



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 28, 2023

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting video available via link found on this web page:

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

AGENDA ITEM I – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees met on September 28, 2023 in Roaden University Center Room 282. After an unavoidable delay due to streaming technical difficulties, Chair Trudy Harper called the meeting to order at 1:49 p.m. and stated that although a livestream of the meeting would not be available, the recording of the meeting would be posted as soon as possible following the conclusion of the meeting.

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

- Addison Dorris
- Fred Lowery
- Jeannette Luna
- Thomas Lynn
- Rhedona Rose
- Johnny Stites
- Barry Wilmore – departed the meeting at 2:32 p.m.
- Trudy Harper

- Tom Jones - absent

A quorum was physically present. Tennessee Tech faculty, staff and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM II – RECOGNITION OF BRASS ARTS QUINTET

Chair Harper thanked the Brass Arts Quintet who played during lunch and stated that they

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would be playing one additional selection. She stated that the Brass Arts Quintet, of the College of Fine Arts, was being recognized for their 60th anniversary as a faculty brass quintet, which is thought to be the longest continually running university brass quintet in the United States. During the lunch break, the Quintet performed “Bouncin’ Brass” by Chris McCormick, “Take the A Train” by Duke Ellington and arranged by Chris McCormick. Members of the Brass Arts Quintet include Scott Hagarty and Chris McCormick, trumpets; Justin Stanley, horn; Joshua Hauser, trombone and euphonium; and Preston Light, tuba. The brass quintet then performed “Road Rage” by Joshua Hauser.

AGENDA ITEM III – RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS

Chair Harper stated that this fall the Golden Eagle Marching Band will be the largest in Tech history, with 211 members from 32 different undergraduate majors, and the Color Guard will again have an active role. Four students were invited to talk about their perspective of how the band is an important part of their Tech experience and how it helped recruit them to Tennessee Tech. Chair Harper asked the students to introduce themselves, tell where they were from, what their major was, and identify their role in the band. Members included: Abby Lane, senior Music Education major and drum major, from Murfreesboro, TN; Emily Castillo, senior Music Education major and black jacket (undergraduate assistant) from Winchester, TN; Chloe Johnson, senior Music Education major and black jacket from Sparta, TN; and Walker Andrews, sophomore Music Education major and mellophone section leader, from Columbia, TN. Abby stated that the amazing faculty and School of Music brought her to Tennessee Tech. Emily stated that her high school band director was a Tech alum and she knew from the beginning that this was the university she wanted to attend. Chloe stated that the faculty made her feel welcomed, and Tennessee Tech and Cookeville had become home to her. Walker stated that the variety of ensembles offered – especially the Bryan Symphony Orchestra – and the “electric” feel when performing in front of an audience brought him to Tennessee Tech.

President Oldham stated how awesome the band members are and that he loves the energy and enthusiasm they bring to ball games. He also stated how much he appreciates the work they put in and congratulated them on a great job well done.

Chair Harper stated that due to one Trustee needing to leave by 2:30 p.m., the agenda would be re-ordered to complete all voting agenda items before the Trustee’s departure.

AGENDA ITEM IV – APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2023 MEETING

Chair Harper asked for approval of the minutes of the June 22, 2023 Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting. Chair Harper asked if there were questions or comments regarding the minutes. There being none, Mr. Stites moved to recommend approval of the June 22, 2023 Board of Trustees minutes. Mr. Lowery seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Mr. Wray called a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM V – CERTIFICATION OF PRESIDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO ATHLETICS

Chair Harper stated that the Ohio Valley Conference requires the Chair of the Board to attest that the President is responsible for administration of the athletics program, has the support of the Board in operating a program of integrity and may vote on behalf of the institution on NCAA and OVC matters. The Chair’s attestation must also be presented to the Board. Chair Harper stated that she would attest to all required and the form would be sent to the NCAA.

AGENDA ITEM VI – APPROVAL OF MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Harper stated that the President was requesting approval of the mission statement as presented.

Upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Lowery moved the Board approve the Mission Statement as presented. Mr. Lynn seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VII – CONSENT AGENDA – A. TENURE UPON APPOINTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS B. POLICY 217 (STUDENT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT)

Chair Harper stated that these items were discussed during the morning committee meetings and the committees voted to place these items on the Board meeting agenda. Ms. Rose moved to pass the consent agenda as presented. Mr. Stites seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM VIII – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – A. PRESIDENT’S COMPENSATION

Vice Chair Rose stated there was great participation in the President’s evaluation. Upon the committee’s recommendation Ms. Rose moved the Board approve the President to receive a four percent raise for his performance during the 2022-23 fiscal year, with the raise to be retroactive to July 1, 2023. Chair Harper stated that because the recommendation came from committee, no second was needed. There being no further discussion, Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM IX – AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – A. DISCLOSED PROJECTS

