is compatible with the greater educational mission of the University. This process also facilitates cohesion of the various programs within the University's greater framework. An example from the Communication B.S. Institutional Effectiveness report shows that this program has four student learning outcomes, each of which is linked to one or more of the strategic goals and related priority actions of Tech Tomorrow, the University's strategic plan [19].

Off-site and distance education programs undergo the same review process. These programs also support Tennessee Tech's mission emphasizing a commitment to enriching the lives of people and communities in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee.

Degree Programs are Appropriate to Higher Education

The evidence that the University's degree programs are appropriate to higher education is based on the notion that degree programs offered by peer institutions are deemed to be appropriate.

The University's degree programs are consistent with those offered by a set of state, national, and aspirational peer institutions [20]. The comparison of University degrees with the degree offerings of peers shows that almost all of the University's degree programs are common to higher education. The University's Ph.D. in Exceptional Learning and baccalaureate degrees in

Environmental and Sustainability Studies, International Business and Cultures, and Multidisciplinary Studies are found at fewer than one-third of these peer institutions. The University considers each of these academic areas to be appropriate for higher education and we provide a justification for less common degrees offered at the University [21].

Conclusion

The University demonstrates compliance with Standard 9.1 since it establishes and maintains coherent degree programs that are appropriate to higher education and aligned with its mission and goals through its new program approval, assessment, and external review processes.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 260 - Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation
[02] General Education Undergraduate Degree Requirement Statement in Catalog
[03] Tennessee Tech Policy 271 - General Graduate Degree Requirements
[04] Accreditation Reviews
[05] Program Evaluation Schedule
[06] Excerpt from BSME ABET Self-Study Report
[07] Excerpt from BS in Nursing Self Study for CCNE
[08] Excerpt from CAEP Advanced Programs Standard
[09] Excerpt from BS in Physics Program Review
[10] Excerpt from MS in Computer Science Self-Study Report
[11] Excerpt from PhD in Exceptional Learning Program Review Report
[12] Fine Art BFA Curriculum Map
[13] Computer ENGR Curriculum Map3
[14] MS in Biology Curriculum Map
[15] Exceptional Learning PhD Curriculum Map
[16] Tennessee Tech Policy 225 - New Academic Programs
[17] THEC New Academic Program Approval Checklist
[18] Excerpt of MS in Community Health proposal
[19] BS in Communication Institutional Effectiveness Report
[20] Academic Programs Peer Comparison Table Revised 2-22-2021
[21] Justification for Less Common Degree Programs

CR - 9.2

Program Length

The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University is in compliance with the minimum semester credit hours for degree length. The University's degree programs are based on the semester credit hour unit which is defined in Tennessee Tech Policy 222 [1]. The University has developed and maintains degree programs of appropriate length regardless of learning location or modality. All baccalaureate degree programs require at least 120 credit hours. At the graduate level, all master's degree programs require at least 30 credit hours; the educational specialist degree programs require a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the master's degree; and all doctoral programs require a minimum of 61 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.

As of the 2020-2021 academic year, the University offers 43 baccalaureate, 19 master's, three educational specialist, and five doctoral degrees.

Baccalaureate Programs

Tennessee Tech Policy 260 [2] details undergraduate program length specifications and states that "a student must successfully complete a minimum of 120 semester hours." The Undergraduate Degree Requirements section [3] of the *Undergraduate Catalog* includes the statement that "a minimum of 120 semester hours, including 36 hours of 3000 and 4000 level upper-division credit approved courses are required for a baccalaureate degree." The catalog also contains a list of programs of study and their curricula. A compilation of that information shows that each listed curriculum requires a minimum of 120 credit hours [4]. Undergraduate engineering degree programs require a minimum of 128 credit hours. The transcript for a student awarded the B.S. in chemistry with all coursework taken at Tennessee Tech [5] and the transcript for a student awarded the B.S. in elementary education with transfer credit from another institution [6] show that each student was required to earn at least 120 credit hours for an undergraduate degree. The transcript for a student awarded the B.S. in Chemical Engineering with all coursework taken at Tennessee Tech [7] and the transcript for a student awarded the B.S. in Mechanical Engineering with transfer credit from another institution [8] show that each student was required to earn at least 128 credit hours for an undergraduate engineering degree.

Post-Baccalaureate Programs

All post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree programs at Tennessee Tech require at least 30 graduate credit hours. The *Graduate Catalog* contains a list of programs of study and

their curricula. A compilation of that information shows that each listed curriculum requires a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours [9].

Graduate courses are numbered at the 5000, 6000, and 7000 levels. Graduate credit is not given for a course numbered at the 4000 level (senior level) or below. Some senior level courses are offered dually at the 4000 level and 5000 level. Students can earn graduate credit in the 5000 level course on the basis of required additional work defined by the instructor in the course syllabus. A course taken at the 4000 level may not be taken later at the 5000 level without special permission from the departmental chairperson, college dean, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Master's Programs

Tennessee Tech Policy 271 [10] describes general graduate degree requirements and states that "a candidate for a master's degree must normally complete at least 30 semester hours of credit in a program requiring a thesis and at least 33 semester hours in a non-thesis program." The policy allows that "some graduate programs may have differing requirements, which will supersede this general policy," and this occurs in a few cases. In particular, the nonthesis Master of Business Administration and Master of Professional Studies require only 30 semester credit hours, and the Master of Art program in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness requires only 30 semester credit hours for both thesis and nonthesis options. The Master's Program in Educational Psychology within the Department of Counseling and Psychology requires 30 semester credit hours for the nonthesis option and 33 semester credit hours for the thesis option [11]. The transcripts for two students awarded the M.S. degree show that each student earned at least 30 graduate credit hours [12] [13].

Specialist Programs

The Specialist in Education degree requires an additional 30 semester credit hours beyond the master's degree [14]. At least 15 semester credit hours must be from 7000 level courses, and no courses below the 6000 level will count toward the degree unless permission is granted by the student's advisory committee, the chairperson of the student's major department, and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. The transcripts for two students awarded the Ed.S. show that each student earned at least 30 graduate credit hours beyond the master's degree [15] [16].

Doctoral Programs

The number of semester credit hours for a doctoral degree varies by the degree program. The Ph.D. degree in Engineering requires a minimum of 72 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 48 credit hours for students entering the program with the master's degree [17]. The Ph.D. degree in Environmental Sciences requires a minimum of 61 semester credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 43 credit hours beyond a related master's degree [18]. The Ph.D. degree in Exceptional Learning requires a minimum of 79 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Students entering the program with a graduate degree may be granted up to nine credit hours toward the degree yielding a program of at least 70 credit hours [19]. Depending upon the concentration chosen, the Joint Doctor of Nursing Practice requires a minimum of 77 to 89 credit hours beyond the BSN degree or 32 to 35 credit hours beyond the MSN degree, respectively [20][21][22][23][24][25]. The Ph.D. in Counseling and Supervision requires 48 credit hours beyond the master's degree for admission to the degree

program [26]. The transcripts for two students awarded the Ph.D. show that each student earned at least 61 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree [27] [28].

Fast Track Programs

The Fast Track program enables qualified Tennessee Tech undergraduates to earn up to six hours of graduate coursework that may be used to satisfy both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements [29]. These courses must be taken at Tennessee Tech and must be approved as appropriate substitutions in the undergraduate curriculum. The integrity of the programs is not jeopardized as the student is completing more rigorous work in the graduate-level course(s) that count toward both degrees. The double counting of credit hours in a Fast Track program potentially shortens the time required for a student to earn a master's degree and is typical of similar programs at other universities such as Georgia Tech [30], the University of Georgia [31], and the University of Alabama [32].

To participate in a Fast Track program at Tennessee Tech, students are required to meet stringent program admissions requirements and obtain graduate advisor, departmental, college, and College of Graduate Studies approval prior to participation. Only graduate-level courses will be accepted for graduate credit (5000, 6000, and 7000), and participating in a Fast Track program does not guarantee that the student will be automatically admitted into the College of Graduate Studies. As evidenced below in Table 1, students must meet the defined admissions requirements for entry into the graduate degree. The grade point average requirements for admission to Fast Track programs are significantly higher than the grade point requirement for admission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Table 1. Fast Track Admissions Requirements by Program.

Programs	Required UG Hours or Status	Required GPA
Business Administration	90 hours	3.2
Chemistry	Junior status	2.8 overall, 3.0 in UD Chemistry
Chemical Engineering	Junior status	3.25
Civil & Environmental Engineering	Junior status	3.25 overall, 3.5 UD CE
Counseling & Psychology	Senior status	3.0
Computer Science	Junior or Senior status	3.25 overall, 3.5 UD C&P
Curriculum & Instruction	90 hours	3.25
Electrical & Computer Engineering	Senior	3.0

English	90 hours	3.25 overall, 3.5 UD English
Mathematics	Senior	3.25
Mechanical Engineering	Junior or Senior status	3.5
Professional Science Master's Environmental Informatics	Junior or Senior status	3.0
Professional Studies	90 hours	3.0 overall, 3.25 major
Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness	90 hours	3.25

(*Note: UD = upper division courses)

Each engineering undergraduate degree requires 128 credit hours for completion. An engineering student participating in the Fast Track program will graduate with a minimum of 152 total credit hours for both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. This is assuming they complete six hours of graduate credit that is counted toward both the undergraduate and graduate degree. In the other undergraduate programs listed above in Table 1, it is possible that a student may complete a minimum of 144 hours if they earn six hours of graduate credit through the Fast Track program.

Distance and Off-Site Programs

The same number of semester credit hours is required for distance education and off-site programs [33]. Deans, departmental chairpersons, and University faculty members participate in the off-campus advisory and instructional program to ensure that courses offered are of the same quality as those taught on the main campus.

Program Development and Approval Process

Tennessee Tech's New Academic Programs Policy 225 indicates that the University follows Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Policy A1.0 regarding the approval of new academic programs [34]. New programs are developed by faculty at the department level in response to a perceived need. Departments then make proposals to a college-level committee. Proposals approved by the college- level committee are then reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee (if undergraduate level) or the Graduate School Executive Committee (if graduate level). Approved proposals are submitted to the Academic Council and then to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Proposals approved by the Provost are submitted to THEC for review. Finally, proposals approved by THEC are submitted to the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees for approval. At each stage of the review of proposed new programs, the length of the program is reviewed.

Conclusion

Tennessee Tech University offers undergraduate degree programs that each require a minimum of 120 credit hours and offers graduate degree programs that each require a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Therefore, Tennessee Tech demonstrates compliance with Standard 9.2.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 222 - Credit Hours
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 260 - Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation
[03] Undergraduate Degree Requirements
[04] Baccalaureate Degree Listing Revised
[05] BS 120 hours Tennessee Tech CHEM-CHEMN Spring 2020 Transcript
[06] BS 120 hours VSCC Transfer Credit ELED Fall 2020 Graduate AT Transcript
[07] BSCHE 128 hours Fall 2020 Graduate KE Transcript
[08] BSME 128 hours RSCC Transfer Credit ME Spring 2020 Graduate EN
[09] Graduate Degree Listing Revised
[10] Tennessee Tech Policy 271 - General Graduate Degree Requirements
[11] Masters Degree General Requirements
[12] MS Chemical Engineering Redacted
[13] MS Chemistry December 2019 Graduate BA
[14] Specialist in Education General Degree Requirements
[15] EDS Instructional Leadership Summer 2019 Graduate RC
[16] EDS Instructional Leadership Summer2019 Graduate RFMIII
[17] PhD in Engineering Requirements
[18] PhD in Environmental Sciences PhD Requirements
[19] PhD in Exceptional Learning Requirements
[20] Adult Gerontology DNP Degree Requirements
[21] Executive Leadership DNP Degree Requirements
[22] Family Nurse Practitioner DNP Degree Requirements
[23] Pediatric Nurse Practitioner DNP Degree Requirements
[24] Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner DNP Degree Requirements
[25] Womens Health Nurse Practitioner DNP Degree Requirements
[26] PhD in Counseling and Supervision Degree Requirements
[27] PhD IDS EVSS Biology MTSU Transfer Summer 2019 Graduate JV
[28] PhD ENGR CSC
[29] Fast Track Description
[30] Georgia Tech MSCS
[31] University of Georgia Double Dawg
[32] University of Alabama AMP
[33] School of Interdisciplinary Studies 2 Plus 2 Website
[34] Tennessee Tech Policy 225 - New Academic Programs

R - 10.2

Public Information

The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University provides information on academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies available to students and the public in various ways, including the Tennessee Tech main website, various unit websites, the online undergraduate and graduate catalogs, sections in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Student Handbook*, course syllabi, and through published policies located in Policy Central. Policy Central is open to students, employees, and the public. This information is available to all students, including students taking online courses and is available to dual enrollment students across all delivery locations and modes of instruction.

Academic Calendars

An Academic Calendar Committee, appointed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for developing the Tennessee Tech academic calendar with all pertinent dates, including but not limited to, semester start and end dates and fall, spring, and other breaks [1].

The Tennessee Tech website home page has multiple links to Tennessee Tech' s academic calendar [2]. In addition, the Office of the Registrar posts the academic calendar and final exam schedules on its website [3].

The University calendar for the current year is published as part of the *Undergraduate Catalog* [4] and the *Graduate Catalog* [5]. These publications are no longer offered in a PDF format; however, both are available on the web. The calendar lists the beginning and ending dates of the term, holidays, final exam periods, and commencements. The University calendar link is included to provide additional information for both editions of the catalog, including the *Graduate Catalog*.

Grading Policies

The Tennessee Tech Grades, Grading, and Examination Policy (Policy 264) [6] provides a comprehensive explanation of grades, quality point averages (also known as "grade point averages"), and examination procedures for students, faculty, and administration, and is published on the Policy Central website.

According to the *Faculty Handbook* [7], faculty are required to provide a grading policy statement either in writing (within a course syllabus) to enrolled students during the first class period of the semester or on the web before the first class period.

Tennessee Tech's grading policy, in addition to other related academic regulations, is located in the Exams and Grades section of the online catalog.

The general grading policies are available as follows:

- The policy is available in the *Undergraduate Catalog* under the Academic Regulations [8] heading. Areas pertaining to grading are attendance and withdrawals, exam and grades, grades and quality points, pass/fail option, and repetition of courses.

- The policy pertaining to graduate students is available in the *Graduate Catalog* under the Registration and Enrollment Requirements heading [9]. Areas pertaining to grading are grading, grading system, quality points, quality point average, grade of "I," and course repetition policy.

Cost of Attendance

Cost of attendance is provided on the Office of Financial Aid website [10]. The website shows the estimated cost of attendance for both in-state and out-of-state new freshmen and new transfer students. The amount is based on estimated student budgets that include tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and personal and transportation expenses, assuming full-time attendance for two terms. The website includes the cost of attendance for the current and prior year. A net price calculator [11] is also included on the site that provides estimated net price information to current and prospective students and their families based on what similar students paid in a previous year. A link is provided to the Bursar website for further information and explanation on tuition and fees and payment deadlines.

A tuition and fee overview is provided on the Bursar website [12] and includes tuition and fees for in-state and out-of-state students, residence hall rate, and a meal plan rate for the most popular dining option. This gives the student an idea of the estimated cost for a semester. Online fees and refund information for online courses are included in the fee schedules on the Bursar website and further explained in the Explanation of Tuition and Fees section.

Distance Education and Online Programs

Students enrolled in distance education and online programs are subject to the same academic policies, calendar, tuition and fees, and refund policies. Information on graduate-level distance programs is outlined on the College of Graduate Studies website [13] and in Tennessee Tech Policy 223 [14]. Financial information is provided on the Office of Financial Aid [10] and Bursar websites [12]. Online students can access student resources on the University website under iLearn Student Resources [15].

Refund Policies

Refunds are processed in accordance with provisions outlined in Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 Fees, Charges, Refunds, and Adjustments, Section U [16]. Policy 511.1 can be viewed on the Policy Central website [17]. Restatement of the refund policies, supported by additional detailed explanation and clarification, is available on the Tennessee Tech website [12] [18] and in the *Student Handbook* [19]. The Bursar website provides the refund information for each of the following categories:

- Tuition and Fees

- Residence Hall Rent
- Residence Hall Deposits
- Meal Plan
- Credit Balances

Further references to the Bursar website link are included in the online undergraduate and graduate catalogs and at other pertinent locations throughout the Tennessee Tech website.

Official refund deadline dates are included in the University calendar [20].

Procedures related to potential refunds are addressed in policy statements with appropriate web links.

- Disbursement of Excess Aid [21] on the Bursar website [12] and in Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 [16]
- Distribution of Refunds [22] on the Bursar website [12] and in Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 [16]
- Withdrawal from Classes in the *Student Handbook* [19] and Tennessee Tech Policy 1203 Withdrawal Procedure [23]
- Refund Appeal in Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 [16] and Student Request Form [24] on the Bursar website [12] and Office of the Registrar website [25] and Fee Refund Form [26].

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University uses various University web pages, including Policy Central, the Office of the Registrar, Bursar's Office, the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, *Faculty Handbook*, *Student Handbook*, and other pertinent web pages, to publish policies related to academic calendars, grading, and refunding, ensuring Tennessee Tech demonstrates compliance with Standard 10.2.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 267 - Academic Calendar
[02] Academic Calendar Website
[03] Registrar Office Website
[04] Undergraduate Catalog
[05] Graduate Catalog
[06] Tennessee Tech Policy 264 – Grading
[07] Faculty Handbook
[08] Academic Catalog Academic Regulations – REVISED
[09] Academic Catalog Registration and Enrollment Requirements – REVISED
[10] Office of Financial Aid Website - Cost of Attendance – REVISED
[11] Tennessee Tech Cost Calculator
[12] Bursar Office Website
[13] College of Graduate Studies Online Programs
[14] Tennessee Tech Policy 223- Distance Education
[15] iLearn Student Resources Website

[16] Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 - Fees - Charges - Refunds and Reimbursements
[17] Policy Central Website - REVISED
18] Consumer Information
[19] Withdrawal Procedure in Student Handbook
[20] University Calendar
[21] Disbursement of Excess Aid
[22] Distribution of Excess Aid
[23] Tennessee Tech Policy 1203 - Withdrawal Procedure
[24] Refund Appeal Student Request Form
[25] Office of the Registrar Website
[26] Fee Refund Request Form

R - 10.3

Archived Information

The institution ensures the availability of archived official catalogs, digital or print, with relevant information for course and degree requirements sufficient to serve former and returning students.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

The catalogs (bulletins) and schedules of classes are all available at Tennessee Technological University and in the Tennessee Tech Archives in various formats, including physical formats, born digital formats, and digitized formats. The current catalogs and schedules of classes are available on the institution's website [1].

As of 2020, information is updated annually and is only available online. Course offerings and requirements of the institution sometimes change, and the catalog does not serve as a contract between the school and the student. The catalog serves as a living document and is updated and published annually. The University Archives makes past catalogs and schedules of classes available. Digital materials are available in the archives' content management system, which is also a preservation management system [2]. This system includes born digital and digitized materials.

The Tennessee Tech Archives provides digitized copies of archived catalogs online for viewing and download for the years 1920 to 2021 [3]. They are checked periodically for bit loss and updated if formats become obsolete. All physical catalog copies are maintained in climate-controlled storage in the University Archives and preserved using acid-free folders and boxes.

The schedules of classes, dating from 1953 to 2003, are available in person and are maintained with the bulletins in climate-controlled storage and preserved using acid-free folders. Recent additions (2008-2021) are available in a pdf format through a database [3]. A sample of the Tennessee Tech *Undergraduate Catalog* from 1975-76 from the catalog archives is provided here [4].

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University provides current, former, and returning students with access to archived official catalogs with relevant information for courses and degree requirements. Therefore, Tennessee Tech demonstrates compliance with Standard 10.3.

Evidentiary Documents

[1] Tennessee Tech Academic Catalog
[2] Preservation Management System
[3] Preservica Sample Revised
[4] Tennessee Tech Undergraduate Catalog Archives 1975_1976

R - 10.5

Admissions Policies and Practices

The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University publishes admission policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent Tennessee Tech's practices, policies, and accreditation status. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the University's practices and policies for all potential students and degree programs, regardless of the method of delivery (e.g., face-to-face, online, hybrid). All recruitment pieces are updated regularly (annually for catalogs and other printed materials and frequently throughout the year for online information).

The mission statement [1] of Tennessee Tech places a strong emphasis on providing a benefit to its students in the form of lifelong success via high-quality instruction and learning experiences for in-person, distance, or online delivery. This service is provided to all without regard to age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. The University is committed to an inclusive and diverse campus that enriches the educational experience, promotes personal growth and a healthy society, prepares students for success in a global economy, and enhances America's economic competitiveness. The University retains a special commitment to enrich the lives of people and communities in the Upper Cumberland region. The admission policies are reflective of these commitments and reviewed every four years [2].

Undergraduate applicants are considered for admission according to approved University standards. Graduate applicants are considered for admission either by approved program standards or by a combination of approved program standards and a selection committee. A multi-level, holistic appeals process is in place for students requesting an appeal to admission standards and/or admission decisions.

The recruitment of students to Tennessee Tech is a campus-wide effort of administrators, faculty, staff, and students; however, the Office of Admissions [3] has the primary responsibility to oversee the undergraduate recruitment initiatives of the University while the College of Graduate Studies oversees the recruitment initiatives at the graduate level [4]. The Office of Admissions and the College of Graduate Studies along with the Office of Communications and Marketing [5] assist academic departments in the development of recruiting plans and materials. The College of Graduate Studies [6] coordinates recruitment activities with each academic unit that offers graduate degree programs. The Office of International Education [7] is responsible for the recruitment of international undergraduates and works closely with the College of Graduate Studies in the recruitment of graduate-level international students. The College of

Interdisciplinary Studies [8] and the College of Education are responsible for the recruitment of undergraduate distance learners and work closely with the College of Graduate Studies in the recruitment of graduate-level distance learners.

It is a high priority at Tennessee Tech to provide prospective students with current, accurate, and complete information and materials to aid them in enrollment decisions. Such information and materials include, but are not limited to, costs of attendance, graduate employment opportunities, and requirements for admission. Admissions presentations, publications, and online material are continually monitored and updated when necessary. Departments, schools, and colleges also regularly review publications and the content of their units' web pages for accuracy. University employees [9a], including volunteers [9b], are well-trained and are monitored to ensure that they are equipped with current, accurate, and complete information.

Aside from limited scholarship offers, the only incentive for enrollment at Tennessee Tech is the opportunity to receive a Tennessee Tech education.

Admission Policies

Admission policies, standards, and procedures for undergraduate domestic and international students are provided in detail on the University admissions websites [10a][10b][10c][10d][10e][10f], on the International Admission website [11], in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [12], and on the Policy Central website [2][13a][13b]. Admission requirements and procedures are provided for all application scenarios (early admission, dual enrollment, incoming freshman, incoming transfer, non-degree seeking, additional bachelor's degree, etc.). All admission policies for domestic and international graduate students are clearly outlined in the *Graduate Catalog* [14], and these policies and procedures are readily available on the Graduate Studies website [15], the International Education website [16], and the Policy Central website [17a][17b].

Freshman applicants are considered for admission based on high school grade point average (GPA), recent test scores, and high school coursework. Prior to Fall 2015, freshman applicants under 21 years of age were required to have a 2.00 high school GPA, a 19 ACT composite (or equivalent SAT combined critical reading and math score), and a college preparatory high school curricula OR a 2.50 high school GPA, a 17 ACT composite (or equivalent SAT combined critical reading and math score), and a college preparatory high school curricula. Students over 21 years of age could substitute COMPASS or AccuPlacer scores for ACT/SAT scores, and a GED score of 525 could be substituted for a high school transcript. After a retention study in 2014, campus committees proposed an increase for direct entrance requirements for select programs [18]:

- College of Engineering – 3.0 GPA, 20 ACT Composite, and 22 ACT Math
- Whitson-Hester School of Nursing – 3.00 GPA and 20 ACT Composite

Transient applicants are processed through the Admissions Office and the International Education Office; applicants must prove good standing at the last institution before admission can be granted at Tennessee Tech. Transfer students are considered for admission based on previous college coursework. Applicants who do not yet have 24 transferrable hours also must submit freshman application materials for review. Currently, a 2.00 last full-time semester GPA, a 2.00 cumulative GPA, and eligibility for readmission at the last institution are required for admission. Selected programs have additional requirements for direct admission.

- College of Engineering – 2.00 cumulative college GPA and a grade of "C" or higher in a pre-calculus mathematics course that includes a study of the trigonometric identities
- New international applicants must also provide minimum test scores on approved language tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB, etc. or a passing grade in a college-level, transferrable English composition course. Minimum scores for approved tests are posted on the International Admissions website [19].

Additionally, the Teacher Education program [20a][20b][20c] and the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing [21a][21b][21c] have admission requirements and procedures for upper-division courses that are administered directly by these departments. Students who do not gain admission to these programs may pursue other degree programs at the University.

Admission standards for former students are identical to those for transfer students unless the student is academically suspended. If suspended, applicants must follow the procedures posted on the Undergraduate Admissions website [22] to gain readmission.

Applicants who have not yet graduated from high school may pursue admission to Tennessee Tech under the Early Admission or Dual Enrollment programs detailed on the Undergraduate Admissions website [3]. These applicants must also provide a letter of recommendation from a high school guidance counselor or administrator and approval by a parent/guardian in the case of Early Admission.

Admission to the College of Graduate Studies at Tennessee Tech requires an applicant to meet general admission requirements as well as program-specific requirements. General requirements are listed on the College of Graduate Studies website [4], the International Education website [11], and in the *Graduate Catalog* [14] as well as on the Policy Central website [17a][17b]. These requirements include official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate credit from an accredited institution and letters of recommendation if required by the major department from persons acquainted with the applicant’s scholastic and professional accomplishments. Within the limits of academic reason, either the departmental chairperson or the College of Graduate Studies may require additional information and verification of credentials submitted in support of an application for admission.

The requirement of minimum test scores either for admission, readmission, or candidacy is determined by individual departments or divisions and is subject to approval by the respective college-level committees, the college dean, and the Graduate Studies Executive Committee.

Admission requirements of specific programs in the College of Graduate Studies are listed in the *Graduate Catalog* under entries for each college or school and are individually defined for each level (master’s, specialist, and doctorate levels). For an example of these requirements, see the admission requirements for all degrees at the master's level [23].

Admission policies are uniformly applied to all students with an established and published appeal process. The appeals process is a non-competitive, holistic, and individualized process where a review committee may consider some or all of the following: academic rigor of courses and core course GPA and grade trends, as well as non-cognitive elements such as an applicant’s concept of self, ability to deal with adversity, long-range goals, community involvement, special interests or abilities, leadership, and support structures. This process is outlined on the Admissions webpage [3] and provides a way for undergraduate applicants to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by

the Admissions Review Committee in situations where extenuating circumstances exist. Only 60 (2.5 percent) of the 2,401 new students enrolling in Fall 2020 were admitted after an appeals process.

The admission policies and procedures are reviewed annually to ensure alignment with peer institutions [24]. Periodic enrollment studies analyze persistence rates with respect to current admission requirements to ensure that current admission requirements are aligned with student success [25].

Recruitment Materials

Tennessee Tech publishes admission policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent Tennessee Tech's practices, policies, and accreditation status. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the University's practices and policies for all potential students and degree programs, regardless of the method of delivery (e.g., face-to-face, online, hybrid). All recruitment pieces are updated regularly (annually for catalogs and other printed materials and frequently throughout the year for online information).

Tennessee Tech represents its accredited status and publishes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) name, address, and telephone number on the University's webpage [26] and in both the *Undergraduate Catalog* [12] and the *Graduate Catalog* [14]. The website, the Undergraduate Catalog, and the Graduate Catalog are reviewed and updated annually.

Recruitment materials are prepared and distributed both electronically and in print. Both the Admissions Office and the College of Graduate Studies work in conjunction with the Office of Communications and Marketing to develop materials that are both attractive and accurate for the target populations. The Admissions Office follows the recommendations of the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) [27] in the development of presentations and print/electronic publications. The Graduate College incorporates best practices in marketing and recruitment strategies to graduate level students as provided by the Council of Graduate Schools [28a], the Southern Council of Graduate Schools [28b], the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals [29], and the South East Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (SEAGAP) [30]. In addition to regional and national recommendations, the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools (TCGS) [31] meets four times per year to discuss graduate best practices and current trends in graduate enrollment management.

All recruitment brochures [32] and presentations [33][34] are given a comprehensive evaluation by Tennessee Tech's Office of Communication and Marketing, Financial Aid and Scholarships, the Office of Admissions, and the academic units as needed before each printing/use for thoroughness and accuracy; admissions and recruitment web pages are given a comprehensive review annually in addition to being updated as changes occur. On-campus and off-campus information sessions and group presentations have become an integral part of the overall recruitment strategy.

All undergraduate and graduate admissions officers are well qualified and receive ongoing training as specified in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) "Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status" document [35]. This training is comprised of change memoranda, departmental and unit sessions, professional development in admission counseling, and comprehensive annual training sessions. Each undergraduate counselor is given a performance review annually that includes

multiple evaluations of presentations made to a live audience of prospective students and family members during that year. Student representatives also receive comprehensive annual training sessions in addition to ad hoc training, both led by qualified admission officers, as necessary. Graduate-level admissions and recruitment professionals are also reviewed regularly and on an annual basis. Enrollment goals and strategies support Strategic Goal Three in the Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan [36].

Other institutional membership in professional admission organizations is maintained by the Tennessee Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admission Officers (TACRAO) [37], the American Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admission Officers (AACRAO) [38], and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) [39]. Recruitment regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) [40] are also followed by admission officers.

Tennessee Tech maintains contractual agreements with independent agents to assist with international recruitment [41]. Tennessee Tech Policy 246 [42] establishes protocol on the recruitment of international students. All agents are legally bound to maintain the same recruitment and marketing principles and policies as institutional employees. Furthermore, Tennessee Tech requires said agents to direct all non-rudimentary prospective student inquiries to the Office of International Education and the Graduate Studies Office for more in-depth and specific information. The Office of Communication and Marketing provides guidelines for referring to SACSCOC accreditation [5].

Website

The Tennessee Tech website [43] is a comprehensive source of information (including, but not limited to, descriptive facts, contact information, comprehensive fee information, requirements, policies, and procedures) for prospective undergraduate students, parents, and college counselors. Through the "Admissions" [3] link on the home page, prospective undergraduate students can access information regarding admission, housing [44], financial aid [45], scholarships [46], fees [47], academic programs [48], and student life [49]. Prospective graduate students can access graduate admission information directly through the "Academics" link on the home page of the Tennessee Tech website [50]. Many web pages on the Tennessee Tech website contain other online publications such as the *University Catalog* [51][52] and the dynamic schedule of courses [53], FAQ's, calendars, and instructions on how to apply [54]. A specialized website landing page has been developed to provide an interactive experience to all prospective undergraduate students [55]. Virtual campus tours are available via videos and photos through both the Admission website [56] and the College of Graduate Studies website. Responsibility for departmental web pages is distributed to various University staff across campus, and information is linked directly to the respective departmental pages [48], not duplicated, whenever possible to ensure that all web pages are consistently maintained by their respective owner and that necessary change requests are completed efficiently. The entire website is overseen by the University webmasters in the Office of Communications and Marketing [5]. These webmasters work in conjunction with other offices to ensure the accuracy of information on the Tennessee Tech website.

Conclusion

The admission requirements and procedures of Tennessee Technological University demonstrate the University's commitment to the lifelong success of students by providing high-quality

instruction and learning experiences without discrimination. Furthermore, Tennessee Tech provides prospective students with current, accurate, and complete information and materials to aid in enrollment decisions. Admission presentations, publications, and online material are continually monitored and updated when necessary. The policies, procedures, evaluative measures, approval structures, appeals processes, stated goals, evaluation and training measures, and communication efforts detailed above show that the University demonstrates compliance with Standard 10.5.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Mission and Vision
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 1200 - Undergraduate Admission Requirements
[03] Undergraduates Admissions
[04] College of Graduate Studies Updated
[05] Office of Communications and Marketing
[06] College of Graduate Studies Admissions
[07] Office of International Education
[08] College of Interdisciplinary Studies
[09a] Employee Training Material Example
[09b] Volunteer Training Material Example
[10a] University Domestic Admission Requirements
[10b] University Domestic Freshmen Admission Requirements
[10c] University Domestic Transfer Admission Requirements
[10d] University Domestic Readmission Requirements
[10e] University Domestic Nondegree Seeking Requirements
[10f] University High School Admission Requirements
[11] International Admission Requirements
[12] Undergraduate Catalog Admissions
[13a] Tennessee Tech Policy 1202 - Readmission After Academic Suspension
[13b] Tennessee Tech Policy 1205 - Policy Central Site Academic Fresh Start
[14] Graduate School Catalog Admissions Policies
[15] Graduate School Domestic Admission Requirements
[16] Graduate School International Admission Requirements
[17a] Tennessee Tech Policy 270 - General Graduate Admission Requirements
[17b] Tennessee Tech Policy 271 - General Graduate Degree Requirements
[18] Tennessee Tech UG Admissions Change Request Program Change ShortForm Rev1
[19] International Admissions Language Score Requirements
[20a] Teacher Ed Freshmen and Transfer Admission Requirements
[20b] Teacher Ed 2+2 Admission Requirements
[20c] Teacher Ed Post Baccalaureate Admission Requirements
[21a] College of Nursing Admission
[21b] College of Nursing Four-Year Program Requirements
[21c] College of Nursing Accelerated BSN Admission Requirements
[22] Readmission After Suspension Procedures
[23] Graduate Admission Requirements
[24] TBR - UT Admissions Comparison
[25] Tennessee Tech Persistence Analysis
[26] Accreditations and Memberships
[27] NACAC Code of Ethics and Professional Practices
[28a] Council of Graduate Schools
[28b] Southern Council of Graduate Schools

[29] About NAGAP
[30] SEAGAP About
[31] Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools
[32] Publications Samples
[33] Undergraduate Information Sessions
[34] Graduate Information Sessions
[35] SACSCOC Advertising
[36] Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan
[37] Tennessee Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers
[38] American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers
[39] National Association for College Admission Counseling
[40] National Collegiate Athletic Association
[41] International Student Recruitment Agreement
[42] Tennessee Tech Policy 246 - International Recruitment
[43] Tennessee Tech Website
[44] Tennessee Tech Housing Information
[45] Tennessee Tech Financial Aid Information
[46] Tennessee Tech Scholarship Information
[47] Tennessee Tech Bursar Office
[48] Tennessee Tech Academic Program Information
[49] Tennessee Tech Student Life Information
[50] Tennessee Tech Home Page
[51] 2020-2021 Undergraduate Catalog
[52] 2020-2021 Graduate Catalog
[53] Schedule of Courses
[54] Admission How to Apply
[55] Majors and Concentrations Website
[56] Virtual Campus Tours

R - 10.6.a

Distance and Correspondence Education

An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:

a. ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University ensures a student who enrolls in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by using the methods outlined below. The Tennessee Tech Distance Education Policy covers the procedures and practices pertaining to distance education courses and programs originating from Tennessee Tech [1].

Unique and Secure Username and Password

Tennessee Tech has a policy for the creation, use, and maintenance of account credentials and passwords used to access the University's information technology facilities and resources [2]. This policy applies to all persons and organizations using the information technology facilities and resources owned, leased, or administered by Tennessee Tech. This includes full-time, part-time, and temporary employees and independent contractors. The policy also applies to all Tennessee Tech students enrolled at the University and alumni. Information Technology Services provides services and resources for employees and students [3]. This policy complements and supports compliance with the State of Tennessee Enterprise Information Security Policies.

All Tennessee Tech students are required to use a secure multifactor authentication consisting of a combination of a personal user login ID combined with a unique password (a minimum of 16 characters in length without consecutive repeating characters), and a One-Time Passcode for authentication [4]. Passwords will be used for authentication of access to all Tennessee Tech systems where stronger multifactor authentication methods are not technically possible.

Tennessee Tech students enrolled in TN eCampus courses log into a dedicated learning management system (LMS) for TN eCampus courses [5]. Each student has a unique name and password comprised of portions of the student’s first name, last name, and date of birth. Students are informed of their credentials via email from TN eCampus Student Success Manager and a format provided on the TN eCampus LMS Login Page. Students are prompted and required to change their password upon their first successful login.

Proctoring

For students enrolled in Tennessee Tech online courses or programs, holds a license for Respondus Monitor that works with Respondus LockDown Browser and the campus online learning management system [6]. Faculty have access to this resource at no additional cost to the students. Students use their personal or university computers and a webcam to record

themselves as they are testing with the parameters established by the course faculty. Faculty can then review the recorded videos for discrepancies in the assessment sessions.

Tennessee Tech's Testing and Learning Center (TLC) provides a secure setting for proctored exams, including those exams administered online. The TLC proctored 1,189 exams during the 2019-2020 academic year, including 312 exams for TN eCampus online courses and 719 for other Tennessee Tech courses. Examinees must schedule an appointment with the TLC using an online registration system, RegisterBlast [7].

For students enrolled in TN eCampus courses or programs, of which Tennessee Tech is a collaborative partner, the TN eCampus central office maintains a secure database to store proctoring instructions and exam passwords. The TLC exam proctors retrieve exam information from the database. For other Tennessee Tech online courses, faculty provide exams, instructions, and passwords to the TLC via RegisterBlast. All examinees follow the process below upon arrival for exam appointments.

