

# TECH TOMORROW STRATEGIC PLAN

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2024

Annual Report





# Executive Summary

Each of the four strategic goals has a faculty member who leads efforts that fall under that goal.

Lenly Weathers, Education for Life

Holly Anthony, Innovation in All We Do

Tom Timmerman, Exceptional Stewardship

Jeremy Blair, Engagement for Impact

Each faculty leader identifies ad hoc committees or task forces based on the expertise needed for the initiative or priority action at hand (instead of general committees formed for each goal).

## Meetings

The faculty leaders meet weekly. They also meet monthly with President Oldham and have met once each semester with Provost Mann Bruce.

They also met with nearly all of the colleges and schools early in the fall semester, primarily at faculty meetings prior to the start of classes.

No meetings of the full Implementation Steering Committee were held this year, but documentation of the topics the faculty leaders were interested in pursuing was distributed to ISC members as a way to inform them of the work being done and to solicit feedback.

## Alignment of Program and Student Learning Outcomes

Institutional Effectiveness' outcome template allows units to align Program and Student Learning Outcomes with Strategic Priorities. The table below details the number of outcomes associated with a Tech Tomorrow Strategic Priority for each of the Institutional Effectiveness areas.

Priority Action	Academic Programs	Academic & Student Services	Administrative Support Services	All
1.A	98	23	9	130
1.B	29	10	8	47
1.C	13	14	6	33
1.D	53	30	6	89
1.E	31	4	3	38
2.A	47	14	14	75
2.B	126	7	22	155
2.C	11	3	5	19
2.D	9	11	6	26
3.A	22	57	24	103
3.B	2	0	5	7
3.C	1	2	8	11
4.A	8	10	16	34
4.B	72	14	5	91
4.C	17	7	8	32
4.D	4	5	10	19
4.E	0	3	6	9

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# Education for Life

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*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.*

## Faculty Lead

**Lenly Weathers**, professor of civil engineering, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering

## Curricular Learning Communities

Due to problems with registration, last year's pilot of the curricular learning communities was delayed until the Fall 2024 incoming class. During this year, the task force worked to discover what caused the problem and to come up how to overcome it for this year. A revised plan was developed and the pilot will go forward this year, with groups of freshman students in the following areas: College of Business, College of Engineering, and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies.

This is also aligned with strategic goal 3 (Exceptional Stewardship).

### Task Force

- Lenly Weathers (chair)
- Julie Baker, Interim Associate Provost, Academics & Operations
- Tony Baker, Professor of English, Director of First-Year Composition Program
- Brandi Fletcher, Director of Records & Registration
- Allan Mills, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
- Allen Mullis, Executive Director of Student Success
- Kumar Yelamarthi, Associate Dean, College of Engineering

## Microcredentials & Digital Badges

Tech Tomorrow calls for the development of “innovative, stackable credentials.” While certificates have been developed at the graduate-school level as a stair-step for programs, this group will examine how Tech could utilize microcredentials and digital badges to help students through industry-specific or transferable skills badges or credentials, along with providing continuing education avenues for non-traditional learners.

This is also aligned with strategic goal 4 (Engagement for Impact).

### Task Force

- Lenly Weathers (chair)
- Kumar Yelamarthi, Associate Dean, College of Engineering
- Julie Galloway, Director, Student Success Center, College of Business
- Steven Frye, Director, College of Interdisciplinary Studies
- Kelvin Norman, Senior Coordinator, Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning
- Kevin Harris, Associate Director, Institutional Assessment, Research & Effectiveness

