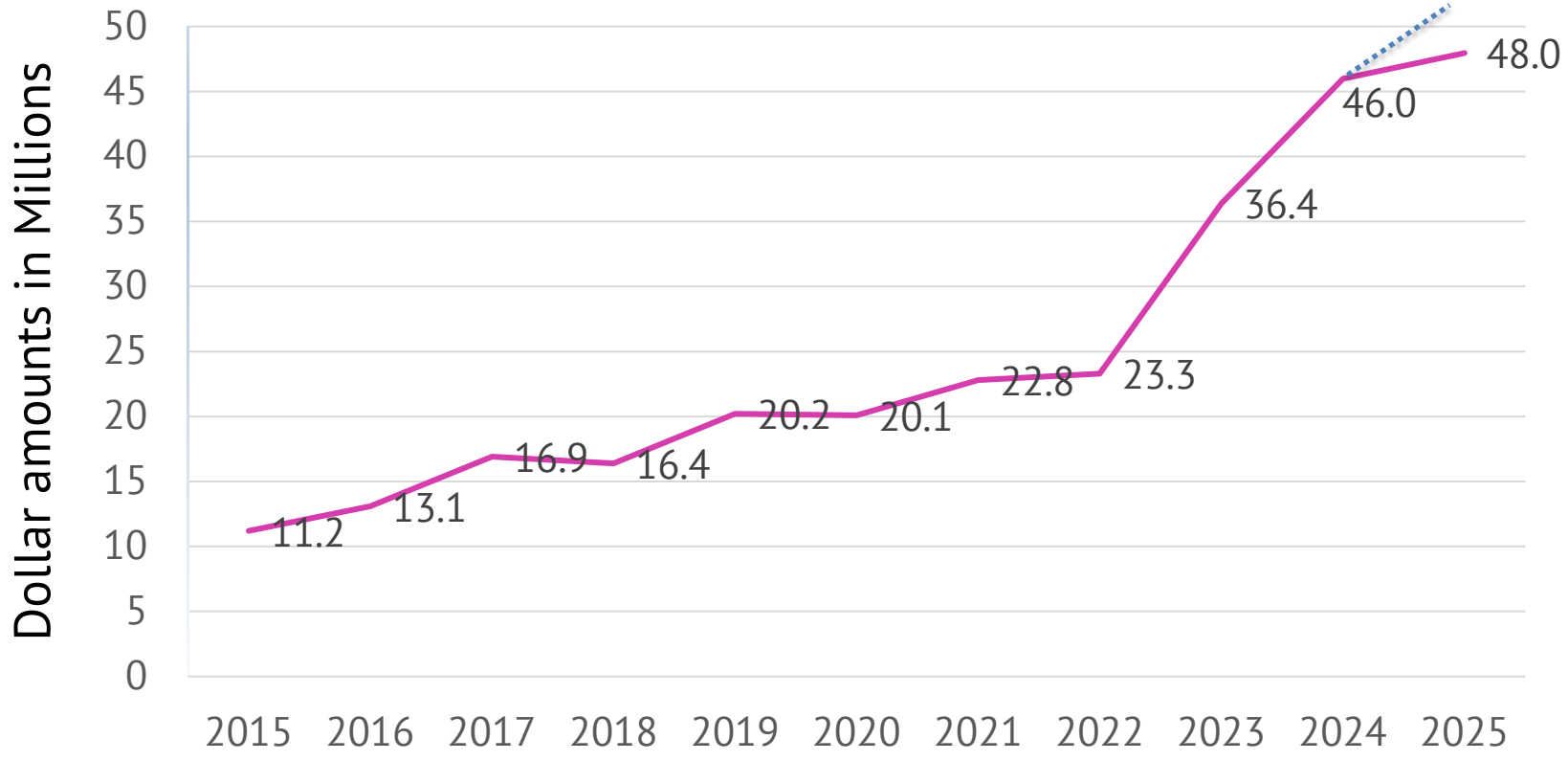
Tennessee TECH

Research & Economic Development Report

