



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

June 20, 2024

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting streamed live via link found on this web page:

<https://www.tntech.edu/board/board-and-board-committee-meetings.php>

AGENDA ITEM I – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees met on Thursday, June 20, 2024, in Roaden University Center Room 282. Chair Trudy Harper called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

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

- Addison Dorris
- Jeannette Luna
- Thomas Lynn
- Rhedona Rose
- Camron Rudd
- Johnny Stites
- Trudy Harper

- Fred Lowery joined electronically.

A quorum was physically present. Tennessee Tech faculty, staff and members of the public were also in attendance. Mr. Lowery confirmed that he could simultaneously hear and speak to the Board members, that he was by himself, and that he received the Board materials in advance of the meeting. Mr. Tom Jones and Captain Barry Wilmore were absent.

A video clip of Captain Wilmore and other astronauts in their purple and gold suits at the International Space Station was playing. Chair Harper stated that she just wanted to remind everyone that it was amazing to be part of Tennessee Tech and for the university to be promoted from space. Also provided by Captain Wilmore was a time lapse of Starliner as they flew over the southern Aurora.

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AGENDA ITEM II – SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

Three successful student-athletes – Tim Coutras, Reghan Grimes and Grant Slatten -- shared their experiences while at Tennessee Tech, why they chose to attend Tech, how they manage their time commitment, and what they plan to do after graduation.

Winners of the Eagle Works competition were also recognized. Eagle Works is Tennessee Tech's version of Shark Tank and is based on student creativity, ideas, viability and business plans for marketing the products. Addison Dorris and Vivekanand Naikwadi were members of the winning teams where the students presented their ideas and prototypes or inventions, and faculty and staff and local industry members voted to select the winners.

AGENDA ITEM III – RECOGNITION OF RETIRING FACULTY

Dr. Graham Kash, professor of speech and communication and longtime speech and debate team coach, was unable to join the meeting but was recognized for 58 years of distinguished service to Tennessee Tech. Dr. Kash began employment at Tech in 1966 and will be retiring from the university on July 31. A scholarship has been set up in his and his wife's names. A plaque will be awarded to him at a later date.

AGENDA ITEM IV – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Harper asked for approval of the minutes of the March 7, 2024, Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting. There being no questions nor comments, Ms. Rose moved to recommend approval of the March 7, 2024, Board of Trustees minutes. Mr. Stites seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM V – STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Ms. Dorris reported that the final weeks of school and the early weeks of summer semester included students' spring break trips, spring break service projects through the university, final exams, the annual SOLO event, student leadership awards ceremony, student worship award ceremony, a campus safety walk to identify unaddressed problems that students face on their daily commutes around campus, (Student Government Association) SGA student elections, student orientation and recruitment sessions (SOAR), new student family programs, adding student members to the Week of Welcome Steering Committee, and the division of Student Affairs partnering with the City of Cookeville, Chamber of Commerce, Cityscape and others preparing for this year's College Town Kickoff.

AGENDA ITEM VI – PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Oldham stated that 2023-24, the 109th year of history at Tennessee Tech University, has been another great year and he wanted to take a quick look at what has been accomplished collectively this year.

