



# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

July 1, 2025

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees met at 12:30 p.m. (EDT) on Tuesday, July 1, 2025. The meeting was held in the Wolford Family Athletics Facility at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Trustees Present: John C. Compton, Board Chair; Bradford D. Box; Decosta Jenkins; Shanea McKinney; Lisa Patel (Student Trustee); Christopher L. Patterson; William (Bill) C. Rhodes III; David N. Watson; T. Lang Wiseman; and Jamie R. Woodson.

University Officers in Attendance: President Randy Boyd; Cynthia C. Moore, Board Secretary and Special Counsel; Chancellor Melinda Arnold (UT Southern); Chancellor Lori Mann Bruce (UT Chattanooga); Chancellor Peter Buckley (UT Health Science Center); Chancellor Yancy Freeman (UT Martin); and Chancellor Donde Plowman (UT Knoxville). Other members of the senior leadership and administrative staff were also in attendance.

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.

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### Opening Remarks by the Chair

Board Chair John Compton opened the meeting and welcomed Jason Leonard, Executive Director of The House ministry, who provided the invocation. Chair Compton extended greetings to Chancellor Lori Mann Bruce (UT Chattanooga) and Chancellor Melinda Arnold (UT Southern) and thanked Dr. Robert Dooley for his dedicated leadership as Interim Chancellor at UT Chattanooga since January 2025.

Chair Compton expressed appreciation to outgoing Student Trustee Lisa Patel for her exemplary service and welcomed Ashlee Mallon, the incoming Student Trustee. He also recognized Dr. Elizabeth Crawford, for her service over the prior year as Faculty Representative to the Education, Research, and Service (ERS) Committee, and introduced Dr. Ken Vickers, from UT Southern, as the next Faculty Representative. Chair Compton also commended the Chattanooga campus for its hospitality and remarked on the substantial number of capital improvements underway.

### Requests to Address the Board

Requests to address the Board were heard as part of the Finance and Administration Committee held earlier in the day.

## **President's Address**

President Boyd delivered remarks on the state of the University and provided an update on progress toward the University's ten-year vision, describing 2025 as the midpoint of "The Greatest Decade in the History of the University of Tennessee."

President Boyd's remarks focused on the University's recent achievements, operational highlights, and progress toward its 2030 strategic plan. He described the national environment for higher education as one of "uncertainty but opportunity" and encouraged the University community to "go boldly into the storm" — continuing to advance during challenging times rather than retreating. President Boyd organized his remarks around major strategic themes and provided the following highlights:

### Enrollment and Student Success

- Systemwide enrollment is projected to exceed 65,000 students for Fall 2025 — a 4.8% increase and the largest class size in the University's history.
- First-year retention increased to 86%, setting a new record.
- Four-year graduation rate also increased.
- Ongoing development of a systemwide Student Information System (SIS) to modernize academic tracking and data-informed advising.

### Teaching, Research, and Innovation

- Renewal of the UT-Battelle contract for management of Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) for an additional five years, extending the partnership to 30 years.
- Development of a public-private partnership (P3) to construct graduate student housing near ORNL to support research collaboration.

### Leadership and Organizational Developments

- Appointment of new chancellors at UT Southern (Dr. Melinda Arnold) and UT Chattanooga (Dr. Lori Mann Bruce)
- Recommendation of Dr. Linda Martin for appointment as Executive Vice President of the UT System (approved later in the meeting).
- Ongoing collaboration with state leadership to secure approval for project financing for academic facilities.

### Strategic Partnerships and State Engagement

- Expansion of state agency partnerships led by Associate Vice President Josh Warren, securing approximately \$45.3 million in funding across 17 projects, including a \$25 million rural health care initiative administered through the UT Health Science Center College of Nursing.
- Continuation of the statewide "Everywhere You Look, UT" mural campaign, with 59 murals completed toward a goal of at least one in every Tennessee county by 2030.

### Advancement and Fundraising

- Record-setting fundraising performance of \$476,935,994 systemwide, surpassing all prior years.

- UT Knoxville contributed over \$400 million, its best year on record.
- UT Chattanooga achieved its strongest fundraising year excluding one-time transformative gifts.
- President Boyd commended the advancement team for exceptional achievement.