Examinees must provide two forms of identification (ID): their student ID and a valid, government-issued photo ID with signature, such as a driver's license or passport. The photo ID is used to verify that the person registered is the person taking the exam. The student ID is collected at check-in to obtain a locker key for storing personal possessions that are not allowed in the testing room. In the testing room, students log in to the LMS and are moved to a designated spot facing away from the computer while the exam password is entered by the proctor. At no time do students have access to passwords. The student's name appears in the LMS so it can be matched to the student identified. In addition to a video monitoring system used in the testing room, the proctor physically monitors examinees by circulating the room every fifteen minutes. If unusual or prohibited behavior is detected, an irregularity report is completed and sent to the instructor [8].

In addition to use of the TLC, students in TN eCampus courses have the option of live virtual proctoring accessed via a link within the course LMS. During online scheduling, students create a profile or account; provide a valid, government-issued photo ID; and answer security questions. On exam day, students are monitored by a live proctor who verifies students' IDs, asks security or challenge questions, and conducts a webcam scan of their work area and desk to ensure security of the exam setting and that no prohibited items are present [9].

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University enforces policies on the creation, use, and maintenance of account credentials and passwords used to access information technology facilities and resources. These policies are reviewed and updated as necessary. Tennessee Tech is continually monitoring ways of improving the proctoring of exams to implement new technologies as they become available so that the University demonstrates compliance with the Federal Requirements 10.6.a.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 223- Distance Education
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 852 - Password Management
[03] Information Technology
[04] Password Information

[05] Tennessee eCampus LMS Login
[06] Respondus Software
[07] Blast Exam Registration
[08] TLC Irregularity Report
[09] Tennessee eCampus Using a Virtual Proctor

R - 10.6.b

Distance and Correspondence Education

An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:

b. has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University has written procedures for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs. Tennessee Tech adheres to regulations set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as ensuring privacy measures through the Tennessee Tech Data Security and Handling Policy (Tech DSP) [1]. Documentation of training in FERPA and other privacy protection policies, as well as data security reviews, is maintained by Tennessee Tech. All distance and correspondence education courses and programs use the online University learning management system (LMS) Desire to Learn (D2L) for instructional resources, student interaction, and grading. The D2L contract provides for protection of all student records pursuant to FERPA and applicable federal regulations. Tennessee Tech is committed to protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs.

Students Rights to Privacy and Confidentiality

Tennessee Tech abides by all guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) [2] and the Tech DSP [1]. All courses, including distance and correspondence courses, are subject to all the FERPA and Tech DSP regulations. Because there is no distinction between types of students, all Tennessee Tech students are protected by the policies and procedures outlined below.

Every fall semester students are notified by campus email of their privacy rights [3] as documented in the Tennessee Tech *Student Handbook* [4]. One of the rights is the restriction of the disclosure of student directory information. However, under certain circumstances as outlined in FERPA (34 CFR § 99.31) [2], Tennessee Tech may disclose this information without consent to parties or under certain conditions.

Tennessee Tech's FERPA guidelines can be found on the Registrar website [2]. This website also includes the FERPA statement, a description of students' rights to inspect and review their academic records, and guidance on how to request amendments to their academic records. The Registrar website makes clear that students provide written consent before the University discloses personal information from these records that is not authorized by FERPA. Tennessee Tech Policy 1206 Confidentiality of Students Records and FERPA Compliance [3] is available on the Policy Central website [5] and on the Registrar's website [2]. This document details Tennessee Tech's policy regarding the confidentiality of Student Education Records and compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Information Technology Services (ITS) ensures the data integrity of student academic records as described in the Tech DSP [1]. Several data-handling requirements are defined to appropriately safeguard the information.

- Level I: Public Information: This level does not require restrictions in distribution or handling.
- Level II: Internal Information: Access must be limited to employees or contracted workers conducting Tennessee Tech business and cannot be transmitted, transferred, or disseminated externally except on official Tennessee Tech business.
- Level III: Confidential Information: When stored or transmitted electronically, Confidential Information must be encrypted at AES 128-bit encryption. Access to Confidential Information must be restricted to Tennessee Tech-managed accounts. Information in a non-electronic format must be secured in a locked location when not in use. Distribution of Confidential Information should only be on a need-to-know basis.
- Level IV: Sensitive Information: When stored or transmitted electronically, Sensitive Information must be encrypted at the highest available level, preferably AES 256-bit encryption or higher. On systems where AES 256-bit encryption is not available, the minimum acceptable encryption is AES 128-bit encryption, unless an express written exception is obtained from the Chief Information Security Officer or his or her designee. Access to information must be restricted to Tennessee Tech-managed accounts. Sensitive Information in a non-electronic format must be secured in a locked location when not in use. Distribution of Sensitive Information should only be on a need-to-know basis.

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) is the contract holder for the D2L course management system used by Tennessee Tech and its sister institutions through December 2021. The contract between TBR and D2L [6] provides that: " . . . all hosting and other services must be performed pursuant to the rules promulgated by the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)" (Section A.2.). Furthermore, the last paragraph relating to Hosting Services in Attachment 1 to the contract states: "For so long as D2L is providing hosting services, D2L acknowledges and agrees that it will take all reasonable steps necessary to protect all student records pursuant to the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), and applicable Federal Regulations set forth at 34 C.F.R. Sec. 99.31. et seq." The contract is held in the Office of the University Counsel for the TBR in Nashville, Tennessee [6]. Upon expiration of the TBR D2L contract, Tennessee Tech will continue with D2L, independent of TBR, and a new D2L contract will continue to provide protection of all student records pursuant to FERPA and applicable federal regulations.

Tennessee Tech also provides FERPA training to all faculty and staff through the following venues:

- Access to the Confidentiality of Students Records and FERPA Compliance policy [3]
- New faculty are trained in FERPA guidelines during the New Tenure-Track Faculty Orientation and Workshop and the attendance records are maintained by Academic Affairs.
- Online faculty FERPA training via the Registrar's website [7]
- A one-page quick guide "FERPA Matrix" [8] is also published on the Registrar's website

- All Tennessee Tech employees, including all student workers who have access to confidential records, are trained by their supervisor and must sign a Confidentiality Agreement [9] as part of the onboarding process.

In addition, the Tennessee Tech Office of Internal Audit maintains a website for data security reviews [10]. Tennessee Tech also provides clear guidelines for the disposal of records accessible on the Volpe Library website [11] and outlined in Tennessee Tech Data Security and Handling Policy [1].

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University provides written policies and procedures for the protection of student privacy for students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs demonstrating compliance with Federal Requirement 10.6.b. Tennessee Tech fulfills FERPA and other privacy protection requirements with mandatory training for all faculty and staff. The Tennessee Tech DSP also outlines data handling requirements at four distinct levels, and Internal Audit publishes compliance reviews for federal and University policies. The Tennessee Tech learning management system, D2L, provides additional privacy protection for students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs. Provisions for dissemination, instruction, reflection, and assessment of data security and privacy practices by Tennessee Tech validate that the University is in compliance with Federal Requirement 10.6.b

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 856 - Data Security and Handling
[02] FERPA
[03] Tennessee Tech Policy 1206 - Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance
[04] Tennessee Tech Student Handbook
[05] Policy Central
[06] D2L TBR Contract
[07] Online FERPA Faculty training via Registrar
[08] Tennessee Tech FERPA Matrix
[09] Confidentiality Agreement
[10] Internal Audit
[11] Destroying Records

R - 10.6.c

Distance and Correspondence Education

An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:

c. ensures that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University distributes notification of fees, conditions of assessment, and refund policies to all students through the Office of the Bursar. Tennessee Tech does not charge an additional fee for verification of student identity for any student, regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses.

Procedures for Projected Additional Student Charges for Verification of Identity

Tennessee Tech does not directly charge students enrolled in distance education courses an additional fee for verification of student identity, and there is no charge for exam proctoring at a Tennessee Tech location as any associated cost is covered through program or alternative and online fee revenue.

Student Fees and Adjustments

The Office of the Bursar maintains information on tuition and fees [1], including incidental fees and other charges. Current updates and changes in fee structures can be found on the Bursar website [2]. A policy outlining student fees and adjustments can also be found in the Tennessee Tech *Student Handbook* [3].

Student Refunds and Appeals

The Bursar website provides information related to refund distribution options and refund procedures including Federal and Title IV funds. The refund policy addresses tuition, fees, housing, and meal plan refunds [4]. A student appeal process is provided in Policy 511.2 [5] and can be found in the Tennessee Tech *Student Handbook* and an electronic appeal form is located on the Bursar website [6].

Conclusion

Students, including those enrolled in distance or correspondence education programs, are provided with information on tuition and fees through the website of the Office of the Bursar. As the University does not charge additional fees for verification of student identity or exam proctoring at a Tennessee Tech location, the institution is in compliance with Federal Requirement 10.6.c. If at any future time the University determines it is necessary to implement a fee for verifying the identity of students enrolled in distance learning courses, the University will distribute a written procedure at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of the projected additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tuition and Fees
[02] Bursar Office Website
[03] Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1 - Fees - Charges - Refunds and Adjustments
[04] Refunds Bursar Website
[05] Tennessee Tech Policy 511.2 - Student Fee Adjustments - Refunds and Appeals
[06] Student Refund Appeals Form

R - 10.7

Policies for Awarding Credit

The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses. These include practices for awarding credit for courses delivered off-campus, in alternate modes of delivery, and for credit by prior learning assessment. This report describes the following aspects of these practices:

- Tennessee Tech's definition of credit hour and course level
- The process of approving new courses and curricula
- Procedures for evaluating credit hour and level of newly approved courses
- Procedures for awarding Prior Learning Assessment credit

Tennessee Tech has defined and published a policy for credit hours (Policy 222) [1]. The Tennessee Tech Credit Hour policy covers the definition of credit hours and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs.

Tennessee Tech Definition of the Credit Hour

Tennessee Tech is responsible for determining the credit hours awarded for coursework in its programs in accordance with the definition of a credit hour for federal program purposes. The definition of a credit hour, which is included in Tennessee Tech Policy 222, applies to courses on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

As described in Tennessee Tech Policy 222, Tennessee Tech is organized on a semester basis. When the term "hour" or "credit" is used, it refers to a semester hour credit. One semester hour of credit requires one hour (55 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks. Summer, intersession, or other alternate course formats require the equivalent amount of work per credit hour.

Two or more hours of laboratory or studio work are required per hour of credit in these courses. An equivalent amount of work is required for practica and other academic activities that award credit. Laboratory hours per credit are determined by the department or college. Semester credit hours earned in courses such as internships, research, theses, dissertations, study abroad, etc. are based on outcome expectations established by the academic program.

Tennessee Tech's online courses and other non-traditional methods of offering courses are held to the same standards as the traditional on-campus courses as described in the two previous

paragraphs. According to the Tennessee Tech policy on Distance Education, online/non-traditional courses must offer an equivalent learning experience and learning outcomes as the on-campus courses [2].

Studio work at Tennessee Tech is calculated according to the policy on laboratory work. This definition of credit is applied to the scheduling of studio classes at the foundations level, in introductory classes, and in upper-division studio classes. Studio classes are scheduled to meet approximately two clock hours per credit per week. Therefore, the majority of studio classes, which produce three semester credits, meet for six clock hours per week in two sessions, three hours each.

Similarly, in course formats that do not have regularly scheduled class meetings, such as Independent Studies, Special Problems, Studio Practica, Senior Thesis, distance education, and other similar courses, a standard of three to four clock hours of work per week for one credit hour is used for planning and evaluation. The Office of the Registrar oversees timely and accurate record keeping of course credit and grades.

Tennessee Tech's definition of the credit hours is also published in the Tech *Undergraduate Catalog* in the Section of Academic Regulations [3]. The level of the course is indicated by the institution's Course Numbering System. Courses numbered 1000-2999 are lower-division courses. Courses numbered 3000-4999 are upper-division courses. Course levels are determined by the depth of matter covered, complexity of the material, and the expectations for students in the course. Courses at the 1000 level have no prerequisites and cover basic concepts and/or terminology of a discipline. These 1000-level courses represent introductory and General Education courses that require no special background. Courses at the 2000 level represent intermediate college-level difficulty that may have a 1000-level prerequisite. Courses at the 2000 level build on the concepts and understanding established in 1000-level courses. The 3000- and 4000-level courses are upper-division advanced courses taken by majors or minors in the subject area/discipline. Students are expected to perform at a high level with the requisite methodological tools and understanding.

Courses numbered 5000-7999 can be taken by graduate students for graduate credit. Courses numbered 5000-5999 can be taken by eligible juniors and seniors for undergraduate credit [4]. A graduate course may meet in conjunction with an undergraduate course. In these cases, the work required of graduate students is significantly different from the work required of undergraduate students. The differential requirements to earn either undergraduate or graduate credit in a 5000-level course are described in the course syllabus.

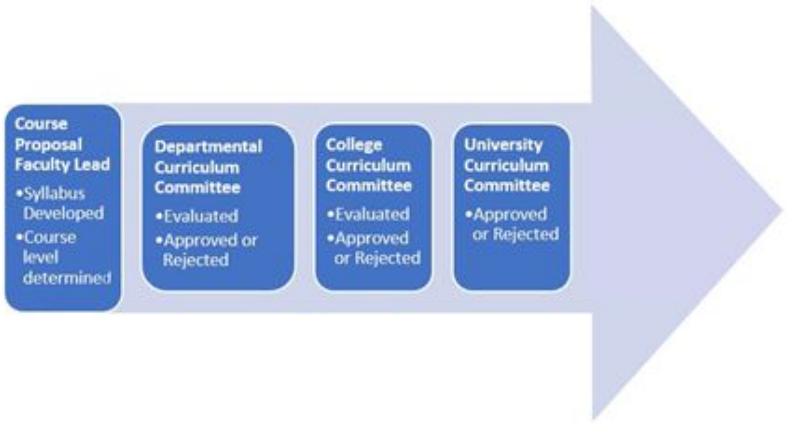
Graduate level courses (5000-7999) are designed to support a higher level of individualized learning and propel the student to become an expert in a chosen field of study. Research activity is required to help students develop the skill set critical for success in a competitive job market. The rigors of graduate study at Tennessee Tech prepare the student to develop leadership and professional skills that are desired and needed in the job market. Graduate students are provided opportunities to conduct research, publish, apply for patents, and attend conferences and workshops that support professional development and career advancement. As required in Standard 9.6, Tennessee Tech graduate courses differ from undergraduate courses in relation to depth of understanding, theoretical presentation of material, extensive reading requirements, focus on non-linear approach to learning, evaluation and application of theoretical concepts, and focus self-awareness and self-confidence of becoming an expert in a field of study.

Processes for Approving Credit Courses

All courses at Tennessee Tech, regardless of format or mode of delivery, must follow the same process for approval, including the amount of credit to be offered.

Approval Process

Quality control of curriculum development and changes occurs at three levels within the University for both undergraduate and graduate curricula. Undergraduate proposals originate within departments and pass through their respective college curriculum committees, which are comprised of credentialed faculty representing each department in that college. A college committee may approve or reject a course proposal based on its merits. If rejected, a course proposal is returned to its department for further consideration. When approved at the college level, a proposal is subjected to final scrutiny by the University Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of chairs from each department in the University.



Graduate course proposals follow a similar pathway in that they originate from individual departments and pass through a college's curriculum committee. However, instead of moving to the University Curriculum Committee [5], graduate proposals go to the Graduate Studies Executive Committee [6], which is comprised of members of the faculty, administrators, and graduate students from departments and colleges that offer graduate degrees.

Members of the University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies Executive Committee are appointed by the President with guidance from the academic departments and colleges. Each committee is comprised of diverse and qualified faculty, administrators, staff, and students [7]. Committee members are appointed for two-year terms.

Determining the Credit Hours Awarded for Courses and Programs

Undergraduate courses, including the credit hours associated with the courses and curricula, are proposed by academic departments through College Curriculum Committees and reviewed for compliance with University standards by the University Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of faculty members, administrators, students, and advisory members appointed by the President of the University. Graduate courses are proposed and reviewed by the Graduate Studies Executive Committee, consisting of faculty members, administrators, students, and advisory members appointed by the President of the University. Procedures and memberships of the University Curriculum Committee [5] and the Graduate Studies Executive Committee [6] are published at the respective committee websites.

The University has an Admissions and Credits Committee [8] composed of faculty, administrators, and students that meets to review cases of students with problems concerning admission, readmission, academic credit, and/or requirements. The Committee studies problems and recommends policies relating to credits to be recognized by the University.

Credit Hours Requirements in Course Descriptions

Course descriptions in the Tennessee Tech *Undergraduate Catalog* [9] and the Tennessee Tech *Graduate Catalog* [10] specify the course credit hours, required lecture hours and/or laboratory hours, as well as other hours as appropriate, along with brief course descriptions. Samples of program requirements and course requirements are presented below to demonstrate the Tennessee Tech credit hour policies.

Samples of Course Requirements as identified in the *Undergraduate* and *Graduate Catalogs*:

HEC 3310. Textiles I. Lec. 2. Lab 2. Credit 3. This three credit-hour undergraduate course requires two lecture hours and two laboratory hours, wherein two laboratory hours equate to one credit hour.

CHE 2011. Chemical and Biological Engineering Process Analysis. Lec. 3. Lab 2. Credit 4. This four credit-hour undergraduate level course requires three lecture hours and two laboratory hours, wherein two laboratory hours equate to one credit hour.

ART 2010. Three-Dimensional Design. Studio 6. Credit 3. This three credit-hour, undergraduate-level course requires six studio hours, wherein six studio hours equate to three credit hours.

BIOL 6350. Management of Wetland Wildlife. Lec. 3. Lab 3. Credit. 4. This four credit-hour, graduate-level course requires three lecture hours and three laboratory hours, wherein three laboratory hours equate to one credit hour.

PRST 6110. Leadership and Communication. Lec. 3. Cr. 3. This three credit-hour, graduate-level course requires three lecture hours.

Academic Credit for Learning Achieved on a Non-Credit Basis (Prior Learning Assessment)

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a term used to describe the evaluation of college-level, credit-worthy learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. It is learning and knowledge students acquire while living their lives, such as by working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open source courseware. PLA is not confined to portfolio assessment, which is simply one type of PLA (as are CLEP tests, ACE evaluations, challenge exams, etc.). The policies and procedures for awarding PLA are described in Tennessee Tech Policy 258 [11].

As described in Policy 258, Tennessee Tech provides PLA credit for the following:

- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- American Council on Education (ACE) Guides – Published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs and examinations offered by non-collegiate agencies (including civilian employers, the military, professional associations, and other workplace related training)
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs)
- Evaluation of Local Training – Program evaluations of non-collegiate instructional programs approved by individual colleges
- Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE)
- Institutional Course Challenge Examination Credit
- International Baccalaureate Programs (IB)
- Portfolio Review Credit (or portfolio assessment credit) – A portfolio is prepared by the student to demonstrate and validate credit for learning acquired outside of the classroom. University faculty will use rubrics to evaluate the student portfolio and make credit recommendations. Portfolios will include documentation such as certificates of training, work samples, awards and honors, job descriptions, performance evaluations, samples of artwork, evidence of self-directed learning, and resumes.

- Prior Military Training Credit
- Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP)
- Dual credit program
- Dual enrollment program
- ACT/SAT

PLA credits apply toward majors, minors, concentrations, General Education requirements, and electives that count toward the degree or certificate being sought in the same manner as traditional courses. PLA credits shall not be treated differently in their application and use than their course equivalencies or appropriate block credit. PLA credits also satisfy prerequisite requirements in the same manner as their course equivalencies.

Tennessee Tech awards credit for certain examinations and courses. Students may obtain credit through a high score on the ACT test, Advanced Placement exams, the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas and courses, and Statewide Dual Credit [12]. The standards are established by faculty in the departments in which credit is to be awarded. Departments work with the Admissions and Credits Committee [13] to review cut scores for awarding credit. The Admissions and Credits Committee is composed of faculty and administrators [14].

The maximum credits awarded for PLA meet SACSCOC Standard 10.8 and cannot exceed 60 credit hours. Students must earn 25% of hours required for graduation through Tennessee Tech credit. PLA credit does not count toward the 25% minimum [15].

Decisions regarding the awarding of PLA credit are overseen by qualified University faculty. For PLA credit portfolio assessment, qualified faculty oversee the process of deciding the appropriate level and amount of credit. For example, the assessment of military credit recommendations based on military occupational specialty (MOS) is overseen by the content-appropriate departments. In addition, experiential learning credit coordinated through the College of Interdisciplinary Studies is overseen by a multi-disciplinary faculty committee representing areas appropriate to the particular petitions for credit. This committee meets each semester to assess petitions for credit. An evaluation rubric is used to determine appropriate credit [16].

Credit by Professional Certificate or Non-credit Courses

Academic credit may be awarded for professional certification or non-credit courses [15][17]. Requests for the award of such credit must be submitted to the departmental chairperson of the department in which credit is being sought. Tennessee Tech Policy 261 specifies that coursework accepted for credit must represent collegiate coursework relevant to the degree, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those enrolled in Tennessee Tech's degree program [17].

Credit by Special Examination

A student who has had sufficient training or experience in a subject to merit the establishment of credit by comprehensive examination but who has not enrolled in the same, comparable, or higher level course at the college level may request to take a special examination prepared by the department involved. A student must submit a completed request for special examination to

the Office of Academic Services. Tennessee Tech will award credit based on the results of such special examinations to a student's permanent record [17].

- Only grades of A, B, C, D, or F will be assigned to such special examination courses.
- A student must be enrolled at Tennessee Tech in order to take a special examination.

Courses Offered Off-campus, Online, or as Dual High School Enrollment

The approval process for new courses includes information of their proposed location and mode of delivery. The same standards apply to off-campus, online, alternately formatted courses (hybrid, studio, internships, etc.) [2]. Regarding course delivery formats and credit hour equivalency, Tennessee Tech Policy 223 states that distance education course will follow Tennessee Tech Policy 222 Credit Hours. The online course must offer an equivalent learning experience and learning outcomes as other delivery modes. Credit hour requirements for degree completion for distance education programs are the same as Tennessee Tech's traditional programs.

Tennessee Tech provides required training [18] and innovative workshops [19] for faculty teaching online courses. The Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) [20] fosters a culture of teaching and learning that is engaged, innovative, transformative, and purposeful. CITL provides faculty development opportunities for all modalities of teaching but provides more detailed training for online instructors.

All dual enrollment high school courses are University-level courses with faculty vetted and approved by the departments offering the courses. Departments offering dual enrollment courses provide the instructors with syllabi, textbooks, course materials, and training. Faculty teaching dual enrollment courses are fully qualified and have the title of adjunct faculty. Dual enrollment students have the same opportunity to provide input for instructor and course evaluations as other Tennessee Tech students. Tennessee Tech is in full control of dual enrollment high school credit offerings and complies with SACSCOC Policy on Dual Enrollment [21].

Conclusion

The institution has an established definition of credit hour and appropriate policies and procedures for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format, location, or mode of delivery. Academically qualified faculty are involved in such oversight. Therefore, Tennessee Technological University demonstrates compliance with Standard 10.7.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 222 - Credit Hours
[02] Tennessee Tech Policy 223- Distance Education
[03] Tennessee Tech Undergraduate Catalog - Academic Regulations
[04] FastTrack Program
[05] University Curriculum Committee
[06] Graduate Studies Executive Committee
[07] Committee Members UCC_GSEC_AC
[08] Admissions and Credits Committee
[09] Tennessee Tech Undergraduate Catalog Cover
[10] Tennessee Tech Graduate Catalog
[11] Tennessee Tech Policy 258 - Prior Learning Assessment
[12] Credit Awarded by Exam
[13] Admissions and Credits Committee
[14] Committee Rosters 2021-2022
[15] Credit by Exams
[16] PLA Evaluation Rubric
[17] Tennessee Tech Policy 261 - Academic Credit from Other Institutions
[18] Required Training for Online Teaching
[19] Workshops and Training for Faculty
[20] Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
[21] Dual Enrollment Courses Offered

R - 10.9

Cooperative Academic Arrangements

The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcripts courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University currently has one consortial/contractual academic agreement with an out-of-state institution. This agreement involves a dual degree between the College of Business and FH Aachen University in Germany [1]. Tennessee Tech also participates in one consortium within the Tennessee higher education system: Regents Online Campus Collaborative (also known as TN eCampus) [2] and delivers two joint degree programs in collaboration with East Tennessee State University (ETSU), one at the graduate level and the other at the undergraduate level. The first is the joint ETSU-Tennessee Tech Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program [3] and the second is a joint Tennessee Tech-ETSU Bachelor of Science in General Engineering (BSE) program [4].

College of Business Dual Degree Program

The College of Business at Tennessee Tech entered into a dual-degree program agreement with FH Aachen University of Applied Sciences in 2011. This program allows Tennessee Tech students the opportunity to spend their junior year at Aachen University in Aachen, Germany, before returning to Tennessee Tech for their final year of coursework. At the conclusion of the program, students earn degrees from both universities. Likewise, students from Aachen University can study for one year at Tennessee Tech and receive degrees from both universities. Courses taken by students at FH Aachen and the Tennessee Tech College of Business require prior approval by the advisors in their respective home institutions.

The Tennessee Tech College of Business Curriculum Committee and faculty review the core curriculum of all College of Business programs every two years as outlined in the College of Business Curriculum Committee bylaws [5]. In addition, the Tennessee Tech College of Business and FH Aachen University regularly collaborate to ensure ongoing success of the dual degree program and in the last review expanded the list of course offerings at both universities. The agreement, including specific required coursework between the two universities, was renewed in 2021 [6].

Courses taken by Tennessee Tech students at FH Aachen University are accepted via the typical international university course transfer process [7]. All students are instructed to request their Aachen University transcript be sent to the Tennessee Tech Study Abroad Office. Once the transcript is received, it will be processed per Tennessee Tech policies, and transfer credit will be verified. The grades received will be converted into U.S. letter grades. Once this process is complete, the transcript will be sent to the Tennessee Tech International Education Office for review, and then grades will be posted accordingly. If any of the credits/classes are questioned,

the appropriate faculty in the College of Business will review the syllabus, course materials, and student work to ensure appropriate credit is awarded.

The Business Studies Program at Aachen University is accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) [8]. The College of Business at Tennessee Tech is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) [9]. The Tennessee Tech-Aachen program has also been approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) [10]. This international partnership with a school of applied sciences helps Tennessee Tech meet its stated mission as a "STEM-infused, comprehensive institution."

Regents Online Collaborative Campus

The Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC) began in 2001 as the Regents Online Degree Program (RODP), with all Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) colleges, universities, and technology centers joining in a collaborative effort to offer a full range of graduate and undergraduate courses, degrees, certificates, and diplomas online [2]. With the authorization of the FOCUS Act legislation in 2016, the six TBR universities transitioned from governance by TBR to governance by independent institutional boards. The University Online Collaborative Transition Agreement outlines the collaborative relationship between these six universities [11]. Each of the TBR and locally governed institutions (LGIs) participating in the ROCC program and staffing courses is accredited by SACSCOC. Tennessee Tech faculty participating in ROCC offer courses available for credit to any student registered at one of the TBR and/or LGI institutions, and Tennessee Tech students may take ROCC courses for credit toward a Tennessee Tech degree.

To resolve the confusion resulting from the continued use of both ROCC and RODP in references to this TBR online collaborative, starting Fall 2015 it was renamed "TN eCampus," as described in the June 2015 system newsletter [12]. TN eCampus has a Curriculum Committee and Curriculum Subcommittee to review programs, courses, and course development. Courses proposed for the AA/AS/BIS programs in the TN eCampus go through a rigorous process to ensure their high quality [13]. Both the full Curriculum Committee and subcommittee are composed of one representative from each of the thirteen community colleges and the five locally governed institutions that were formerly part of TBR. Additionally, the Curriculum Committee includes non-voting representation from Registrar offices, Distance Education directors, and TBR officials who provide guidance on scheduling, enrollments, and student concerns. Meetings of the subcommittee usually occur once a semester, including the summer. Course proposals are submitted using a Course Development Form [14] and must include a syllabus, a sample module, a map of course outcomes and topics, and a curriculum vitae of the faculty member who submits the proposal. A successful course proposal requires approval of both the subcommittee and the full Curriculum Committee. Unsuccessful proposals are returned to the developer(s). Following successful approvals, the course is reviewed by the Academic Oversight Committee, consisting of Chief Academic Officers or their representatives. If final approvals are received, course development begins, and the course is placed in the TN eCampus rotation of courses.

To enable each participating institution to review the credentials of faculty teaching TN eCampus courses, each institution has access to a shared database known as the Faculty Credentialing System (FCS). The FCS database stores faculty credentials, such as transcripts and curricula vitae, and provides institutions with a tool for approving or denying faculty qualifications for all TN eCampus courses. The credentials are prepared by the home institution of each faculty and

uploaded to the FCS for review. An extensive review of faculty credentials was completed in Spring 2018 during the transition from Maestro to FCS. All institutions are notified when new faculty are assigned to TN eCampus courses, so credentials can be reviewed continuously. Institutions can challenge or deny faculty credentials that are insufficiently documented or do not meet Tennessee Tech's standards as guided by SACSCOC.

ETSU-Tennessee Tech Doctor of Nursing Practice Joint Program

The Whitson Hester School of Nursing (WHSON) at Tennessee Tech entered into a collaborative academic agreement in 2015 with the College of Nursing at ETSU [15] to provide a Doctor of Nursing Practice program. This graduate degree program offers six concentrations and prepares graduates for certification in their respective specialty, leading to advanced nursing practice roles in the respective concentration. ETSU provides three of the concentrations. Tennessee Tech provides three additional concentrations, and the campuses share the course delivery for the foundational courses. The joint ETSU-Tennessee Tech DNP program is approved by both the Tennessee Higher Education Commission [16] and the SACSCOC [17]. The joint ETSU-Tennessee Tech DNP program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) [18].

The ETSU-Tennessee Tech Joint DNP Program offers both a BSN-DNP and an MSN-DNP option for all six concentrations. The BSN-DNP credit hours for graduation range from 77-89 credit hours specific to the concentration and a minimum of 1,000 practica hours [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24]. The MSN-DNP concentrations require a range of 32-35 credits hours specific to the concentration and a minimum of 500 practica hours [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30].

A minimum of one third of the program credit hours is taught by each college/school in compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 9.5. This requirement is also outlined in the SACSCOC Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures [31]. The majority of the courses will be taught by the campus holding the specific concentration. The student transcripts clearly reflect the campus where the course was delivered, ensuring monitoring of minimal credit hour requirements for each campus [32]. All graduates receive a diploma that reflects the collaboration with the inclusion of both universities [33].

This program is jointly governed by three councils: Administrative, Curriculum, and Evaluation and a Joint DNP Director or Program Coordinator from each campus. The councils are comprised of graduate nursing faculty and administrators from each respective college/school. The position of Chief Nurse Administrator will rotate between the two deans of the respective colleges/schools. The leadership shifted to the Dean of the WHSON at Tennessee Tech in July 2021 as reflected in the revised Memorandum of Agreement (page 2) [15].

Quality of the Joint DNP Program is ensured by the Curriculum and Evaluation Councils, which report to the Administrative Council and ultimately to the respective Graduate Faculty Committees on each campus. Responsibilities and membership of the Councils are outlined in the Joint MOU [15] and the ETSU-Tennessee Tech DNP Program Bylaws [34].

Tennessee Tech-ETSU Joint Bachelor of Science in Engineering

The joint Tennessee Tech-ETSU BSE program is a collaboration between the College of Engineering at Tennessee Tech and the College of Business and Technology at ETSU. The two colleges entered into a formal agreement in 2015 [35]. The joint Tennessee Tech-ETSU BSE program is approved by both the Tennessee Higher Education Commission [36] and the SACSCOC [37]. This program is jointly governed by an Administrative Council and an Executive

Board. Co-Program Directors (one on each campus) oversee the daily operations of the joint program. This program also has an Industrial Advisory Board, which consists of area employers or other persons with experience that will enable them to provide guidance in defining program curriculum and/or information about the performance of program graduates. The Board meets at least twice per year.

The joint Administrative Council ensures the quality of the curriculum, the qualifications of faculty teaching in the program, and the appropriate scheduling of the courses. The Council consists of faculty members from both institutions, as well as deans and associate deans from both institutions. The Dean of the College of Engineering at Tennessee Tech chairs the Administrative Council until graduation of the first cohort of students. After the graduation of the first class, the role of chairperson will rotate between the two deans of the respective colleges at Tennessee Tech and ETSU.

The Executive Board consists of the university presidents, the university provosts, and the deans of the two collaborating colleges. The Executive Board meets at least twice a year. The provosts serve as co-chairs and set meeting agendas. The Board receives updates in the form of Administrative Council minutes and summaries of decisions and other actions from the Council. As necessary, the Board will also receive updates from other appropriate individuals, such as department chairs, on the operations of the joint program.

The Co-Program Directors provide day-to-day program oversight and leadership. They interact with students, faculty, and staff at both campuses as needed and plan the course offerings and timeslots for classes.

The joint Tennessee Tech-ETSU BSE program of study [38] requires a minimum of 25 percent (a minimum of 32 credit hours) of the program credit hours be taught by each college/school as outlined in the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 9.4 and Tennessee Tech Policy 260 Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation [39]. This requirement is also outlined in the SACSCOC Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures [31]. Courses on the student transcript delivered at ETSU are labeled with "ETSU," and the unlabeled courses are delivered at Tennessee Tech. The transcript labeling reflects the campus from which the course was delivered, ensuring monitoring of minimal credit hour requirements for each campus [40].

This program's first graduating class was Spring 2020. The program has started the accreditation process with ABET/EAC (Engineering Accreditation Commission). A self-study report was due to ABET/EAC in July 2021 with an ABET/EAC site visit to be scheduled for Fall 2021.

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University recognizes the importance of participation in academic consortial relationships and is committed to ensuring high quality courses and programs of participating institutions. Tennessee Tech assesses these agreements against applicable principles to ensure adherence to standards and to the University mission. These efforts ensure Tennessee Tech is compliant with Comprehensive Standard 10.9.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Aachen University
[02] Tennessee eCampus
[03] ETSU Tennessee Tech Joint DNP
[04] Tennessee Tech-ETSU Joint BSE
[05] College of Business Curriculum Committee Bylaws
[06] Tennessee Tech-FH Aachen Agreement
[07] Study Abroad Handbook
[08] Accreditation FIBBA
[09] AACSB Accreditation
[10] SACSCOC Approval
[11] University Online Collaborative Agreement
[12] ROCC Name Change
[13] Tennessee eCampus Course Development Flow Chart
[14] Tennessee ecampus Course Development Form
[15] ETSU-TTU JOINT DNP PROGRAM MOU
[16] THEC Approval_ETSU-Tennessee Tech Joint DNP_27Jan17
[17] SACSCOC Approval of Joint DNP program
[18] Joint DNP CCNE Accreditation
[19] BSN-DNP Adult Gero Acute Care NP Program of Study
[20] BSN-DNP Executive Leadership Program of Study
[21] BSN-DNP Family NP Program of Study
[22] BSN-DNP Pediatric NP Program of Study
[23] BSN-DNP Psychiatric Mental Health NP Program of Study
[24] BSN-DNP Women's Health NP Program of Study
[25] MSN-DNP Adult Gero Acute Care NP Program of Study
[26] MSN-DNP Executive Leadership Program of Study
[27] MSN-DNP Family NP Program of Study
[28] MSN-DNP Pediatric NP Program of Study
[29] MSN-DNP Psychiatric Mental Health NP Program of Study
[30] MSN-DNP Women's Health NP Program of Study
[31] SACSCOC Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Policy and Procedures
[32] Joint DNP Transcript Redacted
[33] Joint DNP Diploma
[34] Joint DNP Bylaws
[35] Joint BSE MOU
[36] Joint BSE-THEC Approval
[37] Joint BSE SACSCOC Approval
[38] General Engineering Joint TTU-ETSU Program of Study
[39] Tennessee Tech Policy 260 - Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation
[40] BSE Transcript Redacted

CR - 12.1

Student Support Services

The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Tech provides a wide range of academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission and Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan. This narrative speaks to the alignment with the institutional mission, strategic plan, and the student body profile, and then outlines student support services organized through the respective divisions: Enrollment Management and Career Placement, Planning and Finance, Research and Economic Development, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs.

Alignment with Institutional Mission and Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan

The University's academic and student support services align with the mission statement: "Tennessee's Technological University creates, advances, and applies knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service" [1]. The foundation of the Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan rests on the core principles, which speak to academic and student supports including academic excellence, community engagement, meaningful innovation, student success, supportive environment, and value creation [2]. Strategic Goal One—Education for Life: Tennessee Tech provides education that unleashes the potential and passion within its students and prepares them for successful careers and culturally enriched lives. Tennessee Tech also provides educational opportunities, programs, credentials, and degrees to fuel the lifelong learning necessary for enduring achievement—prioritizes experiential learning, a tech-unique general education curriculum, student diversity, global awareness, and stackable credentials with innovative pathways. Strategic Goal Two—Innovation in All We Do: Tennessee Tech embraces and deploys its technological foundation in education, research, service, and stewardship. Its technologically infused programs aim to increase scholarly contributions, while serving adult learners and increasing accessibility, as well as recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.

Alignment with Student Body Profile

The University's student body for Fall 2020 was 8,792 undergraduate students and 1,426 graduate students for a total of 10,218, with first-time freshmen at 1,718; undergraduate transfers at 676; international undergraduates at 149; new graduate students at 460; and international graduate students at 102 [3]. Although the typical student is in-state and the traditional age, the entire student body has students of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures. The University strives to serve all students, regardless of their demographics, with a wide variety of academic and student support services.

Support Services for Distance Education

Campus-based and distance education students have access to all academic and student support services offered by the offices listed below through Microsoft Teams and Zoom videoconferencing as well as phone calls, email communication, and sometimes in-person support such as the College of Education's 2+2 advisors and Tier II Information Technology Service (ITS) personnel who travel to 2+2 sites to provide support.