# 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.*

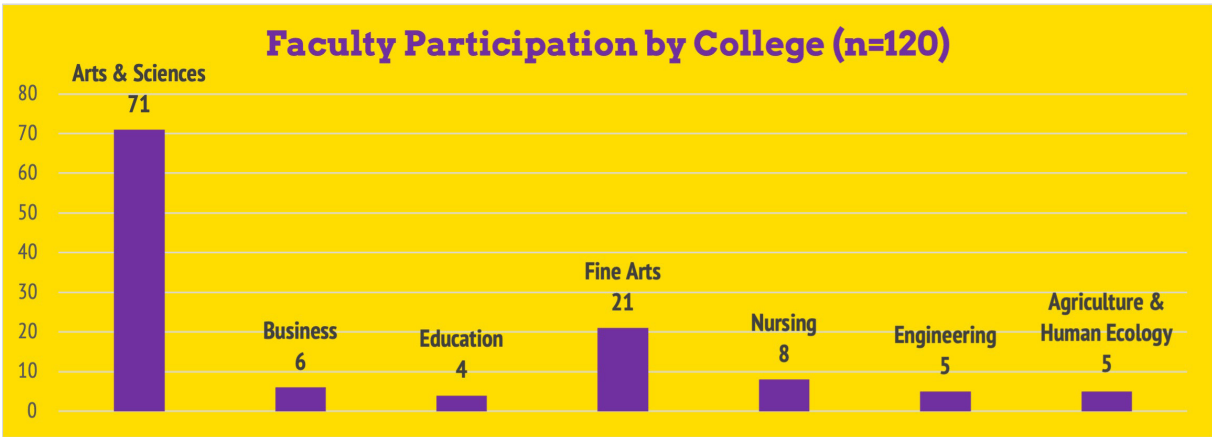
## Faculty Lead

**Holly Anthony**, professor of mathematics education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education

## General Education Vision Committee

<https://www.tntech.edu/strategic/gen-ed-vision.php>

The Gen Ed Vision Committee hosted 27 town halls about future possibilities of Tech’s gen ed program. Participants included 120 faculty members, 58 students, and 45 staff members. Committee leaders also met with academic advisors, the SGA, the Faculty Senate, select freshman classes, and academic departments/units on request.



Information learned during these town halls was used to prepare a survey instrument – in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Effectiveness – which was administered early in the spring 2024 semester. There were more than 2,000 respondents to the survey, which was sent to students, faculty and staff members, alumni and industry representatives. Students made up the largest population of respondents at nearly 64%. Likewise, the greatest percentage of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry representatives came from the College of Engineering at 27.6%.

Surveyed Group	Respondents
Student	1,301
Faculty	266
Staff or Admin	195
Alumni	223
Stakeholder/Industry Representative	52

The committee is wrapping up its work and preparing a final report to be handed off to the next committee, which will delve into the development of possible paths to execute the vision.

Documents and summaries created and used by the committee are available at the committee's website (<https://www.tntech.edu/strategic/gen-ed-vision.php>).

#### Committee

- Holly Anthony (co-chair)
- Allan Mills (co-chair), Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
- Steven Anton, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering
- Heather Bertram, Student, College of Education
- Jeremy Blair, Associate Professor of Art Education (Engagement for Impact faculty lead)
- Kent Dollar, Chair of History
- Helen Hunt, Associate Professor of English
- Samantha Hutson, Assistant Professor of Human Ecology
- Jeanette Luna, Chair of Earth Sciences
- Linda Null, Professor of English, chair of the General Education Committee
- Richard Pirkle, Senior Instructor of Biology
- Lenly Weathers, Professor of Civil Engineering (Education for Life faculty lead)

## **One-to-One Technology Committee**

This committee is examining the feasibility of a one-to-one technology initiative at Tennessee Tech.

The committee's early discussions focused on how to best accomplish providing a similar student technology service to all students. The two avenues are: (1) Issuing a device to all students; and (2) Providing a client-based service that will deliver university-licensed software to a student's personal device.

The committee will be hosting Apple on campus to discuss possible solutions as part of the committee's fact-finding.

