

MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL
TENNESSEE TECH UNIVERSITY
April 9, 2025

The Academic Council met at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 via Teams videoconferencing technology, with Professor Kim Winkle, presiding.

The following members of the council were present:

Dr. Thomas Payne
Dr. Kumar Yelamarthi
Dr. Daren Snider
Dr. Jennifer Shank
Dr. Lisa Zagumny
Dr. Darron Smith
Dr. Lee Ann Shipley
Dr. Ciana Bowhay
Dr. Mark Creter
Dr. Brian O'Connor
Dr. Hyewon Park
Dr. Melissa Comer
Dr. Syed Rafay Hasan
Dr. Kexin Xu
Dr. Ann Manginelli

Dr. Matt Langford
Ms. Megan Atkinson
Dr. Amy Hill
Dr. Linda Null
Dr. Brenda Wilson
Dr. Mustafa Rajabali
Dr. Krystal Kennedy
Dr. Lenly Weathers
Ms. Cheyenne Bare
Ms. Kashaina Nucum

Others present were:

Dr. Lori Bruce
Dr. Julie Baker
Dr. Sharon Huo
Dr. Bedelia Russell
Dr. Holly Anthony
Dr. Stephen Robinson
Dr. Curtis Armstrong

Dr. Melinda Anderson
Dr. Chris Wilson
Dr. Allan Mills
Dr. Steven Frye
Dr. Indranil Bhattacharya

The following members of the council were absent:

Dr. Scott Christen
Dr. Mike Gotcher
Professor Joshua Field
Dr. Ka Grimes
Dr. Christy Killman
Dr. Alfred Kalyanapu
Dr. Jennifer Mabry
Dr. Amber Spears
Dr. Yi Peng
Mr. Harrison Simpson
Ms. Kathryn Dye

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Approval of the Agenda

Approval of Minutes from the March 12, 2025 meeting

2024-2025 Annual Reports

General Education Committee Procedures

General Education History Requirement Delegated Authority Request

General Education Curriculum Changes

Policy 205 Faculty Tenure (Second Reading)

Policy 206 Faculty Promotion (Second Reading)

Agriculture, Name Change – “Agronomy and Soils” concentration to “Agronomy and Precision Agriculture”

Physics

Name Change – “Physics” concentration to “Pure Physics” concentration

New concentration – “Astrophysics”

New concentration – “Computational Physics

Decision Sciences and Management, Name Change – “Operations, Logistics, and Supply Chain Management” to “Operations and Supply Chain Management”

Human Ecology Certificates: Substance Misuse Prevention & Specialist Pre-Child Life

Electrical and Computer Engineering M.S. Thesis Credit Hours

General and Industrial Engineering new M.S. Program

English Admission Requirement change for Creative Writing Concentration

College of Business Reduction in Agribusiness Certificate

Policy 102 University Committees (Second Reading)

Policy 207: Tenured Faculty (First Reading)

Such Other Matters

Adjournment

Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from the March 12, 2025 Meeting

Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

2024-2025 Annual Reports

All reports were approved and seconded. Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

General Education Committee Procedures

Dr. Linda Null presented an *extensive discussion regarding the number of credit hours proposed for the new “Scientific Reasoning” category especially the number of credit hours proposed for the new “Historical Foundations” category*. Dr. Anthony emphasized that the committee used Tennessee Tech University’s mission as a guiding principle in design of the new categories and credit hours required for each. She further stated that the committee had provided several opportunities for feedback over the past couple of years and was unlikely to change the current recommendation. After much discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

General Education History Requirement Delegated Authority Request

Dr. Holly Anthony explained a request for delegated authority from the TN Tech Board of Trustees to exempt students from the Tenn. Code requirement (six hours of American History) if they have successfully completed an American History course in high school (as many other universities have already done). Hours required in Historical Foundations changing from “6 hours” to “3 to 6 hours” After much discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously

General Education Curriculum Changes

Dr. Holly Anthony stated TN Tech’s Strategic Plan identifies “creating a Tech-unique general education curriculum to provide the foundation for technologically adept, analytically capable, and career-ready graduates” as a priority action. The General Education Vision Committee (2023–24) conducted 27 Town Hall Open Forums and a campus-wide survey (1,200+ respondents) and recommended: Vision Committee (VC) Recommendation: Rename the current categories/buckets for General Education courses such that no name is the same as a department/unit on campus. Categories whose names mirror those of departments (e.g., Mathematics, History, Communication) may convey a message that only those departments can offer courses within that category/bucket. More inclusive category/bucket names should make it clearer that any department can propose courses within a bucket (provided that the proposed course is aligned to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) aligned with that category/bucket) After much discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED at seventy- eight percent.

Policy 205 Faculty Tenure (Second Reading)

Dr. Lisa Zagumny highlighted a few of the changes. One change was to differentiate “research/creative activity” and scholarship. In the original policy, it was stated as “research/scholarship/creative activity”, and time was spent defining each term. It was decided that scholarship is different from research and creative activity. Research and creative activity were the initial stages of inquiry to learn and examine while scholarship was the dissemination of that research or creative activity. This was as broken down into separate terms so that candidates who read the policy would understand the distinction between the three. Dr. Brian O’Connor motioned to replace the pronoun “they” with “he, she” to align with other policies, motion did not pass. Dr. Linda Null motioned to remove the word “devolve” and replace it with “shall move forward”, motion passed. After much discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED at eighty- six percent.