### Legislative and Capital Outcomes

- Successful achievement of all FY 2025 legislative priorities, including funding for the Chemistry Building at UT Knoxville and the College of Business Building at UT Martin.
- \$1.9 million in recurring funds to support UT Southern, and \$1.4 million in recurring funds for the Institute of American Civics at UT Knoxville.
- \$45 million to expand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning through enhancements to four Tennessee 4-H Centers that serve the state's youth.

### Strategic Planning to 2030

- Update on the UT System Strategic Plan
  - March–June 2025: Discovery and analysis phase completed.
  - June–August 2025: Visioning phase underway, involving hundreds of stakeholder interviews.
  - September–October 2025: Development and socialization of plan drafts.
  - Plan presentation scheduled for October 2025 Board Meeting.
- The plan identifies four strategic priorities:
  - Accelerate Access, Academic Excellence, and Student Outcomes
  - Drive Economic and Societal Impact through Research and Innovation
  - Fuel Tennessee's Workforce and Talent Needs
  - Advance Tennessee through Community Engagement
- Four enabling priorities were also defined: Cultivating Talent; Leveraging Technology and Data; Advocacy and Investment; and Infrastructure.

Following the presentation, Trustees commended President Boyd's leadership and expressed gratitude to Governor Lee and members of the General Assembly for their support of higher education and the University. The Trustees discussed the importance of measurable metrics, continued communication, and succinct messaging in the strategic plan materials.

Chair Compton observed that, based on the breadth of accomplishments reported, the Board's annual performance review of the President.

### **Approval of Honorary Resolution – Dr. Steven R. Angle**

Chair Compton noted that Dr. Steven Angle retired in December 2024 after more than ten years of distinguished service as Chancellor of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, upon his retirement the Board granted him the title of Distinguished Professor and Chancellor Emeritus. In recognition of his leadership, a formal resolution of appreciation was presented for approval.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the honorary resolution for Dr. Steven Angle (*Resolution HR001-2025*).

Chair Compton noted that the framed resolution would be delivered personally to Dr. Angle.

### **Appointment of University Officer – Dr. Linda Martin**

Chair Compton presented a recommendation for the appointment of Dr. Linda Martin as Executive Vice President of the UT System. He acknowledged Dr. Martin's prior service in multiple roles throughout the University organization and expressed confidence in her leadership as part of the President's executive team.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the appointment, initial compensation, and other terms of employment for Dr. Linda Martin as Executive Vice President (*Resolution 026-2025*).

### **Committee Reports**

**Audit and Compliance Committee.** Committee Chair Decosta Jenkins highlighted three presentations that were delivered in the meeting: (i) a public safety update from UT System Public Safety Coordinator Kelly Mihalik; (ii) a safety and security overview from UT Chattanooga Chief Sean O'Brien; and (iii) an athletic compliance report from General Counsel Ryan Stinnett, which noted that compliance structures across campuses were appropriate and consistent with best practices. He reported that the Committee also met in executive session to review ongoing investigations, audits, and litigation matters as permitted by state law.

**Education, Research, and Service Committee.** Committee Chair Jamie Woodson outlined several action items being recommended for the Board's approval, including: (i) updated institutional mission profile statements; (ii) proposed faculty handbook revisions (UT Chattanooga and UT Martin); (iii) two proposed academic programs at UT Knoxville; and (iv) the creation of two academic departments at UT Chattanooga (Chemistry, and Physics & Astronomy), which are currently combined. The committee also received updates from Dr. Kari Babski-Reeves regarding national research funding challenges, Dr. Bernie Severance on campus performance metrics, and Chancellors Plowman and Freeman on strategic enrollment plans for their respective campuses. Chair Compton commended the committee's meeting as the "most comprehensive and strategic" held during his tenure.