#### Committee

- Holly Anthony (chair)
- Michael Allen, Professor of Mathematics
- Jason Beach, Director of the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning
- Scott Christen, Associate Professor of Communication
- Ismail Fidan, Professor of Manufacturing Engineering Technology
- Steven Frye, Director of School of Interdisciplinary Studies
- Will Hoffert, Director of Academic & Client Technologies, ITS
- Barbara Jared, Director of Nursing
- Lloyd Jones, Coordinator, ITS
- Krystal Kennedy, Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction
- Brian Seiler, Associate Vice President of Information Technology Services
- Jennifer Shank, Dean, College of Fine Arts
- Susmit Shannigrahi, Assistant Professor of Computer Science
- Kyle Turner, Assistant Professor of Decision Sciences & Management

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# Exceptional Stewardship

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

## Faculty Lead

**Tom Timmerman**, Professor and the Mayberry Chair of the Department of Decision Sciences and Management, College of Business

## Enrollment Data Analytics Task Force

This task force was assembled to leverage university expertise in business intelligence and analytics in the College of Business faculty and senior capstone students. The task force provided data that was analyzed by students and faculty to produce insights relevant to student retention. Some of the potentially actionable findings included:

Students from some high schools have better retention rates than others, suggesting that some high schools might be better recruiting targets than others.

Retention rates vary by College, suggesting that college-level retention needs may differ.

Retention rates vary by Pell Grant status and first-generation status, suggesting that some students may need to be provided with additional support.

### Task Force

- Tom Timmerman (chair)
- Curtis Armstrong, Professor of Decision Sciences & Management
- Allen Mullis, Executive Director of Student Success
- Judy Riggsbee, Senior Director of Enrollment Data & Systems

## University Compensation Study

Tennessee Tech engaged the services of a professional consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the compensation levels and structure among faculty and staff. As a major determinant of the attraction and retention of talented employees, the compensation plan plays a key role in driving the effectiveness and efficiency of employees' daily work. Several key outcomes and insights were gained from the study:

- The consulting firm proposed a new job and career structure for staff jobs that should clarify roles and career paths.
- Across the university, faculty salaries lag regional peers by 5%. Some Colleges lag their peers by significantly more than 5%.
- Across the university, staff salaries lag regional peers by 16%.
- Plans are in place to address these issues over the next few years.

## New Initiatives

Additional projects related to stewardship are being pursued including:

Additional analytics projects related to enrollment, retention, and the Launchpad Advising Center; an interactive dashboard to promote budget understanding and transparency; feasibility of an Asset Management System to better track and maintain the physical assets on campus.

[www.tntech.edu/strategic](http://www.tntech.edu/strategic)

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# Engagement for Impact

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*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.*

## Faculty Lead

**Jeremy Blair**, associate professor of art education, School of Art, Craft and Design, College of Fine Arts

## Center for Global Experiences

The Center for Global Experience will be an all-inclusive global research and learning hub for both faculty and students. The Center's leadership develops, facilitates, and supports study abroad opportunities, student and faculty exchanges, international teaching residencies, sustainable global partnerships, international recruiting, and new global degree programs. The Center for Global Experiences identifies workforce and business development opportunities, encourages global entrepreneurship, provides cultural enrichment for students, and sparks a lifelong spirit of exploration.

The Office of Study Abroad has officially changed its name to the Center for Global Experiences. Currently, we are in the process of evaluating and enhancing the mission, vision, services, partnerships, spaces, staffing, and funding to maximize the impact of the newly established Center for Global Experiences.

### Task Force

- Jeremy Blair (chair)
- Julie Baker, Interim Associate Provost, Academics & Operations
- Mahalah Boone, Student, College of Business
- Julia Costa, Student, College of Arts & Sciences
- Melissa Geist, Professor, Whitson-Hester School of Nursing
- Amy Miller, Director, Center for Global Experiences
- Gabriel Porteiro, Student, College of Engineering
- Lenly Weathers, Professor, Civil Engineering

## Art, Culture & Innovation Program

This initiative is currently in the early feedback stage. We are developing concepts such as specialized campus tours that connect art, campus collections, and the city of Cookeville. Additionally, we are discussing designing printed signs and digital graphics for campus monitors to showcase student works, as well as exploring methods to display student works and innovations on campus. While a task force for this initiative has not been officially formed at this time, faculty and staff from across campus have been involved in these early discussions.

