



Research & Economic Development

TENNESSEE TECH

Research & Grants

AT TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY

Michael Aikens, PhD

Acting Vice President for Research and Economic Development

9-12-25

Agenda

- About Myself
- FY25 Research Highlights
- FY26 Goal and Strategies
- How can ORED help?



About Myself

- 20 years at Tech
- The 'economic development guy'
 - Substantial research activity that informs and funds economic development strategy/activity
 - Research areas: quant/qual surveys, economic impact analysis, business development, location intelligence, program planning & development
- Founder/Executive Director Center for Rural Innovation & Rural Reimagined (2017)
 - 16 employees
 - 100% self funded
 - \$4M annual activations
- PI for over \$20M in sponsored programs, additional \$20 million as COPI/key
 - ARC, DOE, EDA, NSF, USDA + state awards + foundations + giving
- Acting VPR July 2025



FY25 Research Highlights

- FY25 performance
 - 193 activations
 - \$47.96M
- FY24 research expenditures: \$36.399M
 - FY25 are not available until January
 - Updated HERD → potentially higher expenditure recognition
- Graduate Assistants FY25
 - Masters: 526
 - PhD: 373
- Publications (2024 calendar year):
 - 381 distinct publications, according to Watermark
- 13 invention disclosures
 - 5 patents awarded!



FY26 Goal: Achieve \$55 Million in Activations

- Strategies
 - Stay the course on federal opportunities
 - Align with national priorities (AI, nuclear, defense, data centers)
 - Diversify portfolio
 - State grants (IRIS, Dept. Innovation, TDEC, etc.)
 - Industry Sponsored Research
 - Military/DoD + Chasm Opps Consultant
 - Private Foundations
 - ADRs in each college
 - Multidisciplinary proposals
 - Grant Forward software to connect/align opportunities with faculty (replaces PivotRP)
 - ORED/CAFE Research Series



A Track Record of Success

FY20 President Oldham challenged faculty to double sponsored program funding in 5 years

- Goal achieved in 4 years
- 5 years of record high award funding
- 10 years of growth for research expenditures
- FY26 goal: \$55M



**WHAT DOES ORED DO,
AND HOW CAN YOU HELP ME?**



Services

- **Proposal and Project Support**

- Facilitate the identification of funding opportunities
- Provide training and assistance with proposal development
- Provide training and guidance on research compliance
- Prepare and negotiate grants and contracts
- Administer faculty research grants
- Economic Impact analyses, data aggregation, and location intelligence



Faculty Support

- Internal Faculty Grant Programs
- Facilitate protection of Intellectual Property and technology transfer
- Innovator Showcase for faculty



Student Support

- Research and Creative Inquiry Day student research exhibition
- Eagle Works student entrepreneurship competition



Learning Opportunities

- **Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Student Training Series**

- Getting Started with Research Grants – Sep 12
- Research Strategies for Social Impact and Economic Development – Sep 26
- Proposal Production – Oct 10
- Best Practices for Grant Management – Oct 24
- Scholarly Dissemination – TBD (Spring)

- **Lunch and Learn Focus Sessions**

- Funding Databases 101 – Oct 2
- Streamlyne Basics – Oct 23
- Professional Profiles (ORCID, ScienCV, Google Scholar, etc.) – Nov 6
- Intellectual Property Basics – TBD (Spring)



Research Series 2025-2026

Sponsored by the Office of Research & Economic Development and
Center for Advancing Faculty Excellence



Getting Started
With Research Grants

September 12

Research Strategies for Social
Impact and Economic Development

September 26

Proposal Production & Best Practices
Grant Management

October 24

Scholarly
Dissemination

Spring 2026



01

Project
Idea



02

Identifying
Funding Source



03

Develop
Proposal



04

Submit
Proposal



05

Manage
Award



06

Dissemination
& Publication



07

Award
Close-Out

Funding Databases

October 2

Streamlyne

October 23

Professional Profiles

November 6

Grants for
Humanities

November 21

Intellectual Property &
Invention Requirements

Spring 2026

Visit tntech.edu/researchseries to register and learn more.

Internal Funding Opportunities

- **Rural Reimagined Faculty Grant Program**
 - Apply for up to \$20,000 in funding to address rural challenges
 - Application live now!
 - Applications close Friday, Sept. 26 at 4:30 PM CST
 - [Learn more](#)
- **TTU Faculty Research Grant**
 - Apply for up to \$20,000 in funding to seed fund research
 - Applications open December 2025
 - [Learn more](#)
- **CITL TechTrendsetters**
 - Technology infused curriculum for TN Tech Courses
 - Applications open Spring 2026
 - [Learn More](#)
- **Tech Transfer Proof of Concept Grant**
 - \$50,00 total pool
 - Funding to advance IP towards commercialization
 - Applications open on rolling basis starting late 2025, early 2026
 - [Learn more](#)



IP/Commercialization Assistance

- FY26: Formally Launch Tech Transfer Division of ORED
- Commercialization IS research, and:
 - Protection of novel ideas
 - Revenue generator for PI and university
 - Not always a business (licensing, partnerships, etc.)
 - Professional development and accolades for faculty
- Resources
 - Invention disclosure assistance
 - Proof of Concept grant
 - LaunchTN network
 - Industry connections
- Faculty Innovator Showcase
 - Part of Research and Creative Inquiry Day
 - \$1,000 for each participant
 - Tradeshow, presentation
 - Industry and government connections



Resource Links

Office of Research and Economic Development

<https://www.tntech.edu/research/>

Research Development Resources

<https://www.tntech.edu/research/research-development.php>

Finding Funding – Pivot RP, will transition to GrantForward

<https://www.tntech.edu/research/resources/findfunding.php>

Policies and Procedures

<https://www.tntech.edu/research/researchcompliance/policies1.php>

Additional resources for specific needs – human subjects, animal subjects, export control, etc. – are available on the site.



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THANKS

Questions?