**Finance and Administration Committee.** Committee Chair Bill Rhodes summarized the committee's work. He noted that the committee received public comments regarding the option agreement for the Maplehurst property (UT Knoxville) and affirmed the administration's commitment to engaging and communicating with community stakeholders. Key reports included: (i) a summary of financial performance for the year to date; (ii) the proposed FY 2025–26 operating budget; (iii) the proposed UT Southern Master Plan; and (iv) a presentation of capital outlay, maintenance, and demolition requests, along with two real property agreements for UT Knoxville.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees in a single vote unanimously approved the following:

- (i) FY 2025-26 Operating Budget (including Salary Plan, Student Tuition and Fees, and Room and Board Rates) (*Resolution 027-2025*);
- (ii) Capital Outlay Funding Requests, FY 2026-27 through FY 2030-31 (*Resolution 028-2025*);
- (iii) Capital Maintenance Funding Requests, FY 2026-27 through FY 2030-31 (*Resolution 029-2025*); and
- (iv) Capital Demolition Funding Requests, FY 2026-27 (*Resolution 030-2025*).

## **Consent Agenda**

Chair Compton asked if there were any requests to remove any items from the Consent Agenda. There being none, upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved: (i) the Resolution to adopt the minutes of the prior meeting of the Board; 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.)

## **2025 President's Awards**

President Boyd recognized recipients of the President's Awards for 2025, honoring faculty and staff who exemplified each of the University's Be One UT values. President Boyd explained that honorees are nominated by colleagues from across the UT System, evaluated by a review committee, and selected for excellence in embodying the University's shared principles. A full list of award winners is filed with these minutes. He announced that awardees would be celebrated at a systemwide luncheon in August and short videos featuring each honoree would be shared later in the summer.

## **Other Business**

Chair Compton recognized Mr. Jack Holden, a longtime staff member who has directed the audio/visual and technology operations of the Board, on the occasion of his upcoming retirement from the University following the July 2025 meeting. He commended Mr. Holden for his professionalism, discretion, and dependability over many years, noting that "everything seems seamless because Jack makes it so." Chair Compton expressed the Board's gratitude for his dedication and wished him well in retirement.

Chair Compton also expressed appreciation to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga leadership, staff, and volunteers for their efforts in hosting the Annual Meeting and related committee sessions, noting the quality of hospitality and organization.

## **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

In closing remarks, Chair Compton reflected on themes from the President's presentation and Board discussions. He emphasized the University's collective commitment to growth, innovation, and student success even amid national enrollment challenges.

Chair Compton remarked: "It is easier to run a business that grows — and likewise, it is easier to lead a university that grows. Our continued commitment to growth, even in a market that may decline nationally, is critically important to maintaining momentum and advancing the University's mission." He further observed that student retention is a key measure of institutional health, stating: "There is no more valued customer than a retained student. It costs more to recruit new students than to retain those already with us. Investing in persistence and completion will strengthen our outcomes and our long-term financial stability."

Chair Compton connected these remarks to President Boyd's earlier comments on the lifetime value of alumni engagement and philanthropy, noting that today's investments in students will yield long-term dividends in alumni support and community impact.

He concluded by thanking Trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff for their dedication to the University's mission and reaffirmed the Board's confidence in the UT System's leadership and direction.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/Cynthia C. Moore

Cynthia C. Moore  
Secretary and Special Counsel

## Approved Consent Agenda Items

- President's Annual Performance Review
- Board Self-Assessment Survey Results
- Resolution Appointing a Managerial Group for U.S. Government Contracts
- Standing Resolution Delegating Authority to Board Secretary
- 2025 Institutional Mission Profile Statements
- Authorization for Conferral of Degrees, 2025-26 Academic Year
- Proposed Faculty Handbook Revisions
  - UT Chattanooga
  - UT Martin
- Proposed New Academic Programs
  - Bachelor of Science in Applied Engineering, UTK
  - Bachelor of Science in Applied Cybersecurity, UTK
- Proposed New Academic Units, UTC
- Tenure Recommendations Requiring Board Approval
  - Grant of Tenure upon Initial Appointment
  - Grant of Tenure upon Early Consideration
- Master Plan, UT Southern
- Capital Disclosure Requests, FY 2026-2027
- Lease Agreement (Walmart Property), UT Knoxville
- Option and Holding Agreement (Maplehurst Property), UT Knoxville
- Ratification of Quasi-Endowments Created during FY 2024-25

*(See Resolutions 031-2025 through 048-2025)*

## Attachments

Copies of the following material(s) were shown or distributed at the meeting and are filed with the official minutes of this meeting.

- President's PowerPoint Presentation: *Igniting the Greatest Decade*