



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

March 6, 2025

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 AND ROLL CALL

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees met on Thursday, March 6, 2025, in Roaden University Center Room 282. Chair Trudy Harper called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

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

- Tom Jones
- Jeannette Luna
- Thomas Lynn
- Claire Myers
- Rhedona Rose
- Camron Rudd
- Johnny Stites
- Trudy Harper

- Fred Lowery – joined electronically

- Barry Wilmore - absent

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.

Lee Wray
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AGENDA ITEM II – RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS

Chair Harper stated that she wanted to recognize four students who were each quite successfully involved in different university activities: Sahera Abumarium, a chemical engineering graduate student who won first place in her category at the American Institute of Chemical Engineers national meeting for her research on microplastics in wastewater treatment plants; Justin Schlenkert, a College of Business junior who recently set three state and three national powerlifting records; Jameson Wharton, a junior Interdisciplinary Studies major and Golden Eagle Football defensive back who founded the annual “Football for the Cure” fundraiser to raise money for cancer research, and T. Wayne Williams, a freshman in the School of Agriculture serving as the 2024-25 Tennessee FFA President.

AGENDA ITEM III – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Harper asked for approval of the minutes of the December 5, 2024, Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting. Chair Harper asked if there were questions or comments regarding the minutes. There being none, Mr. Stites moved to recommend approval of the December 5, 2024, Board of Trustees minutes. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM IV – STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Ms. Myers reported that students were excited to see the opening of a new location of Poet’s coffee in the Volpe Library and she stated that the turn of the new year marks an exciting milestone for our university: 100 years of being the Golden Eagles!

She reported that in true Golden Eagle spirit, hundreds of student workers and volunteers stepped up to assist with Spring Showcase events. Spring Showcase has become a signature event to connect admitted students to future peers and professors and spotlight the university and Cookeville community as a home away from home.

In celebration of National Engineers Week, or EWeek, the Engineering Joint Council hosted their annual competition between the engineering disciplines for the title of Best Darn Major. Representatives from various departments competed in events like Dodgeball, Egg Drop and Tug-of-War throughout the week of February 16, culminating in the second annual Engineering Ball hosted in the new Ashraf Islam Engineering Building Atrium.

Throughout the month of February, various events were held in honor of Black History Month, showcasing history, food, music, and culture. These events unite our student community in empathy and understanding and inspire knowledge and appreciation of Black History.

Ms. Myers stated that she spoke with members of the Student Government Association (SGA) who highlighted important student issues and concerns. Multiple students were curious about the effect of recent Executive Orders on university research activities and other programs. SGA members also shared their appreciation for services provided by the Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness and voiced support for increased staffing in the Center.

SGA also recently hosted a Day of Service to commemorate the 19 lives lost in the March 3, 2020, tornado in Putnam County. The event included a campus cleanup, multiple guest speakers, and a lantern release.

As the weather begins to warm up, students have much to look forward to! Spring break, the annual SOLO (Student Life Opportunity Organization) concert, banquets and awards ceremonies, and spring commencement all lie in the weeks ahead.

AGENDA ITEM V – PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Oldham stated that he would begin his report with women’s basketball. He stated that the women’s basketball team finished in first place in the OVC (Ohio Valley Conference) regular season, they got the top seed, and they will play in the semi-final round on March 7, at 1:00 p.m. As of the date of the Board meeting, they had a season of 24-5, undefeated at home for the season.

He also stated that he spent the previous day in Nashville at the General Assembly. Trustee Rose joined him and others yesterday morning for the Sunset Bill. As a state agency with a Board, eight Trustees were placed on the Board by the Governor and all appointed Trustees have sat through confirmation hearings at some point. All state boards must periodically go through a Sunset Audit to be re-upped for authorization and the state determines how many years before the Board must repeat the process. Previously, before Christmas, Chair Harper joined us for the Joint Committee on Government Operations, where they recommended a five-year sunset extension for our Board. Yesterday the Senate side of the government operations agreed with the five-year extension and the House Government Operations Committee will also hold a similar hearing.

Earlier this morning in the Audit & Business Committee meeting, the state budget was discussed: what the Governor’s proposed budget looks like, and how that is currently going through the legislative process. We are still at least a month and a half away from having a final answer, but it is not looking like the best nor the worst budget picture for us.

In terms of the formula funding, the Governor’s proposed budget did not fully fund the recommendation from Tennessee Higher Education Commission. It was about half of what they were asking for productivity enhancements. So that leaves us a little short on the operations side.

The good news is that the governor’s budget includes the additional money we were needing - \$25,000,000 - for the ACME (Advanced Construction and Manufacturing Engineering) building. That amount should keep us on track with construction, assuming the General Assembly funds that portion of the Governor’s budget.

The Governor’s budget also includes about \$2,500,000 for capital maintenance. There is also a 2.6% salary increase expectation, and the university will need to come up with about half of that.