Upon the committee’s recommendation, Mr. Stites moved the Board approve the FY2023-24 Disclosed Projects for the Baseball Hitting and Pitching Facility and Headhouse (Greenhouse) Renovation. Chair Harper stated that because the recommendation came from committee, no second was needed. There being no further discussion, Mr. Wray called a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

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AGENDA ITEM X – STUDENT TRUSTEE REPORT

Chair Harper welcomed new Trustees, Dr. Jeannette Luna and Ms. Addison Dorris, and stated that she appreciated the significant contributions each had already made to the meetings.

Ms. Dorris stated that she appreciated the opportunity to work with the Board to make Tennessee Tech a better place and to speak about what campus has been like since the beginning of the semester. She stated that she has seen more students attending events and enjoying the college experience. Students engaged in the campus community are more likely to graduate and to maintain a higher GPA.

Ms. Dorris stated that student growth was being hindered by one issue which was needing a meeting space for events. She stated that student organizations were excited about the potential of a new student event center. Ms. Dorris stated that the current pedestrian walkway construction project requires students to reroute their paths to classes. This is probably the most significant complaint from students because it takes more time to get to their academic buildings each day. However, the Office of Transportation regularly provides updates so that students can adjust accordingly. Students are excited about the walkway process but frustrated about lack of accessibility to their buildings.

Ms. Dorris stated that due to the current renovation of Johnson Hall, more students are utilizing Foundation Hall. At the beginning of the semester, students feared visiting this building because it needed repairs and improvements, but students are now impressed at how modern Foundation Hall looks. It still needs other improvements but overall is a great facility.

Ms. Dorris stated that last week students attended the employer career fair and were thrilled about the many events at the fair. She stated that Tennessee Tech students are ready to pursue the next level of opportunities and employers are ready to hire our students and graduates. She stated that Tennessee Tech students are excited to be Golden Eagles.

Ms. Dorris thanked Trustees for all they do to provide positive experiences for students at Tennessee Tech.

AGENDA ITEM XI – PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Oldham thanked Ms. Dorris for the information from the students’ perspective and for the compliments. He stated that students do come first on Tennessee Tech campus. The university is not perfect – no institution is – but the way the “students first” philosophy has been integrated throughout the campus is remarkable. When we fall short, we learn from our mistakes and continue to get better, and that is what he is most proud of in his report today.

He stated that Tennessee Tech is at a three-year enrollment record with 10,117 students – an increase of 2.2 percent over the previous year. The enrollment increase is another indication of

the fact that placing students first is working. He stated that the slide photo displayed tells a great story about last week's career fair. Ultimately, it is about student success, and in the case of the career fair, over 180 companies came for the fair and roughly 1600 students participated. The students were professionally dressed, performed extremely well and many companies went out of their way to come to campus to interview our students, which indicates that Tennessee Tech graduates are in great demand.

President Oldham stated that college ranking is not something he spends a lot of time worrying about but the information is beneficial for the board to know. Each year Forbes ranks 500 college campuses in "America's Top Colleges" and this year only two public universities ranked in the state of Tennessee: University of Tennessee and Tennessee Tech University. This year U.S. New & World Report evaluated more than 1,600 schools and Tennessee Tech ranked number two of public universities in Tennessee and in the top five for public and private universities in Tennessee. Tennessee Tech was named an "A+ School for B Students" which is a testament to our continued focus on providing a great education for all students and that we do not have an elitist approach to education. Tennessee Tech was also named a "Best Value" college by SmartAsset. We continue to have graduates with the highest career starting salary and the lowest debt. Student debt was lower this year and about half of the university's graduates finished college debt free so Tennessee Tech is incredibly affordable. We just need to become better known through marketing and word of mouth.

President Oldham stated that we know Tennessee Tech is a teaching institution and it is firmly believed to be a great university. Great universities do two things: 1) They create and disseminate knowledge, and 2) Identify and develop talent. Students learn from active practitioners in the discipline. Active research keeps the knowledge and the curriculum fresh but, more importantly, it tells how relevant the information is. Students need to know the context for what they are learning. Active faculty participating in research help bring context to the classroom in a significant way. Tennessee Tech does an incredible job mentoring students and teaching in a personal way by faculty members who care, can help shepherd the students into career opportunities and many times provide the encouragement needed by the students. There is no better way to accomplish that than through research and scholarship opportunities. As similar to an apprenticeship program, students are actively learning in an environment by doing. Students are not just reading about an academic subject, the students are actually engaged in a "hands on" approach and have a faculty mentor guiding them. The value of the students' degrees ultimately will be linked in perpetuity based on the reputation of Tennessee Tech and we want the value of that degree to escalate over time.