Academic Affairs

In addition to the academic units (colleges of Agriculture and Human Ecology, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing), the following student support units report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs: Army ROTC, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL), College of Graduate Studies, Honors Program, International Education, Library and Learning Assistance, TN eCampus, Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA), and the Women's Center. A description of each of these units is below.

Academic Units. While Tennessee Tech initiated the Launchpad Student Success Center in June 2020 to advise freshmen and undeclared students, a good deal of advisement continues in the academic units. The Launchpad Student Success Center is addressed below under Enrollment Management and Career Placement where it falls organizationally.

- ***College of Agriculture and Human Ecology.*** In the College of Agriculture and Human Ecology, faculty serve as advisors to students after their first year of being advised via the Launchpad [4]. They offer support and expertise for the various concentrations in the Agriculture and Human Ecology disciplines.

- ***College of Arts and Sciences.*** Professional advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences Student Success Center advise students for the respective disciplines in the College of Arts and Sciences [5]. Advisors strive to help students have a successful beginning to their career at Tennessee Tech. The program is overseen by the Student Success Center Director. The professional advisors work with students through their freshman and sophomore years for most Arts and Sciences departments and freshman through graduation for Sociology and Political Sciences majors.

- ***College of Business.*** Advisors in the College of Business Student Success Center provide academic support to students who are in the lower-division portion of their curriculum [6]. Completion of the lower-division courses, which includes General Education and business core classes, is required for full admission to upper-division. Advisors provide several academic support services, including individualized academic advising meetings, degree planning, access to experiential learning resources (internships, study abroad, and other college-based programs), and referrals to other support units on campus. The Center also provides peer tutoring for business majors in subjects including math, accounting, economics, and computer applications. Students who find themselves academically at-risk can join the Eagles Excel program, which includes specialized advisement and academic resources designed to support students' return to good academic standing. Advisors connect business students with the Student to Career programs and resources. Here, students develop career-ready skills through events, networking, and workshops supported by College of Business alumni and friends and in partnership with the University's Center

for Career Development. Upper-division business majors are advised by faculty members in their respective major/concentration areas. Advising assignments are made when students complete the requirements for admission to upper-division courses (minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA, completion of specified lower-division courses, junior standing).

- ***College of Education.*** Professional advisors in the College of Education Student Success Center provide academic advisement and support to students majoring in a variety of undergraduate programs in the departments of Curriculum and Instruction, Exercise Science, and Counseling and Psychology, including teacher licensure and the off-campus 2+2 program partnership with four different community colleges [7]. The primary focus of the Student Success Center is to serve students by providing accurate, consistent, and timely advisement. Priority is placed on students' academic and professional success, open communication, a clear and practical pathway for coursework, engagement in the college experience, and resources that will help students meet their goals. The College of Education helps build a meaningful, professional network of support throughout the undergraduate career.

- ***College of Engineering.*** The Clay N. Hixson Student Success Center was established by the College of Engineering to provide support, encouragement, and resources to help students as they work toward reaching milestones on the way to becoming engineers and computer scientists [8]. The Center provides a quiet study atmosphere, advising, and peer tutoring to help students succeed. Operation of the Center and its programs is overseen by the College of Engineering's Director of Diversity, Recruitment, and Student Success. The staff of the Center is made up of the Director, Administrative Associate, Academic Advisors, Recruiter, and Assistant Director. The Center's professional academic advisors are equipped with the latest technology to provide a clear picture of academic success for engineering students. They are knowledgeable and committed to assisting freshmen and sophomores in their program of study. Additionally, the Student Success Center Assistant Director provides support for Clay N. Hixson Student Success Center assessment activities (data collection and analysis, survey construction and maintenance) for student retention and progression, student success programs, and accreditation/grants.

- ***College of Fine Arts.*** The College of Fine Arts Success Center provides academic advisement services to all Fine Arts students from sophomore status through graduation [9]. This includes all majors within the College of Fine Arts. Additionally, the College of Fine Arts Success Center assists with recruitment and retention of Fine Arts students.

- ***College of Interdisciplinary Studies.*** From the Student Success Center, students in the various programs of the College of Interdisciplinary Studies (Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Communication and Journalism, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Professional Studies) receive academic guidance and support [10]. Advisors in the Center provide students with the tools, services, and skills they need to achieve their career goals. Students are provided with creative degree programs and versatile course delivery through on-campus, off-site, and online options. The Center staff guide students through the individual process of choosing a major and focus of study suited to their needs and talents as students develop the foundation for successful

careers that are challenging and rewarding. Students are assigned to a program advisor upon admission to the University. The Communication and Journalism majors and the Environmental and Sustainability majors move to faculty advisement upon reaching 60 credits. Students who enter Tennessee Tech as first-time freshmen who already have 60 hours will shift to faculty advisement after their first year.

- ***Whitson-Hester School of Nursing.*** The Nursing Student Success Center provides academic advisement services to upper-division nursing students and assistance with application and admission to students interested in the traditional undergraduate, second-degree RN-BSN, and graduate nursing programs [11].

College of Graduate Studies. The College of Graduate Studies [12] offers graduate students a variety of academic support services on a regular basis, such as thesis and dissertation support and graduate student orientation. Services are offered to local and distance education students. Faculty members from the respective disciplines, departments, and schools advise graduate students who meet with them each semester to register for the next semester's classes and guide guide them in their research endeavors. The mission of the Graduate School is to promote, coordinate, enhance the quality of, and serve as an advocate for graduate education programs at Tennessee Tech.

Honors Program. The Honors Program [13] is an academic unit offering a supportive community for intellectually driven students. Honors students have a curricular program and co-curricular opportunities focused on individualized research readiness, civic engagement, servant leadership, and continued growth as members of a responsible, collaborative community. This parallels Tennessee Tech's goals in the areas of research and creative innovation, community engagement, lifelong learning, and career preparation.

Army ROTC. Army ROTC [14] is an elective program for undergraduate and graduate students providing leadership training for success in any career field. No matter what educational path a student follows, the transferable skills gained from Army ROTC and ultimately as an officer (leader) in the Army will help to prepare a student for success in a career outside of the military. A student may take the basic course curriculum (freshman and sophomore) without any commitment or obligation to join the Army. The program offers merit-based scholarships [15] that will pay 100% of the student's tuition and fees or $5,000 per semester for living expenses. Additionally, the program offers merit-based University scholarships to students trying out the program.

Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL). The Center [16] encourages and aids the teaching excellence of University faculty with training and support in instructional technology, teaching pedagogies, and strategies for improving teaching evaluations. Aligned with the Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan and mission, the CITL seeks to foster a culture of teaching and learning that is engaged, innovative, transformative, and purposeful. These trainings and supports are available for lecturers, instructors, and professors at all levels and focus on positive experiences that are challenging, engaging, and interactive. The CITL has student-focused training materials on the supported technology resources that faculty and students use in their courses [17].

International Education. One of Tennessee Tech's goals is to improve institutional performance on behalf of internationalization and intercultural relations and to ensure that all graduates gain the knowledge, perspectives, and skills necessary to succeed in today's complex, pluralistic world. The Office of International Education [18] provides admissions services to all

international undergraduates and evaluates all admission items for permanent resident applicants. It also provides international students and other visiting scholars with immigration services [19].

Library and Learning Assistance. The Angelo and Jennette Volpe Library [20] focuses on providing information and assisting all students regardless of major or location. The library contributes to the mission of the University by providing the collections, services, and environments that lead to intellectual discovery and student success. The library offers the following services:

- ***Angelo and Jennette Volpe Library.*** The library maintains a collection, both print and electronic, to assist students with research assignments. Librarians offer research help [21] by individual consultation or via online videos [22]. The library subscribes to a citation management tool, RefWorks, to manage information and offers Interlibrary Loan (ILL) to obtain materials the library does not have immediately available. These services and materials are fully accessible to local and distance education students. Physical course reserves [23] allow faculty to make required or supplemental course materials available to students in the library. The library also puts available copies of course textbooks on reserve for students to use in the building. This textbook reserve program helps students access the textbook if they left it at home, the book is backordered in the bookstore, or financial aid has been delayed. Librarians collaborate with the College of Graduate Studies to assist graduate students with thesis and dissertation formatting [24]. This formatting help is available to local and distance education students.

  The library is a heavily used space where students can reserve study rooms online, some of which have technology setups to allow for screen-sharing collaboration or presentation practice. The main floor has group work areas, many computer workstations, study rooms, and printers/scanners. The top floor of the library is a quiet-study floor to facilitate individual work and focus. The library is open 98 hours a week during the semester [25], providing students access to study space, technology, and information assistance to facilitate student success. The most recent five years of library statistics are posted online [26], which include student use of services, technology, materials, and facilities.

- ***Learning Support Program.*** The Learning Support Program (LSP) [27] facilitates student placement into academic support classes (UNIV 1030 Learning Strategies) based on test scores by collaborating with admissions and academic advisors. LSP and library faculty teach reading classes and learning support sections of math and writing/English composition [28]. These academic support classes serve to help students bolster their reading, writing, or mathematics proficiencies. UNIV 1030 may be taken with UNIV 1020, but will not serve as a substitute for UNIV 1020.

- ***Testing.*** The library opened a new university-wide testing facility during the 2019-2020 academic year [29]. The testing area is for examinees to take class exams, makeup exams, standardized tests, exit exams, placement tests, and other proctored exams. All types of exams are administered simultaneously. Professors submit exam information online, and students schedule exams online. The testing area facilitates both paper- and computer-based exams. Because of the strict security measures,

testing is only available in person. However, the library testing facility will coordinate with other testing centers to assist distance education students.

Testing in the library is optional to faculty for both class-wide exams and makeup exams. The library also collaborates with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) to facilitate exams with accommodations. All exams are proctored with very strict protocols. Testing is open longer than traditional office hours to offer students more flexibility to take exams. In its inaugural year, library testing administered nearly 1,200 exams, and 93-97% of students were satisfied with testing, the physical environment, the staff, and scheduling [30].

- ***Tutoring.*** All students have access to free peer tutoring through the university-wide tutoring program managed by the library [31]. The library's tutoring program is Level I and II certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and hires and trains tutors accordingly. Tutoring occurs in person and online, so it is available to all students regardless of their location. Tutors help students understand course material, answer questions, and offer suggestions for studying and learning. Tutoring is available for a class/subject, writing (class papers, graduate school essays, etc.), research help (searching for library resources), résumés, test prep (COMPASS, GRE, ACT, Praxis, etc.), and study skills. Appointments are made online through TechConnect, Tennessee Tech's one-stop-shop for student services and academic advising [32]. The library also coordinates group study sessions for upcoming tests through collaboration with course professors. The statistics [33] demonstrate the success of this program. The tutoring program is heavily used with over 4,000 appointments a year on average. It is also a highly rated student service as 98-99% of 8,588 students surveyed between Fall 2016 and Spring 2020 agree that scheduling an appointment was easy, their tutor was helpful, and they would recommend tutoring to a friend. Various other areas may offer additional tutoring options, including academic departments, Multicultural Affairs, fraternities and sororities, and student organizations.

Study Abroad. The Study Abroad Office [34] through International Education is Tennessee Tech's comprehensive resource for study, faculty-led programs, service-learning opportunities, intern, volunteer, and travel experiences worldwide. The Study Abroad Office is a leader in providing innovative international learning experiences that expand and redefine the world for a diverse population of students, colleagues, and staff. Through collaboration and individual attention, the office continues to promote confidence, development, understanding, and responsibility in the global community. The office offers a full range of advising and support services to students, including program selection, academic planning, financial planning, registration, credit, cultural adjustment, travel planning, and reentry. A variety of program options [35] have been developed to address the diverse needs of students. Programs vary in length, level, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and degree of independence demanded of the participant. The Study Abroad Office works with many departments, administrative offices, and other units within the University to determine appropriate study abroad options for each major and minor and to help students earn credit toward their degree through study abroad. With planning, students in any major, including distance education students, can study abroad and fulfill degree requirements.

TN eCampus. TN eCampus [36], formerly known as the Regents Online Degree Program, is a partnership of community colleges in the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system and universities formerly in the TBR system. The partnership was created to provide students with

more online learning options and the resources needed for academic success. Each partner institution has a liaison on campus who communicates with students and connects them to any support resources and assistance they need. Students also receive information and support from the Student Success Manager located at the TN eCampus main office. TN eCampus courses are fully online except for proctored exams. Multiple proctoring options are available, including virtual proctoring and Tennessee Tech library's testing [37]. Students in TN eCampus courses also have access to multiple tutoring options, including virtual tutoring linked to their course in the TN eCampus learning management system, as well as virtual and in-person tutoring options offered by the library tutoring program [38] at Tennessee Tech. Additionally, students in TN eCampus courses have access to a dedicated online bookstore, technical support help desk, and virtual library. As Tennessee Tech students, they also have access to all student resources like the campus bookstore, myTech IT Helpdesk, and the library. Students with disabilities receive approved accommodations as communicated to instructors by Tennessee Tech's Accessible Education Center (AEC).

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA). Prior to the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation in 2016, Tennessee Tech's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA) program [39] provided summer grants to students to engage in research and creative work under the supervision of a faculty member. Tech expanded and integrated this high-impact program into the University's QEP starting in the 2015-2016 year as the Creative Inquiry Summer Experience Grant Program (CISE) [40]. CISE participants are expected to work 40 hours per week for 10 weeks on their projects. They are also required to present their results on Research and Creative Inquiry Day and encouraged to present at local, regional, or national conferences. Students coordinate with faculty mentors to submit grant applications and participate in this program. Grant applications are reviewed on a yearly basis by the CISE Program Committee, which is led by the CISE Program Director, who also serves as the URECA Director. The CISE grant program is complemented by Tennessee Tech's redesigned URECA program. URECA provides grants to teams to pursue research and creative activities during the academic year, as well as travel grants for students and their accompanying faculty mentors to present their work.

Women's Center. The Tennessee Tech Women's Center [41] leads and supports efforts for women and gender equity across campus and the community. The Center coordinates with other University and community organizations to build an environment characterized by equity, freedom, and dignity for all people. To accomplish this mission, the center connects people, programs, and resources; provides education on gender equity and women's issues; promotes interdisciplinary research in women and gender studies; advocates for equality and inclusion in the campus and community; supports recruitment and retention of women students, staff, and faculty; and fosters self-advocacy for the greater good. Educational programming happens in-person and through social media, virtual events, and streaming film screenings, speakers, and research talks. This virtual content ensures that all students, including distance education students, can be involved.

Auxiliary Services

Auxiliary Services [42] at Tennessee Tech reports to the Vice President of Planning and Finance and includes the bookstore, dining services, mail services, parking and transportation, and snack and beverage vending services. Housing and Residential Life also operates as an auxiliary unit that reports to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Auxiliary Services enhances the campus

experience for students, faculty, staff, and visitors by providing exceptional services that are engaging, innovative, and convenient. The mission of this division is to sustain synergy among the various services while supporting the University's strategic goals. While all auxiliary services significantly impact the student, faculty, and staff experience at Tennessee Tech, the largest and most complex operations are Housing and Residential Life as well as Dining Services.

Bookstore. The university's bookstore [43] is currently operated through a contractual agreement with Barnes and Noble that began in 2013 and will expire in 2023. It is conveniently located in the center of campus in the university's Roaden University Center. The goal of the University Bookstore at Tennessee Tech is to offer students competitively priced textbook options, including new, used, rental, and digital content as well as provide high-quality service. The bookstore also provides a variety of school supplies and spirit gear. All items may be purchased in the store or online. For the online purchases, customers can have the items shipped to an address or picked up at their convenience in the store. Bookstore services are assessed annually and share the results in the Year in Review [44].

Dining Services. Dining Services [45] at Tennessee Tech is operated by Chartwells through a contractual agreement with the University. The current agreement began in 2017 and will end in 2027. Tennessee Tech's campus currently has over 37,300 square feet dedicated to food services operations. The majority of the operation is located in the University Center, which is a hub for student activities. In the University Center is the main residential dining hall, The Caf, as well as several retail locations including Chick-fil-A, Steak N' Shake, Starbucks, Which Wich, and a convenience market. Among the residential buildings, there are two convenience markets, Papa Johns, and a teaching kitchen utilized for student engagement and programming by Dining Services. Throughout the semester, Dining Services hosts numerous events geared towards students, faculty, and staff. During the Fall 2020 semester, they scheduled over 40 events ranging from monotony breakers to high-engagement experiences. Dining Services also partners with local businesses in order to bring a variety of experiences to the campus population while encouraging the support of local small businesses in the community. Results from the most recent survey reflect overall satisfaction with Dining Services [46].

Housing and Residential Life. Residential Life [47] currently has over 2,000 beds in the traditional residential buildings and 227 apartment units. The Residential Life staff is committed to providing each resident with a quality experience. All residence halls and apartments are supported by a professional, full-time, live-in Hall Director and student Resident Assistants (RAs). There is an average of one RA per 30 residents. Each area has a Hall Director office as well as a staff office or desk area. Housing and Residential Life is a self-operated operation with all units being inspected and maintained annually. Handicapped-accessible units are available in two residence halls and in several of the newly renovated apartment buildings. With access to Resident Assistants, Hall Directors (Tennessee Tech Residential Life employees who live in the halls), and on-call Facilities personnel, maintenance is available at all times. The most recent survey reflects overall satisfaction with Housing and Residential Life [48].

Mail Services. Tennessee Tech's central mail services [49] are provided by Cannon Solutions America through a contractual agreement as of August 7, 2021. Located on the ground floor of the Roaden University Center, the mission of Mail Services is to provide the best possible service in the sending, receiving, and delivery of mail and packages for the University community.

Parking and Transportation Services. Parking and Transportation Services [50] is responsible for issuing University parking permits, enforcing parking zones and reserved spaces, as well as

the University's shuttle system. Parking and Transportation Services is a self-operated function within the institution. There are a total of 5,576 parking spots on campus, which is broken down into various zones. There is a premium zone restricted to faculty and staff (≈950 spaces), premium parking for commuter students (≈900 spaces), residential parking (≈1,250 spaces), and perimeter parking available to faculty, staff, students, and visitors (≈725 spaces). Across the institution, there are over 200 handicap-accessible spaces as well as numerous visitor and time-restricted spaces. The institution has contracted with the local city transportation network to provide three on-campus shuttles that run Monday through Friday; the organization also provides free city transportation to students throughout the local community. Tennessee Tech's Parking and Transportation Services is committed to providing safe and reliable parking and transportation options that provide mobility, accessibility, and enhanced sustainability for the University community.

Snack and Beverage Vending. The University has contracted with Five Star Vending to provide snack vending machines on campus [51]. The current agreement began in 2014 and will expire in 2024. It was originally a five-year agreement with an option to extend an additional five years. In 2019, the University opted to extend the agreement for the additional five years. Currently, there are over 30 snack vending machines located in high-traffic areas throughout the campus. Beverage vending at Tennessee Tech is provided by Pepsi through a campus exclusivity agreement, which began this year and is set to expire in 2030. There are currently over 60 beverage vending machines located across campus. Pepsi also supports the University through various free product allotments as well as engagement programs throughout the semester.

Technological Resources

To ensure that students have pervasive access to technology, Tennessee Tech provides many resources and services across campus and beyond. ITS's mission is to explore and invest in innovative technologies that enhance the overall university experience and create and maintain a reliable, sustainable, and secure IT infrastructure that furthers the University's overall mission. Tennessee Tech administers a customer-centric service desk with a single point of contact for all technology needs or incident resolution.

Campus Computer Labs. Tennessee Tech provides students with computer labs designed to enhance the learning experience. There are both open-access, general-purpose labs, and very discipline-specific labs available on campus, with more than 1,000 systems available for student use. Open-access labs are available for extended hours during the regular semester and various times during semester breaks. There are also three 24-hour labs. Information on the lab locations, software and hardware available, and open times can be found online [52].

Tennessee Tech provides a comprehensive local area network for wired and wireless connectivity. Network access is extensive, with over 25,000 wired network ports and approximately 2,200 wireless access points provided across campus. This network is driven by a high-speed fiber-optic backbone network with redundant connections between buildings. The campus Internet connectivity was tripled this year to a full 10 Gbps connection provisioned through protected diverse paths to prevent outages. The campus is currently installing a new research network supporting 100 Gbps connections, and a dedicated 10 Gbps connection to other research and education networks via Internet2 that will be available later this year. Secure

Virtual Private Network (VPN) access to Tennessee Tech resources is available for all campus users [53].

Learning Commons in the Volpe Library. Information Technology Services (ITS), in a partnership with the Volpe Library, maintains the technologies used within the Learning Commons. The Learning Commons provides approximately 100 desktop computers, group study rooms with large monitors, color and black-and-white printing, and cables. The main floor was redesigned to provide easy access to charging outlets; tables and chairs conducive to group collaboration; and an atmosphere of pervasive technology. Additionally, there are booths located along the perimeter with laptop hookups and large LCD TVs to allow students to easily participate in group work. TECHCheck provides short-term technology checkout of approximately 200 mobile devices and other technology for students [54]. Technology checkout statistics (prior to COVID) are available on the library's website [55].

Student Training and Support. Student training in the use of learning technologies is provided primarily through courses in the major and in the General Education program. This practice helps ensure that students have access to appropriate technologies in their academic programs and are trained and supported in their use. All Tennessee Tech students are required to pass ENGL 1010 and 1020 English composition I and II. Course sections typically meet one day per week in a classroom with personal computers. Proficiency in the use of personal computers is among the course goals. Most degree programs include specialized courses that integrate instruction in the use of hardware, software, and online resources that are relevant to the major discipline. Education majors, for example, take FOED 2011 Teaching and Technology and FOED 3010 Integrating Instructional Technology into the Classroom. Students in the College of Business (along with other majors) all take DS 2810 Computer Applications in Business. These classes are also offered online, so distance education students receive the same training as in-person students. Support models have been enhanced to provide remote service and support for faculty, staff, and students. ITS also expanded the offering of technology to provide software, hardware, and support for remote users. In addition, lab machines, based on the time of day, are available in the TechAnywhere Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) environment. In early 2020, ITS launched TechExpress [56], the Single-Sign-On (SSO) portal with Multi-Factor-Authentication (MFA) for additional security. This unified portal allows students to stay up-to-date on current items and campus events, as well as their personal student information, class schedule, and various other academic information. Many web-based applications are available through TechExpress, including iLearn, Office365, Eagle Online, Handshake, Zoom, TechConnect, and other student services capable of using SSO technologies. ITS also launched LinkedIn Learning [57] to further enhance the resources offered to students. LinkedIn Learning includes a training and video catalog with over 900 courses and 21,000 video tutorials. Support for students in the use of technology is provided through the myTech Helpdesk [58] in the library. Support is currently available via email and phone for all Tennessee Tech students, faculty, and staff, including password resets and general troubleshooting of computer issues, both personal and Tennessee Tech-owned. Support hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The myTech Helpdesk is available to the campus community regardless of location, which includes distance education students.

College-Level Initiatives. Individual colleges, departments, and programs at Tennessee Tech are encouraged to improve student learning by transforming existing facilities to accommodate new teaching methods and learning environments. The collaborative classroom model has required additional software to facilitate hybrid learning. The addition of Video TeleConferencing (VTC) applications such as Microsoft Teams and Cisco WebEx, in addition to the current standard of Zoom, have been implemented. Along with the software improvements, teaching stations are

being outfitted with newer technology to help engage students wherever they are engaging from. Hardware additions include motion-tracking cameras, document cameras, desktop interactive Wacom displays, and teaching stations to compensate for the additional performance required to run the mobile learning applications in addition to current faculty workloads.

Technology Funds to Support Student Learning. Each year, proposals are solicited for projects that will directly impact student experiences with technology at the University. These proposals, prioritized by departmental chairs and college deans, are reviewed by a team of ITS staff, campus administrators, faculty, and students. The ITS Committee then recommends projects to be funded throughout the coming year. This is made possible by the Technology Access Fee (TAF) paid by students, which is currently $117.50/semester, with an average yearly base of approximately $2,300,000. Projects funded through this program range from technology in the campus computer labs, specialty labs within various disciplines, the digital multimedia lab, classroom technology upgrades, enhancing wireless access points across campus, and the green printing initiative.

Office of Research Support Services

The goal of the Tennessee Tech Office of Research is to inspire, support, and provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to pursue sponsored and scholastic research and increase externally sponsored activities. The Office's efforts directly support the University's vision to provide academic, economic, and cultural leadership and produce practical, ready-to-work graduates who are prepared to compete in today's technologically driven world. The Office of Research staff includes a contract compliance assistant, a financial analyst, an editor, a senior coordinator, a grant development manager, and a financial associate to support those efforts [59]. Specifically, the Office of Research staff

- Assist in identifying appropriate and relevant funding opportunities and post weekly funding opportunity updates on our website [60]
- Promote and support collaborative, transdisciplinary research and scholarly activities, incorporating its Faculty Research Directory [61] and Research Program Network SharePoint site [62] resources
- Conduct proposal-writing workshops [63]
- Assist with proposal and budget development [64] [65]
- Provide editorial, graphic, and poster-printing support for faculty and students
- Coordinate the submission of proposals to external sponsors using sponsors' portals
- Process all awards from external sponsors
- Negotiate and execute sponsored agreements
- Ensure proposals and sponsored activities comply with Tennessee Tech, state, sponsor, and federal laws, policies, and regulations
- Contribute to start-up packages
- Provide faculty initiation grants
- Assist faculty and students in all matters regarding intellectual property protection and commercialization [66]
- Assist faculty and students in completing Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) compliance training requirements [67]
- Process applications and ensure human subjects research compliance through its Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects [68]
- Help faculty and students understand and follow export control guidance [69]

- Provide opportunities that promote student research and creative inquiry and a venue for presenting that work through the annual Research and Creative Inquiry Day [70]
- Help faculty and students ensure that vertebrate animals are treated humanely in animal-subject research through its Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) [71]
- Educate faculty and students on potential conflicts of interest in their research and help manage those risks [72] [73]
- Help ensure that faculty and students comply with responsible conduct of research principles outlined in Policy 750 [74] and CITI training requirements [67]

Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs [75] facilitates student development through educational programs and services designed to enhance the learning environment in alignment with Tennessee Tech's mission. The division of the Student Affairs contributes to the educational mission of Tennessee Tech by providing premier student support programs and services. It is the division's goal for students to fulfill their personal and educational objectives and aspirations. The division's programs, services, and activities enrich student development in the areas of leadership, service learning, and group collaboration in a diverse and accessible environment that promotes wellness and safety of all students. The Division of Student Affairs is comprised of the following units: Accessible Education Center, Campus Recreation and Fitness Center, Counseling Center, Dean of Students, Greek Life, Health Services, Multicultural Affairs, Residential Life, Student Activities and Campus Life, University Police, and University Service Center.

Accessible Education Center (AEC). The Accessible Education Center [76] is committed to ensuring equal access for all qualifying individuals to Tennessee Tech's academic and physical environments, providing quality services to students and faculty through a variety of resources, including academic adjustments, assistive technology, and software. The Center serves qualified undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in any University program regardless of delivery format or location. The AEC also supports community engagement and outreach initiatives promoting disability awareness, accessibility, and professional development for the University community. Each year, the Center leads efforts toward a smooth transition for high school students in the service area and across the state. The AEC collaborates with various campus partners working toward a more inclusive campus community.

Campus Recreation and Fitness Center. Campus Recreation [77] endeavors to provide programs, services, and spaces that promote the health and wellness of the Tennessee Tech community. Intramural sports, health promotions, fitness classes, and outdoor recreation programs and services create opportunities for student engagement, collaboration, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Campus Recreation's facility, the Fitness Center [78], is a 157,000 square foot facility that houses a 25-meter swimming pool, cardiovascular equipment, cable machines, free-weights, a 1/5 of a mile track, a climbing wall, and multiple other student-use spaces.

Counseling Center. The Counseling Center [79] supports our campus community's mental health through prevention outreach activities, individual counseling, support groups, crisis intervention, wellness resources, and referrals. Counseling Center staff provide emergency mental health services, and counselors are available 24 hours a day for consultation by phone. Personal counseling sessions are conducted in person or via a HIPPA-compliant video conferencing platform to ensure counseling is accessible to students utilizing distance

education. In regard to prevention and outreach activities, the Counseling Center coordinates a number of programs related to alcohol and drug abuse, self-harm prevention, domestic and sexual assault, stress management, anxiety, and depression, among others.

Dean of Students. The Dean of Students Office [80] supports the University's desire to maintain a safe academic environment that promotes all students' well-being by enforcing the behavioral expectations outlined in the student conduct policy. When students and student organizations do not meet the behavioral expectations, the Dean of Students Office will apply the student conduct process in a manner that protects students' rights, provides due process, and results in fair outcomes. The Dean of Students Office provides education, resources, and support to students experiencing adverse circumstances. The Dean of Students Office also serves as the point of contact for students, faculty, staff, parents, and community members with questions or concerns about student life.

Greek Life. The Greek Life Office [81] supports social fraternity and sorority chapters recognized by the University, their members, and governing councils by applying a values-based framework that focuses on academic achievement, campus involvement, community engagement, leadership, service-learning, and conflict resolution. The Greek Life Office hosts, co-sponsors, and facilitates programmatic initiatives related to hazing prevention, alcohol, drug education, sexual misconduct prevention, and other topics that support Greek-affiliated students' safety and wellness.

Health Services. Health Services [82] promotes all students' health and well-being by providing high-quality, affordable care accessible to the University community. The staff is experienced in treating various medical concerns, including acute and urgent care, preventive care, immunizations, physicals, laboratory testing, and allergy injections. The professional staff includes a physician, family nurse practitioners (FNP), nurses, a pharmacist, and a pharmacy technician. Telehealth is offered via a HIPPA-compliant video conferencing platform to ensure health services are accessible to students utilizing distance education. Health Services collaborates with other units to facilitate education in sexual health, substance abuse, and best practices to enhance wellness, such as proper nutrition and stress management.

Multicultural Affairs. The Multicultural Affairs [83] Office provides support for students' personal, cultural, social, and academic growth and development for underrepresented ethnic populations. This unit hosts and co-sponsors programs and events that encourage all the students to learn about their history and take pride in their heritage; explore and understand other cultures, races, and ethnicities; and value diversity. This unit sustains academic counseling, scholarship information, mentorship, and ambassador programs. The Multicultural Affairs Office maintains a physical space that is structured to facilitate student collaboration in an environment that embraces and promotes diversity and inclusion.

Residential Life. The Residential Life unit [84] supports the University's mission by providing on-campus residents with a housing experience that is safe, comfortable, diverse, well-maintained, reasonably priced, supportive, and conducive to education. The Residential Life programming model is designed to promote social and educational opportunities to help residents succeed at Tennessee Tech. Residential Life programs address suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, effective study habits, health and wellness, diversity, and inclusion education through activities and group discussions led by the professional staff within each hall. Residential Life is responsible for executing the Flight Path Program to support students identified in need of

additional support due to poor academic performance, high absentee rates, and other social or emotional concerns. Student living on campus may access Flight Path through their resident assistant. Students living off campus may access Flight Path through the email address flightpath@tntech.edu.

Student Activities and Campus Life. The Office of Student Activities and Campus Life [85] provides opportunities for social and personal development, leadership experiences, and experiential learning for students through events, activities, and programs. This unit coordinates annual events and programs such as the student homecoming competition, canned food drives, service weeks, bi-annual large-scale concerts and speakers, give-away events, and socials. Though many events and programs are held on campus, a significant number are offered in a virtual format via a video conferencing platform to ensure events and activities are accessible to students utilizing distance education. The Office of Student Activities and Campus Life provides advisement, support, and resources to more than 200 registered student organizations [86] representing a wide variety of student interests, including academic clubs, honor societies, sports organizations, faith-based organizations, and special interest clubs.

University Police. The University Police Department [87] is committed to providing the highest quality professional law enforcement and public safety services to the campus community. The University Police Department falls under the Student Affairs division. All University police officers are commissioned law enforcement officers armed with service weapons and have complete arrest authority in accordance with Tennessee law. The department supports the educational mission of the University by maintaining a safe campus environment conducive to learning by providing a wide array of services to students, faculty, staff, and visitors, including emergency crisis response, investigations, crime prevention education and training, vehicle assistance services, traffic control, wellness checks within the residence halls, and security of campus activities and events.

University Service Center. The University Service Center [88] supports student development, personal growth, and experiential learning by facilitating direct, hands-on service opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community. The Center sustains reciprocal partnerships with charities, agencies, non-profits, and civic groups to provide service-learning activities and community service projects based on the students' areas of interest. The University Service Center coordinates undergraduate and graduate certificate programs [89] called "SERVICE" (Students Engaging, Responding, Volunteering, and Impacting Communities Everywhere). Specific coursework completed within the College of Education and a determined number of service-learning clock hours are required to complete this certificate program. The Center maintains the University's food pantry [90] as a resource to help alleviate hidden hunger in the campus community. Students are encouraged to volunteer, donate, and utilize the food pantry through various drives and outreaches.

Enrollment Management and Career Placement

Enrollment Management and Career Placement (EMCP) provides leadership, analysis, and coordination of recruitment, retention, and career development efforts for Tennessee Tech and has gone through significant organizational change since 2017 as evidenced in the last seven University organization charts [91] and the timeline [92]. EMCP focuses on the undergraduate student life cycle through the departments that comprise the division in order to provide services and resources to prospective and currently enrolled students, parents and families, faculty, and staff.

Admissions. The services offered by the Office of Admissions [93] promote the University's mission by actively striving to inspire, guide, and assist students in the pursuit of their postsecondary education at Tennessee Tech. The transition into an institution of higher learning can be intimidating, especially for those prospective students who do not have adequate support at home or among their social circles. The Office of Admissions seeks out prospective students and provides direction and encouragement throughout the matriculation process without regard to age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.

The assistance provided by the Office of Admissions allows Tech's mission to manifest itself in the lives of as many students as possible. The Office of Admissions ensures the effectiveness of its services that are rendered to prospective students and to the University community through careful data collection and analysis of enrollment trends and their correlation with recruitment activities. For example, attendees of on-campus recruitment events are tracked throughout the year to monitor their ultimate enrollment status with the institution.

The services offered by Admissions to undergraduate students are very similar to those offered by the Graduate School [12] to graduate-level students. The population differences between prospective undergraduate and graduate students, however, have resulted in the two distinct offices at Tennessee Tech to more fully meet the distinct needs of these two populations. Admissions is responsible for undergraduate students. The Graduate School is responsible for graduate-level students.

Financial Aid. The mission of the Office of Financial Aid [94] at Tennessee Tech is to provide access to postsecondary education by eliminating or reducing financial barriers to students' academic success. The Office of Financial Aid is committed to helping students achieve their educational goals in accordance with federal, state, and institutional policies. It is intended that students will find the Office of Financial Aid to be a financial resource center. The Office has a committed team of professionals who are here to work in partnership with students and their families to help them understand and manage their college expenses, identify ways to meet those expenses, and keep students up-to-date with information that can assist with reaching their academic goals. The purpose of financial aid programs is to provide monetary assistance to students who can benefit from further education but who cannot do so without such assistance. The primary purpose of a collegiate financial aid program should be to provide financial assistance to accepted students who, without such aid, would be unable to attend the University. The Financial Aid Office administers funds from numerous federal, state, and institutional programs such as federal and state grants, federal and private loans, federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grants, federal work study, lottery, and other state scholarships as well as institutional scholarships. The University is committed to the life-long success of students in its undergraduate, master's, specialist, and doctoral degree-granting programs through high-quality instruction and learning experiences. All undergraduate students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are reviewed for state and federal aid program eligibility. Graduate students are limited to federal unsubsidized loans or federal Grad PLUS loans; however, undergraduate and graduate students who submit the University scholarship application are reviewed for institutional funds. Graduate students may also seek funding through the Graduate Assistantship Program.

Military and Veterans Affairs. Established in 2013 as a new position at the University, the Director of Military and Veterans Affairs directs and monitors the University's veteran student services [95]; collaborates with the Registrar and Bursar's office to ensure that students are

properly certified for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) educational benefits; provides academic program advising for veterans; interprets and ensures adherence to federal laws that govern the Department of Veterans Affairs' educational benefit sector; and ensures compliance with federal, state, and University directives in relation to veteran/dependent educational benefits.

Records and Registration. The Registrar's Office [96] has three divisions to support students: Records, Registration, and Graduation. Services include, but are not limited to: calculating academic standing and GPAs, maintaining courses and the course catalog, providing the University's final exam schedule, processing change of majors (including programs, minors, concentrations, etc.), enrollment verifications, grade changes, student information changes, transcripts, assistance with registration, registration setup, processing of graduation applications, degree analysis, and processing diplomas. The services provided by the Registrar's Office promote Tennessee Tech's mission by supporting students to be career-ready while collaborative service is delivered. The Registrar's Office ensures its programs and services are adequate for the needs of students, staff, and faculty by continuously looking for ways to improve its processes based on the ever-changing needs of students, collaborating with other schools to enhance program offerings (joint programs with ETSU), and working with software companies and partners to ensure the best resources are provided and also used to their fullest potential (Civitas, Ellucian, etc.). Programs and services do not significantly differ between undergraduate, graduate, or professional students. The services provided are generally needed no matter the student type. However, there are some processes that Graduate Studies will assist with initially, yet the Registrar's Office may process the final outcome. For example, requests for exception might have to be first approved by Graduate Studies for a master's student seeking a retroactive withdrawal, but the Registrar's Office will still be the responsible party for processing the change, if approved, in the system; the Office will also maintain the final record accordingly.

Student Success. Tennessee Tech's dedication to student success is evident in the student support services provided by Advisement Services, Career Development, and New Student and Family Programs.