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- Enrollment kicked off fall semester with the fourth largest freshman class in University history. The large class size will help us reach our short-term enrollment goal of 12,000 students.
- Tennessee Tech is ranked as a top national university in the country for the ninth straight year by *U.S. News and World Report* and moved up 35 rankings this year. Tech continues to be ranked the second highest public university in the state of Tennessee.
- Tech continues to have the highest return on investment by pay scale of any Tennessee public university and is one of the top 250 graduate schools as ranked by *Abound*.
- Faculty continue to excel and lead the state in research and teaching. Evidence of this is the perfect score received this past year from Tennessee Higher Education Commission on the Quality Assurance Funding Review.
- Tech established a new Machine Intelligence and Data Science Center (MInDS) that will bring the power of AI in solving real-world problems and will prepare our students for careers in the digital age.
- Tennessee Tech will end this fiscal year in about a week at roughly \$45 million in externally funded research activations. About four years ago, we stated we were going to double research funding and get to \$40 million by 2025. We are now at \$45 million and we achieved the goal a year early. He thanked Vice President Liu for all his efforts.
- Dr. Oldham thanked the Provost, Dean Slater, engineering faculty, members of the Board of Trustees and university federal partners, Congressman John Rose and Congressman Chuck Fleischmann, for helping Tech secure the final Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) approval to launch the new nuclear engineering degree program this fall, only the second nuclear engineering program in the state of Tennessee.
- Tech continues to deepen roots within the community and solidify Cookeville as Tennessee's college town. This was accomplished with the first-ever College Town Kickoff last fall, an event that went extremely well and it is anticipated to become an annual event. The Kickoff is a block party style, high-energy event in downtown Cookeville for students and the public that includes a ferris wheel, a zip line, giveaways, food trucks and a free concert in Dogwood Park.
- Tennessee Tech also welcomed the largest marching band in Tennessee history, with more than 211 members and 32 different undergraduate majors represented in the band, and a return of a color guard for the first time in more than a decade.
- We continue to invest heavily in new and approved spaces for our students to learn, connect and grow. Including our state-of-the-art Ashraf Islam engineering building, now augmented by a small lake and a 70-foot outdoor sculpture by world-renowned artist John Henry, entitled "Wings." The artwork was a gift to the University by the Oakley family.
- By the end of the summer, Tech will also unveil a new pedestrian walkway and plaza. It is an attractive new bricked thoroughfare across the heart of campus that will improve safety and beauty, giving the campus a parklike feel.

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- Major renovations are ongoing at Johnson Hall and design is in the final detail stage. As part of that project, Foster Hall is beginning demolition and the area will be converted into greenspace for the foreseeable future.
- The JJ Oakley Innovation Residence Hall and the ACME building are progressing well now. We expect the Oakley Residence Hall to be completed for the Fall '27 semester and the ACME building design is being finalized now.
- The overall quality of campus landscaping is outstanding. The grounds crew that plans and maintains the campus landscape does an outstanding job.
- The new west side of Tucker Stadium is finishing up design and will accommodate a new home dressing room, new press box and all premium seating. Demolition on the old west side will begin in the next few weeks. The new west side is scheduled to open fall 2026.
- Dr. Oldham stated that he especially wanted to thank all our partners for making these projects possible, including the Putnam County Commission, the Cookeville City Council, Averitt Express, members of the Board of Trustees and community supporters who have given generously to help support all these efforts and many more.
- The most high-energy and enthusiastic football coach available, Bobby Wilder, was recently hired. Coach Wilder is a proven winner and fundraiser, and a new day for football is beginning at Tennessee Tech.
- Tennessee Tech's women's soccer team and men's golf team won conference championships this year. Overall, Athletics finished fourth out of 11 schools in the Conference Commissioners Cup, which is a good showing. And more importantly, our student athletes just recorded their 31st consecutive semester with an average GPA of 3.0 or better.
- Dr. Braswell and his team have worked extremely hard and are knocking on the door of close to \$16 million this year in annual fundraising. In the past four years, Tech has exceeded more than we raised in the previous five-year campaign that we thought was ambitious at the time.
- The market study was just completed, and the compensation study is being implemented. We have progressed through the first phase of implementation and are looking forward to the second phase to begin in the next couple of weeks to make certain we remain competitive for the best talent possible.
- 2023-24 has been a year of continuing and adding partnerships with the City of Cookeville, Putnam County, Chamber of Commerce, other Upper Cumberland counties and counties across the state through Rural Reimagined, school systems statewide, Averitt Express, Whisper Aero, Tennessee Valley Corridor, Oak Ridge National Labs, TVA, UCOR and many, many more. Dr. Oldham thanked each of these partners, and he stated he wanted to thank faculty and staff for giving students an excellent learning experience – second to none.
- He stated that it is important to note that we must continue to partner and be a good partner with so many great companies, like Averitt Express and Nissan, and with emerging companies like Whisper Aero. We must continue to partner with TVA, Oak Ridge National Lab, Y-12 complex, and so many other technical entities. We partnered

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with other universities, community colleges and K-12 entities around the state. Most of all, we must continue to always put students first and be relevant and responsive to the expectations of our ownership group, which is quite simply, the citizens of the great state of Tennessee.

