



TECH TOMORROW

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022

Annual Report

Overview

When Tennessee Tech completed its strategic plan, Tech Tomorrow, in summer 2018, it was a blueprint to provide the university with a clear strategic direction. Dean Thomas Payne and Dean Lisa Zagumny, who led the strategic planning process, put it best in calling it a “living document ... a tool to guide our actions, examine our progress, and measure our success.”

For many organizations, this would have been the stopping place, but that is not the Tech way. Four faculty members were appointed as working group chairs, one for each goal, and committees were formed to begin work on these goals. The Implementation Steering Committee offers feedback on proposals, strives to remove implementation roadblocks, evaluates proposals and schedules prioritization for implementation of proposals. (See Appendix 1 for a list of 2021-2022 ISC members.)

Their actions shape the priorities and actions of the university as we build the Tennessee Tech of tomorrow.

Executive Summary

This year saw the appointment of four new working group faculty leaders:

- Lenly Weathers, Education for Life
- Holly Anthony, Innovation in All We Do
- Tom Timmerman, Exceptional Stewardship
- Jeremy Blair, Engagement for Impact

This spring, we began a campus engagement campaign to reintroduce Tech Tomorrow to the campus as we come out of the pandemic and to introduce it to new faculty and staff who have joined us since its launch.

Meetings

No meetings of the full Implementation Steering Committee were held this year.

Weekly meetings of the four new working group faculty leaders began in the spring. Meetings of two of the budget subcommittees established under this plan also occurred this year: the Emerging Opportunities and Threats, and Facilities and Infrastructure.

A presentation about Tech Tomorrow was given to the Division of Student Affairs Leadership Team.

Working Group Faculty Leaders

This past year, the four original working group faculty leaders all fulfilled their commitment to the university with regards to Tech Tomorrow. In an email to faculty and staff members, President Phil Oldham said:

“I want to thank the first four faculty leaders of the Tech Tomorrow working groups, as well as the more than 50 faculty and staff members who made up these groups, for their work. The four leaders – **Ed Lisic** (Department of Chemistry), **Jason Beach** (Department of Curriculum and Instruction), **Ann Davis** (Department of Accounting) and **Bedelia Russell** (Whitson-Hester School of Nursing) – put all of their expertise and talents to use in helping to implement the Tech Tomorrow plan in a way that positively impacted our students.”

Four new faculty members have accepted appointment to lead the working groups as we continue to implement Tech Tomorrow.

Strategic Goal One: Education for Life

Tennessee Tech provides education that unleashes the potential and passion within our students and prepares them for successful careers and culturally enriched lives. Tech also provides educational opportunities, programs, credentials, and degrees to fuel the lifelong learning necessary for enduring achievement.



Lenly Weathers, associate professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering, has been named the faculty leader for the Tech Tomorrow Education for Life goal.

“As the team leader for Education for Life, I am eager to reach out to students, faculty, staff and administrators to promote the priorities under this facet of Tech Tomorrow by improving current practices or creating new ones,” Weathers said. “This will mean continuing to evolve a Tech-unique general education curriculum to provide the foundation for technologically adept, analytically capable, career-ready graduates. Expanding the diversity of our student population is also a priority of Education for Life, as is the related goal of developing each student’s global awareness in our increasingly interconnected, global society.

“This will also mean seeking to broaden and deepen course-related experiential learning opportunities, as well as extracurricular opportunities like CISE (Creative Inquiry Summer Experience) grants, study abroad, internships co-ops, and service learning.

“I look forward to working with the greater Tech community to make Education for Life a vital component of Tech Tomorrow.”

Strategic Goal Two: Innovation in All We Do

Tennessee Tech innovates in all we do, embracing and deploying our technological foundation in our education, research, service, and stewardship.



Holly Anthony, professor of mathematics education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, has been named the faculty leader for the Tech Tomorrow Innovation in All We Do goal.

“Strategic planning is key to moving an institution towards a future that is imagined but not yet fulfilled,” Anthony said. “I am excited to be invited to play a role in that movement. I have seen a number of really good ideas come to fruition in my tenure at Tech and I have seen other really good ideas get lost in the daily grind. It is my hope to bring life to ideas that will put Tech at the forefront of innovation in academia.

“Tech Tomorrow is a dynamic strategic plan that is powered by the people for whom it is most impactful: students, faculty, staff, and the university. It will be a privilege to meet with faculty and students, hear their ideas for innovation in all we do, and work to develop those ideas into initiatives and programs that guide us towards excellence.

“Tech is a wonderful place to work, study, and grow. And, innovation should be at the heart of everything. It is an honor to be working with a team of visionaries who share a passion for seeing TTU innovate in all we do. I am ready for the challenge!”

Strategic Goal Three: Exceptional Stewardship

Tennessee Tech is committed to optimizing resources and continuously improving effectiveness, efficiency, and return on investment for students.



Tom Timmerman, professor and chair of the Department of Decision Sciences and Management in the College of Business, has been named the faculty leader for the Tech Tomorrow Exceptional Stewardship goal.