Policy 206 Faculty Promotion (Second Reading)

Dr. Lisa Zagumny highlighted a few of the changes. One change was to differentiate “research/creative activity” and scholarship. In the original policy, it was stated as “research/scholarship/creative activity”, and time was spent defining each term. It was decided that scholarship is different from research and creative activity. Research and creative activity were the initial stages of inquiry to learn and examine while scholarship was the dissemination of that research or creative activity. This was as broken down into separate terms so that candidates who read the policy would understand the distinction between the three. After much discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED at eighty-five percent.

Agriculture, Name Change – “Agronomy and Soils” concentration to “Agronomy and Precision Agriculture”

Dr. Ciana Bowhay stated agronomy careers are expected to grow by 5% by 2029. Between 2023 and 2031, the global precision agriculture job market has an expected 10-12% compound annual growth rate and a \$22 billion valuation. Precision agriculture relies on GPS and GIS technologies to improve production efficiency and promote environmental stewardship. Additionally, graduates will benefit from

the hands-on applications of these technologies by using unmanned aerial systems to capture, analyze, and interpret agronomic data. The new Agronomy & Precision Agriculture (AP A) concentration gives TN Tech a competitive advantage by providing hands-on application and expertise for graduates to enter the precision ag sector with advanced working knowledge of both agronomy and precision agriculture technologies. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Physics Name Change – “Physics” concentration to “Pure Physics” concentration New concentration – “Astrophysics” New concentration – “Computational Physics

Dr. Stephen Robinson stated we are removing CHEM 1120 and MATH 4510 to accommodate the increase in credit hours of three of our new courses and the addition of the PHYS 3021 Modern Physics laboratory. Reducing the number of hours of physics courses thus allowing students to obtain a minor in another science/engineering discipline or interdisciplinary combination of courses from multiple departments. In order to provide more flexibility for our majors and to address the increased interest in astrophysics, we are proposing to create a new concentration in Astrophysics. We are leveraging the Astronomy minor and have created an additional 3 courses to round out concentration which are all upper-division courses. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Decision Sciences and Management, Name Change – “Operations, Logistics, and Supply Chain Management” to “Operations and Supply Chain Management”

Dr. Curtis Armstrong stated based on an analysis of the industry's use of the term, logistics is considered a component of supply chain management. Therefore, we request that the title of the concentration be updated. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Human Ecology Certificates: Substance Misuse Prevention & Specialist Pre-Child Life

Dr. Melinda Anderson stated the Pre-Child Life Certificate will provide undergraduate students in the School of Human Ecology's Human Development and Family Science Concentration foundational courses to be best prepared to pursue a child life degree at the graduate level. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Electrical and Computer Engineering M.S. Thesis Credit Hours

Dr. Syed Hasan stated most of our peer institutions have a 30 credit-hour M.S. thesis program. This will create a uniform degree requirement and level the field with them. Additionally, increasing the research and thesis hours will allow students to put more focus on their research. It is anticipated that this change will help in increasing the master's enrollment in the ECE department. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

General and Industrial Engineering new M.S. Program

Dr. Chris Wilson stated Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE) remains an important field of engineering. Within the State of Tennessee, knowledge of ISE subjects is very much sought after in industry. The General & Basic Engineering Department was renamed as General & Industrial Engineering to help meet such needs. The department already houses a minor in ISE and the MS in Engineering Management (MSEM). After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

English Admission Requirement change for Creative Writing Concentration

Dr. Linda Null stated this change allows for students applying from majors other than English and for working professionals to become part of the program and in turn, opens a way to increase enrollment. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

College of Business Reduction in Agribusiness Certificate

Dr. Thomas Payne motioned to retract the item from the agenda. Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED.

Policy 102 University Committees (Second Reading)

Dr. Sharon Huo stated two committees reporting to Academic Council were updated. An update was made to the University Curriculum Committee name within the policy, as it had been referred to as the Curriculum Committee. A new standing committee, the General Education Committee, was added. The Faculty Development Steering Committee was moved under the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The new Export Control Committee was added to committees that report to Administrative Council. The committee formerly known as Faculty and Staff Traffic Appeals Committee was updated to its new name, Non-Student Citation Appeals Committee. The new Radiation Safety Committee was added to committees that report to Administrative Council as well. A line was revised to clarify the structure and committees reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs: Academic Calendar Committee, the newly added Center Stage Committee, Faculty Development Steering Committee, and Outstanding Faculty Awards Committee. After little discussion Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Policy 207: Tenured Faculty (First Reading)

Dr. Bedelia Russell stated the proposed revisions included annual evaluation and review processes for tenured faculty, an effort to make remediation efforts explicit, alignment with current evaluation practice and language, expanded definitions to assist with clarity of narrative sections, and the addition of headings to align with the narrative for each section of the policy. Some additional items considered were the removal of specific dates to use timelines instead, clarified scope and step in review process, and alignment with relevant revisions to Policy No. 205. Faculty Improvement Assessment is now referred to as Peer Review Committee (PRC). In Section VIII, four main heading sections were added for clarity along with editorial changes. Policy No. 207 was being reviewed parallel to Policy No. 205 to modify definitions within the policy. The committee members reviewing the policy were all tenured faculty members and the review process included going through line by line.

Such Other Matters

Dr. Lisa Zagumny nominated Professor Kim Winkle to serve as chairperson for the upcoming year and Dr. Linda Null seconded. APPROVED unanimously.

Adjournment

Dr. Lisa Zagumny MOVED approval and Dr. Mustafa Rajabali SECONDED. APPROVED unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Amy McCoy, Recorder

Documents on file with the minutes:
All documents presented at the meeting