- ***Advisement Services (Launchpad Student Success Center).*** In June 2020, the Launchpad Student Success Center [97] opened in the Volpe Library. Advising Centers and Student Success Centers [98] primarily serve undergraduate students. Freshmen and upperclassmen are assigned a dedicated advisor based on the curriculum and the center supporting that population. While all colleges, with the exception of Agriculture and Human Ecology, have their own student success center (addressed in the Academic Affairs section above), the University has a dedicated student success center for freshmen and undeclared student advising. The Launchpad Student Success Center is the one-stop-shop for freshmen and undeclared student advising, transition assistance, and academic and personal support at Tennessee Tech. The team is dedicated to helping new students adjust to college life, navigate their first year on campus, and support their transition into their academic program of study.

- ***Career Development.*** Tennessee Tech's Center for Career Development [99] is a comprehensive career readiness service center that provides personal career counseling and exploration and job preparation coaching and hosts the enterprise system Handshake that is instrumental in assisting the office in interactions with thousands of employers and students each year. The Center hosts seven on-campus job fairs, on-campus interviews, and specialty employer events and administers two career readiness programs for students (GOLD/PURPLE). The Center offers in-person

and online virtual career counseling services to all on-campus and off-campus students and alumni. The Center also relies heavily on technology to reach students through vendors such as Handshake, Career Spots, TypeFocus, and Interview Stream. TypeFocus assists students by providing access to personality and vocational interest inventories. These services assist freshmen and sophomores with clarifying occupational and academic interests based on their skills, interests, and values. Through the software platform Interview Stream, students have access to a virtual "mock" interview system that allows them to practice interview questions, record interview responses, and seek out tips/advice from the online career coach. Over 750 students accessed the virtual interview system in 2018-2019. In addition, career advice videos are available on a 24/7 basis via the website through CareerSpots. Finally, Handshake is the Center's 24/7/365 virtual Career Development Enterprise system. Handshake leverages machine learning to assist students in identifying job, internship, and part-time employment opportunities. It houses their resumes and provides them an opportunity to have their resume referred to inquiring employers. Handshake serves as the Center's primary tool for communication to both employers and students. The Center also is home to Cooperative Education that typically has 70 students "on site" working in full-time career-related work assignments. In 2019-2020, cooperative education provided over $4 million in student earnings. The Center also hosts six job fairs each year. Each fall semester, a part-time event is hosted to welcome students back to campus; STEM/Engineering and Business Agriculture, Government, and Human Ecology specialty events; and a Graduate and Professional School Fair. Spring semester offers a second part-time employment event, a spring Engineering Fair, and a College of Education Fair. Employer specialty events such as Career's n Coffee, Employer Spotlights, and Employer in Residence are additional ways the Center connects students with employers. Career readiness certification programs (based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Competencies) run in fall and spring and are specifically designed for freshman/sophomore and junior/senior populations. Over three hundred students received career readiness certifications in 2019-2020.

- ***New Student and Family Programs.*** The Office of New Student and Family Programs [100] is committed to serving students and families by

    - Providing programs and services to assist the transition of new students into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of Tennessee Tech
    - Exposing new students to the University's educational, extracurricular, and multicultural opportunities in order to foster personal growth
    - Educating parents and family members and establishing partnerships to support students' academic and personal success
    - Developing students as leaders who are engaged inside and outside of the academic community

  The purpose of the Office of New Student and Family Programs is to bridge the gap and ease the transition of first-year students to the University through engaging and educational programming. All programs and services align with the institution's Tech Tomorrow strategic initiative focusing on improving the undergraduate student experience; Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) standards; and the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) guidelines.

Conclusion

These support programs, services, and activities are designed to expand learning and development opportunities for every Tennessee Tech student. These opportunities also extend to distance education, which provides a full range of student support services. Regular program assessments enable the University to ensure that programs are consistent with the institutional mission and goals, attuned to appropriate outcomes for student learning and development, meet high standards for effectiveness, implement refinements based on sound assessment data, and continue to meet the real needs of students. Therefore, Tech is in compliance with Standard 12.1.

Evidentiary Documents

[001] Mission
[002] Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan
[003] Daily Enrollment 2020-09-08 Preliminary Census
[004] College of Agriculture and Human Ecology - Advisement
[005] College of Arts and Sciences Student Success Center
[006] College of Business Student Success Center
[007] College of Education Student Success Center
[008] Clay N. Hixson Student Success Center
[009] Fine Arts Student Success Center
[010] Interdisciplinary Studies Student Success Center
[011] Whitson-Hester School of Nursing - Nursing Advising
[012] College of Graduate Studies
[013] Honors
[014] ROTC
[015] ROTC Scholarship
[016] CITL
[017] CITL iLEARN
[018] International Education
[019] Immigration Services
[020] Angelo and Jennette Volpe Library
[021] Research Help
[022] Library Classroom
[023] Course Reserves
[024] Thesis and Dissertation Formatting
[025] Library Hours
[026] Library Statistics
[027] Learning Support Program
[028] Learning Support Statistics
[029] Testing
[030] Testing Statistics
[031] Tutoring
[032] TechConnect
[033] Tutoring Statistics
[034] Study Abroad
[035] Study Abroad Programs
[036] Tennessee eCampus
[037] eCampus Testing
[038] eCampus Tutoring

[039] URECA
[040] CISE
[041] Women's Center
[042] Auxiliary Services
[043] University Bookstore
[044] 2019 Year In Review
[045] Dining Services
[046] Dining Survey Fall 2019
[047] Residential Life
[048] Housing and Dining Survey Spring 2020
[049] Mail Services
[050] Parking & Transportation
[051] Campus Vending
[052] Computer Labs
[053] VPN
[054] TECHCheck
[055] TECH Checkout Statistics
[056] TechExpress
[057] LinkedIn
[058] myTech Helpdesk
[059] What We Do
[060] Weekly Research Funding Opportunities
[061] Faculty Research Directory
[062] Research Program Network
[063] Research Workshop Series
[064] Proposal Development Resources
[065] Budget Development Resources
[066] Intellectual Property Advisory Committee
[067] CITI Training
[068] Human Subjects Research Support
[069] Export Control Compliance
[070] Research and Creative Inquiry Day
[071] Animal Subjects Research
[072] Conflict of Interest Policy
[073] Conflict of Interest Management Plan
[074] Responsible Conduct of Research Policy
[075] Student Affairs
[076] Accessible Education Center
[077] Campus Recreation
[078] Fitness Center
[079] Counseling Center
[080] Dean of Students
[081] Greek Life
[082] Health Services
[083] Multicultural Affairs
[084] Residential Life
[085] Office of Student Activities and Campus Life
[086] Student Organizations
[087] University Police

[088] University Service Center
[089] SERVICE Certificate
[090] Food Pantry
[091] Org Charts July 2017-July 2020
[092] Timeline
[093] Undergraduate Admissions
[094] Financial Aid
[095] Military and Veteran Affairs
[096] Registrar's Office
[097] Launchpad Student Success Center
[098] Student Success Centers
[099] Center for Career Development
[100] New Student and Family Programs

R - 12.4

Student Complaints

The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University publishes policies and procedures to address student complaints, demonstrates adherence to these policies and procedures to resolve such complaints, and maintains records of complaint cases.

Information about how students can report grievances and make complaints or appeals is addressed first, followed by a review of the various policies and procedures for which a student might file an appeal or lodge a complaint. These complaints/appeals are categorized as Academic Complaints, Non-Academic Complaints, and General/Miscellaneous Complaints. Tennessee Tech advises students to follow the established procedures for filing complaints/appeals. If a student files a complaint that is covered by another process, the complaint will be governed by that process and will be referred to the appropriate school official for disposition. Policies and procedures for student complaints do not differ for face-to-face and online students. All students, regardless of learning location or modality, are afforded the opportunity to report grievances or complaints using the proper procedures.

Whenever possible, students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of the matter directly with the faculty member(s) or other individual(s) involved. However, if an informal approach is neither successful nor advisable, the student may file a formal written complaint.

Policies and Procedures to Address Student Complaints and Evidence of Implementation

Information about how students can report grievances and make complaints or appeals is widely published on Tennessee Tech websites and in student publications. The principal means of dissemination are the Express Menu [1], Policy Central [2], Student Complaint web page [3], and in academic policies in the *Student Handbook* [4]. These means of dissemination are described below.

Express Menu. Students can easily access the Student Complaint web page from the Express Menu on Tennessee Tech's main website. By hovering their cursor over the Express Menu, students can display a Student Complaint link to the Student Complaint web page located on the Student Affairs website.

Policy Central. Policy Central is a freely accessible and searchable online repository of all Tennessee Tech policies, including those that pertain to student complaints/appeals.

Student Complaint Web Page. The primary method by which students file complaints/appeals is described on the Student Complaint web page located on the Student Affairs website. The Student Complaint web page summarizes Tennessee Tech's complaint/appeal process, provides links to policies regarding specific complaints and general complaints, outlines the complaint resolution process, and explains how to appeal the outcome of a complaint. Students can lodge a specific or general complaint with the Office of Student Affairs from the web page. The Student Complaint web page is an online means to explain and facilitate Tennessee Tech's procedures for submitting complaints/appeals.

- ***Student Handbook***. Information regarding student complaints/appeals can be found in the online *Student Handbook*. Academic policies pertaining to students are listed there as well as a link to the Student Complaint web page located on the Student Affairs website.

  Tennessee Tech does not draw a clear distinction between complaints and appeals. An appeal could be defined as following channels in an existing policy while a complaint might be defined as falling outside or beyond the steps contained in an existing policy. To avoid potential confusion, Tennessee Tech considers them one and the same.

Maintenance of Records of Student Complaints

The Student Complaints and Appeals Record Keeping table categorizes complaints/appeals as academic or non-academic and identifies the governing policy or procedure, mode and location of records, and responsible office [5]. Each of these types of complaints/appeals as well as the policy and procedure is reviewed below. Examples of implementation are provided, and the means of maintaining records is described.

Academic Complaints/Appeals

The primary types of academic complaints involve academic misconduct appeals, grade appeals, requirement appeals, academic standing, and appeals related to academic forgiveness (e.g., Academic Fresh Start).

Academic Misconduct and Discipline Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Student Academic Misconduct Policy (Policy 217) [6] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on page 200 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7], is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8] and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* [4] under Academic Policies.

This policy establishes procedures and provides forms for faculty to report allegations of misconduct and to impose sanctions. This policy also provides a mechanism for a student appeal.

Faculty report an allegation of misconduct utilizing the Allegation of Academic Misconduct Charging Document [9] found in a link within Policy 217, which is then forwarded by email to the student's official Tennessee Tech email address, the student's major department chair, the provost, the registrar, and the dean/director of the college/school in which the misconduct took place. In the charging document, the instructor explains the allegation, provides his or her recommended sanction, and includes any supporting documentation. The charging document informs the student how to appeal the charge.

A student may appeal a charge of academic misconduct and/or the sanction by completing the Academic Misconduct Request for a Hearing Form [10], found in a link in Policy 217 within five business days (absent good cause) from the receipt of the charging document and emailing it to the dean/director of the college/school in which the misconduct took place. Once the appeal form is received, the dean/director forwards the form, the charging document, and any supporting materials to the chairperson of the college/school's Academic Misconduct Committee. The chairperson then arranges a hearing of the college/school's Academic Misconduct Committee within eight business days (absent good cause) from the receipt of the request for an appeal. The college/school Academic Misconduct Committee follows the procedures outlined in Policy 217 when holding a hearing.

If the Academic Misconduct Committee finds that the preponderance of evidence supports the charge and the sanction, the appeal process ends. The decision of the college/school committee is communicated by the dean's office via official Tennessee Tech email to the student, instructor, provost, registrar, department chair, and dean with oversight responsibility for the student's major (if not the same as the dean), as soon as practical, but not later than two business days (absent good cause) of the hearing. The college/school's Academic Misconduct Committee's decision is final. There is no appeal.

In the case of repeat or particularly egregious misconduct, the Academic Misconduct Committee can also recommend that a University-level sanction be added to the charge. If the college/school Academic Misconduct Committee recommends imposing university-level sanctions, the recommendation is forwarded to the provost, who shall notify the student via official Tennessee Tech email of any recommendation to seek additional penalties, whether from a college/school committee or from the provost. The student will also be advised of his or her right of appeal. If the student appeals the decision, the provost will notify the chairperson of the University Academic Misconduct Committee (which is composed of the chairs of the college/school committees), who will notify the Committee members of the need to hold a hearing. The hearing shall be held within 10 business days (absent good cause) from the receipt of the request for an appeal by the provost. The University Academic Misconduct Committee follows the procedures outlined in Policy 217 when holding a hearing.

If the Committee finds that the preponderance of the evidence, including any prior incidents of academic misconduct, warrants additional penalties, the Committee may then impose a university-level sanction (reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion). The University Academic Misconduct Committee will communicate its decision via official Tennessee Tech email to the student, the instructor, the provost, the department chair, the dean, the dean of major, and the Office of the Provost, as soon as possible, but no later than two business days (absent good cause) of the hearing. The Academic Misconduct Committee's decision is final.

Each college and the instructor maintain their own academic misconduct records per student in their student files. Each academic misconduct and the appeals are sent to Academic Affairs by all colleges and inserted into the Office of the Provost share drive under Student Academic Misconducts and filed according to each student's last name in files A-Z followed by their T number. The Office of Academic Affairs maintains the records of completed academic misconduct cases and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 109 allegations, 19 appeals, two probations; 2018-2019, 67 allegations, 27 appeals, one suspension, two expulsions; 2019-2020, 60 allegations, 43 appeals, four expulsions. Two examples of academic misconduct appeals are included as

evidence [11] [12]. One concerned in-class copying, and the appeal was unsuccessful. The other involved online misconduct, and the student's appeal resulted in reduced sanctions.

Grade Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Grade Appeal Policy (Policy 218) [13] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Student Complaints, on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Student Complaint web page [3], is referenced on page 155 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7], is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Academic Policies [4].

This policy establishes procedures for students seeking to appeal the assignment of a final course grade.

The student must first consult with the course instructor to understand the instructor's justification for the grade and to resolve the disagreement in an informal, cooperative atmosphere. If a resolution is not reached through the instructor consultation, the student may appeal in writing to the chair of the department in which the grade was assigned within five business days (absent good cause) after the instructor denies the student's request. Within seven business days (absent good cause) after receiving the appeal and supporting evidence, the department chair will meet jointly with the student and the instructor in an attempt to resolve the dispute. If, in the opinion of the chair, the student's appeal lacks merit, the chair will notify the student and the instructor in writing within three business days (absent good cause) after the chair's joint meeting with the student and the instructor. If, in the opinion of the chair, the instructor assigned the grade in a manner not in accordance with Tennessee Tech policy, the chair will recommend to the instructor in writing that the grade be changed. Any such recommendation from the chair will be made within three business days (absent good cause) after the joint consultation with the student and the instructor. Within three business days (absent good cause) after receiving the instructor's written response (within nine business days from the joint meeting), the chair will communicate the status of the appeal to the student and the instructor.

A student wishing to continue his or her appeal after receiving the notification from the department chair may appeal to the dean of the college in which the course is taught within five business days (absent good cause) of the chairperson's decision. If the chair and the dean concur that the student's request lacks merit, the dean will so inform the student, the instructor, and the chair in writing within three business days (absent good cause) after the joint consultation with the student, the instructor, and the chair.

If, in the opinion of the dean, the instructor assigned the grade in a manner not in accordance with Tennessee Tech policy, the dean will recommend to the instructor in writing that the grade be changed. The recommendation from the dean will be made within three business days (absent good cause) after the joint consultation with the student, the instructor, and the chair. The instructor shall, within three business days (absent good cause) after receiving the dean's recommendation, provide a written response to the dean. Within three business days (absent good cause) after receiving the instructor's decision (within nine business days from the joint meeting), the dean will communicate the status of the appeal to the student, the instructor, and the chair.

A student wishing to continue his or her appeal after receiving notification from the dean may appeal to the provost within five business days (absent good cause) after receiving notification from the dean, who will then forward the appeal and all documents to the chair of Academic Council, who will then appoint a Grade Appeal Committee to address the case.

The chair of the Grade Appeal Committee will notify the student, the instructor, the department chair, and the dean that the appeal has been referred to the Grade Appeal Committee. The Committee will meet within seven business days (absent good cause) after the chair of the Academic Council receives the appeal request and supporting evidence. The instructor and the student will be allowed to present their positions to the committee.

If the Committee determines that the appeal lacks merit, the appeal ends, and the student has no further recourse under this policy.

If the Committee determines that the instructor assigned the grade in a manner not in accordance with Tennessee Tech policy, the Committee will either approve the student's request or modify it in accordance with the Committee's findings. The Committee chair will notify the instructor in writing of the Committee's decision within three business days (absent good cause). The instructor will then have seven business days (absent good cause) to respond to the Committee's decision. If the instructor declines to change the grade, the chair of the Grade Appeal Committee will communicate the Committee's decision and the instructor's response to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, who will, if he or she concurs with the decision of the Grade Appeal Committee, notify the Records Office that the grade is to be changed. The chair of the Grade Appeal Committee will notify the student, the instructor, the department chair, the dean, and the vice president for academic affairs of the disposition of the appeal. The Committee's decision is final. According to the policy, the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may not overrule the decision of the Grade Appeal Committee. If, however, the instructor refuses to change the grade as recommended by the Grade Appeal Committee, the instructor is in violation of policy and the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs would handle the situation accordingly.

Grade appeals are housed in the department, dean's office, and/or the provost's office according to the student last name and T number. Depending on the attempt to resolve the disagreement is where the records are kept according to the steps for resolving the grade appeal. If the instructor is not available, the department chair handles the appeal, which at that point the records are maintained in the department. If an agreement cannot be reached with the department or the instructor, the appeal will be handled by the dean's office and a record will be maintained in the dean's office as well. If a resolution has not been reached, the grade appeal goes to the provost's office for the Grade Appeal Committee to review and make the final decision after reviewing all evidence. The office of Academic Affairs maintains the records of grade appeal cases and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of grade appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, two appeals, two resolutions; 2018-2019, no appeals; 2019-2020, one appeal, one resolution. An email example of an unsuccessful course grade appeal that reached the dean of the college is included as evidence [14] [15]. Included are an email exchange between the professor and the student, an email exchange between the professor and department Chair, and a decision letter from the chair and from the dean. The other example includes the same details as the first example, but is from another academic unit.

Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start Requests/Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start Policy (Policy 1205) [16] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Student Complaints, on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Student Complaint web page [3], is referenced on pages 27-28 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17], is referenced on the Registrar's

Office web page [18] under Forms, and is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8].

This policy establishes procedures for Tennessee Tech to provide academic forgiveness for undergraduate students who have experienced academic difficulty and who have been separated from institutions of higher education for at least four consecutive years, allowing students to make a clean start upon returning to college. The policy also establishes a process for student appeals. A student may be granted an Academic Fresh Start only once.

Students interested in requesting a Fresh Start must complete and sign the Academic Fresh Start Application [19] found on the Registrar's Office web page [18] under Forms or in person at the Records Office, no later than the completion of 15 credit hours after subsequent enrollment at Tennessee Tech. Tennessee Tech will decide, in its sole discretion, whether the student has satisfied the four-year separation requirement.

A student may appeal the decision regarding his or her Fresh Start request by providing a written statement with any supporting documentation to the provost within 15 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of that decision. The provost will issue a written decision on the student's appeal within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) after the student has provided all supporting documentation. The decision of the provost is final.

The Registrar's Office maintains the records of completed Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of Fresh Start applications and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 18 applications, 13 approved; 2018-2019, 18 applications, nine approved; 2019-2020, 11 applications, five approved. Two examples of successful Fresh Start applications are included as evidence [20][21]. Included are the Fresh Start applications, student statements, and transcripts.

Graduate Academic Fresh Start Requests/Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Graduate Academic Fresh Start Policy (Policy 275) [22] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Student Complaints, on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on page 156 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7], and is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8].

This policy establishes procedures for Tennessee Tech to provide academic forgiveness for graduate students who have experienced academic difficulty. A Graduate Academic Fresh Start request is limited to situations where the individual wishes to apply to a new graduate degree program other than the previously attempted coursework. An individual may be granted an Academic Fresh Start only once. This policy also establishes a process for student appeals.

An individual seeking a Graduate Academic Fresh Start must meet all the requirements for admission as determined by the new program and the College of Graduate Studies and submit a completed Application for Graduate Academic Fresh Start [23] found on the College of Graduate Studies web page [24] under Online Forms, including a written justification for the request.

The approval of a request for a Graduate Academic Fresh Start is at the discretion of the new department and academic dean for the program to which the individual is applying and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

If the new department denies admission, the student may request an exception to appeal the decision. The student must complete the Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the Registrar's Office web page to start the appeal process. The student must

submit the completed form to his or her new program chair, the department chair, the college dean, and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies, who must authorize the exception in writing. If denied, the student may then appeal to the Graduate Studies Executive Committee for a final decision.

The College of Graduate Studies maintains the records of completed Graduate Academic Fresh Start appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of Graduate Fresh Start appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 11 requests, nine approved; 2018-2019, one request, one approved; 2019-2020, no requests. Three examples of successful Graduate Fresh Start applications, one of which was a successful appeal, are included as evidence [26][27][28].

Academic Standing Appeals. The policies regarding academic standing at Tennessee Tech are listed individually below.

- ***Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards.*** The University Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards Policy (Policy 263) [29] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on pages 45-47 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Academic Policies [14].

  This policy provides information on Tennessee Tech's minimum standards for continued undergraduate enrollment. A student who fails to satisfy the required minimum academic requirements set forth in Policy 263 will be placed on either academic warning, probation, or suspension. A student may seek readmission after suspension by following the requirements of Tennessee Tech Policy 1202 [30].

  The Records Office maintains the records of cases involving undergraduate academic suspension. A Retention Rates Summary Report is included as evidence [31].

- ***Readmission after Academic Suspension Requests.*** Tennessee Tech's Readmission after Academic Suspension Policy (Policy 1202) [30] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on pages 26 and 47 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* [4] under Academic Policies.

  This policy establishes the procedures for the readmission of undergraduate students after academic suspension. Students academically suspended may gain readmission according to the procedures set forth in Policy 1202 by completing a Readmission after Suspension Form [32] found on the Undergraduate Admissions web page [33] under Returning Students. Readmission is subject to the appropriate dean's or his or her designee's recommendation and Admissions and Credits Committee approval. Tennessee Tech will place students readmitted under this policy on probation and reclassify students' academic standing in subsequent terms as described in Policy 263 Academic Retention Standards [29]. The decision of the Admissions and Credits Committee on any application for readmission is final.

  The Admissions Office maintains the records of these readmission requests and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of readmission after suspension requests and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 138 requests, 130 approved; 2018-2019, 123 requests, 112 approved; 2019-2020, 143 requests, 123

approved. Two examples of successful readmission requests are included as evidence [35][36]. Included are the Request for Readmission Forms, student statements, and applicable email correspondence and memoranda.

Admissions and Degree Requirement Appeals. The policies regarding admissions to Tennessee Tech and degree requirements are listed individually below.

- ***Undergraduate Admission Requirement Appeals.*** Tennessee Tech's Undergraduate Admission Requirements Policy (Policy 1200) [36] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on the Undergraduate Admissions web page [33] under Requirements, and is referenced on pages 19-35 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17].

  A student may appeal an undergraduate admission denial by providing a written statement with supporting documentation to the vice president for enrollment management and career placement within 15 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of that decision. The vice president will issue a written decision within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) after the student has provided all supporting documentation. The decision of the vice president is final.

  The Admissions Office maintains the records of undergraduate admission appeals and their resolution. For the past three fall terms, the number of admission appeals and their resolution are as follows: Fall 2017, 47 appeals, 24 approved, eight denied, 15 withdrawn; Fall 2018, 38 appeals, 20 approved, two denied, 16 withdrawn; Fall 2019, 20 appeals, 16 approved, four denied. Two examples of undergraduate admission written appeals are included as evidence [37][38].

- ***Graduate Admission Requirement Appeals.*** Tennessee Tech's Graduate Admission Requirements Policy (Policy 270) [39] is found on the Policy Central web page [2] and is referenced on page 156 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7].

  A student may appeal a graduate admission denial or any provision of this policy by submitting a Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) web page [24] under Online Forms. The department chair, the college dean, and the dean of the College of Graduate Studies must authorize the exception. Their decision is final.

  The CGS maintains the records of graduate admission appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of admission appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, no appeals; 2018-2019, one appeal, one approved; 2019-2020, two appeals, two approved. Two examples of successful requests for admission exceptions to the Graduate School Executive Committee (GSEC) for insufficient GPA's are included as evidence [40] [41].

Graduate Student Reinstatement after Dismissal Requests/Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Graduate Student Reinstatement after Dismissal and Appeal Procedures Policy (Policy 281) [42] is found on the Policy Central web page [2].

A graduate student who was dismissed from Tennessee Tech may request reinstatement by completing and submitting the Reinstatement Request Form [43] found on the CGS web page [24] under Online Forms. A graduate student who wishes to appeal, may appeal in writing to the

GSEC within five business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the denial. The GSEC may, at its discretion, allow the student to appear before the committee or to provide additional documentation related to the request for reinstatement. The chair of the GSEC will notify the student of the committee's decision within seven business days (absent good cause) of the committee's meeting or deliberation. The GSEC decision is final.

The CGS maintains the records of graduate reinstatement appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of reinstatement appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 10 requests, eight approved, two denied; 2018-2019, 12 requests, 10 approved, two denied; 2019-2020, six requests, two approved, four denied. Two examples of completed reinstatement requests after dismissal are included as evidence [44][45]. In one example, the reinstatement was denied by the CGS after an earlier reinstatement. In the other, the denial by the CGS was successfully appealed to the GSEC.

Residency Classification Appeals. The Residency Classification Policy (Policy 253) [46] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], the Undergraduate Admissions Office web page [33] under Tuition and Fees, and is referenced on pages 28 and 40 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17] and page 176 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7].

This policy describes the process by which students can appeal the decision of Tennessee Tech's residency classification regarding whether the student is considered "in-state" or "out-of-state" for admission, fees, and tuition purposes. A student wishing to appeal his or her classification may appeal in writing to the Director of Admissions within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) of notification from the initial decision of the residency classification officer. Additional documentation can be provided at this stage if the student feels it is helpful, provided said documentation is submitted to the Director of Admissions within 45 calendar days (absent good cause) of the initial decision of the residency classification officer. The Director of Admissions will notify the student of approval or denial of his or her appeal in writing within 14 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of all information related to the appeal.

A student may request a reconsideration of an appeal denial by submitting a written appeal to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Placement (VP-EMCP) within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) of notification of the first appeal decision. The VP-EMCP or his or her designee will notify the student of approval or denial of his or her appeal in writing within 14 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Associate Vice President will be final.

The Admissions Office maintains the records for residency classification appeals and their resolutions. For the past three academic years, the number of residency appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 44 requests, 27 approved; 2018-2019 40 requests, 31 approved; 2019-2020, 12 requests, 11 approved. In cases without resolutions, the student did not meet the criteria to be classified in-state or did not provide the necessary documentation for the case to be considered.

Part-time students who are employed full-time in Tennessee, but do not live in the state, may be classified as out-of-state students but not pay out-of-state tuition per Classifying Student In-State and Out-of-State (TBR Policy 0240-02-02) [47]. For the past three academic years, the number of out-of-state tuition waiver requests for part-time students are as follows: 2017-2018,

eight requests, eight approved; 2018-2019, 24 requests, 23 approved; and 2019-2020, seven requests, seven approved.

Two completed applications for in-state residency classification based on a Tennessee domicile are included as evidence [48] [49]. In one case, the student had earlier received two out-of-state tuition waivers based on full-time employment. Also included as evidence are two completed applications requesting an out-of-state tuition waiver based on full-time employment [50] [51].

Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation Requests/Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Requirements for a Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation Policy (Policy 260) [52] is found on the Policy Central web page [2] and is referenced on pages 37-43 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17].

A student wishing to request an exception to any portion of this policy may complete the Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the Registrar's Office web page. The Director of Academic Services will notify the student of approval or denial of his or her request within 14 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of the request.

A student may appeal the decision of the Director of Academic Services by submitting a letter of appeal to the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Placement within 14 calendar days (absent good cause) from the notice of the decision. At that time, the student may supply any additional or supplemental information he or she believes is pertinent to the request. The vice president, in consultation with the provost or his or her designee, will convene a subcommittee of the Admissions and Credits Committee to consider the student's written appeal. The vice president on behalf of the sub-committee will notify the student in writing of its decision no later than 14 calendar days (absent good cause) after receipt of the appeal and all supporting information. The decision of the sub-committee of the Admissions and Credits Committee is final.

The Office of Academic Affairs maintains the records of undergraduate degree and graduation appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of requests and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 174 requests, 168 approved, six denied; 2018-2019, 150 requests, 146 approved, four denied; 2019-2020, 277 requests, 265 approved, 12 denied. Two examples of successful requests for a University exception, one regarding the catalog year and one concerning a transfer credit, are included as evidence [53] [54]. An example of a successful appeal of a denial is also included as evidence [55].

Academic Credit from Other Institutions Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Academic Credit from Other Institutions Policy (Policy 261) [56] is found on the Policy Central web page [2] and is referenced on pages 25-26, 33-34 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17].

A student wishing to request an exception to any portion of this policy regarding transfer credits from another institution may complete the Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the Registrar's Office web page [18] and submit it to the Office of Academic Services.

The Director of Academic Services will notify the student of approval or denial of his or her request within 14 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of the request. A student may appeal the decision of the Director of Academic Services by submitting an appeal letter to the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Placement (VP-EMCP) no later than 14

calendar days (absent good cause) after notification of the Director of Academic Services' decision. The VP-EMCP, in consultation with the provost or his or her designee, will convene a subcommittee of the Admissions and Credits Committee to hear the student's appeal. The VP-EMCP, on behalf of the sub-committee, will notify the student in writing of its decision no later than 14 calendar days (absent good cause) after receipt of the appeal and all supporting information. The decision of the sub-committee of the Admissions and Credits Committee is final.

The Admissions Office maintains the records of transfer credit appeals and their resolution. Two examples of completed transfer credit appeals and their resolution are included as evidence [57] [58]. For the past three academic years, the number of requests and their resolutions are as follows: 2016-2017, 84 requests, 81 approved; 2017-2018, 74 requests, 72 approved; 2018-2019, 54 requests, 51 approved.

Full Course of Study Requirements for International Students Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Full Course of Study Requirements for International Students Policy (Policy 240) [59] is found on the Policy Central web page [2] and is referenced on pages 28-32 in the *Undergraduate* [17] and on page 172 in the *Graduate Catalogs* [7].

This policy describes the requirements related to immigration and the number of credit hours international students are obligated to enroll in while attending Tennessee Tech with the following visa statuses: F-1 or J-1 status. According to the Student Exchange Visitor Program, students with F-1 or J-1 status must meet specific enrollment criteria each semester (fall and spring terms) to satisfy the immigration policy on international students maintaining full-time status.

Students wishing to request an exception to these requirements must receive written authorization from the senior immigration advisor or the Director of International Education. Such exceptions are very limited and must comply with federal law related to student visas.

The Office of International Education maintains the records of appeals and their resolution.

For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and their resolution are as follows: Fall 2017, four requests and approvals; Fall 2018, four requests and approvals; Fall 2019, five requests and approvals.

Three examples of email exchanges between students, professors, and the Office of International Education regarding issues with the requirements for international students are included as evidence [60] [61] [62]. In one of these, the student requested to drop below the required number of credit hours; in another, the student was under-enrolled; and one concerned a hybrid course.

Prior Learning Assessment Appeals (PLA). Tennessee Tech's Prior Learning Assessment Policy (Policy 258) [63] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on the Registrar's Office web page [18] under Graduation, is referenced on the Undergraduate Admissions web page [33] under Requirements, and is referenced on pages 20-24, 33-34 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17].

This policy establishes procedures for the transfer, acceptance, and evaluation of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) for undergraduate university credit and establishes a process for appeals.

Recommendations and scoring by ACE, CLEP, and other external bodies are under the auspices of the evaluation body and cannot be appealed. Student appeals of these decisions should be directed to the appeals procedures for each testing agency or credit recommendation service. Students may appeal internal PLA credit decisions by submitting the Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the Registrar's Office web page. Students may submit revised portfolios upon recommendation of the assessor after receiving recommendations for improvement or reasons for credit denial.

Two examples of completed PLA appeals and their resolution are included as evidence [64] [65].

The Office of Academic Affairs maintains the records of prior learning assessment appeals as part of the undergraduate degree and graduation appeals and their resolution in Banner Document Management. For the past three academic years, the number of requests and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 174 requests, 168 approved, six denied; 2018-2019, 150 requests, 146 approved, four denied; 2019-2020, 277 requests, 265 approved, 12 denied.

Non-Academic Complaints/Appeals

Several formal non-academic complaint/appeal procedures are handled or coordinated by the departments of the Office of Student Affairs, Athletics, Business and Fiscal Affairs, and Enrollment Management. The policies and procedures are provided below with examples to illustrate the process and demonstrate that the procedures are followed.

Athletics Financial Aid Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Athletics Financial Aid Policy (Policy 907) [66] is found on the Policy Central web page [2]; on the Athletics Department web page [67] under Inside Athletics, For Student Athletes; and on page 29 of the *Student-Athlete Handbook* [68].

This policy describes financial aid sources and award guidelines for Intercollegiate Athletics and establishes a procedure for appealing a financial aid decision. With the approval of the Director of Athletics, each head coach will recommend to Tennessee Tech's Scholarship Office the amount of athletically related financial aid for each student-athlete or prospective student-athlete. The Department of Athletics shall comply with all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), and Tennessee Tech policies and rules in the renewing, non-renewing, cancellation, reduction, or gradation of institutional financial aid.

A student-athlete who wishes to appeal a Department of Athletics financial aid decision may appeal that decision using the procedure found in Policy 909 Student-Athlete Appeals and Transfer [69]. For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and resolutions are as follows: 2017-2018, one appeal, one resolution; 2018-2019, four appeals, four resolutions; 2019-2020, two appeals, two resolutions. A successful appeal of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) (pace of progress) and a successful SAP (GPA) appeal are included as evidence [70] [71].

Athletics financial aid appeals are maintained by the Financial Aid Office along with other student appeals. They are completed and scanned to each student account in Banner.

Student-Athlete Appeals and Transfers. Tennessee Tech's Student-Athlete Appeals and Transfer Policy (Policy 909) [69] is found on the Policy Central web page [2]; on the Athletics Department web page [67] under Inside Athletics, For Student Athletes; and on pages 9, 17, 18, 20, and 33 of the *Student-Athlete Handbook* [68].

This policy provides for a student-athlete appeals process in the event of nonrenewal or reduction of aid and for a student-athlete wishing to transfer to another institution.

If a student-athlete wishes to transfer from Tennessee Tech to another institution, the student-athlete must complete the required Transfer Notification Form [72] found on the Athletics Department web page [67] under For Student Athletes and submit it to the Athletics Compliance Office. Per NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.3.1, the institution has two business days to enter the student-athlete's name into the transfer database. When a student-athlete initiates the transfer process, it is at the discretion of the head coach for the student-athlete to remain on the roster.

A student-athlete may appeal the denial of the one-time transfer exception or a decision related to his or her athletically related financial aid. If a student-athlete wishes to appeal a financial aid decision, he or she must first appeal to the head coach of that sport program. If the student-athlete declines to discuss either appeal with the head coach, or is unable to reach an agreement, the student-athlete may file a written appeal to the Director of Athletics within 15 business days (absent good cause) of receipt of notice of the adverse action. The Director of Athletics must reply in writing within seven business days (absent good cause) from the date of receipt of the appeal.

If the aforementioned appeals are unsatisfactory to the student-athlete, he or she may submit a written appeal to the faculty athletics representative, who serves as the chair of the Student-Athlete Appeals Committee. Appeals to the Committee will only be considered after the student-athlete has exhausted the appeals process within the Department of Athletics. The student-athlete should submit the request no later than 15 business days (absent good cause) from the receipt of the decision of the Director of Athletics.

The Committee will make its decision and inform the student-athlete and the Director of Athletics in writing within 15 business days (absent good cause) of the initial filing of the appeal. The decision of the Committee is final.

The Athletics Compliance Department maintains the records of these appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of student-athlete financial aid or transfer appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, no appeals; 2018-2019, no appeals; 2019-2020, one appeal, one resolution. The unsuccessful appeal request, email correspondence, decisions by the coach, the athletics director, and the Student-Athlete Appeals Committee are included as evidence [73].

Greek Life Complaints. Tennessee Tech's Greek Life Policy (Policy 320) [74] is found on the Policy Central web page [2] and on the Greek Life web page [75] under Resources.

Tennessee Tech recognizes and supports the member chapters of the social Greek community as an integral part of its educational mission and objectives. This policy details the standards that Greek organizations are expected to maintain and establishes a process for appeals.

The Office of Greek Life will have jurisdiction in all cases where a violation of the Greek Life policies and procedures has occurred. In addition, if a final decision is made that a policy violation occurred as a result of the processes outlined in Policy 141 Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment and/or Policy 144 Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures [76] [77], the Greek

organization and/or any members acting on behalf of the organization will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined in the Student Conduct Policy (Policy 302) [78].

A student may file a complaint against a Greek organization by submitting a Greek Life Incident Report [79] found on the Greek Life web page [75] under Chapter Forms to the Office of Greek Life within 10 business days (absent good cause) when the complainant becomes aware of a violation. The Office of Greek Life will notify in writing the alleged offending chapter that a complaint has been filed.