“Tennessee Tech is widely known for its great return-on-investment for students,” Timmerman said. “Our graduates receive well-paying jobs for the modest price they pay for a Tech education. I’m very proud of this reputation and believe that it is a key strategic strength of the university.

“So how do we maintain this strength? We must continue to provide high value to students through high-quality programs, faculty and services. But we must provide these things while also minimizing unnecessary costs. I’m happy to lead the Exceptional Stewardship Working Group in an effort to continuously find ways to provide value to our students while controlling costs. We have an outstanding group of faculty, administrators and students with great ideas for achieving this goal and I look forward to working with them.”

Strategic Goal Four: Engagement for Impact

Tennessee Tech fosters partnerships with government, business, and non-profit organizations to advance economic and workforce development, create and disseminate knowledge, serve the public good, and generate cultural impact.



Jeremy Blair, assistant professor of art education in the School of Art, Craft and Design, has been named the faculty leader for the Tech Tomorrow Engagement for Impact goal.

“I am so excited to serve on the Tech Tomorrow Strategic Planning team,” Blair said. “As the new faculty lead for Engagement for Impact, I look forward to fostering innovative partnerships, developing engaging programs, and building bridges across campus that empower our students and university.

“Tech Tomorrow provides a unique opportunity for me to collaborate across disciplines, explore new directions and infrastructures, and dream without boundaries. Speaking with today’s students and faculty inspires me to serve Tech Tomorrow creatively and reimagine the future of Tennessee Tech.”

He served on the previous Innovation in All We Do working group, as well as on the Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge committee.



Campus Engagement & Relaunch

This spring, we began a campus engagement campaign to reintroduce Tech Tomorrow to the campus as we come out of the pandemic and to introduce it to new faculty and staff who have joined us since its launch.

- A series of four Tech Tomorrow messages from President Oldham were posted to his blog and emailed to all faculty and staff members at Tech. These messages served as a way to reintroduce the campus to Tech Tomorrow by announcing the four new working group faculty leaders, highlighting previous efforts (by both working groups and independent offices around campus), and challenging members of the campus community to make Tech Tomorrow part of their planning, thinking and doing.
 - *A new day for Tech Tomorrow*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/president/a-new-day-for-tech-tomorrow/>
 - *What have we done, part 1*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/president/tech-tomorrow-what-have-we-done-part-1/>
 - *What have we done, part 2*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/president/tech-tomorrow-what-have-we-done-part-2/>
 - *What's next for Tech Tomorrow?*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/president/whats-next-for-tech-tomorrow/>
- Posts were published in Tech Times about each of the four new faculty leaders
 - *Lenly Weather*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/techtimes/2022/administration/meet-the-tech-tomorrow-faculty-leaders-lenly-weathers-education-for-life/>
 - *Holly Anthony*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/techtimes/2022/administration/meet-the-tech-tomorrow-faculty-leaders-holly-anthony-innovation-in-all-we-do/>
 - *Tom Timmerman*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/techtimes/2022/administration/meet-the-tech-tomorrow-faculty-leaders-tom-timmerman-exceptional-stewardship/>
 - *Jeremy Blair*
<https://blogs.tntech.edu/techtimes/2022/administration/meet-the-tech-tomorrow-faculty-leaders-jeremy-blair-engagement-for-impact/>
- The Tech Tomorrow website (www.tntech.edu/strategic) was revamped
- A Qualtrics form (https://tntech.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5pThNQkBDrPW1M1) was created to allow users to submit ideas for the working groups or efforts they or their unit have undertaken independently

Diversity Initiatives

- **Created cabinet-level position of Chief Diversity Officer for the university**
- **Completed first phase of the Diversity Scholarship fundraising initiative**
 - \$2 million raised (“unheard of” for schools comparative to Tech)
 - Second phase in development now
- **Established the Diversity Champions group in spring 2021**
 - Diversity Equity Access Council’s existing members rolled into champions group, others were identified by Tech’s vice presidents and deans
 - Racial and ethnic diversity champions will facilitate and promote diversity and inclusion efforts for their area while also being a resource or reference for racial and ethnic concerns involving diversity, equity, and inclusion. They will be the key person in addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues within their respective areas.
 - Currently developing a university strategic diversity plan
- **Student diversity recruitment efforts**
 - Added dedicated underrepresented population admissions recruiter
 - Established RACE TO TECH event, which is geared to bring students of color to campus with a tailored experience; held once per semester; yield rate more than 50% for students who came to these events
 - Has helped to target markets for the traveling Tech to You events
 - Identified 40 diverse Tennessee high schools to target for student recruitment
 - Establish camp opportunity to bring rising 10th-12th grad students to Tech
 - Initial effort is to support the expansion of a camp already in place at Tech: the Explorations in Engineering & Computing camp, a week-long camp to engage students through hands-on projects taught by Tech’s faculty members
 - Targeted to students from underrepresented ethnic and cultural groups and those that will be first-generation college students
 - Previous camps have had about 25 students each year; for this year (2022), the target was 50 students; capacity has been expanded to accept 75 students based on the fact that there has been a record number of applications (more than 250 as of April 5)
 - Future camp, as presented to the Board of Trustees, is a Leadership Camp that is not tied to a specific college.
- **Faculty and Staff Diversity**
 - Exploring partnership with CITL to purchase university membership in National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (<https://www.facultydiversity.org/>) to provide resources and mentor opportunities

Master Plan

The new Tennessee Tech Master Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees at its March 2022 meeting, is greatly informed by the Tech Tomorrow strategic plan. It uses the core principles, mission and vision statements, the four strategic goals, and the 2025 metric goals as a foundation for laying out a comprehensive tool for planning in the future.