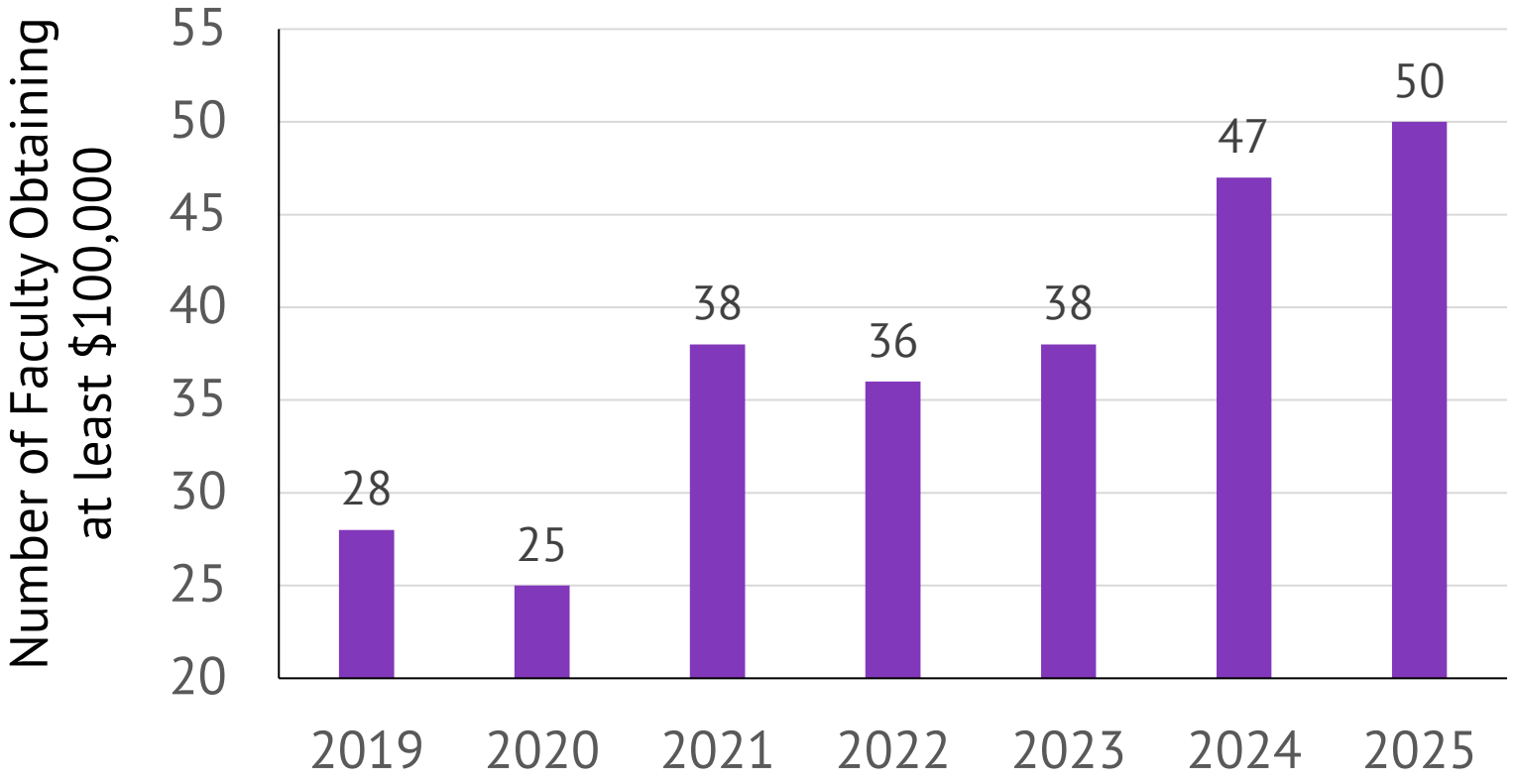
Presentation to Academic & Student Affairs Committee
Board of Trustees