If the complaint is within the jurisdiction of the governing council (i.e., the Interfraternity Council, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, or the Panhellenic Council), the complaint form and any supporting materials will be forwarded to the accused Greek organization's governing council for investigation and adjudication. Each governing council has jurisdiction and may adjudicate violations of their respective constitutions and bylaws. Upon the completion of adjudication, the governing council judicial board will submit a judicial report to the Office of Greek Life for review. The Office of Greek Life will review the judicial report and will either accept or reject the recommended sanctions. If accepted, the sanctions will go into effect immediately. If rejected, the Governing Council Judicial Board will reconvene to formulate new sanctions and resubmit the judicial report for approval.

If the complaint alleges a violation of the Greek Life Policy, the Office of Greek Life will be responsible for investigation and adjudication of the alleged violation. Depending on the severity of the complaint, the Office of Greek Life has the authority to direct an accused chapter to cease chapter operations until the complaint has been adjudicated.

A Greek organization that has been sanctioned by a Governing Council Judicial Board or the Office of Greek Life may appeal in writing to the Dean of Students within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the receipt of notice that sanctions have been enacted. The Dean of Students may uphold, change, lessen, increase, or eliminate the sanctions. If the Greek organization is dissatisfied with the decision of the Dean of Students, it may continue the appeal by submitting a written request to the Vice President for Student Affairs within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the date when the Dean of Students' decision has been officially reported and received by the sanctioned organization. The decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs is final.

The Office of Greek Life maintains all records related to Greek organization complaints, disciplinary actions, and appeals. There have been no complaints/appeals over the past three academic years.

Student Conduct Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Student Conduct Policy (Policy 302) [78] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Student Complaint web page [3], on the Dean of Students web page [80], is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Student Conduct Policy [81].

This policy describes standards of conduct and adjudication processes, including appeal procedures, for student disciplinary matters. This policy applies to both students, registered student organizations (RSO), and prohibited conduct on and off Tennessee Tech property. Policy 302 includes a list of actions/behaviors that are prohibited.

Upon a determination by a preponderance of the evidence (unless otherwise required by federal or state law, rule, or regulation) that a student or RSO has engaged in prohibited conduct listed

in the policy, the Dean of Students or the Judicial Council will impose appropriate sanctions according to the policy unless a student contests the alleged violation(s) under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA) in accordance with provisions outlined in the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, Tennessee Code Annotated Section 4-5-301 et seq. and related rules.

A student or RSO accused of any violation of this policy will be given written notice of the alleged violation. Tennessee Tech will deliver this notice by sending an email to the student's or RSO's official Tennessee Tech account. The notice will be effective on the date the email notification is sent to the student's or RSO's official Tennessee Tech email account.

- ***Preliminary Meeting.*** Tennessee Tech will send a preliminary meeting notification letter 48 hours (absent good cause) prior to a preliminary meeting with the Dean of Students and will include, at a minimum: a. the time, place, and date of the preliminary meeting; b. a written statement of the alleged violation and description of the alleged behavior including time, date, and place of occurrence if such information is available; c. notice of the right to be accompanied by an advisor of choice, including an attorney, provided the student or RSO consents to sign a release of necessary education records to the advisor; d. notice that the advisor may not speak on behalf of the student or RSO in the disciplinary meeting; e. notice of the right to address any information that Tennessee Tech is relying on as a basis for the preliminary meeting.

  Upon receipt of the preliminary meeting notification letter, the student or RSO must contact the Dean of Students Office within 48 hours (absent good cause) to schedule a preliminary meeting. Failure to do so will result in a disciplinary hold placed on the student's account or in the case of an RSO, suspension of privileges. During the preliminary meeting with the Dean of Students, the student or RSO will have the opportunity to contest the alleged violation and present information.

  Following the preliminary meeting and investigation of the complaint, the Dean of Students will determine if sufficient information exists for the disciplinary process to continue.

  If the Dean of Students concludes a violation did not occur, the matter will end. If the Dean of Students determines there is sufficient information to proceed with the disciplinary process, the student or RSO will have a disciplinary hearing regarding the alleged violation. If the Dean of Students determines the alleged misconduct does not warrant consideration of suspension, expulsion, or revocation of degree or credential of a student or revocation of registration of an RSO, the student or RSO will have a hearing before the Dean of Students.

- ***Hearing Options in Cases of Possible Suspension, Expulsion, or Revocation of Degree or RSO Registration***. If the Dean of Students determines that the alleged misconduct could result in suspension, expulsion, or revocation of degree or credential of a student or revocation of registration of an RSO, the student or RSO will have the opportunity to

  1. Contest the alleged violation(s) under the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act (UAPA) in accordance with provisions outlined in the Uniform Administrative

Procedures Act, Tennessee Code Annotated Section 4-5-301 et seq. and related rules; or
2. Waive a hearing pursuant to the UAPA and choose a hearing before the Dean of Students; or
3. Waive a UAPA hearing and choose a hearing before the Judicial Council.

- ***Notice and Due Process Rights Related to Disciplinary Proceedings.*** Unless a student or RSO waives in writing his or her right to a disciplinary proceeding, a student or RSO accused of any violation of this policy will be given written notice of the alleged violation. Tennessee Tech will deliver this notice by sending an email to the student's or RSO's official Tennessee Tech email account. The notice will be effective on the date Tennessee Tech sends the email notification to the student's or RSO's official Tennessee Tech email account.

  For proceedings that could result in suspension, expulsion, or revocation of degree or credential of a student or revocation of registration of an RSO, or that involve allegations of sexual misconduct as defined by the Student Due Process Protection Act and subject to this policy, Tennessee Tech will send a notification letter at least 72 hours prior to the disciplinary proceeding.

  The notification letter will include, at a minimum: a. the time, place, and date of the disciplinary proceeding; b. the names of witnesses Tennessee Tech expects to present at the disciplinary proceeding and the names of witnesses Tennessee Tech may present if the need arises; c. an explanation of the student's or RSO's right to request a copy of the investigative file, which will be redacted as required by federal and state law; d. an explanation of the student's or RSO's right to request copies of all documents, copies of all electronically stored information, and access to tangible evidence that Tennessee Tech has in its possession, custody, or control and may use to support claims or defenses, unless use would be solely for impeachment. All such documents will be redacted as required by federal and state law; e. a written statement of the alleged violation and description of the alleged behavior including time, date, and place of occurrence if such information is available; f. notice of the right to present his/her/its case to the appropriate disciplinary authority; g. notice of the right to be accompanied by an advisor of choice, including an attorney, provided the student or RSO consents to sign a release of necessary education records to the advisor; h. Notice that the advisor may not speak on behalf of the student or RSO in the disciplinary meeting; i. notice of the right to call witnesses who can speak on his or her behalf; and j. notice of the right to address any information that is used by Tennessee Tech in a disciplinary proceeding.

- ***Hearings Before Dean of Students.*** In a hearing before the Dean of Students, the student or RSO has the right to be accompanied by an advisor of choice, provided the student or RSO consents to a release of necessary education records. The advisor may not speak on behalf of the student in the hearing.

  The student or RSO has the right to speak on his or her or its behalf, to call witnesses and to question all witnesses, to present evidence, and to challenge the admissibility of evidence or the right to remain silent in a hearing. Formal rules of evidence shall not be applicable. The Dean of Students shall issue a written decision that includes his or her findings, conclusions, and sanctions within three business days (absent good cause) after the conclusion of the hearing and all evidence is submitted. The student

or RSO will be advised in writing of the decision and all sanctions imposed as a result of the disciplinary hearing via the Tennessee Tech email account. Any sanction imposed as a result of a hearing before the Dean of Students will be effective immediately upon notification of the student or RSO.

- ***Hearings before Judicial Council.*** In the hearing, the student or RSO has the right to be accompanied by an advisor of choice, provided the student or RSO consents to sign a release of necessary education records. The student or RSO has the right to speak on his or her or its behalf, to call witnesses and to question all witnesses, to present evidence, and to challenge the admissibility of evidence or the right to remain silent in a hearing. Formal rules of evidence shall not be applicable. The Judicial Council shall issue a written decision that includes its findings, conclusions, and sanctions within three business days (absent good cause) after the conclusion of the hearing and all evidence is submitted.

- ***Procedures Related to Interim Measures and Interim Suspensions.*** When the Dean of Students determines that interim measures or an interim suspension are required for the health and safety of Tennessee Tech and/or property, the student or RSO will be given an opportunity for an informal hearing with the Dean of Students to contest the interim measure. The informal hearing will be held within five calendar days (absent good cause). The student or RSO will be entitled to formal hearing in accordance with the procedures described in Policy 302 before a permanent measure is imposed.

- ***Student or RSO Appeals.*** A student or RSO may appeal a sanction imposed by the Dean of Students or the Judicial Council. The student or RSO must file a written appeal with the Dean of Students within 10 calendar days (absent good cause) from the date of the decision letter. The Student Conduct Appeal Committee will hear all appeals. The Student Conduct Appeal Committee will consider the appeal based on the record and statements submitted by the student or RSO and the Dean of Students. The Student Conduct Appeal Committee may request the student or RSO and the Dean of Students appear before the Student Conduct Appeal Committee to clarify any questions regarding the appeal record or statements.

  The Student Conduct Appeal Committee will make its decision within 10 business days (absent good cause) of receipt of all relevant information.

  A student or RSO may file a written appeal of the Student Conduct Appeal Committee's decision to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The student or RSO must file a written appeal within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the date of the decision letter. After consideration of the appeal, the record, and any other relevant information, the Vice President will issue a written decision within five business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the appeal.

  The Vice President for Student Affairs' decision is final, except in cases where a student has been expelled or the student's degree has been revoked. In those cases, the student may appeal the Vice President's decision to the President. The student must file a written appeal with the President's Office within 10 business days (absent

good cause) of the date of the decision letter. The President will issue a written decision as soon as reasonably possible. The President's decision is final.

- ***Prospective Students.*** A prospective student's admission to Tennessee Tech may be rescinded for pre-attendance conduct that is prohibited by Tennessee Tech's Student Conduct Policy (Policy 302) [78]. A prospective student may appeal the admission decision by providing a written statement with supporting documentation to the Vice President for Student Affairs within 15 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of that decision. The Vice President will issue a written decision within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) after the student has provided all supporting documentation. The decision of the Vice President is final.

  The Dean of Students office maintains student conduct files which contain the records of student conduct, appeals, and resolutions. For the past three academic years, the number of cases and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 68 cases, 64 resolutions, one appeal; 2018-2019, 63 cases, 59 resolutions, one appeal; 2019-2020, 35 cases, 32 resolutions, one appeal. Unresolved cases are the result of the student leaving the institution prior to the resolution. Two completed requests for a hearing before the Dean of Students are included as evidence [82] [83]. Documents include Conduct Summary Reports, Hearing Reports, Disciplinary Action Reports, Police Reports, and notification letters.

Discrimination and Harassment Complaints. Tennessee Tech's Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy (Policy 141) [76] is found on the Express Menu [1] under both Student Complaints and Student Resources, on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Student Complaint web page [3], on the Human Resources web page [84] under Diversity and Inclusion, on the Title IX web page [84], is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8], is referenced on the University Counsel web page [86], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Discrimination and Harassment [87].

This policy describes Tennessee Tech's policy on unlawful discrimination and harassment and establishes procedures for the resolution of complaints of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, disability, age, veteran status, genetic information, and any other category protected by federal or state civil rights laws. The policy also establishes the process for student appeals.

Any student who believes that he or she has been a victim of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation within the scope of this policy or any faculty or staff member who has witnessed discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should report the incident, as soon as possible, to any responsible employee or directly to a reporting authority (i.e., Office of Human Resources or Office of Compliance).

Upon receipt of a complaint, the reporting authority will determine whether the complaint meets the definition of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation as defined in Policy 141. If the complaint does not rise to that level (does not meet the definition of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation as defined in Policy 141), the reporting authority will forward the complaint to the appropriate administrator for action, if any.

Complaints may also be reported through the anonymous general Student Complaint Form [88] found on the Student Complaint web page [3]. Please note that anonymous complaints will be

investigated to the full extent possible; however, anonymous complaints may not always provide sufficient information for resolution or action.

Any responsible employee who becomes aware of a potential incident of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation must report the incident to the appropriate reporting authority as defined in Policy 141 within one business day (absent good cause). Complaints must be made within 365 days (absent good cause) of the last incident of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. In situations that require immediate action because of safety or other concerns, Tennessee Tech may take reasonable, appropriate administrative action.

Tennessee Tech will conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation of the complaint and provide notification of the outcome to the complainant and the respondent. The timeframe for the investigation will depend on the complexity of the investigation and the severity and the extent of the allegations.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will provide a summary of his or her findings and conclusions to the vice president for planning and finance. The Vice President will decide whether or not a violation of this policy has occurred based on the investigator's findings and conclusions, or, if necessary, request additional information and/or further investigation of the matter.

Either party may request the Vice President to reconsider his or her decision. The party shall notify the investigator in writing of the request for reconsideration within five business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the Vice President's decision. The following are the only bases for reconsideration:

1. A procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter that was not reasonably available at the time the determination or dismissal was made;
3. A conflict of interest or bias by institutional participants that affected the outcome.

The Vice President will issue a written response to the request for reconsideration as promptly as possible. The Vice President's decision related to the request for reconsideration is final. If a written request for reconsideration is not received within five business days (absent good cause), the original decision of the Vice President is final.

The compliance officer maintains the records of discrimination and harassment complaints and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of complaints and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, one complaint, one resolution; 2018-2019, no complaints; 2019-2020, four complaints, four resolutions. A table listing discrimination and harassment complaints, the investigative findings, and the case resolutions is included as evidence [89].

Services for Students with Disabilities Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Services for Students with Disabilities Policy (Policy 340) [90] is found on the Accessible Education Center web page [91] under Faculty Members, on the Policy Central web page [2], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Disabilities Services [92].

This policy describes the process and procedures Tennessee Tech follows to ensure that qualified students with disabilities are not excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities and establishes the process for a student appeal.

- ***Determination of Reasonable Accommodations or Adjustments.*** When a student requests an accommodation or adjustment, academic or otherwise, the Accessible Education Center (AEC) will consider the reasonableness of the request. If the request is approved, the AEC will inform the student in writing of the approval within three business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the request. If the AEC has concerns about the reasonableness of the request, AEC will assemble a group of trained, knowledgeable, experienced individuals to review the program/course, service, or activity requirements to determine whether effective alternatives to the essential requirements exist which could allow students with disabilities to participate in programs/courses, services, or activities without waiving or lowering essential requirements or fundamentally altering the nature of the program/course, service, or activity. The AEC will inform the student in writing within three days (absent good cause) of its determination.

  If the student is dissatisfied with the AEC's decision, the student may request, in writing, a review by the Director of the AEC within three business days (absent good cause) of delivery of the determination. The director will review the determination and will issue a written decision within three business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the student's request for review. The director's decision is final.

  If the student is dissatisfied with the Director of AEC's decision, the student may file a complaint as provided in Tennessee Tech Policy 141 Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment [76].

- ***Implementation of Reasonable Accommodations or Adjustments.*** A student who is dissatisfied with the implementation of a reasonable accommodation or adjustment should notify the AEC. The AEC will investigate the matter and communicate its decision in writing to the student within three business days (absent good cause) of the investigation's completion. If the student is dissatisfied with the AEC's decision, the student may submit a written request for reconsideration to the director of the AEC within three business days (absent good cause) of delivery of the decision. After reviewing the decision, the director will issue a written decision within three business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the student's request for review. The director's decision is final.

  If the student is dissatisfied with the director of AEC's decision, the student may file a complaint as provided in Policy 141 Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment [76] or with the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

  The AEC maintains the records of accommodation or adjustment appeals and their resolutions. For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, two appeals, two resolutions; 2018-2019, one appeal, one resolution; 2019-2020, no appeals.

  Two unsuccessful examples of disability appeals, one concerning exam accommodations and the other regarding video monitoring, are included as evidence

[93] [94]. Included in the evidence are AEC case notes, email correspondence, and the decisions by the director of the AEC.

Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance Policy (Policy 1206) [95] is found on the Registrar's Office web page [18], on the University Counsel web page [86], on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Compliance web page [96], in the *Student Handbook* which includes a direct link to Policy 1206 [95], and is referenced on the Bursar's Office web page [97] under Privacy Information.

This policy outlines Tennessee Tech's policy regarding the confidentiality of Student Education Records and compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and establishes the process for a student to amend his or her education record.

A student may request the amendment of education records that he or she believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. To request Tennessee Tech to amend an education record, the student must submit a written request to the custodian of the record. This written request must clearly identify the portion of the record the student wants amended and must detail the reason(s) for the requested amendment. Such reason(s) shall be limited to the issues of whether the record is inaccurate or misleading in recording the underlying action or whether Tennessee Tech's placement of the information in the student's record is in violation of his or her rights.

The custodian of the record receiving the request shall review it and, in consultation with Tennessee Tech counsel as necessary, determine whether to grant the student's request for amendment. Within a reasonable amount of time, the custodian must notify the student in writing of his or her decision regarding whether to grant or deny the requested amendment. If the custodian denies the requested amendment, the custodian will provide written notification to the student that shall include notification of the student's right to request an appeal hearing.

A student may appeal the denial of a request to amend an education record and request a hearing via a written request to the registrar within 10 business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the custodian's denial of the request. Following the receipt of a written request for a hearing, the registrar, in consultation with the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Career Placement, shall appoint an officer or committee to hear the appeal. The hearing officer or committee chair shall set the date for an appeal hearing to be held within 45 calendar days (absent good cause) from the date of the hearing request and shall notify the student in no less than 10 business days (absent good cause) from the hearing. A student may submit evidence and/or be assisted or represented by individual(s), including but not limited to an attorney. The hearing officer or committee chair will notify the student in writing of the decision within 45 calendar days (absent good cause) after the conclusion of the hearing. The written decision must include both a summary of the evidence considered and a detailed explanation of the rationale for the decision. The hearing officer's or the Committee's decision is final.

If the requested amendment is denied, the hearing officer or committee chair must inform the student in writing of the student's right to place a statement in the file commenting on its contents and setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decision. This statement must be maintained in the education record, and a copy must be provided to anyone to whom the record is provided.

Students wishing to complain of alleged violations of FERPA by Tennessee Tech may file a complaint with the Office of the Registrar and/or Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education.

The Records Office maintains the records of completed appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, no students have requested to amend their education records.

Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures Complaints. The Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures (Policy 144) [77] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Student Complaints, on the Student Complaint web page [3], on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Human Resources web page [84] under Diversity and Inclusion, on the Title IX web page [85], on the University Counsel web page [86], is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8], and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures [98].

When a person reports sex discrimination, Tennessee Tech will follow its rules, procedures, and processes used for Title VII sex discrimination allegations, which provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging sex discrimination.

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail at any time (including during non-business hours) to Tennessee Tech's Title IX Coordinator or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, Tennessee Tech will provide the parties written notice of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview.

Tennessee Tech will investigate, to the extent necessary or possible, the allegations in a formal complaint and create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence. During the investigatory process, both parties will have an equal opportunity to 1. present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and inculpatory and exculpatory evidence; and 2. inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which Tennessee Tech does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation. At the conclusion of 10 business days (absent good cause), the Title IX Coordinator will send the investigative report along with the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy to the hearing officer. The investigatory phase shall be completed within 45 days (absent good cause).

A live hearing of formal complaints not dismissed will be conducted by a hearing officer (see Policy 144 for definition of hearing officer) that meets the requirements set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated Section 4-5-324. The hearing phase shall be completed within 30 days (absent good cause). Tennessee Tech will notify both parties at least 72 hours (absent good cause) prior to a live hearing. Live hearings may be conducted with all parties physically present in the same geographic location or, at Tennessee Tech's discretion, any or all parties, witnesses, and other participants may appear at the live hearing virtually, with technology enabling participants

simultaneously to see and hear each other. During the hearing, the hearing officer will follow the procedures set forth in Policy 144.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer will issue a written determination regarding responsibility simultaneously to the parties. The written determination will include 1. the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment; 2. a description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held; 3. the findings of fact supporting the determination; 4. the conclusions regarding the application of Tennessee Tech's rules, policy, and if applicable, code of conduct to the facts; 5. a statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination of responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions Tennessee Tech imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Tennessee Tech's education program or activity will be provided to the complainant; and 6. the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and/or respondent to appeal.

Either party may appeal a determination of responsibility or the dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegation. A party wishing to appeal a determination or the dismissal must file a written appeal with the Title IX Coordinator within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the date of the determination or dismissal. The written appeal must identify the basis or bases for the appeal and explain with specificity the facts supporting the basis or bases of the appeal.

Once an appeal has been made, the Title IX coordinator will 1. notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties; 2. ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is(are) not the same person as any investigator(s) or the hearing officer that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator; 3. ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies(comply) with the standards set forth in Policy 144.

If a party is a student, the Vice President for Student Affairs is the appeal decision maker. If a party is an employee, the Vice President for Planning and Finance is the appeal decision maker. The respective vice president will issue a written appeal decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result within the anticipated timeframe, absent good cause.

The Title IX Coordinator will provide the written appeal decision simultaneously to both parties. The appeal phase shall be completed within 15 days (absent good cause).

The Compliance Officer maintains the records of sex discrimination and sexual harassment complaints and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of complaints and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 21 complaints, 21 resolutions; 2018-2019, 24 complaints, 24 resolutions; 2019-2020, 14 complaints, 14 resolutions. A table listing Title IX grievances, the investigative findings, and the case resolutions is included as evidence [89].

Housing Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Housing Policy (Policy 305) [99] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Student Resources, Residential Life; the Office of Residential Life web page 100] under Housing Applications; the Policy Central web page [2]; and is referenced in the *Student Handbook* under Residential Life Housing Policy [101].

This policy establishes the procedures regarding the student housing agreement and provides a process for student appeals. Disciplinary action against a student for violating any applicable rule, regulation, or policy related to student conduct shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in Policy 302 Student Conduct [78].

Students may appeal a decision related to housing, except a disciplinary matter, by completing and submitting the Residential Life Housing Appeal Form [102] found on the Office of Residential Life web page [100] within five business days (absent good cause) of the decision to the Director of Residential Life. Within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the receipt of all information related to the appeal, the Director of Residential Life will notify the student of the decision in writing. The Director of Residential Life's decision is final.

The Office of Residential Life maintains the records of completed housing complaints and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of complaints and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 106 appeals, 106 resolutions; 2018-2019, 73 appeals, 73 resolutions; and 2019-2020, 75 appeals, 75 resolutions. Two successful appeals of release and/or cancellation denials because of COVID-related issues are included as evidence [103] [104].

Financial Aid/Scholarship Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Institutional Scholarship (Policy 1204) [105] is found on the Express Menu [1] under Scholarships, on the Financial Aid web page [106] under Types of Aid/Scholarships, on the Scholarship web page [107], on the Policy Central web page [2], and is referenced on pages 50-52, 61-67 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17].

This policy establishes procedures for student appeals to ensure consistency and fairness regarding the strategic use of scholarships awarded to students. This policy applies to donor-funded or institutional scholarships only.

A student wishing to appeal a decision related to his or her scholarship must complete the Request for Exception to University Requirement Form [25] found on the Scholarship web page [107] and submit it to the Office of Financial Aid. The Appeals Committee composed of the Scholarship Coordinator, the Director of Financial Aid or his or her designee, and the Director of Admissions or his or her designee will convene to hear the matter.

The Scholarship Coordinator will communicate in writing to the student the Committee's decision within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) of the coordinator's receipt of the appeal.

The student may appeal the Committee's decision in writing to the VP-EMCP within 15 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of the committee's decision. The VP-EMCP will communicate his or her decision in writing to the student within 30 calendar days (absent good cause) of receipt of the second appeal. The decision of the VP-EMCP is final.

The Financial Aid Office maintains the records of completed appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of financial aid appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 158 appeals, 156 resolutions (2 appeals considered incomplete); 2018-2019, 183 appeals, 183 resolutions; 2019-2020, 190 appeals, 189 resolutions (one appeal considered incomplete). Two examples of successful financial aid appeals are included as evidence [108] [109]. One pertains to lack of pace of progress, while the other is regarding lack of pace of progress and insufficient GPA. Also included as evidence are two examples of successful scholarship requests for exceptions, one regarding the tardiness of a transcript, the other concerning service hours [110] [111].

Student Fee Adjustments, Refunds, and Appeals. Tennessee Tech's Student Fee Adjustments, Refunds, and Appeals Policy (Policy 511.2) [112] is found on the Policy Central web page [2], is referenced on the Bursar's Office web page [97] under Refunds, and is referenced in the Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8].

This policy establishes the procedures for processing refunds for student registration fees, dormitory rent and prepayment, and meal plan adjustments outlined in Fee Charges, Refunds, and Fee Adjustments (Policy 511.1) [113], and establishes the process for a student appeal.

Students who wish to appeal a refund decision must submit a Student Refund Request Form [114] on the Bursar's Office web page [97] under Refunds to the Office of the Registrar Fee Refund Committee within two full academic semesters (fall and spring) after the term for which a student requests a refund (absent good cause). Proof of extenuating circumstances must accompany the completed form. The Committee will review the appeal and make a decision. The Business Office will notify the student in writing within one week (absent good cause) of the Committee's decision. If the appeal relates to a prior term, the Committee may require additional time. Any necessary transcript or financial adjustments will be applied to the student's record.

If the Committee denies the appeal based on insufficient documentation, the student may resubmit the appeal with additional documentation for further review. If the Committee denies the appeal for any other reason, students may submit a written request for final review to the Vice President for Planning and Finance within 10 business days (absent good cause) after the denial notification. The vice president will issue a written decision within 10 business days (absent good cause) of receipt of the student's request. The decision by the Vice President for Planning and Finance is final.

The Records Office maintains the records of student fee adjustments and refund appeals and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 99 appeals, 99 resolutions; 2018-2019, 97 appeals, 97 resolutions; 2019-2020, 111 appeals, 111 resolutions. Two examples of refund appeals, one approved involving a roommate altercation and an unsuccessful appeal concerning a pregnancy, are included as evidence [115] [116].

Parking/Traffic Citation Appeals. Tennessee Tech's General Parking and Transportation Policy (Policy 415) [117] is found on the Parking and Transportation web page [118] under How to Appeal Citations, on the Express Menu [1] under both Student Complaints and Student Resources, on the Student Complaint web page [3], and on the Policy Central web page [2].

This policy establishes Tennessee Tech's parking and transportation procedures and the process for student appeals.

Students wishing to appeal a citation may do so within 15 business days (absent good cause) of the date of issue to the Citation Appeals Committee. Appeals may be filed via the online Parking Portal [119].

The designated citation appeals committee for students meets regularly during the fall and spring semesters. Students are notified of the Committee's decision by email to the student's official Tennessee Tech email.

The decision of the designated Citation Appeals Committee may be appealed by submitting a written appeal with all relevant documentation attached within five business days (absent good cause) of the notification of the appropriate committee decision to Parking and Transportation Services.

A designated administrator not affiliated with the Citation Appeals Committee will review the request and communicate his or her decision to the individual making the appeal within five business days (absent good cause) after receiving the written appeal along with all relevant documentation. This notification will be sent to the student's official Tennessee Tech email or to the last known home address. This decision is final. For the past three academic years, the number of appeals and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, 351 appeals approved, 187 fines reduced, 443 denied; 2018-2019, 529 appeals approved, 95 fines reduced, 656 denied; 2019-2020, 304 appeals approved, 95 reduced, 318 denied.

The Office of Parking and Transportation Services maintains the records of completed parking/traffic appeals and their resolution. Three examples of completed parking/traffic appeals, one denied, one reduced, and one approved are included as evidence [120] [121] [122].

Police Complaints. Tennessee Tech's Police Complaint Procedure (Policy 411) [123] is found on the University Police web page [124] and on the Policy Central web page [2].

This policy establishes procedures for filing an official complaint against a Tennessee Tech police officer.

Tennessee Tech views all allegations of misconduct or impropriety involving police personnel seriously and will actively investigate every complaint filed.

Any individual who witnesses or has knowledge of police misconduct may file a formal complaint with the Chief of Police. If the complaint is against the Chief of the Police Department, the complainant may file the complaint with the Vice President for Student Affairs. In all other cases, the individual may file a formal complaint with Tennessee Tech's Police Department in one of the following ways:

1. Call the Police Department's main line at 931-372-3234 and request to speak with the Chief of the Police Department in order to file the complaint over the telephone.
2. Complete the University Police Department Official Complaint Form [125] found on the University Police web page and mail or deliver to the following address: Chief of Tennessee Tech Police, Tennessee Tech Police Department, Box 5081, Cookeville, TN 38505.
3. Personally appear at the Police Station, located at 242 East 10th Street, Suite 100 (Foundation Hall) in Cookeville, Tennessee, request to speak with the Chief of the Tennessee Tech Police Department, and file the complaint in person.

Once a complaint is received, the Chief of the Police Department, or the Vice President for Student Affairs' designee if the complaint is against the Chief, will conduct an investigation into the complaint. The time to complete an investigation under normal circumstances should not exceed more than 10 working days (absent good cause). When all pertinent information has been reviewed and the investigation has been completed, the Chief of the Police Department or the vice president's designee will assign one of the following outcomes to the complaint:

1. Exonerated – Allegation(s) made in the complaint occurred; however, the police officer's conduct was proper and/or followed department policy.
2. Unfounded – The allegation(s) was(were) found to be false. This may apply to the entirety or to a portion of the complaint against the police officer.
3. Not sustained – There was insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation(s).
4. Sustained – The allegation(s) are supported by sufficient evidence to justify a reasonable conclusion of guilt.

The Chief of the Tennessee Tech Police Department or the Vice President's designee will provide a written investigation report and recommendation to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The vice president will make a final determination and communicate the final decision to the complainant and the officer. The complainant will not receive information regarding the type or amount of disciplinary action taken.

The Office of Student Affairs and the Chief of Police maintain the records of completed police complaints and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of complaints and their resolution are as follows: 2017-2018, no complaints; 2018-2019, one complaint and one resolution; 2019-2020, no complaints. One example of a written complaint about a traffic stop is included as evidence [126]. Included are the officer's statement and the investigation outcome letter.

General or Miscellaneous Complaints. The University Student Complaint web page [3] outlines procedures for complaints not covered by other procedures including noncompliance with SACSCOC standards; fraud, waste, and abuse reporting; and distance learning education.

Student Complaints. Tennessee Tech's Student Complaint Policy (Policy 301) [8] is found on the Express Menu [1], on the Policy Central web page [2], on the Student Complaint web page [3], on pages 57-58 in the *Undergraduate Catalog* [17], is referenced on page 16 in the *Graduate Catalog* [7] and in the *Student Handbook* under Student Complaint Policy [127].

This policy establishes procedures regarding complaints not covered by other procedures in place to assure that concerns and complaints of students are addressed fairly and resolved promptly.

To make a complaint not specifically covered by a procedure already in place, students complete and submit the Student Complaint Form [88] found on the Express Menu [1]. If a complaint is filed that is governed by another process, it will be referred to the appropriate school official for disposition.

Whenever possible, students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of the matter directly with the faculty or other individual(s) involved. However, if an informal approach is neither successful nor advisable, the student may file a formal written complaint.

On the Student Complaint Form [88], a student should input (at a minimum) his or her name and his or her official Tennessee Tech email address, the date of the alleged conflict or action, a summary of the complaint, a list of other persons who may provide information, and any appropriate documentation. The student must also include the resolution or outcome he or she is seeking. The complaint must be submitted within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the event giving rise to the complaint.

Within five business days (absent good cause) of receiving the complaint, a conference will take place with the student and a staff member from the Office of Student Affairs. The student must submit all relevant documentation within 10 business days (absent good cause) of the date the student files the complaint. The Student Affairs staff member will notify appropriate persons and request any information or further documentation needed to resolve the complaint.

The Student Affairs staff member may attempt to resolve the complaint by encouraging discussion between the student(s) involved or third-party members of the Tennessee Tech community, or by taking the appropriate action to resolve the complaint.

A review of the complaint with the supervisor(s) or others in the line of supervision of third parties (such as vendors in contract with Tennessee Tech), if applicable, may be used when deemed appropriate and beneficial to the process.

The Student Affairs staff member assigned to the complaint will file a final written resolution or a finding of "unresolved" in the Office of Student Affairs within 15 business days (absent good cause) of the date the student submits the relevant documentation. If there are circumstances requiring an extension of this deadline, the staff member assigned to the complaint will notify the parties involved.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the student may appeal the outcome to the Appeal Committee by completing the online Student Complaint Appeal Form [128] and filing it with the Executive Director for Student Affairs within five business days (absent good cause) of receiving the final written resolution or finding of "unresolved." The Appeal Committee will follow the procedures outlined in Policy 301.

The Appeal Committee will issue a final written decision within 20 business days (absent good cause) of the date the student submits an appeal. The chair of the Committee will notify the parties involved. The Committee's decision is final.

The Office of Student Affairs maintains the records of student complaints and their resolution. For the past three academic years, the number of complaints and their resolution are as follows: 2018-2019, 53 complaints, 53 resolutions; 2019-2020, 61 complaints, 61 resolutions; and 2020-2021, 49 complaints and 49 resolutions. Two examples of completed Student Complaint Forms, one involving a noise complaint and one concerning residence hall temperatures, are included as evidence [129] [130].

Tennessee Tech makes viewable to its constituencies, including students, the means of reporting suspected instances of noncompliance with SACSCOC standards on the Student Complaint web page [3] as well as the Tennessee Tech SACSCOC web page [131].

Fraud, waste, and abuse reporting is possible via the Student Complaint web page [3] as well as the Internal Audit web page [132]. Incidents of fraud, waste, or abuse should be reported to one of the following:

A. A supervisor or department head
B. An institutional executive (e.g. dean, associate vice president, vice president, president),
C. Tennessee Tech Internal Audit at 931-372-3045 or Tennessee Tech's Internal Audit Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Report Form [133] (refer to the Internal Audit web page and select Fraud, Waste, or Abuse Reporting),

D. The Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's hotline for Fraud, Waste, and Abuse at 800-232-5454. To report online, refer to the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's web page [134] and select Other Functions, Investigations.

Additionally, the process for student complaints relating to consumer protection laws that involve distance learning education offered under the terms and conditions of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) are also viewable on the Student Complaint website [3].

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University provides, implements, and maintains records for a full range of student complaint procedures as well as a general complaint policy that helps ensure that Tennessee Tech students can seek a prompt, fair, and thorough resolution of any problem they may encounter and can seek reasonable exceptions through an established appeal process to Tennessee Tech rules and policies. Therefore, Tennessee Tech is in compliance with Standard 12.4.