Faculty active in research and scholarly activities accomplish the following: 1) Ensure ongoing relevance in academic programs 2) Establish the university's national reputation, and 3) Engage students in ultimate active learning experiences.

President Oldham stated that Tennessee Tech reached a record of \$34,000,000 in Research last year. Many of the scholarships that take place on this campus are not externally funded. Faculty place much work on scholarly levels in many ways but funding is beneficial because it helps us

establish the national level of competitiveness and reputation. We want to continue to push on the Research level because, ultimately, it allows us to impact more students and to create more opportunities for them. We don't conduct research just for some esoteric reason, but because it makes a difference in the lives of students.

President Oldham stated that Tennessee Tech continues to juggle as we continue to improve the campus. A few examples of projects completed in the last five years include: Lab Sciences Commons and Stonecipher Lecture Hall, Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation & Fitness Center, renovations of multiple buildings and more than \$200,000,000 in improvements have been completed in the last five years.

He stated that the Peachtree Avenue road project should be completed shortly after Christmas. By spring semester, much of the current pressure resulting from construction projects should be alleviated on campus. Attempts are made to keep everyone informed as much as possible.

Current ongoing projects including parking, transportation and the Peachtree Avenue road project. The Ashraf Islam Engineering Building is scheduled for completion in early April. Renovation of Johnson Hall and demolition of Foster Hall are also projects in process. Tucker Stadium and the Football Operations Center are in the design phase. It is hoped that we can move the Tucker Stadium project into the construction phase at the end of this season and the Advanced Construction and Manufacturing and Engineering Building is nearing the end of the design phase.

He stated that he wanted to recognize Dr. Polk-Johnson and her staff and the Division of Student Affairs for their work with community relations. Student Affairs has had much support from other parts of campus but College Town Kickoff was fantastic and the feedback received from the community was tremendous. We began talking a few years ago about pitching Cookeville as Tennessee's college town, and it is a perfect fit and a great descriptor for Cookeville. Not only is the campus beginning to embrace the campus/community relationship but the community is embracing the relationship in a big way. The students and the community want the College Town Kickoff to continue annually and he stated that he also requests that it become an annual event. We are trying to introduce students early on in their college experience about the wonderful place they will be residing, for at least a few years. When a student selects a university, they are not just selecting a campus. They are also selecting a community because that is home, at least for a while. The more we can develop these relationships between Cookeville, Putnam County and the campus, the better off our students are and the better value we bring to this part of the state as well. College Town Kickoff was exciting as indicated by about 2500 in attendance, with approximately half being students. It was a great opportunity to have students mix with community members. College Town Weekends has become a recurring weekend event and there are so many events between campus, Cookeville and Putnam County that Student Affairs could lay out activities for students to hang around on weekends and stay active and involved.

President Oldham stated that beginning this year, he is serving as chair of the Cookeville-

Putnam County Chamber of Commerce which is a great opportunity. He stated that he has served on the Chamber Board for at least ten years. This is a great example of what great relationships exist between the city and the campus, and that is beneficial in many ways. For example, when matters arise around transportation or safety issues pertaining to campus, Tennessee Tech has great cooperation with the city. He stated that he recently met with the city manager about safety crossings for students, and the city was more than helpful and cooperative. He stated that they are working on a significant list of items that are believed to make greater improvements for students to negotiate campus and nearby communities.

President Oldham stated that Cookeville is Tennessee's college town and Cookeville is realizing what a great asset they have in Tennessee Tech University. Many improvements and activities are occurring but he stated he would end with a simple statement that the best is yet to come, there is a lot more to accomplish and he is excited to see where this goes in the future.

AGENDA ITEM XII – BOARD SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Wray reported that the requested changes have been made to the Tech Farms LLC operating agreement approved at the June Board meetings. The revised agreement was then sent to the Foundation Board for their approval. The revised, signed version of the Tech Farms LLC operating agreement can be found in the Diligent Resources Center under Audit & Business Committee.

AGENDA ITEM XIII – MEETING DATES

Chair Harper stated that the next Board meeting is November 30, 2023. Meeting dates for 2024 include: March 7, June 20, September 25, and December 5.

She also stated that the meeting was still being recorded and she apologized that it was not possible to stream the meeting due to the technical difficulties experienced.

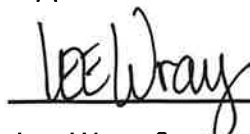
AGENDA ITEM XIV – OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM XV - ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

Approved,

 12/20/23

Lee Wray, Secretary

