



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE COMMITTEE October 24, 2024

The Education, Research, and Service Committee of The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees met at 2:00 p.m. (EDT) on Thursday, October 24, 2024. The meeting was held in the Pilot Company Ballroom of the Student Union located at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Committee Members Present: Jamie R. Woodson, Committee Chair; John C. Compton, Board Chair; Elizabeth K. Crawford (Faculty Representative); Charles Hatcher, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Agriculture; Shanea A. McKinney; Lisa N. Patel (Student Representative); and Donald J. Smith.

Other in Attendance:

Trustees: Bradford D. Box, Decosta E. Jenkins; William (Bill) C. Rhodes III; David N. Watson, and T. Lang Wiseman.

University Administration: President Randy Boyd; Bernard Savarese, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Success; Cynthia C. Moore, Board Secretary and Special Counsel; Chancellor Steve Angle (UT Chattanooga); Chancellor Peter Buckley (UT Health Science Center); Chancellor Yancy E. Freeman (UT Martin); Interim Chancellor Linda C. Martin (UT Southern); and Chancellor Donde Plowman (UT Knoxville). In addition, other members of the UT senior leadership and administrative staff were present.

Ms. Moore announced the presence of a quorum. The meeting was webcast for the convenience of the University community, the general public, and the media.

Opening Remarks of the Committee Chair

Committee Chair Jamie Woodson called the meeting to order, expressing gratitude to the UT Knoxville campus for their hospitality. New committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Crawford (UC Foundation Professor and Program Advisor for the Learning and Leadership programs at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) and Lisa N. Patel (an undergraduate student in the Tickle College of Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville) were introduced. Committee Chair Woodson announced a revision to the order of the agenda to prioritize the action items before the presentations.

Proposed New Academic Programs

Occupational Therapy Doctorate, UT Health Science Center. Dr. Cindy Russell, Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs, UT Health Science Center, presented the proposed Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program at the UT Health Science Center. The program will be housed in the College of Health Professions. She highlighted that the program aligns with the University's mission to address workforce shortages in healthcare and ensure Tennessee residents have access to high-quality professional education. The new OTD program will expand enrollment capacity and create more clinical training opportunities.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved a recommendation that the Board of Trustees adopt the Resolution approving the new academic program at the UT Health Science Center, as presented in Tab 3.1 of the meeting materials.

Doctor of Philosophy in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication, UT Knoxville. Dr. John Zomchick, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, UT Knoxville, introduced the proposed Ph.D. in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication in the Herbert College of Agriculture. The program's objective is to prepare students to address social science issues related to food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. Dr. Zomchick explained that the program would prepare future leaders, educators, and researchers in agricultural education and communication, serving Tennessee's farming and rural communities. The Ph.D. program will help train new professionals to fill these roles while enhancing research on agricultural policy and rural development.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved a recommendation that the Board of Trustees adopt the Resolution approving the new academic program at UT Knoxville, as presented in Tab 3.2 of the meeting materials.

Board Policy on Institutional Accreditation

Dr. Jorge Perez, Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, provided an overview of the accreditation process, including the types of accreditations (institutional and programmatic). Dr. Perez reminded the Committee members that all UT campuses are institutionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). He outlined: (i) the key components of the SACSCOC standards; (ii) the steps and timeline associated with the reaffirmation process; and (iii) the reaffirmation schedule for each of the UT campuses. Dr. Perez also commended UT Knoxville for its eligibility for differentiated review, allowing a streamlined evaluation of its academic standards.

Dr. Bernie Savarese, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Success, indicated that Tennessee Public Chapter 868 (2024), requires each governing board of a public institution of higher education to: (i) identify and determine the institutional

accrediting agencies or associations eligible to serve as an accreditor; and (ii) update the institution's policies and practices regarding accreditation to ensure that the institution may freely choose to pursue accreditation by any accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Savarese stated that the proposed Board Policy on Institutional Accreditation is a new policy, which will satisfy the new statutory requirements in advance of the deadline (December 31, 2024).

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved a recommendation that the Board of Trustees adopt the Resolution approving the Board Policy on Institutional Accreditation, as presented in Tab 2 of the meeting materials.

Presentations

Student Success Indicators. Dr. Savarese provided an update on student enrollment trends, noting that UT institutions have outperformed national trends despite FAFSA¹ processing delays and demographic shifts. Dr. Savarese highlighted record-setting student enrollment across the UT System, attributing growth to strong recruitment strategies and expanded student support services. As of Fall 2024, achievements for the UT System included:

- Enrollment reached 62,208 students, an all-time high;
- Enrollment grew by almost 6% over the prior year and by more than 18% over the last five years;
- First-year retention rate increased to 85.5%;
- The four-year graduation rate increased to 52.1%, representing a 4.9% improvement over the last five years;
- The six-year graduation rate is 64.2%, representing a 1.3% improvement over the last five years;
- The number of bachelor's degrees reached 9,853, representing a 14.3% increase over the last five years; and
- The number of graduate and professional degrees reached 4,146, representing a 13.4 increase over the last five years.