Evidentiary Documents

[001] Tech Express
[002] Policy Central
[003] Student Complaints Web Page
[004] Student Handbook - Academic Policies
[005] Table 1: Student Complaints and Appeals
[006] Tennessee Tech Policy 217 - Student Academic Misconduct
[007] Graduate Catalog
[008] Tennessee Tech Policy 301 - Student Complaint
[009] Allegation of Academic Misconduct Charging Document
[010] Academic Misconduct Request for Hearing Form
[011] Academic Misconduct Example 1
[012] Academic Misconduct Example 2
[013] Tennessee Tech Policy 218 - Grade Appeal
[014] Grade Appeal Example 1
[015] Grade Appeal Example 2
[016] Tennessee Tech Policy 1205 - Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start
[017] Undergraduate Catalog
[018] Registrar's Office Web Page
[019] Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start Application
[020] Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start Sample 1
[021] Undergraduate Academic Fresh Start Sample 2
[022] Tennessee Tech Policy 275 - Graduate Academic Fresh Start
[023] Graduate Academic Fresh Start Application
[024] College of Graduate Studies Web Page
[025] Request for Exception to University Requirement
[026] Graduate Fresh Start Example 1
[027] Graduate Fresh Start Example 2
[028] Graduate Fresh Start Example 3
[029] Tennessee Tech Policy 263 - Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards
[030] Tennessee Tech Policy 1202 - Readmission After Academic Suspension

[031] Retention Rates Summary Report
[032] Readmission After Academic Suspension Form
[033] Undergraduate Admissions Web Page
[034] Undergraduate Readmission After Academic Suspension Example 1
[035] Undergraduate Readmission After Academic Suspension Example 2
[036] Tennessee Tech Policy 1200 - Undergraduate Admission Requirements
[037] Undergraduate Admission Requirement Appeal Example 1
[038] Undergraduate Admission Requirement Appeal Example 2
[039] Tennessee Tech Policy 270 - Graduate Admission Requirements
[040] Graduate Admission Requirement Appeal Example 1
[041] Graduate Admission Requirement Appeal Example 2
[042] Tennessee Tech Policy 281 - Dismissal and Appeal Procedures
[043] Graduate Reinstatement Request Form
[044] Graduate Reinstatement After Dismissal Example 1
[045] Graduate Reinstatement After Dismissal Example 2
[046] Tennessee Tech Policy 253 - Residency Classification
[047] TBR Policy 0240-02-02
[048] Residency Classification Example 1
[049] Residency Classification Example 2
[050] Out-of-State Tuition Waiver Example 1
[051] Out-of-State Tuition Waiver Example 2
[052] Tennessee Tech Policy 260 - Baccalaureate Degree and Graduation
[053] University Exception Request Example 1
[054] University Exception Request Example 2
[055] University Exception Request Example 3
[056] Tennessee Tech Policy 261 - Academic Credit from Other Institutions
[057] Academic Credit from Other Institutions Example 1
[058] Academic Credit from Other Institutions Example 2
[059] Tennessee Tech Policy 240 - Full Course of Study Requirements for International Students
[060] Requirements for International Students Example 1
[061] Requirements for International Students Example 2
[062] Requirements for International Students Example 3
[063] Tennessee Tech Policy 258 - Prior Learning Assessment
[064] Prior Learning Assessment Example 1
[065] Prior Learning Assessment Example 2
[066] Tennessee Tech Policy 907 - Athletics Financial Aid
[067] Athletics Department Web Page
[068] Student-Athlete Handbook
[069] Tennessee Tech Policy 909 - Student-Athlete Appeals and Transfer
[070] Appeal of Satisfactory Academic Progress Example 1
[071] Appeal of Satisfactory Academic Progress Example 2
[072] Transfer Notification Form
[073] Student-Athlete Appeal and Transfer Examples
[074] Tennessee Tech Policy 320 - Greek Life
[075] Greek Life Web Page
[076] Tennessee Tech Policy 141 - Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment
[077] Tennessee Tech Policy 144 - Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures
[078] Tennessee Tech Policy 302 - Student Conduct
[079] Greek Life Incident Report
[080] Dean of Students Web Page
[081] Student Handbook - Student Conduct Policy

[082] Student Conduct Appeal Example 1
[083] Student Conduct Appeal Example 2
[084] Human Resources Web Page
[085] Title IX Web Page
[086] University Counsel Web Page
[087] Student Handbook - Discrimination and Harassment
[088] Student Complaint Form
[089] Title IX Complaint Examples
[090] Tennessee Tech Policy 340 - Services for Students with Disabilities
[091] Accessible Education Center Web Page
[092] Student Handbook - Disability Services
[093] Disability Appeal Example 1
[094] Disability Appeal Example 2
[095] Tennessee Tech Policy 1206 - Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance
[096] Compliance Web Page
[097] Bursar Office Web Page
[098] Student Handbook - Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures
[099] Tennessee Tech Policy 305 - Housing
[100] Residential Life Web Page
[101] Student Handbook - Residential Life Housing Policy
[102] Residential Life Housing Appeal Form
[103] Housing Appeal Example 1
[104] Housing Appeal Example 2
[105] Tennessee Tech Policy 1204 - Institutional Scholarship
[106] Financial Aid Web Page
[107] Scholarships Web Page
[108] Financial Aid Appeal Example 1
[109] Financial Aid Appeal Example 2
[110] Scholarship Request for Exception Example 1
[111] Scholarship Request for Exception Example 2
[112] Tennessee Tech Policy 511.2 - Student Fee Adjustments - Refunds and Appeals
[113] Tennessee Tech Policy 511.1. - Fee Charges - Refunds and Fee Adjustments
[114] Student Refund Request Form
[115] Student Refund Appeal Example 1
[116] Student Refund Appeal Example 2
[117] Tennessee Tech Policy 415 - General Parking and Transportation
[118] Parking and Transportation Web Page
[119] Parking Portal Web Page
[120] Parking Traffic Appeal Example 1
[121] Parking Traffic Appeal Example 2
[122] Parking Traffic Appeal Example 3
[123] Tennessee Tech Policy 411 - Police Complaint
[124] University Police Web Page
[125] University Police Department Official Complaint Form
[126] Police Complaint Example
[127] Student Handbook - Student Complaint Policy
[128] Student Complaint Appeal Form
[129] Student Complaint Example 1
[130] Student Complaint Example 2

[131] SACSCOC Web Page
[132] Internal Audit Web Page
[133] Internal Audit Fraud - Waste and Abuse Report Form
[134] Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's Web Page

R - 13.6

Federal and State Responsibilities

The institution (a) is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended and (b) audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities under Title IV, SACSCOC relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

The Tennessee Technological University Office of Financial Aid has received from the U.S. Department of Education the documents, described in the narrative below, that provide the basis for participation in Title IV aid programs. The University adheres to all federal regulations as set forth under Title IV Student Aid Programs [1].

Program Eligibility and Participation

ECAR. The Tennessee Tech Office of Financial Aid received notification from the U.S. Department of Education in October 2018 that continued eligibility in all federal aid programs was reaffirmed from October 2018 through June 30, 2024. A copy of the Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR) is attached [2a][2b].

This document approves the University to participate in the following aid programs through June 2024:

Program Approved	Continuously Since
Federal Pell Grant	July 1, 1972
Federal Family Education Loan	December 1, 1965
Federal Direct Loan	July 1, 1994
Federal Perkins Loan	July 1, 1972
Federal Work Study	December 1, 1965
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	December 1, 1965
Federal Teach Grant/Loan	August 29, 2008

Federal Perkins Loan. Any school's authority to make new Federal Perkins loans ended on September 30, 2017, and final disbursements were permitted through June 30, 2018.

ECAR for Dropping Certificate Program. Upon the federal government's approval of the Rescission of the Gainful Employment Rule, Tennessee Tech chose to early implement this new ruling with an effective date of July 12, 2019. This ECAR represents that change submitted to the U.S. Department of Education [3a][3b].

ECAR Addendum for Shortened Academic Year. Due to COVID, Tennessee Tech requested and was granted a waiver for a Temporary Academic Year Reduction to 29 weeks for the academic year of 2019-2020 [4].

PPA. The University has also received a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) dated through June 30, 2024, signed on behalf of the Secretary of Education, providing continued participation in any Title IV, Higher Education Amendments (HEA) Program [5a][5b].

Processing of student aid applications and federal funds is carried out as mandated by these regulations. Student eligibility is verified following the federal and state verification regulations. The regulations are reviewed annually, and all manual and systematic procedures are adjusted each year.

The Office of Financial Aid annually reports all federal aid expenditures to the U.S. Department of Education via the submission of the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) report. The FISAP report is completed by the Director of Financial Aid with assistance from University loan accounting staff and reported each year by the submission date deadline. The President of the University signs the final report before the submission is complete [6a] [6b] [6c] [6d] [6e] [6f].

Annual Audit

The State of Tennessee Division of State Audit, following the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A133, conducts an annual audit of the federal award programs and those award programs administered through the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation. The most recent finalized audit was for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

A summary of the annual financial audits and Title IV findings since 2016 is given below. The full audit report for each item below is available at the Office of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury/Division of State Audit website [7a] [7b] [7c] [7d].

Audit Year Ending June 30, 2016	No federal aid compliance findings
Audit Year Ending June 30, 2017	Finding #2 Written agreements for non-institutional agencies for Federal Work Study
Audit Year Ending June 30, 2018	No federal aid compliance findings
Audit Year Ending June 30, 2019	No federal aid compliance findings

The Office of Financial Aid concurred with all findings, and management's responses are included in the audit reports mentioned above. No findings have been repeated, and all have been cleared.

Federal Audit

Tennessee Tech has an ongoing, open U.S. Department of Education general assessment program review. Tennessee Tech has responded to the Department's preliminary Program Review Report. Tennessee Tech is not aware of potential infractions that would jeopardize its Title IV participation, and the Department has not suggested that participation is at risk. Tennessee Tech continues to work with the Department to provide information, has taken specific corrective actions, and looks forward to the resolution of the program review by the Department.

Cohort Default Rate

The U.S. Department of Education annually assesses the University Cohort Default Rate based on data provided by the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). A cohort default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain loans during a federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) and default before the end of the next one to two fiscal years. Each fiscal year, the University receives notification concerning its cohort default rate. Tennessee Tech consistently maintains one of the lowest cohort default rates of all four-year universities in the state of Tennessee for each of the last five years. The most recent default rates, as reported by the U.S. Department of Education, are as follows:

FY	Tennessee Tech Rate	Tennessee Rate	National Rate
2018	4.1	9.1	7.3
2017	4.8	11.6	9.7
2016	5.0	11.5	10.1
2015	4.6	11.1	10.8
2014	5.3	11.8	11.5
2013	6.1	11.4	11.3

The University has never been placed on the reimbursement method. The University has never been required to obtain a letter of credit in favor of the U.S. Department of Education. Students are encouraged to contact the U.S. Office of Inspector General with issues or complaints regarding the administration of the federal funds. To date, no action has been mandated by the Office of Inspector General due to these complaints or issues.

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University has no significant impending litigation issues concerning financial aid activities, no unpaid dollar amounts due back to the U.S. Department of Education, and no adverse communication received from the U.S. Department of Education. The University maintains adequate controls over the financial aid audit process. Those controls include a review by the University through the Office of Internal Audit and through the federal and state audits conducted by the Tennessee Office of Comptroller Treasury, Division of State Audit. Therefore, Tennessee Tech demonstrates compliance with the requirements of Standard 13.6.

Evidentiary Documents

[1] Federal Student Aid Handbook
[2a] Eligibility and Certification Approval Report
[2b] Approval Letter
[3a] Update Approval Notice
[3b] ECAR Update for Dropping Certificate
[4] ECAR Update for Shortened Academic Year
[5a] PPA Transmittal Letter

[5b] Program Participation Agreement
[6a] FISAP - Complete 2015_2016
[6b] FISAP - Complete 2016_2017
[6c] FISAP - Complete 2017_2018
[6d] FISAP - Complete 2018_2019
[6e] FISAP - Complete 2019_2020
[6f] FISAP - Complete 2020_2021
[7a] Financial and Compliance Audit Report 2016
[7b] Financial and Compliance Audit Report 2017
[7c] Financial and Compliance Audit Report 2018
[7d] Financial and Compliance Audit Report 2019

R - 13.7

Physical Resources

The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University maintains and operates physical facilities and resources to serve the needs of its academic programs, support services, and other key elements of its mission, providing high-quality learning, working, and living environments on campus and at off-campus sites.

University Facilities: Main Campus

The 267-acre main campus [1] is located in Cookeville, Tennessee, and consists of 100 buildings with 3,090,450 square feet used for classroom instruction, research activities, student housing, administrative offices, athletic and recreational purposes, library, and other uses [2].

The University continually seeks ways to enhance its physical infrastructure to support students, faculty, and staff in all aspects of its educational, research, and regional development missions, including the construction and acquisition of new campus buildings and facilities. The most recently completed buildings or facilities on the main campus include:

- The $96 million, 165,840 square foot Laboratory Science Commons and Stonecipher Lecture Hall Complex completed in January 2021. It houses the Chemistry Department and a portion of the Biology Department. There are also labs for Earth sciences, physics, and environmental sciences. The building, located immediately north of the Capital Quad residence halls, is the key feature of a new east-west academic mall.

- The $54 million, 153,527 square foot Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center completed in April 2020. The new facility almost doubles the size of the previous Recreation and Fitness Center. With its prominent location, the new facility is designed to be the new campus "front door" attracting prospective students while serving current students and faculty.

- The $6 million, 20,000 square foot addition to the Roaden University Center (RUC) and Multi-Purpose room renovation completed in 2019. The project expanded the west side of the RUC, creating more space on the ground and first floors. A walking bridge between the west side expansion and Centennial Plaza was also created.

University Facilities: Off-Campus

Located 25 miles west of the main campus, the Appalachian Center for Craft is a satellite campus on over 500 wooded acres overlooking Center Hill Lake near Smithville. This facility, built in 1979, has 85,000 square feet used for studios, classrooms, galleries, exhibition areas, administration, student housing, and other auxiliary operations such as dining services.

The Shipley Farm, also known as the Tech Farm, consists of 300 acres approximately three miles from the main campus and is used for various educational and regional activities. The farm produces cattle, swine, and sheep along with small grain crops of wheat and soybeans, as well as hay, and includes a nursery research and service center. The farm includes the multipurpose Hyder-Burks Agricultural Pavilion, a 125-by-250 foot heated indoor show arena that seats 2,100 people and is used primarily for cattle/horse shows, rodeos, expos, and other public events. Adjoining the show arena is a 36,000 square foot, clear span livestock barn.

The University has a long-term use agreement with the owners of Oakley Farm, one of several "Pioneer Century Farms" in Tennessee, so designated as a farm in operation prior to Tennessee statehood. Split into two tracts, the first is about 1,350 acres located near Monterey while the second is around 450 acres near the Roaring River in Putnam County. Its primary operations are educational programs involving beef cattle, crop production, and other agricultural activities.

The Austin property, approximately 400 acres of timberland in Cumberland County (about 40 miles northeast of the main campus), was acquired by Tennessee Tech in 1976 and is used primarily for wildlife instruction and research by the Biology Department.

Tennessee Tech Campus Master Plan

The Campus Master Plan is maintained to provide direction for the future of the University's facilities. The Campus Master Plan consists of the existing plan, an acquisition plan, and an existing aerial view with 10-year, 20-year, and 30-year visions for the University. The Campus Master Plan includes new facilities construction, road and pedestrian route upgrades, building upgrades to meet campus enrollment needs, a physical resources inventory, and the physical survey. The University's latest comprehensive Campus Master Plan was compiled in 2010 and updated in 2013 [3]. It was amended in 2018 to include details pertaining to a proposed academic expansion around the area of the new Laboratory Science Commons [4]. Tennessee Tech is currently working with Bauer-Askew Architecture PLLC to revise and update the current Campus Master Plan with the goal of finalizing the new plan in 2022.

Recommendations on the allocation of funds by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) for renovations and new construction are guided directly by the Campus Master Plan. Updates to the master plan are coordinated with the Board of Trustees, reviewed by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and sent to the State Building Commission for approval.

Adequacy of Physical Resources

The physical resources of the University are adequate to accomplish its teaching, research, and service mission.

Educational Usage: The University has a sufficient number of classrooms, laboratories, and offices to support its teaching mission. Moreover, the University also has many specialized instructional

spaces. For example, the Heidtke Training Room and the Bloomberg Analytics Lab in Johnson Hall support programs in the College of Business. In Bell Hall, the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing utilizes a skills lab, a health assessment lab, and two simulation labs with control and debriefing rooms. The Backdoor Playhouse and set design workshop in Jere Whitson Building support the Theater Program. The Agriculture program has an agricultural engineering and technology classroom and a small engine classroom at Tech Farm. The Human Ecology program uses a commercial kitchen and dining space in Oakley Hall so that students can experience large-scale food preparation and host Friday Café lunches. The School of Art, Craft, and Design uses various specialized studios on campus (drawing, digital media, painting) and at the Appalachian Center for Craft (clay, fibers, glass, metals, wood). The School of Music has rehearsal and performance spaces in the Bryan Fine Arts Center. The College of Engineering has many specialized laboratories in Brown Hall (measurement, digital computer aided design, circuits, electronics), in Lewis Hall (machine shop, materials lab, electricity lab), in Foundation Hall (senior design lab, 3D printing lab), and in the Foundry (technical lab).

Research Usage: The University's research mission is accomplished by faculty, staff, and students in most academic buildings and in the Volpe Library.

Service Usage: Facilities that support service and outreach include the Hyder-Burks Pavilion, Ray Morris Hall (which houses the Millard Oakley STEM Center and hosts many outreach activities for area K-12 schools), and the Bryan Fine Arts Center. Tennessee Tech's iCube is a virtual reality lab housed in the Volpe Library. The students, faculty, and staff of iCube use marketing strategies and virtual reality technology to provide collaborative solutions for education, training, public policy campaigns, and other state, regional, and national initiatives.

The adequacy of the University's physical resources is assessed regularly. Several Tennessee Tech colleges and programs are individually accredited by national organizations, including ABET (Engineering), CAEP (Education), and CCNE (Nursing). These accrediting reviews typically include an explicit judgment on the adequacy of physical resources to support the unit mission [5] [6] [7] [8] [9].

The adequacy of library space and services is assessed through periodic surveys [10] and usage monitoring [11] [12] [13] [14] [15]. The adequacy of instructional technology and parking has also been assessed through surveys [16] [17].

The University conducts regular formal assessments of the adequacy of space for its mission and uses them to improve its infrastructure. A 2009 study by the Dober Lidsky Mathey firm showed that Tennessee Tech had deficiencies in research laboratory space, physical education/recreation areas, and library/study areas. Research lab space was addressed by the new Laboratory Science Commons opened in 2021. Increased space for physical education and recreation was addressed by the 2020 opening of the new Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center and the repurposing of the old fitness center as the Academic Wellness Center for use by the Department of Exercise Science. A full redesign of the Volpe Library to accommodate a Library Commons which opened in 2011 has greatly enhanced study and learning spaces available to students on campus. The Dober Lidsky Mathey firm is currently preparing an analysis of classroom, lab, and studio utilization on campus [18].

The University complies with state and federal standards related to accessibility. All new construction and major renovations comply with the Americans with Disability Act

guidelines. The campus is relatively flat and almost all buildings have an elevator. If a class is scheduled in a room or laboratory that is difficult to access, the Accessible Education Center works with the academic department to relocate the class. Handicapped accessible units are available in two residence halls and several of the apartment buildings in Tech Village.

Space Utilization and Allocation

The allocation of campus space is the responsibility of the President, acting on the recommendation of the Space Utilization and Allocation Committee, in accordance with approved Committee procedures [19]. The Committee is comprised of faculty, administrators, staff, and a student, with the Senior Associate Provost as its executive support officer [20]. Any campus unit requesting new space submits its request through a space request form [21] which is then reviewed by the Committee.

To ensure that available space is used efficiently to serve the campus mission, especially for scheduling regular course meetings during the academic year and summer terms, the University utilizes an Event Management System (EMS) that includes extensive information about the features and capabilities of each instructional space on campus, along with scheduling information. EMS also captures rates of utilization as a tool for monitoring current and future campus space needs [22].

Renovation and Capital Improvements

A range of major and minor projects is undertaken continually to improve Tennessee Tech's capabilities in meeting the needs of its programs and the fulfillment of its mission [23]. All renovation projects are planned and designed with direct involvement of users of the space. Tennessee Tech Facilities personnel complete minor renovation projects, while major renovation projects are designed by independent architectural/engineering firms and awarded on the basis of outside contractor bids. The Tennessee State Building Commission must also approve major projects. Specific projects are classified as major when the cost is equal to or greater than $100,000; likewise, small renovations made in one building within any six-month time frame are considered a major project if the cost amounts to $100,000 or greater. THEC annually evaluates the need for major renovations and construction based on an analysis of available space compared to established standards. When the Tennessee State Building Commission approves capital improvements, an independent design firm works with the University's Capital Projects and Planning staff and users of the space to ensure the needs of the users are met. Capital Projects approved since 2015 are the Laboratory Science Commons and Stonecipher Lecture Hall Complex, the Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center, the Roaden University Center Addition, the Engineering Building, the Innovation Center Residence Hall, and the Tennessee Poultry Research Center. Current or recent facilities improvements on campus include the renovation of Bruner Hall, the Roaden University Center West Patio Expansion, the Cooper-Dunn Residence Hall renovation, multiple roof replacements, a campus-wide steam system pressure increase, and the Dixie Avenue Steam Line Replacement.

In addition to the major renovation projects undertaken by the University, it is common for departments and colleges to remodel existing facilities to better meet student, faculty, and staff needs. For example, the College of Business utilized university and philanthropic funds totaling approximately $500,000 to renovate classrooms and offices, create a forensics laboratory, and build-out space to house the Bloomberg Laboratory. A list of recent examples of minor projects, by college, is provided as College-Level Renovations Projects [24].

Common Spaces and Dining Facilities

The University's physical infrastructure related to common spaces and dining locations is regularly improved. For instance, the recent Roaden University Center renovation and expansion upgraded the Multipurpose Room flooring and audio/visual system, added square footage to the dining area on the west end of the building, and added the West Patio outdoor seating area.

The University contracts with Chartwells Higher Education to operate all food service locations on campus [25]. As part of its contractual agreement, Chartwells has completed several upgrades including a renovation to the dining hall in the RUC and the addition of Chick-fil-A and Which-Wich Sandwich Shop to the retail mix on campus [26]. Chartwells, in conjunction with the Director of Auxiliary Services at Tennessee Tech, regularly evaluates the on-campus dining options and facilities and forecasts the offerings and facility improvements necessary for an evolving student body. Moreover, in January of 2020, Tennessee Tech engaged Brailsford and Dunlavey, Inc. to assess current and future housing and dining demand in order to develop a comprehensive Housing and Dining Master Plan.

Residential Facilities

The University houses approximately 2,500 residents on campus in the 15 traditional residence halls and the Tech Village apartment complex that it operates and maintains. Tech Village is located on the western side of campus and consists of twenty-eight apartment buildings, a community center, and laundry facilities. All residential units are inspected and maintained on an annual basis. Handicapped accessible units are available in two residence halls and in several of the apartment buildings in Tech Village. Through the use of resident assistants, hall directors (Tennessee Tech Residential Life employees who live in the halls), and on-call Facilities personnel, maintenance is available 24 hours a day.

The University is nearing completion of a multiyear renovation project to upgrade infrastructure in the traditional residence halls. With these improvements, all residential facilities have either been renovated or constructed in the past 10 years except New Hall South (built in 2004) and Crawford Hall.

The student experience in Tennessee Tech campus housing is assessed through a survey of residents, faculty, and staff. Results from 2020 indicate a dramatic increase in survey participation and significant increases in satisfaction in virtually all areas of the Tennessee Tech residential life experience. A total of 1,103 students and 283 faculty and staff responded to the survey, representing approximately 11% of the student population and 20% of the employee population [27].

In January of 2020, Tennessee Tech engaged Brailsford and Dunlvaey, Inc. to develop a comprehensive Housing and Dining Master Plan [28] with the goal of assessing current and future housing and dining demand to empower Tennessee Tech to maximize investments in its housing and dining and develop a long-term strategy to support student enrollment and retention.

Recreational Facilities

The University has several recreational facilities that are available for use by students, faculty, staff, and the extended University community. The Memorial Gym is used for intramurals and

houses two gyms and a pool. The Hooper Eblen Center has one main gymnasium and a walking area. Indoor and outdoor tennis courts are available. The outdoor intramural complex has three softball fields and four football/soccer fields. The intramural sports program also offers a large array of activities to serve the diverse student, faculty, and staff population. The Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center completed in April 2020 is available for all students, staff, alumni, and paying guests, with a wide variety of facilities and programs to promote health and wellness [29]. The design of the new facility fosters an inviting environment for wellness by creating spaces that combine independent and group recreation to meet the needs of all users. Fitness and weight spaces provide state-of-the-art equipment, including a climbing wall. Racquetball courts and gym courts feature spectator and pre-game gathering spaces for drop-in play, scheduled leagues, and intramural events. A Multipurpose Activity Court allows access to indoor sports, while the indoor leisure pool creates more opportunities for social interaction. Lap lanes are provided for exercise and programmed activities, and the whirlpool invites relaxation and socializing.

Information Technology Infrastructure

Tennessee Tech provides many information technology resources and services for faculty, staff, and students. These resources and services are appropriate to the nature and objectives of the University's academic programs and are suitable for courses delivered via a fully face-to-face, a fully online, or a hybrid modality.

Open-access, general purpose computer labs, as well as discipline-specific labs, are available on campus, with more than 1,000 systems for student use. These labs are equipped, as appropriate, with specialty software to meet the computing needs of various academic disciplines [30]. The Learning Commons in the Volpe Library provides approximately 100 desktop computers, 180 laptops (which are available for checkout), group study rooms, cables, and chargers. Open-access labs are available for extended hours via campus ID, including a variety of times during semester breaks, with three labs available 24 hours per day. The TechAnywhere virtual desktop service provides 24-hour access to virtual desktops and associated applications from both on and off campus. Both monochrome and color printing is available in labs, and printing is secured and managed with Pharos Uniprint via campus ID.

Network access is also extensive, with over 25,000 wired network ports and approximately 2,200 wireless access points provided across campus. This network is driven by a high-speed fiber optic backbone network with redundant connections between buildings. The campus Internet connectivity was tripled in 2020 to a full 10 Gbps connection provisioned through protected diverse paths to protect against outages. The campus is currently installing a new research network supporting 100 Gbps connections. A dedicated 10 Gbps connection to other research and education networks via Internet2 will soon be available. Secure Virtual Private Network (VPN) access to Tennessee Tech campus resources is available for all campus users.

ITS' *Impulse* high-performance computing (HPC) facility has been available to all campus researchers and classes since its launch in September 2017. It contains 40 traditional compute nodes, four GPU-enabled nodes, management and login nodes, a 175 TB file server, and an internal 56 Gbps Infiniband network, for a total of 1232 CPU cores, 8 GPU devices, and 6.3 TB of RAM. The facility has seen over 70% utilization since launch, serving 39 PI groups and five academic departments across four colleges, with a total of 273 students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Additionally, ITS staff facilitate connecting campus users to leadership-class HPC facilities funded through NSF's Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE) program, enabling scales of research far beyond local capabilities.

A new strategic plan for Information Technology Services (ITS) is being developed to ensure that current and future IT needs of the University are met.

Facilities Staffing and Maintenance

Support for the physical resources of Tennessee Tech is provided by various divisions within the Office of Facilities and Business Services. Operations and Maintenance has overall responsibility for maintenance and system repairs in University buildings and for grounds maintenance. Energy, Utilities, and Mechanical Systems oversees the heat plant and is responsible for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Telecommunications provides telephone, voicemail, and video services to the student residential halls and to faculty and staff offices. Tennessee Tech contracts with Service Solutions Corporation (SSC) for custodial services at the main Cookeville campus [31], and with the host institutions at its off-campus sites such as Pellissippi State Community College [32].

Maintenance

The University compiles and continually updates a list of current and future projects with detailed information about status, costs, scope and features, contractor/designer, etc. This list reflects the prioritization of projects as needed upgrades and repairs are identified and helps determine the order in which projects should be undertaken as needs arise or as capital projects and maintenance funds become available. Tennessee Higher Education Commission guidelines require the University to allocate sufficient funding for maintenance and operations of plant and to report maintenance expenditures each budget cycle [33].

Risk Management of Physical Assets

Risk management of physical assets is provided through policies and procedures that control access to campus facilities, building and construction safety, environmental safety, loss and theft reporting, and insurance for physical assets.

Tennessee Tech Policy 561 Key Control regulates the issuance, inventory, and recovery of keys for all campus facilities [34]. Supervisory authorization is required for the issuance of any key to an employee. Key inventory is maintained centrally through the Tennessee Tech Facilities Office, and all issuance and return of keys is through that office. Keys are returned directly to facilities upon retirement, termination of employment, change of department, or when access to a particular facility is no longer needed or has been revoked. Checkout and security of the keys is a direct responsibility of the employee.

Reporting of property loss is governed by Tennessee Tech Policy 514 Reporting and Resolution of Institutional Losses [35]. This policy requires the reporting of property loss using a "Notification of Loss Report," along with a quarterly report of total property loss, "Quarterly Report Property Loss at Institution."

Insurance of physical assets. The State of Tennessee is self-insured through a Risk Management Fund and does not carry or maintain commercial, general liability insurance or medical, professional, or hospital liability insurance [36]. The Risk Management Fund pays for building and content losses for all state entities between $25,000 and $7.5 million. Additional

coverage for losses between $7.5 million and $750 million is provided by contract with excess insurance policies, which are also paid out of the Risk Management Fund. All claims against the State of Tennessee, including the University or its employees, are heard and determined by the Tennessee Claims Commission in the manner prescribed by law. Damages recoverable against the University are expressly limited to claims paid by the Claims Commission pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 9-8-301 et seq.

Off-Campus Sites

A substantial portion of required coursework for some Tennessee Tech degrees is offered at several off-campus sites:

- Upper-division courses leading to the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education
- Upper-division courses leading to the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies

The B.S. is a 2+2 program offered by the Tennessee Tech College of Education in partnership with several community colleges in the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system and includes some online coursework. Likewise, the Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies is comprised of general education courses offered by the host community college and a mix of classroom and online instruction.

In support of these programs, Tennessee Tech offers courses at five TBR community colleges or their branch campuses:

Location	Facilities
• Chattanooga State Community College	1 classroom
• Columbia State Community College	1 classroom; 1 faculty office
• Motlow State Community College	1 classroom; 1 faculty office
• Pellissippi State Community College	2 classrooms; 3 faculty offices
• Roane State Community College:	
○ Anderson County (Oak Ridge)	2 classrooms; 2 faculty offices
○ Roane County (Harriman)	1 classroom; 1 faculty office
○ Scott County	1 classroom; 1 faculty office

Tennessee Tech full-time and/or part-time faculty deliver instruction at each of these sites. The environment is equivalent to classroom space on campus and services (ITS, furniture, custodial, etc.) are dictated contractually at each site [37] [38]. These programs are eligible for the use of funds generated by the Technology Access Fee paid each semester by all Tennessee Tech students.

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University acquires, constructs, operates, and maintains physical resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. Therefore, the University is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 13.7.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Campus Map
[02] Building Areas
[03] Campus Master Plan
[04] Campus Master Plan 2018 Amendment
[05] ET Criterion 7 Facilities
[06] ChE Criterion 7 Facilities
[07] EE Criterion 7 Facilities
[08] CAEP Physical Resources Info
[09] CCNE Physical Resources
[10] 2018 Student Survey
[11] Collections Summary
[12] Library Study Rooms
[13] Library Gate Count
[14] Circulation
[15] 2019 Seating Study Data
[16] Fall 2020 Faculty Pulse Survey
[17] Parking Survey results
[18] Tennessee Tech Draft Classroom and Lab Analysis with Table
[19] Tennessee Tech Policy 170 - Campus Space Utilization and Allocation
[20] Campus Space Utilization and Allocation Committee
[21] Space Request Form Fillable
[22] EMS Classroom Utilization
[23] Current Project List 2020
[24] College Level Renovations
[25] Chartwells Contract
[26] Tech Dining Locations
[27] Residential Life Survey Spring-2020
[28] Tennessee Tech Housing and Dining Master Plan Briefing Document - September 2020
[29] Recreation
[30] Software List for Physical and Virtual Labs
[31] SSC Agreement
[32] PSCC Tennessee Tech Transient Use Agreement Rev 9-1-20 Executed
[33] Basic Maintenance and Expenditure Calculation FY2020-2021
[34] Tennessee Tech Policy 561 - Key Control
[35] Tennessee Policy 514 - Reporting and Resolution of Institutional Losses
[36] Certificate of Self Insurance 2019
[37] PSCC and Tennessee Tech Lease Agreement
[38] RSCC and Tennessee Tech with Addendum 2021

R - 13.8
Institutional Environment

The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University considers a healthy, safe, and secure environment for its constituents to be an absolute priority and critical to the fulfillment of its mission. The University has clear and effective safety measures, including an accredited police department and multimodal emergency information dissemination systems. Through these processes and practices, the University complies with Standard 13.8.

Responsibility for Health, Safety, and Security at Tennessee Tech

Tennessee Tech is committed to the priority of protecting the health and safety of all students, staff, faculty, and visitors and providing a secure environment at all university facilities and sites where it offers programs, taking the necessary and reasonable steps to ensure this. Multiple offices assume and share responsibilities for health, safety, and security. Tennessee Tech maintains a full-service law enforcement agency [1], Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department [2], and emergency management operations. The University's programs and processes demonstrate its proactive and effective approach to providing a healthy, safe, and secure environment and services by developing emergency operations plans; initiating emergency preparedness, guidance, and planning [3]; and appropriately disseminating emergency and safety information to all members of the University community.

Crisis Communications Plan

Tennessee Tech maintains a crisis communications plan [4] administered by the Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) [5]. The plan utilizes multiple streams to communicate information effectively to the campus community during crises. No single form of communication can reach the entire campus population. Therefore, the OCM disseminates information to the community via the Tennessee Tech home page, SMS/text messaging, University email, social media, and University emergency blog. *TTUAlert* [6] is the new text messaging notification system designed to notify students, faculty, and staff about University emergencies. Students are automatically signed up to receive SMS/text and email about campus emergencies, inclement weather notices, crime alerts, and other critical information. The alert is sent straight to the mobile via the new text messaging service. Information Technology Services (ITS) ran a test alert on May 29, 2020.

The Tennessee Tech Crisis Communications Plan has been tested during real-world emergency notifications, scenario training, and periodic functionality testing. The plan is reviewed annually and updated appropriately to ensure efficient and effective emergency information delivery to the Tennessee Tech community. The University updated its crisis communications system recently to decrease the automatic response time in tornado notifications. A tornado warning in March 2020 was not notified to campus on time due to a power malfunction. To prevent such power malfunctions, now, there are multiple computer workstations located in Clement Hall. The

University has addressed this issue by adding redundant emergency notifications systems around campus.

Ensuring Campus Security and Safety: Tennessee Tech Police Department

At Tennessee Tech, the safety and security of students, faculty, employees, and visitors is a top priority. For this reason, the University is committed to providing quality professional law enforcement and public safety services to the campus community through the Tennessee Tech Police Department (PD) [1].

The Tennessee Tech PD contains 13 commissioned law enforcement officers and four civilian employees and reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs [7]. University officers have the same enforcement authority as municipal law enforcement officers. They carry firearms and can use necessary force, including lethal force, to protect themselves and others from death or serious bodily injury. Officers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

All Tennessee Tech PD law enforcement officers are certified first-responders. University officers graduate from a fully accredited law enforcement academy and meet the same standards, including initial and annual training, as required for all law enforcement in the State of Tennessee. University PD officers are required by the Tennessee Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) Commission to complete a minimum of 40 hours of training each year with requirements for areas dealing with de-escalation techniques, mental health awareness, sexual assault investigation, emergency vehicle operations, and firearms training. In addition, the department requires training for all the University police personnel in responding to critical incidents and Rave mobile safety emergency notification systems *(RAVE)* emergency notification systems for all University police personnel.

The Tennessee Tech PD provides a full range of services, such as investigating all crimes committed in its jurisdiction, making arrests, providing crime prevention/community services programs, enforcing traffic laws, and maintaining crowd control for campus special events.

The Tennessee Tech PD maintains a close working relationship with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and has agreements with these agencies to implement and coordinate campus law enforcement operations. The police department is in direct communication with Putnam County Emergency Services (911) to facilitate rapid response to an emergency. Because campus safety is a shared responsibility, the University encourages everyone to promptly and accurately report crimes, suspicious activity, or emergencies to the Tennessee Tech PD so that officers and other appropriate personnel can respond as quickly as possible. The compliance officer reviews all University police reports monthly.

In addition to the Tennessee Tech PD, one may also report crimes and other emergencies to Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) [8]. These individuals are faculty and staff with significant responsibility for student and campus activities. To further enhance safety and security, the University maintains approximately 30 "blue light posts" throughout campus. These posts contain emergency phones, which provide direct communication to the Tennessee Tech PD.

The Annual Campus Safety and Fire Report contains information regarding campus security and personal safety including topics such as crime prevention, fire safety, University police law enforcement authority, crime reporting policies, disciplinary procedures, and other matters of importance related to security and safety on campus. The most recent report is available at the University police website [9].

Compliance with Regulations of Title IX, Title VII, and Clery Act

Tennessee Tech prohibits discrimination in employment; educational programs; and activities based on race, color, religion, creed, ethnic or national origin, sex, disability, age (40 and over), status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other category protected under Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and other federal and state laws (Tennessee Tech Policies 141 [10], 142 [11], and 144 [12]). The Office of Compliance is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act [13], including the Violence Against Women Act amendments and all Uniform Crime Reporting [8]. Additional information, including all crime statistics, are available at the Tennessee Tech PD website [14]. The University does not have any pending investigations by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) for possible violations alleging sexual violence since the last Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) comprehensive review.

Ensuring Health and Safety at Tennessee Tech

Prioritizing the health of faculty, staff, and students remains a goal at Tennessee Tech. The University offers a variety of medical assistance and treatments through Health Services and addresses emotional health through its Counseling Center, where faculty, staff, and students receive a variety of mental health services, such as one-on-one counseling, suicide prevention, help for sexual and domestic assault, and addiction therapy. The State of Tennessee also provides an Employee Assistance Program which offers limited mental health benefits in addition to insurance-covered benefits. More information about other health and wellness options, such as recreation, healthy dining, and parks, can be found on the Health and Wellness website [15].

The Accessible Education Center [16] facilitates accommodation requests students need for specific courses, and Human Resources addresses Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requests for faculty and staff. The goal of all of these services is addressing the needs of faculty, staff, and students so that all have opportunities to receive the health and service resources that they need for a healthy and supportive campus environment.

Tennessee Tech has several policies and procedures to ensure safety on campus. This information is posted on the Tennessee Tech PD and Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) websites. Tennessee Tech Policy No. 401 [17] is the EHS policy. It is reviewed every three years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Director of EHS in consultation with the Vice President for Planning and Finance with recommendations for revision presented to the Administrative Council and the University Assembly. Tennessee Tech’s policy is to formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), plans, and other guidance documents required to achieve and maintain compliance with EHS regulatory requirements. Collectively, these documents are known as the Tennessee Tech Safety Manual [3]. They are subject to the President's approval. New SOPs, or revisions to existing SOPs, are developed as necessary and placed on a review schedule. The Office of EHS consults affected departments in response to anticipated significant document changes. Requests for the development or review of specific documents are submitted to the University Safety and Environmental Committee Chair and the

Director or Coordinator of EHS. These requests are evaluated, and appropriate action is taken. EHS provides documents to regulatory agencies upon request. The Director of EHS or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret this policy.

Tennessee Tech has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. The IRB is charged with protecting the rights and welfare of people involved in research. Tennessee Tech Policy 730 establishes the process and procedures for Tennessee Tech's IRB and appropriate review for research involving human subjects [18].

Tennessee Tech Policy 740 The Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Experimentation ensures the humane care and use of animals in research, testing, and training. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) provides for and protects the welfare of laboratory animals used for research and pedagogy. It is charged with the review of research protocols, and conducts evaluations of Tennessee Tech's animal care and use [19].

Safety Training and Guidance for Personnel and Student Body

Tennessee Tech is committed to the safety of all personnel and students on its campus. To ensure safety, Tennessee Tech provides numerous training manuals and safety plans that give guidelines on best practices that maintain safety. All manuals and plans are publicly available under the EHS Office's web page [20] for personnel and students to access as needed. In addition to the manuals, all personnel with potentially hazardous duties must complete up-to-date or annual training that is documented and recorded for a minimum of three years.

