



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF THE FALL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES February 27, 2026

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees met at 8:30 a.m. (CST) on Friday, February 27, 2026. The meeting was held in Mooney Library at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, Tennessee.

Trustees Present: John C. Compton, Board Chair; Bradford D. Box; Hon. William E. Haslam; Andy Holt (Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Agriculture); Decosta Jenkins; Ashlee C. Mallon (Student Trustee); Shanea McKinney; William (Bill) C. Rhodes III; Donald J. Smith; J. David Wade; 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.

Call to Order and Invocation

Board Chair John Compton called the meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Brian Wilcox, alumnus of the UT Health Science Center, cardiothoracic surgeon, and Chief Clinical Officer of Ascension Saint Thomas, who delivered the invocation.

Opening Remarks of the Chair

Chair Compton welcomed trustees and guests to the UT Health Science Center and expressed appreciation to Chancellor Peter Buckley and his leadership team for hosting the meeting. He commended Chancellor Buckley's leadership and the progress achieved at the UT Health Science Center, noting the institution's momentum in expanding educational capacity, strengthening partnerships across Tennessee, and advancing strategic initiatives to improve healthcare outcomes for the state.

Chair Compton reflected on the previous day's committee meetings and expressed appreciation for the productive discussions and collaborative spirit among trustees and University leadership. He noted that the Board would hear campus updates from each

chancellor for the first time as part of the regular meeting agenda and would also consider the UT System Strategic Plan and the strategic plan for UT Chattanooga.

Chair Compton recognized the recent passing of Crawford Gallimore and honored his many years of dedicated service to the University, including his service as a former trustee, Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee, and external member of the Audit and Compliance Committee following the adoption of the UT Focus Act. He also recognized Mr. Gallimore's commitment to sound governance. The Board observed a moment of silence in his memory.

Requests to Address the Board

Chair Compton announced that no requests to address the Board had been received for assignment to either a committee or the full Board.

Campus Updates

University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Chancellor Peter Buckley highlighted the continued transformation of the UT Health Science Center under the theme "Healthy Tennesseans, Thriving Communities." He emphasized the institution's expanding statewide partnerships, efforts to address Tennessee's healthcare workforce shortages, and plans for a new interdisciplinary College of Medicine building that will significantly increase educational capacity and strengthen the University's statewide health mission.

University of Tennessee at Martin. Chancellor Yancy Freeman reported that UT Martin is exceeding enrollment projections established in its strategic plan and remains on pace to achieve record enrollment. He highlighted the institution's investments in new academic programs, student success initiatives, and major capital projects, while emphasizing partnerships that support regional workforce development and economic growth throughout West Tennessee.

University of Tennessee Southern. Chancellor Melinda Arnold discussed the rapid growth and transformation of UT Southern, highlighting the campus's "More, Better, Local" enrollment strategy and its success in increasing enrollment, retention, and student engagement. She emphasized innovative approaches to serving traditional and adult learners while expanding educational access and strengthening the University's role in southern Middle Tennessee.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Chancellor Lori Bruce provided an overview of UT Chattanooga's strategic priorities and the institution's growing momentum. She emphasized the institution's emerging national leadership in quantum information science, describing investments in academic programming, research, and industry partnerships designed to position Chattanooga and the State of Tennessee at the forefront of next-generation technologies while supporting workforce development and regional economic growth.

University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Chancellor Donde Plowman provided a follow-up report on the implementation of UT Knoxville's strategic vision, responding to the Board's prior request for additional information regarding the University's long-term priorities and the metrics guiding institutional decision-making. She outlined the campus's goal of becoming both a world-class public research university and the nation's premier undergraduate experience, emphasizing a data-driven approach that benchmarks progress against leading peer institutions.

Chancellor Plowman highlighted the University's continued growth in research excellence and student success while describing strategic initiatives designed to improve four- and six-year graduation rates through targeted interventions, expanded honors opportunities, and enhanced support for Pell-eligible and first-generation students. She emphasized that improving persistence and graduation outcomes is central to UT Knoxville's strategy for strengthening student success and national competitiveness and noted that progress is being measured through clearly defined performance metrics that guide institutional priorities and investments.

Following the campus presentations, trustees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear directly from each chancellor regarding institutional priorities and strategic initiatives. Discussion emphasized the importance of measuring student success beyond first-year retention through persistence and four- and six-year graduation rates, with trustees encouraging future campus updates to include these metrics as indicators of long-term student achievement. Trustees also suggested that a future Board meeting include a systemwide discussion of student success and retention strategies, recognizing the innovative approaches being implemented across the University's campuses and the value of sharing best practices throughout the UT System.

Trustees also discussed the University's benchmarking methodology and encouraged a review of the peer institution comparison groups to ensure that they continue to reflect appropriate competitive and aspirational institutions for measuring performance and strategic progress. University leadership indicated that the peer groups would be revisited and brought back to the Board.

Brief Recess

The Board recessed briefly before reconvening to consider the remaining items on the agenda. Commissioner Holt was unable to remain for the balance of the meeting due to another official commitment.

President's Update

President Randy Boyd thanked the chancellors for their presentations and noted that the campus updates demonstrated the remarkable momentum occurring across the UT System. He observed that each institution has developed a distinctive mission while remaining aligned

with the UT System's overarching strategic priorities of student success, research excellence, workforce development, and service to the State of Tennessee.

President Boyd commented that providing trustees with periodic campus presentations offers valuable insight into the unique opportunities and challenges facing each institution and expressed appreciation to the committee chairs for structuring the meeting agenda to accommodate the presentations. He emphasized that the diversity of missions represented across the UT System strengthens the University's ability to serve every region of Tennessee and meet the evolving needs of students, employers, and communities.