AGENDA ITEM VII – CONSENT AGENDA – A. LEASE AGREEMENT B. EMERITUS PRESIDENT CONTRACT C. TENURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the consent agenda. Mr. Rudd seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.A. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – MAINTENANCE AND MANDATORY FEES

1st MOTION: FY25 Increase

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the recommended FY2024-25 5.05% undergraduate maintenance; 4.99% graduate maintenance and 5% mandatory fees increase. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.A. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – MAINTENANCE AND MANDATORY FEE

2nd MOTION: ELIMINATION

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the elimination of the pre-2020 tuition model and move all undergraduate students to the flat-rate tuition model effective fall 2025. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.B. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – NON-MANDATORY FEE

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the parking fines effective fall 2024. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

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AGENDA ITEM VIII.C. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – DUAL ENROLLMENT TUITION

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the dual enrollment tuition rate of \$184.80 per credit hour. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.D. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – FY2023-24 ESTIMATED AND FY2024-25 PROPOSED BUDGET

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the FY2023-24 estimated and FY2024-25 proposed budgets and organizational chart. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.E. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – CAPITAL BUDGET FY2025-26

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the FY2025-26 Capital Budget request. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.F. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – DISCLOSED PROJECT MODIFICATION

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the disclosed project modification. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Mr. Rudd stated that due to the significant budget increase in the disclosed project modification, it is important to keep this project within this budget as closely as possible because the increased expense does affect the overall budget of the university. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.G. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

Following discussion at the morning committee meeting and upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the master plan amendment. Because the recommendation came from committee, a second was not needed. Dr. Luna stated that she wanted to express a safety concern about the pedestrian walkway. The route into campus to reach two of the largest parking lots crosses the pedestrian walkway. Dr. Oldham replied that the longer-range master plan calls for the parking to go away with parking to be moved to other areas but we will continue to monitor the situation and work on it. Mr. Wray called a roll call

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vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM IX – ELECTION OF STUDENT TRUSTEE

Chair Harper stated that the FOCUS Act requires the Board to select a student as a non-voting member. Tennessee Tech’s Student Government Association (SGA) developed a process for selecting a candidate to present to the Board for consideration. The nominee selected by the SGA was Claire Myers.

Dr. Luna moved to approve Claire Myers to serve as the student trustee for fiscal year 2024-25. Mr. Stites seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM X – BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Wray stated that Vice-Chair Rose will coordinate the President’s evaluation and Deb Combs will communicate to Trustees when the evaluation is available in Diligent.

Mr. Wray will continue to send training materials, podcasts, FAQs, general topic points, etc. about Boards around the country to Trustees. He also stated that the Diligent Resource Center includes a wealth of good information for Trustees and others.

AGENDA ITEM XI – OTHER BUSINESS – RECOGNITION OF ADDISON DORRIS AND DEANNA METTS

Chair Harper stated that the Board had two additional items of business before adjournment. The first item was recognition of outgoing student Trustee, Addison Dorris. Addison was asked to come forward and receive a plaque recognizing her service.

The second item was recognition of Deanna Metts who is retiring after 41 years of service as the university’s Director of Internal Audit, starting her service at Tech in 1983. Deanna was asked to come forward and receive a plaque honoring her dedication and commitment.

Chair Harper also stated that Tony Nelson, University Policy Chief, recently retired and the Board wanted to thank him for his service.

AGENDA ITEM XII – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Approved,

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Lee Wray 10/18/24
Lee Wray, Secretary

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