Safety Precautions in Buildings, Facilities, and on Campus

Tennessee Tech ensures the safety of its facilities, classrooms, residence halls, and labs in a variety of ways. Safety precautions for buildings and classrooms include safety postings, and buildings are equipped with alarms, public address systems, and fire extinguishers. Door anchors, which barricade the door more effectively than the regular locking mechanism, are available in all classrooms, ready to be deployed in the event of an active shooter. All buildings are inspected monthly for fire extinguisher compliance and traffic flow for evacuation plans, which are posted in each building. The emergency alert systems are inspected at least annually.

There is an Active Shooter Response Plan that uses the FBI's Run, Hide, or Fight techniques with guidance on when those responses are appropriate. The Tennessee Tech PD conducts training on the Active Shooter Response for the units on campus [21].

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are located in many buildings [22]. A safety coordinator, who is the chief source of information on health and safety to the occupants, is assigned to every building [23]. The coordinator can be contacted to report health, safety, and environmental concerns and requesting audits, inspections, and consultations [24].

In residence halls and Tech Village apartments, the buildings are equipped with cameras and emergency phones. The doors to the halls are locked, and only those who live in the hall can get in with their student ID. All student campus residence locations are patrolled by University police [1]. There are defibrillators in MS Cooper and Ellington residence halls and Tech Village. First aid kits are available in Hall Director/RA offices. There are full-time staff and resident

assistants throughout the areas, and the staff is on call at all times. Two fire drills a semester per building and one tornado drill a semester per building are conducted [25].

Lab safety is ensured by following standard operating procedures and guidance detailed in manuals and the hygiene and hazard plans, conducting lab safety training, and posting relevant hazard signage on the lab doors [20] [26]. EHS classes are required for all Tennessee Tech paid personnel working in a lab or shop setting. Numerous regulations require that certain activities receive annual training. Tennessee Tech utilizes various training resources including an online program [27].

There is a systematic process for chemical waste removal from the labs. Each building that generates the chemical waste is required to have a satellite collection area. Labs complete a waste data sheet when they move their waste to these collection areas. Tennessee Tech has a contract with an outside company that removes and disposes of the chemical waste from the satellite collection areas.

Safety phones are strategically placed around campus. They are blue-lit for easy identification, have direct access to a 24-hour emergency line, and automatically locate a caller's location of use [28].

Addressing COVID-19 Health and Safety Concerns

The Tennessee Tech Pandemic Response Plan provides procedures and guidelines for the University to follow in the event of a disease (virus) [29a]. When COVID-19 struck, the University created several task forces to implement the above plan and craft responses specific to COVID-19. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Tennessee Tech provided information; personal protective equipment; classroom resources; and health and safety information relevant to faculty, staff, and students.

The website titled "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)" [29b] provides essential health and safety information, such as what symptoms to watch for, strategies for minimizing spread, and locations where masks are required or optional. Additionally, this site contains links to the campus COVID-19 Dashboard with recovered, active, and cumulative cases [29c] [29d]; a Return to Tech Campus Plan for Students [29e]; a Return to Tech Campus Plan for Employees [29f]; information on the CARES Act Higher Education Relief Fund [29g]; and links to national and campus resources, which include IT Helpdesk resources and campus signage resources with example signs the campus community can expect to see [29h] [29i] [29j]. This site [29b] also provides contact information for department staff, as well as the Tennessee Department of Health. The changes made on campus due to COVID-19 are updated as necessary [29k].

Review and Testing of Facilities and Grounds for Health and Safety Concerns

Tennessee Tech has several standing committees that review and evaluate the University's facilities and grounds based on the committee's specific focus. They include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Committee, the Building and Grounds Committee, The Commission on the Status of Women, and University Safety and Environmental Committee [30]. Additionally, Tennessee Tech's EHS Office coordinates the routine inspection of several life safety systems across campus, including but not limited to, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, AEDs, and fire suppression systems. Findings are reported, prioritized, and addressed by the respective committees.

Emergency Management

The Office of EHS is tasked with creating a culture of emergency preparedness across the University. EHS is responsible for coordinating a comprehensive, all-hazards approach through all emergency cycles, including prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. The Higher Education Opportunity Act, which includes 20 USC § 1092 (f)(1)(J), requires the development and maintenance of an emergency management program and a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for the University [31].

The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is the administrative document governing the entire campus [4] [32]. Although it is based on a worst-case scenario and provides for the University's critical functions and roles during disaster response, its general procedures for managing information, activities, and operations can be applied as needed during any emergency level. The Emergency Operations Planning Group (EOPG) [32] is primarily responsible for developing, maintaining, and reviewing the EOP and staffing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the direction of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) [32]. The CMT is chaired by the President of the University and is responsible for strategic decisions during emergencies that include campus closings and communication releases.

Campus-wide tornado and siren-testing drills are conducted regularly. In case of emergencies, the procedures given in the evacuation plan are followed [32]. University police, EHS, and Facilities officials have the authority to evacuate buildings. Re-entry is allowed only when the threat/situation is cleared. The University PD has direct radio communication to Cookeville's first responders to provide rapid response in emergencies. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) may be activated by the President at any time. Normally, the decision to activate the EOC will be based on a recommendation by the University PD, the Director of EHS, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President. There are four levels of Emergency Management (EM)/EOC responses based on the incident type and threat levels, ranging from EM monitoring to full activation of EOC [32].

In addition to the University-wide efforts, EHS guides departments and colleges to develop and improve their internal emergency plans (Continuity of Operations Plan) [33] and works with the University's external stakeholders at the local and state level.

Providing a Healthy, Safe, and Secure Environment for All Off-campus Sites

Tennessee Tech provides a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all off-campus sites where the University offers programs. Those sites include the Appalachian Center for Craft (ACC), Chattanooga State, Motlow State, Pellissippi State, and Roane State Community Colleges. Onsite security personnel patrol the buildings and grounds of ACC at two-hour intervals between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. when the campus is open. When the campus is closed, onsite safety personnel do not conduct active patrols but are available in case of emergency situations. This security protocol is followed every day of the year, including holidays. ACC security personnel can respond to emergency situations. However, they are required to contact the University PD after a crime or emergency has occurred. University police will complete an incident report. The Dekalb County (where the ACC is located) Sheriff’s Office also conducts daily patrols of the campus and provides incident reports, responses, etc., regarding the ACC. The ACC campus contains nine first aid kits, four bleed control kits, and two automated external defibrillators. Onsite personnel receive annual first aid and fire safety training.

Regarding community colleges, the safety and health of Tennessee Tech students and employees are addressed in the agreements Tennessee Tech has with these institutions [34] [35]. Tennessee Tech students and employees are expected to abide by applicable policies and procedures of these colleges regarding conduct so as to provide for the health, safety, and well-being of all who use the sites. The police departments of the community colleges will be responsible for the safety and security of Tennessee Tech students, staff, and faculty while participating in educational activities on the sites. Tennessee Tech students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to sign up for the college's emergency notification system.

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University maintains a healthy, safe, and secure environment at on-campus and off-campus sites for its constituents. The University has clear and effective safety measures in place, including an accredited police department; an EHS Office; appropriate health and safety resources, regulations, and procedures; and multimodal emergency information dissemination systems. Through these processes and practices, the University demonstrates that it complies with Standard 13.8.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] University Police
[02] Environmental Health and Safety
[03] Environmental Health and Safety Guidance Documents_Safety Manual
[04] Tennessee Tech Emergency Operations Plan 2018
[05] Office of Communications and Marketing
[06] TTUAlert
[07] Student Affairs
[08] Annual Security and Fire Safety Report
[09] Annual Security and Fire Safety Report 2021
[10] Tennessee Tech Policy 141 - Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment
[11] Tennessee Tech Policy 142 - Process for Filing Title VI Complaints
[12] Tennessee Tech Policy 144 - Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures
[13] Admins Safety Campus Website-Clery Act
[14] Campus Crime Statistics
[15] Health and Wellness Website
[16] Accessible Education Center
[17] Tennessee Tech Policy 401 - Environmental Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
[18] Tennessee Tech Policy - Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects_IRB
[19] Animal Subjects in Research
[20] Environmental Health and Safety Office Manuals and Plans
[21] Response to an Active Shooter Situation
[22] Automated External Defibrillator Program
[23] Health and Safety Building Coordinators
[24] Environmental Health and Safety Reporting
[25] Residential Life Safety
[26] Environmental Health and Safety Lab Safety
[27] Environmental Health and Safety Training Matrix
[28] Safety and Security
[29a] Hazard Annex G TTU Pandemic Plan

[29b] Coronavirus Disease 2019
[29c] COVID Dashboard
[29d] COVID Dashboard 2
[29e] Return to Tech Student Book
[29f] Return to Tech Employee Book
[29g] Coronavirus Aid Cares Act
[29h] Expect Flier
[29i] Social Distance Sign
[29j] Elevator Sign
[29k] Safety Measures Post
[30] Committees
[31] Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008
[32] EHS Emergency Operations Plan
[33] Continuity of Operations Plan
[34] RSCC and Tennessee Tech with Addendum 2021
[35] PSCC and Tennessee Tech Lease Agreement

R - 14.1

Publication of Accreditation Status

The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy and (b) ensures all its branch campuses include the name of the institution and make it clear that their accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) represents its accredited status and publishes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) name, address, and telephone number on the University's webpage [1] and in both the Undergraduate Catalog [2] and the Graduate Catalog [3]. Both the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate Catalog are reviewed and updated annually. Procedures on Publication of Accreditation Status. Part (b) of this standard is not applicable to Tennessee Technological University because it does not have any branch campuses.

Tennessee Tech has established internal processes and procedures to ensure the consistent and accurate publication of its accreditation status with SACSCOC. The University uses the following wording when publishing its accreditation status and includes this wording in the TTU Publication Guide and Review web page [4]:

Tennessee Tech University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees. Questions about the accreditation of Tennessee Tech University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org)

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University accurately publishes the SACSCOC name, address, and telephone number in both the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, which are reviewed and updated annually. Therefore, TTU is in compliance with Standard 14.1.

Evidentiary Documents

[1] Accreditation and Memberships Web Page
[2] Undergraduate Catalog
[3] Graduate Catalog
[4] Publication Guide and Review Web Page

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R - 14.3

Comprehensive Institutional Review

The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites.

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs and off-campus instructional sites in the applicable standards within this Fifth Year Interim Review report. Tennessee Tech does not have any branch campus locations. The following table provides a brief synopsis of how Tennessee Tech has addressed the distance learning programs within its Fifth Year Interim Review report and contains links to the full-text narratives for each standard.

Standard #	Topic	Distance Education
6.1	Full-Time Faculty	Tennessee Tech does not employ a separate faculty for its online courses or programs. All faculty teaching courses in online programs have been appropriately vetted and are qualified to teach those areas.
6.2.b	Program Faculty	Tech does not employ a separate faculty for its online programs. The faculty who are responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the academic programs offered via online and distance education modalities are the same faculty who ensure the quality and integrity of face-to-face academic programs.
6.2.c	Program Coordination	Tennessee Tech assigns responsibility for program coordination and curriculum development and review, regardless of delivery mode

		or instructional site, to qualified faculty members for each of its educational programs.
8.1	Student Achievement	Tennessee Tech identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to its mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered with no differentiation by student location or learning modality of students.
8.2.a	Student Outcomes: Educational Programs	All education programs at Tennessee Tech have identified student learning outcomes (SLOs), assess the extent to which students achieve those outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results. The assessment process is the same for all modes of instruction by which a program is offered via a fully face-to-face, a fully online, or a hybrid modality.
9.1	Program Content	Off-site and distance education programs undergo the same review process as all other program content. These programs also support Tennessee Tech's mission emphasizing a commitment to enriching the lives of people and communities in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee.
9.2	Program Length	The University has developed and maintains degree programs of appropriate length regardless of learning location or modality.

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		The same number of semester credit hours is required for distance education programs and off-site programs. Deans, departmental chairpersons, and University faculty members participate in the off-campus advisory and instructional program to ensure that courses offered are of the same quality as those taught on the main campus.
10.2	Public Information	Tennessee Tech provides information on academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies available to students and the public in various ways, including Tennessee Tech's main website, various unit websites, the online undergraduate and graduate catalogs, sections in the *Faculty Handbook* and *Student Handbook*, course syllabi, and through published policies located in Policy Central. Policy Central is open to students, employees, and the public. This information is available to all students, including students taking online courses and available to dual enrollment students across all delivery locations and modes of instruction.
10.5	Admissions Policies and Practices	Tennessee Tech publishes admission policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent Tennessee Tech’s practices, policies, and accreditation status. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately

		represent the University's practices and policies for all potential students and degree programs, regardless of the method of delivery (e.g., face-to-face, fully online, hybrid).
10.6.a	Distance and Correspondence Education	Tennessee Tech ensures a student who enrolls in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by using the procedures and practices described in the related Tennessee Tech policies. The Tennessee Tech Distance Education Policy [1] covers the procedures and practices pertaining to distance education courses and programs originating from Tech.
10.6.b	Distance and Correspondence Education	Tennessee Tech has written procedures for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs. Tennessee Tech adheres to regulations set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as ensuring privacy measures through the Tennessee Tech Data Security and Handling Policy (Tech DSP). Documentation of training in FERPA and other privacy protection policies, as well as data security reviews, is maintained by Tennessee Tech. All distance and correspondence education courses and programs use the online university learning management system (LMS)

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		Desire to Learn (D2L) for instructional resources, student interaction, and grading. The D2L contract provides for protection of all student records pursuant to FERPA and applicable federal regulations. Tennessee Tech is committed to protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses and programs.
10.6.c	Distance and Correspondence Education	Tennessee Tech distributes notification of fees, conditions of assessment, and refund policies to all students through the Office of the Bursar. Tennessee Tech does not charge an additional fee for verification of student identity for any student, regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled in distance or correspondence education courses.
10.7	Policies for Awarding Credit	Tennessee Tech employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses. These include practices for awarding credit for courses delivered off campus, in alternate modes of delivery, and for credit by prior learning assessment.
12.1	Student Support Services	Campus-based and distance education students have access to all academic and student support services through various electronic means, as well as phone calls, email communication, and sometimes in-person support such as the College of

		Education's 2+2 advisors and Tier II ITS personnel who travel to 2+2 sites to provide support.
12.4	Student Complaints	Information about how students can report grievances and make complaints or appeals is addressed first, followed by a review of the various policies and procedures for which a student might file an appeal or lodge a complaint. These complaints/appeals are categorized as Academic Complaints, Non-Academic Complaints, and General/Miscellaneous Complaints. Tennessee Tech advises students to follow the established procedures for filing complaints/appeals. If a student files a complaint that is covered by another process, the complaint will be governed by that process and will be referred to the appropriate school official for disposition. Policies and procedures for student complaints do not differ for face-to-face and online students. All students, regardless of learning location or modality, are afforded the opportunity to report grievances or complaints using the proper procedures.
13.7	Physical Resources	Tennessee Tech provides many campus-wide resources and services for information technology for faculty, staff, and students. These resources and services are adequate and suitable for delivering quality distance and face-to-face education. The various technology solutions and services

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		managed and/or administered by Tennessee Tech are appropriate to the nature and objectives of the University's academic programs and courses delivered via a fully face-to-face, a fully online, or a hybrid modality.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence provided in the table above, Tennessee Technological University is compliant with this standard. Tennessee Tech applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs and off-campus instructional sites in the applicable standards within this Fifth Year Interim Review report. Tennessee Tech does not have any branch campus locations.

Evidentiary Documents

[01] Tennessee Tech Policy 223- Distance Education

R - 14.4

Representation to Other Agencies

The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation, and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions. (See SACSCOC's policy "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies.")

Judgment

☐ Compliance ☐ Non-Compliance

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University ensures that it accurately describes itself to all U.S. Department of Education (USDoED) recognized institutional accrediting agencies by providing access to institutional documents (catalogs and handbooks) and web pages that are regularly reviewed and updated. Information related to Tennessee Tech's mission/purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents in all accreditation reports for USDoED recognized accreditation agencies, and the evidentiary documents provided to those agencies and the public (including catalogs and handbooks), help to ensure an accurate representation of the institution. Tennessee Tech keeps each USDoED recognized accrediting agency with which it is affiliated, including SACSCOC, apprised of any change in its accreditation status. Academic programs at Tennessee Tech hold accreditation from 11 specialized professional accrediting agencies including four recognized by the USDoED. Each of these programs is fully accredited by the agency, and there are no negative actions for any program. Tennessee Tech adheres to the SACSCOC policy Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies.

Specialized Professional Accrediting Agencies

Table 1 includes programs, degree level, accreditation letter date, accrediting agencies (those recognized by the U.S. Department of Education are marked with an *), results, and the date of next accreditation [1] [2]. There are no negative actions for any program. The attached Description Statements include portions of the most recent accreditation reports from the respective agencies which speak to the representation of Tennessee Tech in identical terms specific to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents [3]. The information provided to each accrediting agency is largely mediated by the forms and formats prescribed by the accrediting agency, hence not every accrediting agency requires the standard information related to the University overall.

Agency Notification of Change in Status

The university accreditation liaison is responsible for collecting accreditation information from the colleges regularly and submitting this information to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). Adverse changes in accreditation status should be reported to each USDoED-recognized accrediting agency, including SACSCOC. To date, there have been no adverse changes to report on the accreditation status of the university or any of its programs.

Conclusion

Tennessee Technological University represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status. Therefore, Tennessee Tech is in compliance with Standard 14.4.

Evidentiary Documents

[1] Table 1_Accrediting Agencies and Accreditation Status
[2] Programs Accredited by USDE-Recognized Accrediting Organizations
[3] College Description Statements

Part IV: Fifth-Year Follow Up Report

(Not applicable to Tennessee Technological University)

Part V: The Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Executive Summary

EDGE: Enhanced Discovery through Guided Exploration

Quality Enhancement Plan - Tennessee Tech University – (From original QEP Proposal)

Tennessee Tech University has developed *EDGE: Enhanced Discovery through Guided Exploration* as its five-year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The overarching goal of *EDGE* is to enhance student learning by infusing creative inquiry throughout the undergraduate experience. We propose an integrated curricular and co-curricular plan whereby our students will develop the skills to formulate creative inquiry questions or problems, decide on proper approaches to address them, explore relevant evidence, and produce and present their findings or creations. We anticipate that active engagement in creative inquiry will improve our students' creative and critical-thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills.

The four goals of the plan are to (1) establish an undergraduate curriculum that encourages student success in creative inquiry, (2) expand student co-curricular opportunities for undergraduate creative inquiry, (3) support and acknowledge faculty and students who engage in creative inquiry, and (4) develop the infrastructure to support undergraduate creative inquiry.

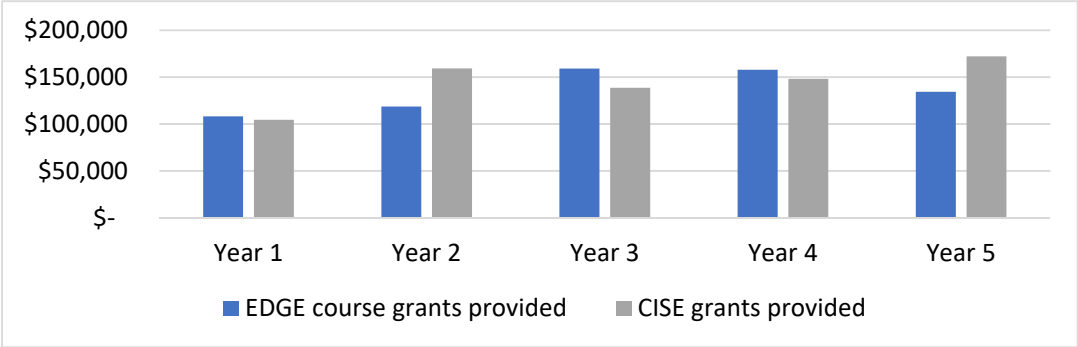
In the process of selecting the topic and developing *EDGE*, the QEP Committee was motivated to (1) craft a representative process that valued input from a wide range of constituents, including faculty, students, staff, employers, and alumni; (2) promote the University's mission and institutional priorities; (3) identify opportunities for improved student learning via a thorough review of institutional needs; (4) complement or strengthen existing programs at Tennessee Tech; (5) consider best practices at other institutions; and (6) provide our graduates with the skills that employers and society value. *EDGE* embodies these objectives. Broad campus support for the plan is evident, as demonstrated by the participation of 21 academic departments from six schools or colleges in our pilot year.

Detailed student learning outcomes (SLOs) that are tied directly to institutional needs have been crafted to directly address the principal elements of creative inquiry while simultaneously including all disciplines. Tennessee Tech also anticipates improvement in program outcomes, including increasing curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to engage in creative inquiry, and increasing faculty support of these activities. SLOs and program outcomes will be assessed with a mix of direct and indirect assessments. Direct measures include the Information Literacy Test (ILT), the Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT), the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), and the *EDGE* Rubric, which will be used by faculty for assessing student artifacts. A collection of surveys will be used as indirect measures.

Tennessee Tech will provide the financial, physical, and human resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete *EDGE*. The University is committing approximately $4.1 million in total resources, including pilot-year investments, over the six-year implementation of the QEP. The organizational structure of *EDGE* has been created in order to make reporting responsibilities and oversight clear. Additionally, key *EDGE* personnel are in place.

As the project progresses, Tennessee Tech's new Office of Creative Inquiry will administer and carefully analyze all budget-related expenses. The project will proceed in accordance with a detailed timetable that establishes the implementation of various program elements, budgetary expenditures, and assessment plans over the course of a multi-year time frame. Tennessee Tech is a public research university with more than 10,000 students located in Cookeville, Tennessee. Our 2016-2021 QEP, *EDGE,* has been designed to enhance student learning by infusing creative inquiry (CI) throughout the undergraduate experience. We have implemented an integrated curricular and co-curricular plan which has enabled our students to develop the skills to formulate CI questions, decide on proper approaches to address them, explore relevant evidence, and produce and present their findings or creations. Over the past five years, Tech has invested over $2.2 million in all aspects of *EDGE*, including $780,000 in 170 *EDGE* course grants (Fig. 1) in all eight of our Colleges or Schools for faculty to redesign and enrich their courses with CI projects, to the benefit of an estimated 14,000 undergraduates. Tech has also invested over $800,000 for 192 Creative Inquiry Summer Experience (CISE) grants for undergraduates in all eight Colleges or Schools to participate in summertime faculty-mentored individual research and creative activity projects. *EDGE* has also provided $42,000 for 37 faculty development opportunities (prior to COVID travel restrictions); given 652 students from all eight Colleges or Schools the opportunity to present their work at Tech's annual Research and Creative Inquiry Day; and has given 35 students the opportunity to publish their work in Tech's *Journal of Creative Inquiry* (JCI).

Fig. 1. Support of *EDGE* course grants and CISE grants by year.



SECTION 1: Initial Goals and Intended Outcomes

Overarching goal: To promote CI throughout an undergraduate student's four-year experience at Tennessee Tech, we planned on expanding existing programs and beginning several new ones. The QEP has four specific program goals:

Goal 1: Establish an undergraduate curriculum that encourages student success in CI.
Goal 2: Expand student co-curricular opportunities for undergraduate CI.
Goal 3: Support and acknowledge faculty and students who engage in CI.
Goal 4: Develop the infrastructure to support undergraduate CI.

We established the following program outcomes aligned with Goals 1 through 4:

- Undergraduate programs offer opportunities for CI.
- Faculty support undergraduate students in CI activities.
- Students participate in CI activities.
- Students have opportunities to communicate/disseminate the results of their CI activities.
- Students who have participated in CI activities are prepared for their career goals and advanced study.

A set of specific skills underlying the process of CI and expressed as our student learning outcomes (SLOs) is detailed below in Section 3, Goal 1.

SECTION 2: A Discussion of Changes Made to the QEP and the Reasons for Making Those Changes

In executing the QEP, the Committee found that it went mostly as planned, but with a few changes. Originally, students in the first-year experience (FYE) courses, which are one credit-hour courses taken by students most often in their first semester (e.g., UNIV 1020 First-Year Connections, HON 1010 Introduction to Honors, etc.), were to utilize information literacy modules and assess their impact with the Information Literacy Test (ILT) developed by James Madison University. The modules, based on the University of Wyoming's *Tutorial for Information Power* (TIP), were customized by Tech librarians for Tech's Eagle Search library system. This strategy was piloted with two sections of HON 1010 in Fall 2015 and Fall 2016, with two other FYE course sections serving as control groups. Due to poor correlation of test performance with module usage, however, the ILT was discontinued after Fall 2016 and replaced with a quiz designed by Tech librarians.

Also, in Year 1 (January 2017), the University Curriculum Committee strengthened the QEP by adding the requirement for all First-Year Connections courses to include "a creative inquiry project/activity which students should share," thus integrating the QEP topic into these classes. Subsequently, the QEP Committee amended its plan, making the information literacy modules a required part of these classes and later adding the use of the modules as a requirement of *EDGE* grant courses. Student knowledge of the information literacy modules was assessed with a quiz developed by Tech librarians.

In Year 5, due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University, the QEP budget was reduced from $577,000 to $470,000, with reductions made in areas such as professional development which were curtailed due to travel restrictions. Nonetheless, all worthy *EDGE* course grant proposals and CISE grant proposals were fully funded for the project's final year.

SECTION 3: QEP Impact on Student Learning and the Environment Supporting Student Learning

Goal 1: Develop an undergraduate curriculum that encourages student success in creative inquiry

"*Taking the Research Methods courses with Dr. Carroll my freshman year was very beneficial to developing skills in research and problem solving. The creative inquiry process that I learned in that course sequence has helped me with problem solving in my major courses and this summer as I am doing research with the CISE grant…..Being exposed to creative inquiry so early on has been extremely helpful because I have been able to apply it to all my classes in college and it has helped me to perform highly in all my classes.*" – *EDGE* course student

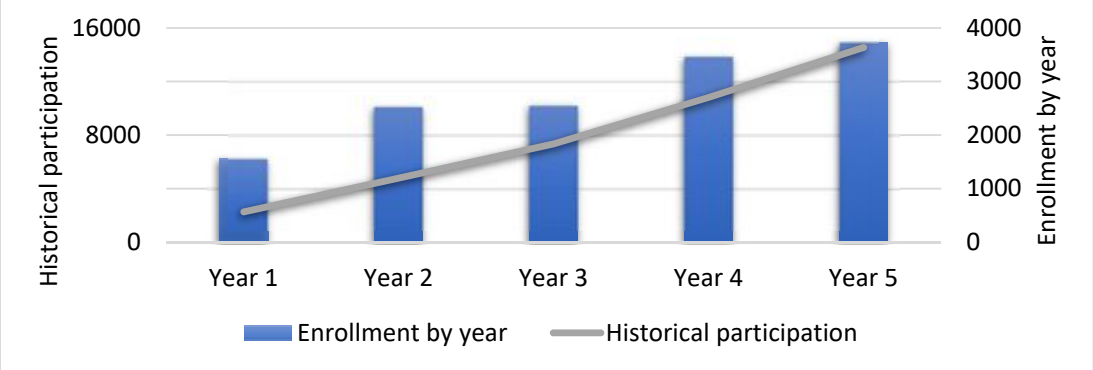
"*Incorporating creative inquiry into my class has helped my students discover ways to take their learning outside the classroom, to investigate the real-world issues that underlie their studies, and to feel comfortable authoritatively joining a larger conversation amongst scholars and experts*." – *EDGE* course instructor

The *EDGE* program has two principal components: (1) competitive *EDGE* course/curriculum grants open to all instructors for redesigning their courses to include CI projects and (2) CISE grants for students to engage in intensive, individual, co-curricular projects under the mentorship of a faculty member. The final distribution of *EDGE* course grants awarded at the various course levels (and the percent for each) was: 1000-level (8%), 2000-level (11%), 3000-level (30%), and 4000-level (51%). The *EDGE* grant program will be addressed further in this section, and the co-curricular CISE grant program will be addressed in the next section.

To make systemic change throughout the University with the QEP, *EDGE* course/curriculum grant recipients must agree to "permanently" incorporate CI components into their courses. The RFP for *EDGE* grants notes that, once a course is supplemented with a CI grant and redesigned to include CI activities, it is expected that those activities would remain part of the course in semesters following the grant period, with adjustments made by the instructor based on their experience.

Department chairs complete a form to formally agree to this condition. The plan also includes a sustainability grant program so that *EDGE* courses that require extra funds may continue after the initial funding period. Fig. 2 shows the number of students enrolled each year in all *EDGE* courses as well as the total number of students enrolled cumulatively since the beginning of *EDGE*. As shown, *EDGE* has been very successful with an estimated 14,000 students participating in all course levels.

Fig. 2. Student enrollment in *EDGE* Creative Inquiry courses.



In Year 5, a total of 197 *EDGE* courses were offered fall and spring. In addition to these certified *EDGE* courses, many faculty have made a more far-reaching impact by using CI pedagogy in their other courses, as noted by a professor of English:

"*Since I began using Creative Inquiry strategies, I have incorporated student questions into the content delivery in all my classes. In upper division classes, I use this as the driver of student learning; in General Education classes, I use student questions to fill in the holes and to see if students can say back to me what they've learned in a penalty-free space, using such opportunities to deepen their knowledge. Put simply, Creative Inquiry is how I teach now.*"

As part of the grant agreement, instructors assess each of their students' work and report their results for two successive offerings of the course. One-half of the faculty stipend is held until the first report is submitted. Faculty are also required to reflect on the course outcome and provide possible changes for the next offering. These reports are reviewed by the QEP Director.

Faculty use the quiz designed by Tech librarians for SLO 1 (Students will effectively use digital information search tools) and report these results based on a four-category system of competence ranging from Novice (1), Emerging (2), Competent (3), to Advanced (4). Faculty assess SLOs 2 through 5 using the "*EDGE*/CISE rubric," developed from the Association of American College and University's VALUE rubrics, George Mason University's Students as Scholars QEP rubric, and Florida Atlantic University's Distinction Through Discovery QEP rubric. The rubric uses the same four-category system of competence and details SLOs 2 through 5 according to the following:

2. Students will formulate a CI question or problem, with sub-elements of

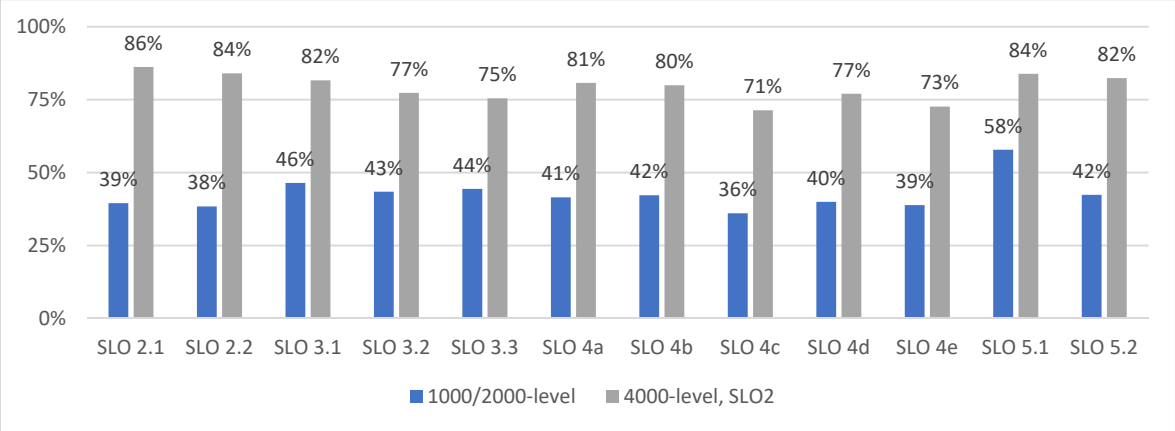
    2.1. Topic selection

    2.2. Explanation of question/problem

3. Students will explore a CI question or problem, with sub-elements of
3.1. Choosing an appropriate discovery process to address the problem
3.2. Collecting information relevant to the problem
3.3. Assessing collected information in a discipline-appropriate manner
4. Students will create an original scholarly or creative project applying (4.1) critical-thinking skills and/or (4.2) creative thinking skills, with sub-elements of
    4a. Analysis
    4b. Conclusions
    4c. Embraces contradictions
    4d. Originality of thought
    4e. Connecting, synthesizing, transforming
5. Students will communicate their findings/creations/art/inventions in a discipline-appropriate manner, with sub-elements of
    5.1. Clarity and organization
    5.2. Applying appropriate scholarly conventions when reporting or performing

The mean assessment value for SLO 1 for all *EDGE* courses is 3.14, or slightly better than "Competent," which met the QEP internal goal of at least "Competent" on average. With regard to SLOs 2 through 5, Fig. 3 shows the performance of two groups of students: those enrolled in 1000/2000-level *EDGE* courses and those enrolled in 4000-level courses where students selected their own inquiry question (SLO 2). As shown, 70-85% of students in upper-division *EDGE* courses were assessed to perform at the "Competent" or "Advanced" level on each SLO, meeting or exceeding the QEP internal goal of 70%, versus 36-58%, of lower division students. These results show the growth of Tech students' creative-inquiry skills as they matriculate through their curricula. Table 1, discussed below, provides additional evidence of the impact of *EDGE* on freshmen and particularly seniors' creative-inquiry skills.

Fig. 3. Percentage of "Competent" or "Advanced" values on the rubric assessment for SLO: 1000/2000-level courses vs. 4000-level courses with SLO 2 selected for all years of the QEP.



The *EDGE* Student Survey asks students to assess the opportunities provided to them in CI-infused courses, querying students about inquiry activities, learning activities, mental activities, reflective activities, teaching practices, and critical-thinking skills. Questions were inspired by two sources: (1) a similar survey used to assess the efficacy of an inquiry-based learning initiative at Miami University and (2) the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Complete survey results are available elsewhere, but due to page limitations, only one aspect of the survey will be noted here. Table 1 compares the response of students in *EDGE* courses with University-wide results from the administration of the NSSE in Spring 2020. As shown, students in both lower-level and 4000-level *EDGE* courses had a more enriching experience than students University-wide with regard to three of the survey questions that are central to CI (NSSE questions 2d, 2e and 2f). These results show the enhanced quality of this core component of the QEP.

Table 1. *EDGE* student survey for Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 vs. NSSE for Spring 2020.

Survey question[1,2]	***EDGE* 1000- & 2000- level courses[1] vs. NSSE FY[2]**					***EDGE* 4000- level courses[1] vs. NSSE Senior[2]**				
	EDGE survey		NSSE			*EDGE* survey		NSSE		
	mean	n	mean	n	t	mean	n	mean	n	t
2d. Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	2.74	189	2.65	518	1.14** *	2.86	185	2.79	470	0.96*
2f. Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	2.94	189	2.75	502	2.34** *	3.06	185	2.87	452	2.89* **
2g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	2.96	189	2.94	498	0.18	3.28	185	3.13	447	2.24* **

[1]*EDGE* survey: During the current school year, about how often have you participated in the following reflective activities as part of this course?
[2]NSSE: During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?
* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

The Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT) was administered in a sample of *EDGE* courses at the beginning and end of each semester (Table 2). The gain is the difference between the pre- and post- administration. The CAT, an assessment tool developed by Tennessee Tech and adopted by approximately 350 institutions across the country, has been used to assess the critical-thinking skills of Tech students since its creation by University faculty more than 20 years ago. Based on our experience with this instrument, the gains reported for this project meet the internal QEP goals for all years except for Year 5, where they are inconclusive.

Experience has shown that the mode of administration is an important factor with regard to results. Students know that course grades do not depend on the results of the test, so they have to be willing to do their best for reasons other than personal gain, e.g., for the good of the instructor, class, or department. Students tend to put in greater effort when they take the test in a class setting with other students and the instructor present and when they are instructed to remain in their seats for one hour rather than when they take it at their convenience outside of class. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, tests in Year 5 were mostly taken online outside of class, which may explain the inconclusive results for that year.

Table 2. CAT instrument results.

QEP Year	# *EDGE* CAT Classes	Average Gain	Statistical Analysis	Effect Size
Year 1	12	1.76	$t(185) = 5.13^{***}$	0.31
Year 2	11	0.91	$t(168) = 2.64^{**}$	0.18
Year 3	11	1.56	$t(138) = 3.77^{***}$	0.28
Year 4	9	1.60	$t(111) = 3.78^{**}$	0.27
Year 5	7	0.64	$t(128) = 1.43$	0.12

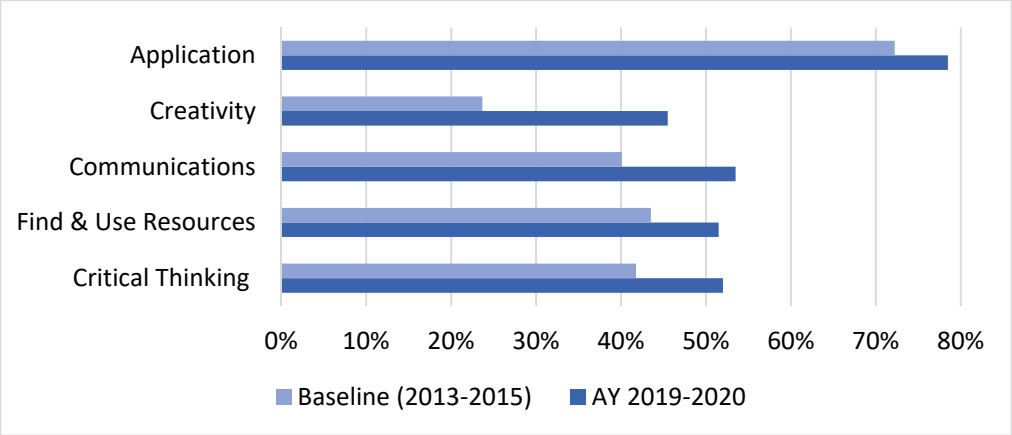
* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Tennessee Tech has used the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction System to evaluate courses for many years. The IDEA System allows faculty to choose the most important course objectives and then asks students to report perceived progress on those objectives. Evidence of a successful campus-wide QEP should be observed in the frequency with which faculty choose QEP-relevant objectives. The IDEA System includes five objectives that are particularly relevant to the QEP:

- Learning to *apply* course material
- Developing creative capacities
- Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
- Learning how to find, evaluate and use resources to explore a topic in depth
- Learning to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments and points of view

Fig. 4 compares the frequency at which faculty chose these objectives before implementing the QEP with the results from AY 2019-2020, i.e., prior to the potential anomalies introduced by the COVID pandemic. It is clear from these results that faculty are choosing QEP-relevant objectives with greater frequency than they were before the QEP began. Of particular note is the emphasis now put on "Developing creative capacities," a central pillar of the QEP topic, Creative Inquiry, which has now been endorsed by 20% more faculty than at the start of our QEP.