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He stated that he wanted to spend most of the time providing an overview of capital projects because he often gets these types of questions. He stated that our best estimate is that about \$750,000,000 of capital improvements have been made on campus over the last 10 or 12 years and the transformation is becoming evident.

Kittrell Hall is a good example of a renovation completed about five years ago. Across the Quad from Kittrell is the Jeffers Learning Resource Center in Bartoo Hall, which is a tremendous resource for the College of Education. These are two of the oldest buildings on campus – second only to Derryberry Hall – and renovations have given them new life.

Bruner Hall was also renovated in recent years. Bruner houses computer science, mathematics, and physics, and includes a large lecture hall. Roaden University Center, a 50-year-old building, now includes a large addition on the back side, which is heavily used by students for events, and provides opportunities for students to relax, study and interact. The University Center renovation also included the plaza area.

Also included is the relatively new Laboratory Science Commons area, a 165,000 square foot, state-of-the-art laboratory facility – the largest building on campus. The Stonecipher Lecture Hall is a great attachment to the building.

The entry point of campus is the Marc L. Burnett Student Fitness and Recreation Center, a student-funded project. Students voted on an increase to their fees to fund this facility. A conscious decision was made to place it on the corner of 7th Street and Willow Avenue because that was the main entrance to campus, and it serves as a great selling point to see all the student activity at that corner. He voiced appreciation to Jim Cobb and the facilities and project management individuals for negotiating the 26 different property transactions with 14 different property owners to make this building possible in this location.

The latest addition, the Ashraf Islam Engineering Building, is a great image for the College of Engineering and for the campus, along with the “Wings” sculpture.

Foster Hall was demolished to make room for the next iteration of campus development. The pedestrian walkway has been possibly the most disruptive project to campus because it was in the heart of campus, but it is believed that everyone is enjoying it now.

Demolition of the west side of Tucker Stadium took place to enable the new west side of the stadium to be completed by fall of 2026.

Johnson Hall is under full renovation and the project calls for some enhancements to the current footprint with the addition of a front entrance area. The renovation should be completed Spring of 2027.

JJ Oakley Innovation and Residence Hall, with 400 beds, should be completed by fall 2027.

The new Student Event Center is in the planning stages, and a completion date for it is not

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currently available.

The new track should be completed by spring of 2028. A second residence hall is also being considered. We are looking at the addition of sorority houses and construction of a Football Operation Center.

Two major academic buildings, one on the Quad - a social sciences academic building – will be placed on the footprint of Matthews-Daniel and Crawford Halls, and a Life Sciences building that would go on the footprint where Lewis Hall and the current Foundry are located.

In addition, we have a lot of renovations lined up to include Prescott, Clement and Brown Halls as a part of the College of Engineering plan, and Memorial Gym and Derryberry Hall. Once the new Life Sciences building is complete, Pennebaker will be renovated.

AGENDA ITEM VI – HONORARY DOCTORATE

Mr. Jones moved that Tennessee Tech University award Purna Saggurti the degree, Honorary Doctor of Finance. Mr. Lynn seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VII – CONSENT AGENDA – A. NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL (NAPP) FOR MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IN AGRISCIENCE TECHNOLOGY B. NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM PROPOSAL (NAPP) FOR MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IN CHILD LIFE

Upon the committee's recommendation, Ms. Rose moved the approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.A. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – COMPENSATION PLAN

Upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the proposed compensation plan:

2.6% pool for recurring salary increases effective July 1, 2025, pending approval of Governor's FY2025-26 budget

- Employees with satisfactory or better evaluation are eligible for raise.
- Employees who are on or were on a Performance Improvement Plan for FY2025 are ineligible.
- Employees hired prior to 12/31/2024 and still employed on 7/1/2025 are eligible.
- Step 1: Implementation of Phase 3 of Market Compensation Plan for both faculty and non-faculty
- Step 2: Merit increases for all eligible employees including those getting step 1 increases with a minimum of 1% and maximum of 10% per employee.

Dr. Luna made a motion to amend the original motion for recommended merit increases from one to ten percent to one to five percent. Mr. Rudd seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The amendment failed 6-2 with Dr. Luna and Mr. Rudd voting in favor.

Mr. Wray called a roll call vote on the original motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the proposed five percent annual increase in housing rates compounded over the next five years to be effective fall 2025. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the disclosed project for the Hooper Eblen Center sound system. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII.D. – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – APPROVAL OF INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

Upon the committee's recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the proposed Internal Audit Charter. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

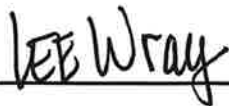
AGENDA ITEM IX – BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Wray stated that THEC (Tennessee Higher Education Commission) was coordinating a retreat for all members of the Boards of Trustees of LGIs (locally governed institutions.) The retreat will be offered October 12-13 at MTSU (Middle Tennessee State University.)

AGENDA ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Approved,

 07/16/25

Lee Wray, Secretary