UT System Strategic Plan

President Boyd presented proposed updates to the UT System Strategic Plan, explaining that the revisions reaffirm the University's long-term commitment to serving Tennessee through excellence in education, research, outreach, workforce development, and operational effectiveness. He noted that the University's strategic vision remains unchanged, while the updated plan refines objectives and priorities to address emerging opportunities and challenges across all campuses and institutes.

The President reviewed the strategic framework, including continued emphasis on educational excellence, research growth, outreach and engagement, workforce and administrative excellence, and advocacy for the University. He stated that the updated plan reflects input from the trustees, campus leadership, and system administration and provides a roadmap for advancing the University's mission with accountability through measurable outcomes.

Following discussion, trustees expressed support for the updated key performance indicators and emphasized the value of a unified framework that allows each campus to pursue its distinctive mission while contributing to shared systemwide goals. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the revisions to the UT System Strategic Plan (*Resolution 003-2026*).

2026 Goals and Objectives

President Boyd presented the 2026 Goals and Objectives, which are organized around the UT System Strategic Plan. The objectives focus on enrollment growth, student success, research expansion, economic development, workforce preparation, operational excellence, financial stewardship, legislative initiatives, and continued collaboration among campuses and state partners. Trustees expressed support for the goals and their alignment with the University's strategic priorities. The complete list of 2026 Goals and Objectives is included in the meeting materials filed with these minutes.

UT Chattanooga Strategic Plan

Chair Compton recognized Chancellor Lori Bruce to present the proposed University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Strategic Plan, *Momentum* (2025–2030), which builds upon the institution's recent successes and supports continued growth.

The planning process engaged faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners, and other stakeholders in developing a shared vision for UT Chattanooga's future. Organized around five strategic pillars—Academic Excellence and Student Outcomes; Developing and Supporting Our People; Innovative and Impactful Research; Operational Excellence; and Community Engagement and Impact—the plan establishes measurable objectives to guide decision-making and track progress. Trustees commended the inclusive process and its emphasis on student success, accountability, and regional engagement.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Strategic Plan - *Momentum* (2025–2030) (**Resolution 004-2026**).

Committee Reports

Audit and Compliance Committee. Committee Chair Decosta Jenkins reported that the Committee approved the 2026 Institutional Compliance Plan and the 2026 Internal Audit Plan and received updates regarding research compliance, environmental health and safety, enterprise risk management, and campus safety initiatives at the UT Health Science Center. Chair Jenkins further reported that the Committee received the results of the State Audit, which concluded with an unqualified (unmodified) opinion. He advised, however, that the auditors identified one material weakness in internal controls and reviewed management's corrective action plan to address the finding. Chair Compton emphasized the importance of resolving the issue with the same level of attention devoted to prior Sunset Audit findings and encouraged continued management focus to prevent recurrence.

Education, Research, and Service Committee. Committee Chair Jamie Woodson summarized the work of the Education, Research, and Service Committee, noting that the Committee received updates regarding academic affairs, enrollment trends, research activity, student success initiatives, health and wellness, and other matters. Chair Woodson reported that the Committee considered one action item requiring approval that could not be placed on the Board's consent agenda: the proposed revisions to the UT Martin Student Code of Conduct. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees pursuant to a roll call vote unanimously approved the Revised Student Code of Conduct, UT Martin (**Resolution 005-2026**).

Finance and Administration Committee. Committee Chair Bill Rhodes reported that the Finance and Administration Committee reviewed matters relating to the University's financial position, capital program, information technology initiatives, compensation and workforce

issues, and other administrative topics affecting the UT System. Chair Rhodes advised that the Committee approved and is recommending Board approval of three action items that could not be placed on the consent agenda: (i) the Revised Operating Budget; (ii) the State Budget Amendment Request; and (iii) the Tuition and Fees Proposal for the UT Health Science Center. He noted that the proposed actions support the University's continued financial stability, strategic investments, and legislative priorities while maintaining affordability and advancing institutional excellence. Other action items approved by the Committee are included in the Board's consent agenda. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees, in a single vote, unanimously approved the Revised FY 2025–26 Operating Budget (*Resolution 006-2026*), the FY 2026–27 State Budget Amendment Request (*Resolution 007-2026*), and the FY 2026–27 Tuition and Fees Proposal for the UT Health Science Center (*Resolution 008-2026*).

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. Trustee Bill Rhodes abstained from the vote due to his service on the Board of Directors of Regions Bank, which is providing the financing for the Cherokee Mills acquisition. (A complete list of the approved items appears at the end of these minutes.)

Other Business

No additional business was brought before the Board.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Compton commended President Boyd and the chancellors for the campus presentations and strategic discussions, noting that they reflected the strength and momentum of the UT System and each campus's contributions to the University's mission. He also recognized the University's work to meet critical workforce, research, and economic development needs across Tennessee and emphasized that the strategic plans and initiatives considered during the meeting position the University for continued success. Chair Compton expressed appreciation to the trustees, University leadership, faculty, staff, state partners, and all who contributed to the success of the Winter Meeting.

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

- Resolution Appointing a Managerial Group for U.S. Government Contracts
- Grant of Tenure upon Initial Appointment
- New Academic Program: Bachelor of Science in Bioinformatics, UT Knoxville
- Cherokee Mills Acquisition and Bank Loan, UT Knoxville
- Confirmation of Authority – Interim Treasurer

(See Resolutions 009-2026 through 013-2026)

Attachments

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

- Presentation: President's Report