### Task Force

No task force or committee has been formed yet.





ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR  
**2019 – 2023**



# COLLABORATIVELY

EXAMINING AND ADDRESSING RURAL TENNESSEE'S  
MOST CHALLENGING ISSUES

**\$36M** IN RESEARCH  
ACTIVITY

**24** RURAL TOURISM  
PROJECTS

**5,000** STUDENTS,  
COMMUNITY, AND  
FACULTY ENGAGED

**650** SMALL BUSINESSES  
AND ENTREPRENEURS  
ASSISTED

**7** DISTRESSED COUNTIES HELPED WITH RESEARCH,  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TOURISM

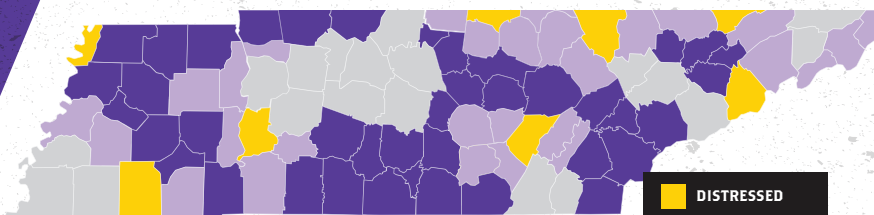
**67** RURAL COUNTIES  
HELPED

**900** TOTAL RURAL  
PROJECTS

**800** JOBS CREATED  
OR RETAINED

## TRANSFORMING RURAL LIVING

THROUGH SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,  
INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



**OUR FY 2025 GOAL**  
TO SERVE **ALL 76 RURAL COUNTIES** IN TENNESSEE

■ DISTRESSED  
■ AT-RISK  
■ TRANSITIONAL

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ENERGY  
PUBLIC SAFETY **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
ADDICTION AGRICULTURE POVERTY INFRASTRUCTURE  
**RURAL TRANSFORMATION** MENTAL HEALTH  
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ELECTRIC VEHICLES CYBER SECURITY  
**HEALTHCARE** TOURISM JOB CREATION  
PUBLIC SAFETY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**113,000**  
Volunteer/Service Hours

**\$300,000**  
Faculty Grants Awarded

**\$2.5B+**  
In Analysis of Economic Impact  
On Public and Private Investments

Rural Reimagined  
is powered by the Center  
for Rural Innovation



Center for Rural Innovation  
TENNESSEE TECH

[TnTech.edu/grandchallenge](https://TnTech.edu/grandchallenge)  
[maikens@tnitech.edu](mailto:maikens@tnitech.edu)



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# 2025 Goals

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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	2023-2024 Current	+/-
12,000 total headcount enrollment	10,186	10,117	-69
22% Minority Enrollment	16.00%	21.00%	+5.00%
82% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate	75.00%	77.30%	+2.30%
50% 4-year graduation rate	34.60%	38.40%	+3.80%
60% 6-year graduation rate*	55.20%	54.20%	-1.00%
\$40 million annually in sponsored research	\$20.23M	\$36.36M <sup>†</sup>	+\$16.13M

\* Tech's 6-year graduation rate met the 60% goal for two consecutive years (2021-2022, 2022-2023)

<sup>†</sup> Sponsored research current is 2022-2023; 2023-2024 amount available late summer 2024

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## Appendix 1: *Implementation Steering Committee*

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Phil Oldham, President

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

Lori Mann Bruce, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Karen Lykins, Vice President of Enrollment and Communication

Lori Maxwell, Chair, Sociology & Political Science (Faculty Senate)

Rob Owens, Chief Diversity Officer

Tom Payne, Dean, College of Business

Cynthia Polk-Johnson, Vice President of Student Affairs

Claire Stinson, Vice President of Finance and Planning

Lee Wray, Chief of Staff

Dewayne Wright, Executive Director, Strategic Planning

Lisa Zagumny, Dean, College of Education











Tennessee  
TECH