September 25, 2025

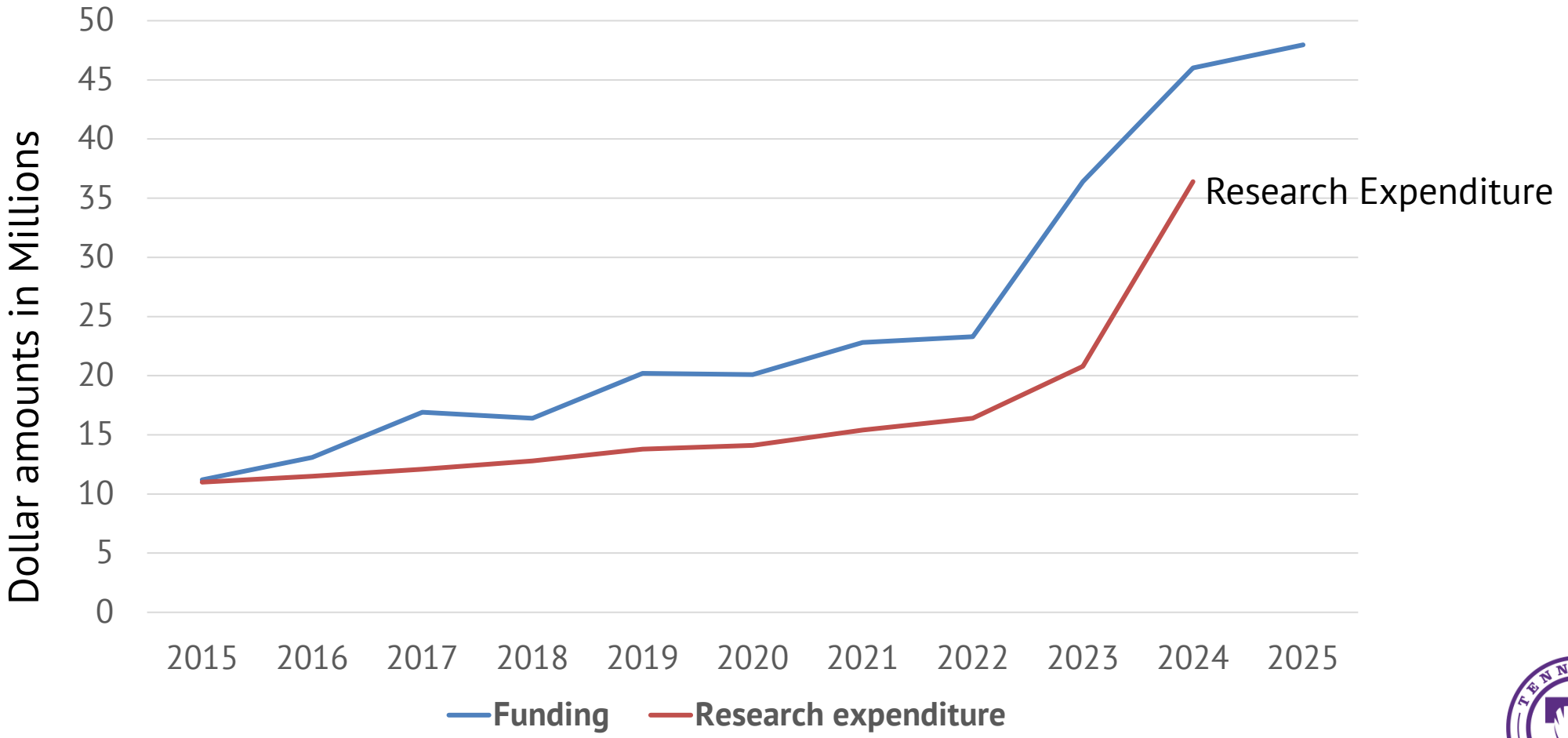
Research: Record Level of Funding Activations For Fiscal Year 2025



Key to Success Is Our Dedicated Faculty



Research Expenditures



Carnegie Research Activity Rankings and National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Expenditure Rankings

	Number of Schools
1) R1 (Very high research activity)	187
2) R2 (High research activity)	139
3) Research	216
Total	542

NSF Research Expenditure Rankings

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
14.0	15.4	16.4	20.8	36.4
308	306	317	304	249 (not final)

Grants Vs. Activations Vs. Expenditures

Terminology	Grants	Activations	Expenditures
Definition	Total amount of $ over the entire duration of the project	Annual allocated budget amount	Only $ spent
Dollar amount captured	e.g., $3 M over 3 years, thus counted as a grant of $3M	$1M each for year 1, 2, 3	$ amount spent
Relevance	Allows faculty to plan if and when to apply for another grant	Determines how much $ the university is receiving each year for spending planning	Report to National Science Foundation (NSF) as the most important research metric
Application	Principal investigators can claim the entire credit for their credits	Most reliable and stable metric for the university	Used for rankings of Carnegie R1,R2,or R3 and various other rankings

Enhanced Research Will Provide

1) Students with experiential learning opportunities:
   - ✓ Independent and teamwork
   - ✓ Problem-solving abilities
   - ✓ Leadership and teamwork qualities
   - ✓ Communication skills
   - ✓ Analytical and critical thinking capabilities
2) Faculty to teach state-of-the-art knowledge and technologies
3) Technologies for economic development

Trajectory Is Still Linear

- FY26 goal: $55M – trajectory is in motion
- Aligned with national priorities: Artificial Intelligence (AI), nuclear, defense, and data centers
- Strong state partnerships
- Expanding industry-sponsored research and corporate engagement
- Faculty development driving larger, more competitive proposals
- Recent wins from major agencies (e.g., National Institutes of Health) build momentum
- All research matters – from $20K to $20M – every project adds value
- We are not waiting to grow—we are delivering
- The future of research at TN Tech is transformative

Economic Development

- Expanding funding through federal/state grants, increasing student engagement, and scaling commercialization, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Research drives economic development:
  - $5M projected this year for the Center for Rural Innovation & Rural Reimagined
  - Community-based research solving real problems
  - Data-driven strategies informed by applied research
- Strive to serve the 78 rural counties of Tennessee (76 served), presence in 10 distressed counties
- Thousands of community leaders and residents engaged to collaboratively address local and statewide challenges
- Hundreds of students at all levels (undergraduate, master's, doctoral) directly involved in economic development: research, service learning, internships
- Active disaster recovery support in distressed areas, including boots on the ground in Cocke County following Hurricane Helene
- Growing tech transfer: establishing office, rising faculty and student spin-off companies, record patents and invention disclosures


TENNESSEE TECH
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