Dr. Savarese then provided a more in-depth analysis of the trends at each of the UT campuses. It was explained that the decrease in enrollment at the UT Health Science Center was reflective of a strategic decision to right size the incoming class for the College of Pharmacy. Trustee Shanea McKinney, a graduate of the College of Pharmacy, expressed her appreciation to Chancellor Buckley for the thoughtful approach, which recognizes the changes in the marketplace including the number of pharmacy schools and overall demand for pharmacists.

¹ Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Trustees commended UT's continued progress in student success metrics and emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum in retention and graduation rate improvements. In terms of the information provided, the trustees expressed their interest in learning more about (i) the goals that will be included in the upcoming UT System strategic plan, and (ii) the UT campuses' performance as compared to their aspirational peers. Additionally, a request was made for the Administration to consider how transfers within the UT System should be reflected within the scope of the retention figures.

Research Enterprise. Dr. Savarese began his remarks by introducing Dr. Kari Babski-Reeves, who has joined the UT System and will be serving as Associate Vice President for Research. Dr. Savarese stated that research is an integral aspect of the mission of the University. Research transforms ideas into practical applications that impact and improve lives. UT research expenditures have grown to an all-time high for the eighth consecutive year (\$484 million). While the total number of grant proposals submitted has declined, the grant proposal dollar amounts have increased reflective of a shift toward larger-scale, high-impact research projects. Dr. Savarese provided an update on the adoption and future implementation of components of the Huron Research Suite Solutions application.

Committee Chair Woodson emphasized the importance of the research enterprise in serving Tennesseans and inquired about the needs of the campuses in this area. President Boyd indicated that expanding and upgrading the University's infrastructure is a critical imperative for attracting and retaining high caliber research faculty and increasing the University's research activities.

UT Research Foundation. Dr. Maha Krishnamurthy, President of the UT Research Foundation (UTRF), provided an update to the Committee. She highlighted that UTRF's mission is to translate university research into real-world applications by supporting faculty entrepreneurs, securing patents, licensing technologies, and promoting industry partnerships. Dr. Krishnamurthy reported significant growth in technology commercialization and intellectual property development over the past fiscal year, and she outlined UTRF's strategic priorities to further enhance technology commercialization and research impact. Student Trustee Lisa Patel expressed her appreciation for the entrepreneurial fellowship program.

Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey. Dr. Matt Matthews, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, presented an update on the next administration of the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey, conducted by Harvard University's Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE). The upcoming survey, scheduled for Spring 2025, will be the first instance when all UT campuses have participated at the same time. The survey will be conducted on a triennial basis moving forward. Key areas of focus include workload distribution, research expectations, and compensation satisfaction. Among other things, faculty will be asked to evaluate institutional support for professional growth, department leadership, and overall job fulfillment. The survey will be

distributed to tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty, ensuring a comprehensive representation of faculty perspectives. Survey results are expected by August 2025.

UT Knoxville Digital Learning Initiative. Dr. Bruce Behn, Dean and Chief Executive Officer of Digital Learning, and Dr. Shay Scott, Vice Dean and Chief Operating Officer of Digital Learning, provided an in-depth overview of the UT Knoxville's Digital Learning Initiative, an ambitious effort aimed at expanding flexible, technology-enhanced education. The presentation focused on the market demand, the planned growth in programs, and the collaboration with Arizona State University. The initiative is focused on:

- Expanding online course offerings to accommodate student needs, including working professionals and non-traditional learners;
- Enhancing digital infrastructure to support high-quality virtual and hybrid learning environments; and
- Strengthening faculty support and training to ensure effective digital instruction.

Consent Agenda

Committee Chair Woodson asked if there were any requests to remove an item from the agenda. There being none, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved: (i) the Resolution to adopt the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee; and (ii) the Resolutions pertaining to the other action items included on the Consent Agenda (a complete list of the approved items appears at the end of these minutes).

Other Business and Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Committee, Committee Chair Woodson adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Cynthia C. Moore
Cynthia C. Moore
Secretary and Special Counsel

Approved Consent Agenda Items

- Minutes of the Prior Meetings (June 24, 2024)
- Proposed Academic Program Modification: Bachelor of Science Business Administration in Business Analytics, UT Chattanooga
- Tenure Recommendations Requiring Board Approval
 - Grant of Tenure upon Initial Appointment
 - Grant of Tenure upon Early Consideration

Information Items

- Annual Report on Intercollegiate Athletics
- Education, Research, and Service Committee Work Plan
- Ratification of Administrative Action to Terminate or Inactivate Academic Programs
- Certification of Degrees Conferred

Appendix – Supplemental Materials

- Campus Intercollegiate Athletics Reports:
 - UT Chattanooga
 - UT Knoxville
 - UT Martin
 - UT Southern