



ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 9, 2023

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting was streamed live via link found on this web page:

<https://www.tntech.edu/board/board-and-board-committee-meetings.php>

AGENDA ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee met on March 9, 2023 in Roaden University Center, Room 282. Chair Rhedona Rose called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

Chair Rose asked Mr. Lee Wray, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

Rhedona Rose
Dan Allcott
Savannah Griffin
Barry Wilmore

Other board members also in attendance were Trudy Harper, Thomas Lynn, Fred Lowery, Tom Jones, Dan Allcott, and Johnny Stites. A quorum was present. Tennessee Tech faculty, staff, students, and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Rose asked for approval of the minutes of the December 1, 2022 Academic & Student Affairs Committee meeting. Chair Rose asked if there were questions or comments regarding the minutes. There being none, Trustee Wilmore moved to recommend approval of the December 1, 2022 Academic & Student Affairs Committee minutes. Trustee Allcott seconded the motion. Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Provost's Report

Provost Bruce provided updates on recent activities in Academic Affairs, including an update on

LEE 06/30/23

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation. She reminded members that this university accreditation is critical to the university and gave as an example that having a SACSCOC accreditation certifies the university's eligibility under Title IV to disperse federal financial aid to students. Dr. Bruce reminded the Trustees that the accreditation process is on a 10-year cycle and that the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved the University's recently submitted 5th Year Interim Report. The university received a "clean" approval of that report after an extensive evaluation to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Dr. Bruce then informed the Board that the next phase of university accreditation will be the full reaffirmation of Tennessee Tech's accreditation and that a large team will document all 100 standards over about a two-year period.

Next, Provost Bruce introduced the new Interim Dean of the Volpe Library, Professor Sharon Holderman. She shared that Professor Holderman has served as faculty in the Volpe Library for more than a decade and as Library Director at Ohio State University previously.

Next, Provost Bruce recognized and presented an award to Dr. Julie Baker, Professor of Curriculum & Instruction, as Tennessee Tech's inaugural OVC Faculty Member of the Year. She gave several examples of how Dr. Baker is very active in service to the university, service to her profession, and service to the students.

Provost Bruce's final item in her report was the recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Tennessee Tech's Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), commemorating 50 years of teaching, research, and service in support of successful management of fishery resources in Tennessee. Tennessee Tech is one of 41 Cooperative Research Units (CRU) in 39 states across the US. The CRU is an arrangement where USGS scientists are embedded in the university operating like regular faculty members in many ways. She recognized that Tennessee Tech's CRU is led by two USGS scientists, Dr. Mark Rogers and Dr. Amanda Rosenberger, who lead a team of about 10 post-docs, student researchers, and staff. Over the 50 years of the partnership, more than 200 students from all over the US have conducted their undergraduate research, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation under the advisement of the USGS scientists.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Expedited Letter of Notification (ELON) for the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Nuclear Engineering

Provost Bruce shared information regarding a proposal for a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Nuclear Engineering at Tennessee Tech that would be housed in the Mechanical Engineering Department in the College of Engineering. Provost Bruce provided highlights of the Letter of Notification that was submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and explained that if approved by THEC, the College of Engineering will proceed with the development of a New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) that would be brought back to the Board for approval. Dr. Bruce shared projected enrollment and numbers of graduates, with a goal of having within five years an enrollment of approximately 50 students. She also shared Governor Lee's statement from the 2023 State of the State Address where he stated, "No other state in the country comes close to Tennessee's legacy, resources, and potential to be a leader

Lee 06/30/23

in nuclear energy. And there is no long-term national strategy that doesn't include nuclear energy." Dr. Bruce stated that the College of Engineering at Tennessee Tech is well positioned to help address the workforce demands, in particular the engineering workforce demands that are coming over the horizon in the field of Nuclear Energy in the US.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Spring Enrollment Update

Karen Lykins, Vice President of Enrollment & Communication, began her presentation by giving a retention update on the large (2,050) 2022 freshman class at Tennessee Tech, which showed a 91.5% historical retention rate. She shared some possible reasons behind the high retention rate, including the classroom experience, campus activities, launchpad, and the flight path program with absenteeism reporting to name a few.

She then provided an update on enrollment numbers for the 2023 Spring semester, stating that the applications and admissions numbers are very encouraging. She presented information about communications plans, new higher scholarship levels for first-time freshmen, new scholarship programs for transfer students, and recruitment events on campus, including multiple Spring Showcase recruitment events where faculty and staff in the colleges and academic departments spend Saturdays with the newly admitted students and their parents. She also presented information about how all of these strategies and activities are leading to very encouraging applications and admissions data for incoming freshmen for this next fall semester. She shared that the number of applications on March 9, 2023 was 7,968, which is up 1,053 over that day last year. The admits for March 9, 2023 was 6,432, which is 889 over that day last year. Early enrollment indicators including Spring showcase attendance, soar registration, and housing application numbers are showing very promising fall first time freshman numbers.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge

Michael Aikens, Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, provided an update on the Rural Reimagined Grand Challenge, including an overview of current faculty-led service projects and the impact of past projects. He provided quantitative data on the impact of the Grand Challenge, for example the fact that more than 100,000 service hours have been volunteered and more than \$12million in external grants and contracts have been garnered by faculty and staff to propel the efforts to address challenges and opportunities in rural communities in Tennessee.

He provided additional quantitative data on the impact of the Grand Challenge that included currently having a presence in 60 of the 76 rural counties in Tennessee, with over 150 faculty and over 2,000 students engaged. He gave examples of students and faculty engagement that included the tourism branding package that a student created for Monterey to promote tourism, the Remote Area Medical Clinic (RAM) project that provides free medical, dental, and vision to underserved populations in upper Cumberland communities, and research in areas that include addiction, modernizing infrastructure, and improving water systems to name a few.

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LFE 06/30/23

Michael concluded his presentation with information about the Faculty Grant Program where \$144,076 was awarded to 10 faculty principal investigators, from 6 colleges in 10 research areas. He highlighted one example where 25,000 was awarded to assistant professor of nursing, Matthew Langford, for his grant titled: Rural Re-imagined, the Urgent Care Mental Health Model. Dr. Langford founded Hope Springs Clinic, a non-profit, free mental health service in the Upper Cumberland for urgent, non-crisis mental health care.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Other Business

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Adjournment

There being no further business, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee adjourned at 9:31 a.m

Approved,

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Lee Wray, Secretary