From the Master Plan's executive summary:

The plan supports current and future institutional goals and initiatives that strive to enhance academic quality, improve student collaborative learning, and continue the overall beautification of campus. The proposed strategies and recommendations provide a blueprint for flexible growth that allows [Tech] to achieve the following objectives:

- Elevate perception of the campus to help recruit students and faculty and engage alumni and donors
- Develop an engaging environment to encourage students to remain on campus
- Maintain the academic core by locating all learning facilities within the central district
- Enhance the Historic Quadrangle by defining renovation and repurposing strategies
- Enhance and create campus greenspace with expanded and interconnected linking of quadrangles
- Relocate parking from the campus core by distributing lots around the perimeter of campus
- Develop strategically located parking garages
- Promote a pedestrian and bike friendly campus with reduced vehicular circulation
- Strengthen the campus perimeter to create a clear and perceivable boundary for the University
- Create a “front door” to the campus from the Seventh Street and Willow Avenue intersection and from the approach onto the campus along University Drive.
- Continue the progressive rehabilitation of aging buildings and infrastructure

Grand Challenge

Tech publicly launched the Rural Reimagined grand challenge in Spring 2019. Rural Reimagined has an existing steering committee and is led by Michael Aikens, director of the Tennessee Tech Center for Rural Innovation. Since March 2019, Rural Reimagined has impacted 44 Tennessee counties, interacted with over 3,000 community members, faculty, staff and students, has created over 100 community partnerships, has accumulated 50,000 student service-learning/volunteer hours, and has activated more than \$8 million in rural-related grant funds. In 2021, Rural Reimagined received a national award in recognition of its work. And, for the first time, Gov. Lee's budget proposal for 2022-2023 includes \$1 million dollars in funding for Rural Reimagined. <https://www.tntech.edu/grand-challenge/>

Community Engagement Carnegie Classification

As a result of its Tech Tomorrow efforts, the university is seeking the Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification for Community Engagement during the current 2024 cycle.

The Carnegie Foundation defines community engagement as:

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

Especially in regards to Rural Reimagined, along with other initiatives across Tennessee Tech, we feel that the university not only meets the Carnegie definition of community engagement, but would be a leader in this space.

Dewayne Wright, executive director of strategic planning, and Lisa Zagumny, dean of the College of Education, have been asked to lead this effort by President Oldham.

Key dates:

- Application deadline: May 1, 2023; Campus notified: December 2023; Public Announcement: January 2024

2025 Goals

In summer 2019, President Oldham set out goals for the university to reach by 2025. The original announcement can be found at <https://blogs.tntech.edu/president/where-will-we-be-in-2025/>.

Numbers for these goals are tracked each year, with the final numbers to be reported at the start of the 2026 academic year to accommodate goals requiring data calculated after the end of the 2025 academic year.

These goals were all set pre-pandemic.

- 12,000 total headcount enrollment
- 22% minority enrollment
- 82% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate
- 50% 4-year graduation rate
- 60% 6-year graduation rate
- \$40 million annually in sponsored research
- Growth of online programs
- Strengthen career development
- Be recognized as the champion and center of excellence regarding the future of rural Tennessee communities

Goal	2018-2019 Baseline	2021-2022 Current	+/-
12,000 total headcount enrollment	10,186	9,840	-346
22% Minority Enrollment	16.00%	17.74%	+1.74%
82% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate	75.00%	72.90%	-2.10%
50% 4-year graduation rate	34.60%	35.40%	+0.80%
60% 6-year graduation rate	55.10%	59.90%	+4.80%
\$40 million annually in sponsored research*	\$20.23M	\$22.77M*	+\$2.54M

* Sponsored research current is 2020-2021; 2021-2022 amount available late summer 2022

Appendix 1: *Implementation Steering Committee*

Phil Oldham, President

Lori Mann Bruce, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Jeff Boles, Chairperson, Department of Chemistry (Faculty Liaison)

Brandon Johnson, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Career Placement

Karen Lykins, Chief Communication Officer

Tom Payne, Dean, College of Business

Claire Stinson, Vice President of Finance and Planning

Holly Stretz, Professor, Chemical Engineering (Faculty Senate)

Jennifer Taylor, Vice President of Research and Economic Development

Lee Wray, Chief of Staff

Dewayne Wright, Executive Director, Strategic Planning

Lisa Zagumny, Dean, College of Education