Fig. 4. Percentage of faculty choosing QEP-relevant course objectives.



Goal 2: Expand student co-curricular opportunities for undergraduate creative inquiry

"*The CISE program has provided an immersive summer experience of solving real world environmental issues such as the presence of microplastics in the environment, as well as the opportunity to creatively broaden my understanding of engineering through research*." – CISE student, 2021

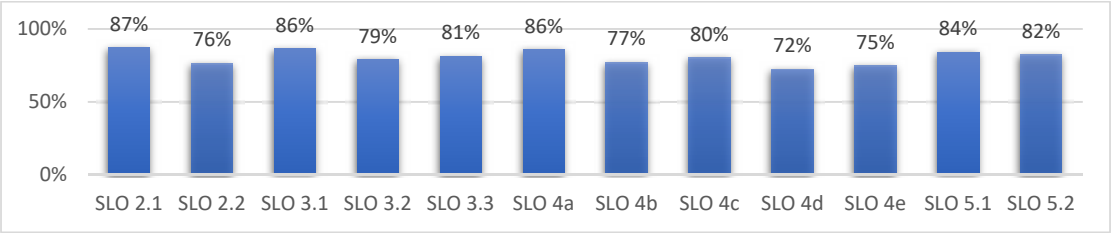
"CISE provides an excellent opportunity for undergraduate students to get involved in creative and scientific learning beyond the classroom-based curriculum. Students are able to explore cutting-edge research, develop communication skills, and get an early experience of what graduate research may look like. Most of my CISE students have pursued a master's or doctoral degree after completing their undergraduate program." – CISE faculty mentor, 2021

The second major part of the QEP is the co-curricular CISE grant program. CISE grants are typically funded for $4,000 with $3,500 as a student summer stipend. In the first year of this competitive program, 30 grants were funded, with this number rising to 44 in the final year. Over the past five years, Tech has invested more than $800,000 for 192 *CISE* grants for students from each of its Colleges/Schools. CISE undergraduates normally work 40 hours per week for 10 weeks on their projects, under the mentorship of a faculty member. They are also required to present their research results at the CISE Showcase Event (Fig. 5) at the start of the following fall semester and on Research and Creative Inquiry Day in April, and they are encouraged to present at local, regional, or national conferences.

Fig. 5. CISE showcase event, Aug. 23, 2016.

Student work is assessed using the *EDGE/*CISE rubric. The faculty mentor for the projects assesses SLOs 2, 3, and 4, and the CISE Director assesses SLO 5 at the CISE Showcase Event. SLO 1 is not assessed for these grants. Fig. 6 shows that throughout the past five years, 72-87% of CISE students were assessed to perform at the "Competent" or "Advanced" level on each SLO, meeting or exceeding the internal QEP goal of 70%.

Fig. 6. Percentage of "Competent" or "Advanced" on the rubric assessments by SLO: CISE students.



A survey of CISE faculty shows the importance of this co-curricular program on student success post-graduation: 91% of CISE faculty agree that CISE will be important or very important for *enhancing admission* to graduate school, and 91% agree that CISE will be important or very important for *preparing them* for graduate studies.

EDGE has also expanded two other opportunities for undergraduate students to communicate their CI projects: with presentations at Research and Creative Inquiry Day and with publications in Tech's *JCI*. In Year 1, 123 undergraduates presented their work at Research and Creative Inquiry Day, with this number steadily rising to 141 presentations in Year 5, despite a drop in undergraduate enrollment of more than 400 students during this time period. (Due to COVID-19, Year 4 and Year 5 were virtual events.) In addition, prior to *EDGE*, students majoring in the Humanities had not participated in Research and Creative Inquiry Day due to the exclusive poster format of the event. To expand this opportunity to Humanities students, a paper presentation option was added, starting with Year 2. By adding this option, 19 English majors have now been able to participate in this campus-wide celebration of CI.

The QEP Committee created the JCI as a venue for students to publish high-quality CI works in all fields of study. The mission of the journal is to educate students with the manuscript submission and peer review process, to encourage the dissemination of the products of CI, and to increase undergraduate involvement in CI. Submissions are reviewed for publication by the JCI Committee. The first online issue was published in Spring 2017. Data on the journal is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Data for the *Journal of Creative Inquiry*.

Issue	Articles Submitted	Articles Published	Departments	Colleges
1	16	7	4	4
2	18	14	7*	5*
3	8	6	6	2
4	10	8	2	1

*One article is an interdisciplinary submission from Fine Arts and Nursing.

Goal 3: Support and acknowledge faculty and students who engage in creative inquiry

The QEP has offered various avenues of support to faculty who engage in CI, including in-house workshops, seminars, and confidential one-on-one consultations on topics such as designing curriculum, performing assessments, promoting active learning, designing effective assignments, and finding other methods to enhance CI. The QEP has also provided funding for off-campus faculty development. Central to these efforts has been a close partnership with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE), and then following its reorganization in 2017, the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL). The Office of Creative Inquiry and the CITL (formerly CTLE) both report to the Office of the Provost. Beginning in Spring 2016 and for each year thereafter, the OCI, CTLE/CITL, and *EDGE* Faculty Fellows have joined

to offer Camp QEP, an intensive multi-day summer workshop designed to immerse faculty in the theory and practice of CI and to provide guided opportunities to integrate CI into the design and assessment of designated courses. Altogether, 112 faculty have attended Camp QEP, either in-person or remotely, with some attending multiple times. Survey results show that the Camp QEP workshop has been very well-received and has improved with time (Table 4).

Table 4. Camp QEP survey results.

	% responding "agree" (somewhat or strongly)				
Survey statement	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Camp QEP provided me with new knowledge or understanding.	67%	93%	92%	100%	100%
Camp QEP gave me the tools I needed to integrate CI into my instruction.	67%	100%	92%	100%	100%
Camp QEP gave me the insight I needed to effectively assess my students' work with CI.	50%	80%	92%	85%	94%
I plan to change my teaching practice as a result of what I've learned from Camp QEP.	67%	100%	92%	100%	100%

With respect to external faculty development opportunities, the QEP Committee established the *EDGE* Faculty Development Grant program to support activities that would directly enhance instructors' knowledge of the *EDGE* student learning outcomes and pedagogical practices to improve their students' SLO-related skills. Funds have supported travel to participate in conferences and faculty development workshops; tuition to enroll in enrichment courses; and licenses for educational technology. Awards are generally limited to $1,000. To be eligible, faculty are required to have successfully applied for an *EDGE* course grant. Applicants are also required to describe how they will disseminate their experience with others on campus. Faculty have been grateful for the opportunity to deepen their CI pedagogical knowledge, as exemplified by this statement from a professor of Sociology:

"The most important lesson learned from the conference involved both cautionary tales of how allowing students to pick topics in Social Problems could go awry. These cautionary tales emerged into a brainstorming session of ways to frame the selection of topics in a way to prevent issues and to maintain a disciplinary focus on topic selection. Now that I have applied these and other tips from the conference in my QEP funded class, I can attest to how crucial these tips were for the success of the class."

Altogether, 37 faculty have been supported with grants totaling $42,000. Unfortunately, this program was impacted by travel restrictions due to COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

The QEP Committee has also supported Goal 3 by formally acknowledging outstanding CI accomplishments by faculty and students with three annual awards: (1) the Excellence in Creative Inquiry Teaching Award, open to *EDGE* grant recipients; (2) the Excellence in Creative Inquiry Mentoring Award open to CISE project faculty mentors; and (3) the Excellence in Creative Inquiry Student Award, open to CISE grant recipients. Each award

includes a monetary prize. The faculty awards (two each) are presented at the Faculty Awards Reception. Four student awards are presented at Research and Creative Inquiry Day. Award winners are posted on the OCI website to commemorate their accomplishments.

Goal 4: Develop the infrastructure to support undergraduate creative inquiry

For CI to flourish at Tennessee Tech, it has been important for pre-existing and QEP-specific CI-related programs, offices, and initiatives to work in concert. The QEP Committee successfully undertook a number of actions to realize this objective. First, the OCI was established in March 2016 and shares space with the CTLE/CITL in the Volpe Library. Secondly, OCI programs and activities have been presented on an easy-to-navigate informational website, which communicates current and future opportunities for faculty and staff participation in CI, including those sponsored by OCI or partner programs such as CITL. The website showcases student and faculty CI projects and awards, faculty workshops, and grant deadlines. Informational details of *EDGE*, such as assessment activities, rubrics, and surveys are provided. Finally, the *EDGE* Steering Committee has met periodically as needed to review progress of the QEP. Other committees that support the Steering Committee include the Course and Curriculum Grant Committee, CISE Committee, *Journal of Creative Inquiry* Committee, Assessment Committee, and Marketing Committee.

SECTION 4: A Reflection on What the Institution has Learned as a Result of the QEP Experience

In January 2016, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education elevated Tennessee Tech from the M1: Master's University - Larger Program category to the Doctoral University category. This move followed years of effort by faculty, administration, and students in all academic areas who placed additional emphasis on research and creative activities. In retrospect, it is clear that the Tennessee Tech 2016-2021 QEP, *EDGE: Enhanced Discovery through Guided Exploration*, was a near-ideal fit for this transition and thoroughly supported the University's new strategic plan. Nonetheless, the program did have limitations. As mentioned above, only about 20% of *EDGE* course grants went to 1000/2000-level courses. Lower level general education courses tend to have larger enrollments, making it a challenge to include CI projects requiring assessment with the *EDGE* rubric. Additionally, while *EDGE* course grants went to all Colleges/Schools, the distribution across campus was uneven, perhaps due to the inclination of faculty clustered within various departments to adopt new pedagogical methods and assessment techniques. Both of these issues point to the need for more flexible, but robust and valid, assessment tools.

EDGE was designed as an integrated curricular and co-curricular plan to enhance student learning by infusing a unique style of inquiry, *creative inquiry*, throughout the undergraduate experience. Every element of the plan has been successfully executed over the past five years, meeting or exceeding the goals and outcomes in these historically unprecedented times. Through the program and due to Tennessee Tech faculty's dedication to excellence, an estimated 14,000 undergraduates have acquired the skills of CI through *EDGE* course grants; 192 undergraduates have applied these skills in intensive faculty-mentored CISE projects; hundreds of students have presented their work annually at Research and Creative Inquiry Day; and 35 students have published in the *JCI*. Throughout this time, the University has

shown that it has a creative, dynamic faculty dedicated to excellence and a student body that is eager to learn new skills, face new challenges, and find new ways to discover and better understand the world. The University will continue to reap the benefits of *EDGE* as it moves forward in the years ahead.

Tennessee TECH

5.1

Agenda Item Summary

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: New Academic Programs Update

☐ **Review** ☐ **Action** ☒ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: Provost Bruce

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Updates on new academic programs following our last board meeting:

1. THEC approved the new B.S. in Animal Science on January 21, 2022.
2. The on-site external review of the new B.S. in Studio Arts occurred on February 16, 2022.
3. The on-site external review of the new B.S. in Music occurred on February 17, 2022.
4. THEC approved the LON for the new Ph.D. in Higher Education on January 19, 2022.

EMILY HOUSE
Executive Director

THEC TSAC

BILL LEE
Governor

STATE OF TENNESSEE
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 9TH FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243
(615) 741-3605

TO: Philip Oldham, President

FROM: Dr. Emily House

SUBJECT: Tennessee Technological University
Academic Program Modification Request:
Animal Science, Bachelor of Science

DATE: January 21, 2022

Pursuant to THEC *Academic Policy A1.1 Academic Program Modifications*, the elevation of a concentration to a free-standing program has been approved as outlined below:

FROM: **Major:** Agriculture, Bachelor of Science (CIP Code 01.0000)
Concentration: Animal Science

TO: **Major:** Animal Science, Bachelor of Science (CIP Code 01.0901)
Concentrations: (1) Animal Science Industries, and (2) Pre-Veterinary Science

Under separate cover, THEC staff will transmit an updated Academic Program Inventory that will reflect this academic program modification and the termination of the Animal Science concentration in the existing Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a May 2023 termination date.

Best wishes for success in implementing this academic program.

cc: Lori Bruce, TTU Provost
Sharon Huo, TTU Associate Provost
Bruce Greene, TTU Director, School of Agriculture
Betty Dandridge Johnson, THEC Chief Academic Officer

EMILY HOUSE
Executive Director

BILL LEE
Governor

5.1

STATE OF TENNESSEE
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 9TH FLOOR
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243
(615) 741-3605

TO: Lori Bruce, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Tennessee Technological University

FROM: Betty Dandridge Johnson, Chief Academic Officer
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

SUBJECT: Tennessee Technological University
Letter of Notification: Higher Education, Doctor of Philosophy

DATE: January 19, 2022

Thank you for the submission of the Letter of Notification (LON) for the Higher Education, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program. Per THEC Policy A1.0 New *Academic Programs: Approval Process,* the LON is evaluated on the following criteria: alignment with state master plan and institutional mission, need, sustainable demand, program costs and revenues; institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program; and avoidance of duplication.

After reviewing the revised LON, I approve Tennessee Technological University's (TTU) plan to develop the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) for the Higher Education, PhD program. As TTU continues to develop the proposed program, all concerns italicized on the attached LON evaluation must be reflected in the NAPP. It is understood the proposed program will be developed in accordance with the mission of TTU and will meet the Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025 degree completion and workforce development objectives.

The LON projects implementation of an approved Higher Education, PhD program in Fall 2023. Please be advised that the approval and the attached LON evaluation will be posted on the THEC website for public disclosure.

Attachment

cc: Emily House, THEC Executive Director
Philip Oldham. TTU President
Lisa Zagumny, TTU Dean College of Education
Jeremy Wendt, TTU Chair Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Letter of Notification Evaluation
January 19, 2022

The evaluation of the Letter of Notification (LON) is in accordance with the *THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process.* The evaluation is conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON is posted on the THEC website for a 15-day period of comment by interested parties. Based on the internal and external evaluation, THEC will make a determination to support, not to support, or defer a decision based on a revised LON.

Institution: Tennessee Technological University	**LON Submission Date**: July 14, 2021 **LON Resubmission Date:** September 27, 2021 **LON Resubmission Date:** December 13, 2021
Academic Program, Degree Designation: Higher Education, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) **Concentrations:** ▪ Higher Education Administration ▪ Student Affairs	
Proposed CIP Code: 13.0406 (Higher Education/Administration)	
Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2023	
Time Period Posted on Website for Public Comment: July 15 – July 29, 2021	
Program Liaison: Jeremy Wendt (jwendt@tntech.edu), Chair & Professor, Curriculum & Instruction	

Note: Comments in italics within this document should be addressed in the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP).

Criteria	Comments
Letter of Support from President/Chancellor	▪ A letter of support dated June 25, 2021 from President Oldham was included in the LON submission. ▪ The proposed program was approved by the TTU Board of Trustees on June 24, 2021.
Background on Academic Program Development	▪ The proposed PhD in Higher Education was developed in the process of creating the 2018 Tech Tomorrow strategic plan. A working group found that TTU had a gap in educational programs related to Higher Education as compared to peer institutions. ▪ TTU has received inquiries from the TTU community expressing interest in a HE doctoral program.
Purpose and Nature of Program	▪ Tennessee Tech is proposing a self-paced, 79-credit hour online Higher Education PhD program to be completed in four years depending on a student's enrollment. ▪ The core objective of the proposed program is to prepare professionals to "leverage robust and complex data across educational systems – both P-12 and postsecondary – to better understand student access, persistence, and success." ▪ The proposed program will feature two concentrations – Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs.

	▪ The program will be grounded in data science and technological innovation and will include 18 credit hours of research course work including a three-course sequence in both qualitative and quantitative research. ▪ The proposed program is designed for students pursuing careers as academic faculty, administrators, policy analysts, and educational researchers who are interested in leading colleges and universities, state higher education agencies, foundations, and related associations. ▪ Students admitted from undergraduate programs will be able to earn a master's degree on the way to the PhD. ***What type of master's degree will students earn? In the NAPP, please include a program of study for students that will earn a master's degree.*** ▪ The proposed program will provide theoretical and research-based information that can be adapted to any postsecondary education leadership role with the ability to improve college access, student success, and persistence to completion. The program will: o Provide opportunities to explore and analyze data science and its relationship to student learning and success. o Prepare candidates to effectively understand higher education research and policy to address challenges and initiate data informed change. o Develop innovative scholars who are equipped to advocate for student success and research-based/data science guided best practices at the college level. o Leverage advanced technologies to best prepare user centric elements in a high-tech, scientific ecosystem. o Build professional capacity and competencies in higher education topics such as immersive/augmented realities and innovative instructional technologies as they relate to and inform ethics, finance, access, affordability, organization, culture, persistence, and college life. o Engage candidates in rich field experiences through which they develop and apply data science skills while working with leaders in the field ▪ Students will complete a practicum to leverage their research skills and data analysis on critical issues facing higher education.
Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission	▪ The proposed program will support the state's goals for student success by: o Ensuring the academic readiness of students and the alignment of the desires and aspirations of the student and the goals of the proposed program, the provision of extra supports and interventions when needed, and peer mentoring. o Providing a completely online program to serve students unable to come to campus. o Providing completion services and career readiness programs to support the doctoral students in the program

	▪ The proposed program will contribute to family prosperity by: o Providing an affordable option to pursue doctoral studies and have a positive return on investment. o Ensuring transparency and continued improvement through the program review and academic auditing and evaluation process at TTU. o Ensuring outreach to adult learners to help boost their annual earnings through additional education. ▪ The proposed program will contribute to the state's future workforce needs by: o Leveraging TTU's expertise in STEM education to train administrators and researchers to enhance the quality of the state's production of STEM professionals. o Enhancing data science skills will help students develop necessary skills that will help them serve institutions that are becoming more technologically adept. o Capitalizing on the work-based learning opportunities provided by students currently employed at institutions of higher education and the proposed 15 semester hours of practicum experiences students will receive. ▪ The proposed program aligns with the institutional mission of TTU by continuing the tradition of Tech leading innovation and STEM-driven curriculum. ▪ TTU has a Carnegie classification of Doctoral University: Moderate Research. The proposed program will continue to allow TTU to maintain this classification.
Institutional Capacity to Deliver the Proposed Program	▪ The proposed program will be supported by existing faculty and current administrators at TTU who are qualified to serve as graduate faculty. ▪ Adjunct faculty will supplement full-time faculty loads. ▪ A total of three new graduate assistant positions will be requested in year one, two, and three ▪ Two new FTE faculty positions will be requested in year two and three of the proposed program. ▪ The College of Education's Director of Graduate Programs will serve as program director. ▪ ***Please explain how this program might impact other doctoral programs at TTU.***
Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions	▪ Two Tennessee public universities offer PhD's in Higher education – the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (CIP 13.0406 - Higher Education/Administration), and University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (CIP 13.0401 – Educational Leadership). ▪ Many institutions offer EdD degrees in related CIP's. o 13.04.06 – Higher Education/Administration: Union University, University of Memphis, Vanderbilt University. o 13.04.01 – Educational Leadership and Administration: East Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University,

	University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Freed-Hardeman, Lincoln Memorial, Lipscomb. o 13.0404 – Educational, Instructional, and Curriculum Supervision: Trevecca Nazarene University o 13.0499 – Educational Administration and Supervision, Other: Carson Newman. o Higher Education Concentrations exist in EdD programs at Austin Peay State University (CIP 13.0401), and Middle Tennessee State University (CIP 13.0406). ▪ The proposed program is distinctive because of its commitment to technological innovation, its data science core, and its partnerships. ▪ Existing partnerships between TTU and educational institutions will enable students to collect and/or analyze a wealth of educational data through their program of study.
Feasibility Study	
Student Interest	▪ Current TTU undergraduate seniors, graduate students, P-12 partners, TTU faculty and staff, as well as TTU alumni were invited to complete a survey to gauge student interest. 16,152 surveys were distributed, and 978 participants completed some survey questions. o 32 percent indicated considerable interest in attaining a PhD in higher Education, 41 percent indicated moderate interest, and 28 percent had no interest. o Of respondents who expressed at least moderate interest in the program, 80 percent indicated interest in enrolling within two years, and approximately 60 percent indicated a preference for full-time enrollment. o Almost 70 percent of respondents indicated a Graduate Assistant position would influence their decision to enroll.
Local and regional need	▪ BLS data indicate 100 jobs available in the North Central Tennessee Non-Metropolitan area; 170 in Nashville; and 140 in Chattanooga for "education administration, postsecondary" positions. ▪ CUPA-HR data demonstrates the salary range for educational administration positions is not dependent on possessing an advanced degree in higher education. However, graduates of the proposed program may enter an occupation area with a potential salary range from approximately $89,000 to $191,000. ▪ An overview of current job openings at TTU, Motlow State Community College, Roane State Community College, and Volunteer State Community college show 20 open higher education administration jobs which graduates of the proposed programs could qualify for, though not all require an earned doctorate.
Employer need/demand	▪ BLS data shows a four percent growth projection for management positions in higher education nationally from 2019 to 2029. ▪ BLS data shows a six percent employment growth rate at universities and a four percent growth rate at community colleges between 2019-2029. ▪ BLS data and many current job openings are included in the appendices to support the long-term employer need.

Future sustainable need/demand	▪ Letters of support were included from a variety of education and nonprofit leaders supporting the development of the proposed PhD in Higher Education from the following: o Deans for Impact – Peter Fishman, VP of Strategy o Highlands Economic Partnership – Amy New, President and CEO o Lincoln Memorial University – Clayton Hess, President o Motlow State Community College – Michael Torrence, President o National Institute for Excellence in Teaching - Candice McQueen, Chief Executive Officer o Roane State Community College – Chris Whaley, President o TTU – Brandon Johnson, VP for Enrollment Management and Career Placement; Cynthia Polk-Johnson, VP for Student Affairs
Program costs/revenues and THEC Financial Projection Form	▪ The proposed program anticipates $2,000 in equipment costs for years 2 and 3 as it relates to laptops, software, and printers for new FTE faculty. ▪ To assist in supplementing full-time faculty loads, $15,000 a year is being allocated for adjunct faculty. ▪ Two new FTE faculty positions will be requested during year 2 at $85,800 including base salary and benefits and year 3 at $88,374 including base salary and benefits of the proposed program. ▪ Three Graduate Assistantships (GA) will be funded at approximately $25,000 per position. One position will be added in year one, a second in year two, and the third in year three. ▪ Operating funds include $2000 in travel funds in years 2-3, $3000 in travel funds for years 4-5, and $4000 in travel funds for years 6-7. ▪ TTU expects the program to be revenue generating from a combination of tuition and fees beginning in year one. ▪ ***Please include anticipated costs for external program review to the planning year in the financial projections form and any associated narrative.***
Public comments	▪ No public comments were received.

6.1

Agenda Item Summary

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: Proposal for Academic Program Modification for B.S. in Design Studies

☐ **Review** ☒ **Action** ☐ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: Provost Bruce

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: The School of Human Ecology proposes to establish a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program in Design Studies. If approved, this will elevate two existing concentrations under the B.S. in Human Ecology to a new stand-alone B.S. degree program. This change is expected to improve student recruiting efforts for this field of study and enhance career opportunities for our graduates.

Agenda Item Summary

7.1

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: Intercollegiate Athletics Update

☐ **Review** ☐ **Action** ☒ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: President Oldham

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Current status of the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) and recent changes to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Agenda Item Summary

8.1

Date: March 10, 2022

Agenda Item: Overview of Admissions and Marketing Initiatives

☐ **Review** ☐ **Action** ☒ **No action required**

PRESENTERS: Brandon Johnson and Karen Lykins

PURPOSE & KEY POINTS: Overview of various admissions and marketing initiatives that have been added recently to increase enrollment.

8.2

Tennessee TECH

Presentation to Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Board of Trustees

March 10, 2022

1

Recruiting Wings Up: It's Personal

Influences on Recruitment, Messages

Annual, Ongoing Review of Data

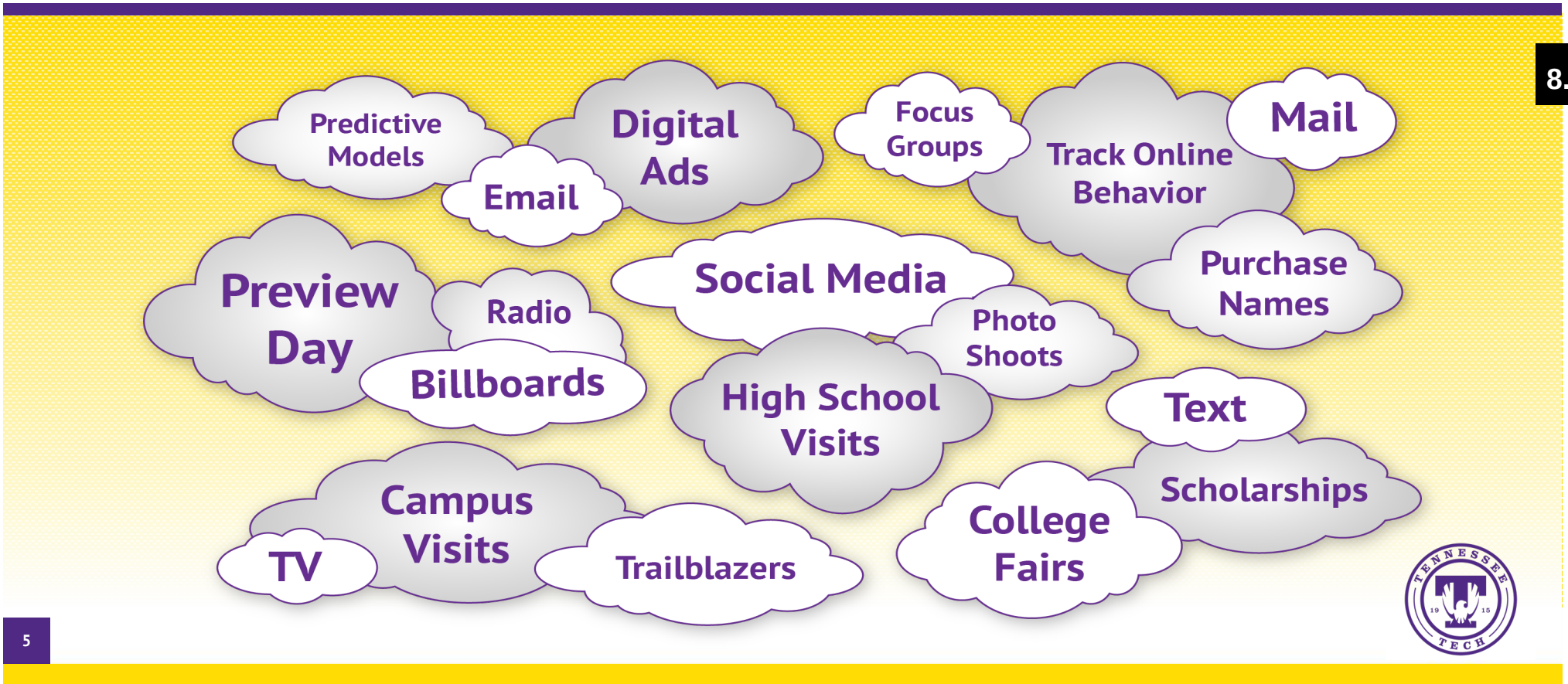
- Admissions and marketing data by region, county and school
- Current class behavior
- Perception/awareness
- Competition

Coordination of Strategies

- Develop key messages
- Develop key recruitment strategies
- Work with faculty, showcase campus

The Sky's the Limit

8.2



Calls to Action

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- Email templates
- Apply and visit digital ads
- TV commercial
- Tennessean ads and paid content
- Social campaign video
- Trailblazers Instagram stories, posts and videos

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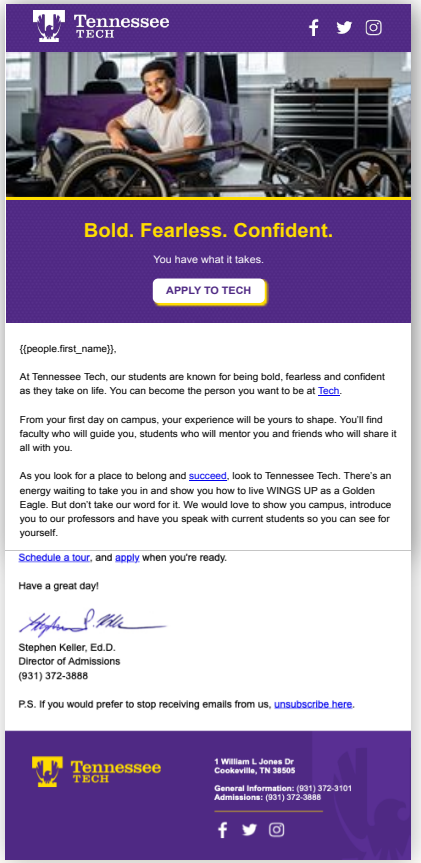
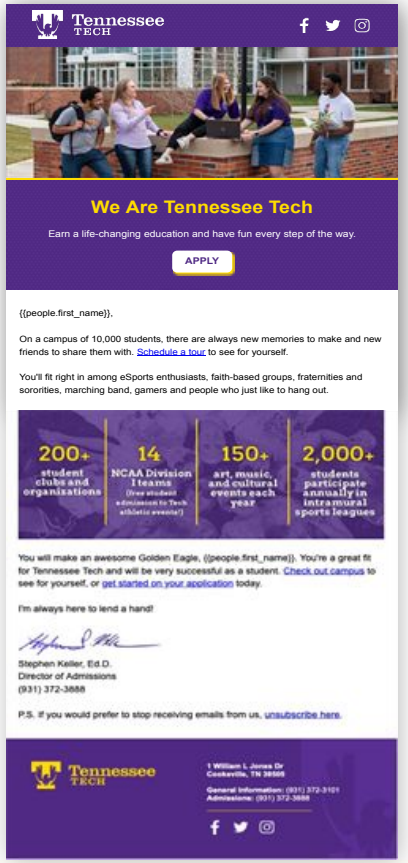


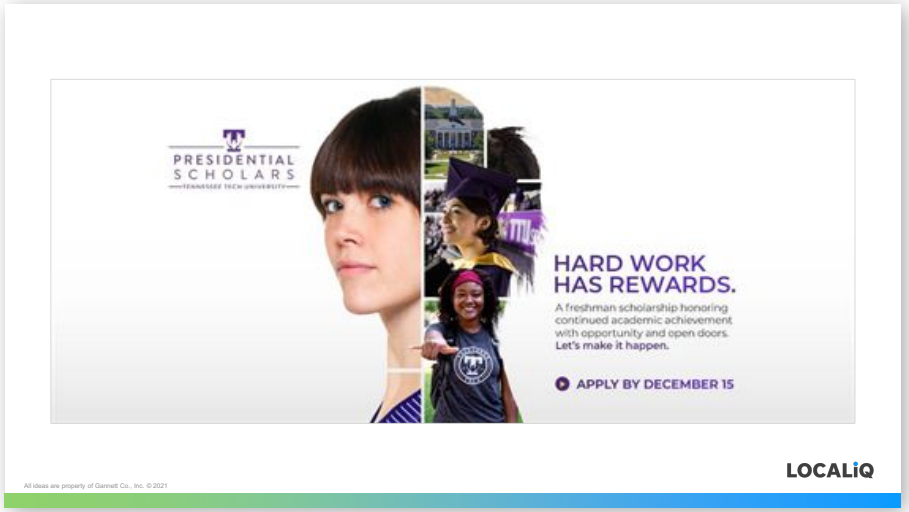


Apply and Visit Digital Ads

TV Commercial

TV Commercial Add On

Tennessean Ads



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Story from Tennessee Tech

Tennessee Tech's ICI program is at the intersection of innovation

Tennessee Tech applies for expedited approval of a new degree for fall 2023.

Cemile Kavountzis, for Tennessee Tech University

Published 5:02 a.m. CT Dec. 30, 2021

Tennessee Tech's new ICI program will prepare students for a changing world. *Photo Provided By Tennessee Tech University*

The modern world is not just interconnected – it is interdisciplinary. Nearly every field on the planet uses computers and technology to some degree.

One needs to look only as far as the smartphone in their hand to appreciate the prevalence of computing in disciplines well beyond the bounds of traditional computer science.

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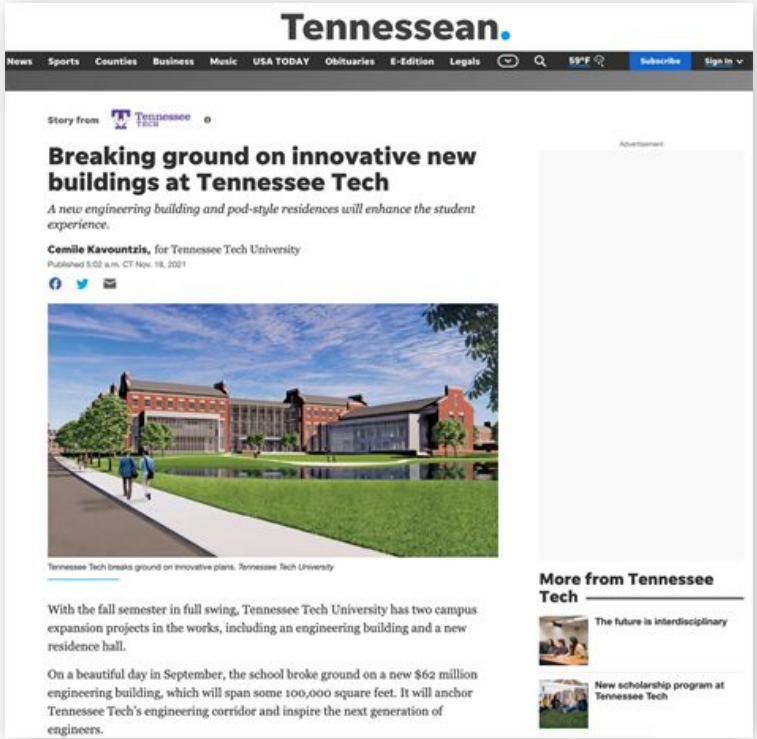
Exciting expansion projects at Tennessee Tech

New scholarship program at Tennessee Tech



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Story from Tennessee Tech

Breaking ground on innovative new buildings at Tennessee Tech

A new engineering building and pod-style residences will enhance the student experience.

Cemile Kavountzis, for Tennessee Tech University

Published 5:02 a.m. CT Nov. 18, 2021

Tennessee Tech breaks ground on innovative plans. *Tennessee Tech University*

With the fall semester in full swing, Tennessee Tech University has two campus expansion projects in the works, including an engineering building and a new residence hall.

On a beautiful day in September, the school broke ground on a new $62 million engineering building, which will span some 100,000 square feet. It will anchor Tennessee Tech's engineering corridor and inspire the next generation of engineers.

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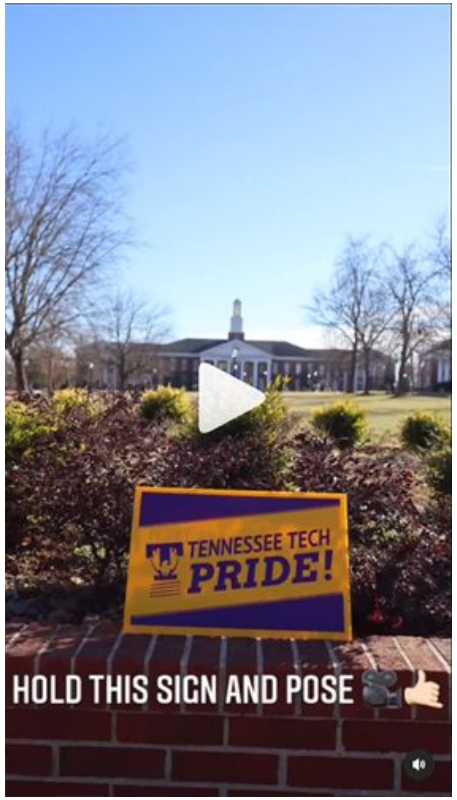
More from Tennessee Tech

The future is interdisciplinary

New scholarship program at Tennessee Tech

Social Campaign Video

Trailblazers Instagram Video



tntechtrailblazers Showing our Tennessee Tech pride all around campus!!
#tntechvisit #tntechtrailblazers #wearetntech #collegevisit

Trailblazers Instagram Post

8.2

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Now Live Wings Up!

CONGRATULATIONS,
You are accepted!