



## **Board of Trustees Meeting**

**March 22, 2018**

**Bell Hall, Room 260**

### **MINUTES**

#### **AGENDA ITEM I—CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees met in regular session on March 22, 2018, in Bell Hall, Room 260. Chair Tom Jones called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

Chair Jones asked Kae Carpenter, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

- Dr. Barbara Fleming
- Dr. Melissa Geist
- Ms. Trudy Harper
- Mr. Millard Oakley
- Mr. Purna Saggurti participated by phone and confirmed that he could simultaneously hear and speak to the Board members, that he was the only person present in the location from which he was calling, and that he received the Board materials in advance of the meeting.
- Mr. Johnny Stites
- Ms. Teresa Vanhooser
- Capt. Barry Wilmore
- Mr. Tom Jones

A quorum was physically in attendance.

Tennessee Tech faculty, staff, and members of the public were also in attendance.

Chair Jones stated that he discussed with President Oldham the importance of starting the Board meetings centered on Tennessee Tech students. He stated that the students are the product of Tennessee Tech and the Board was in place to assist in finding the best way to educate students.

Chair Jones introduced Tennessee Tech student Madison Davis who earned the distinction of being the first national champion speaker in the Tennessee Tech speech and debate team's long and impressive history. He stated that she was 2018's national champion speaker in novice debate for

the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA). He stated that Ms. Davis and a teammate, Derrick Sarmiento, was the state champion team, and the entire speech and debate team was ranked the seventh best team of its size in the country.

Chair Jones stated that Ms. Davis was joined by assistant speech and debate coach, Jacob Metts, instructor of Communication Studies, and by Dr. Graham Cash.

Ms. Davis stated that two out of the three Tennessee Tech NPDA pairings on the speech and debate team made it to the championship rounds, meaning that Tennessee Tech had some of the best debate pairings in the nation. She stated that the region in the comprehensive tournament was the most competitive region in the country. She stated that she represented the debate team as a whole.

Ms. Davis expressed her gratitude to Tennessee Tech and the Board for the recognition and opportunity to speak. She stated that the debate team needed the Board's continued support to be more competitive in the future.

Mr. Stites asked how the Board could continue to support the debate team. Ms. Davis answered that the debate team was able to attend the national comprehensive tournament because it was held in Nashville, TN. She stated that the tournament will be held out of state in the future and the debate team needed to have the resources to be able to travel.

With that, Ms. Davis concluded her remarks.

## AGENDA ITEM II – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Harper moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Stites seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

## AGENDA ITEM III – ELECTION OF STUDENT TRUSTEE

Chair Jones stated that the FOCUS Act required the Board to select a student as a non-voting member and that the candidates were Forrest Allard, a junior majoring in accounting and economics; Sawyer Hall, a freshman majoring in electrical engineering; and Micayla Holton, a graduate student working on her master's degree in curriculum and instruction. He stated that all candidates would be enrolled through March of 2019.

Mr. Allard, Mr. Hall, and Ms. Holton each provided a brief introduction and expressed their gratitude to the Board and to Tennessee Tech for the opportunity.

Dr. Fleming nominated Mr. Allard to be the student representative for the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees. Mr. Stites seconded the motion.

With no other nominations, at the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried 8-0 with Mr. Oakley recorded as present not voting.

Chair Jones stated that the Board would like the other nominees to serve as student advisors to the active student Board member.

Chair Jones appointed Mr. Allard to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee.

## AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Oldham congratulated Dr. Geist for being selected as the recipient of the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s 2018 Pediatric Primary Care Board Certified Nurse Award. He stated that nominated nurses have made significant contributions in the area of professional practice, education, research, or service. He stated that nominees were judged for innovation, collaboration, leadership, professional risk-taking, and patient-centered care.

President Oldham asked the leaders of the Strategic Planning Committee, Drs. Tom Payne and Lisa Zagumny, to report on the status of the strategic plan, which they did.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Stites asked how the Strategic Planning Committee envisioned Tennessee Tech in 10 years.

Dr. Payne answered that Tennessee Tech would look different with both technology and society changing; it would be hard for anyone to envision. He stated that in three to five years he saw a great deal more students that were involved with their community and the institutions they would serve after graduation. He stated that graduations would be more seamless transactions that would be natural because of engagement of students’ experiential learning.

Dr. Payne stated that Tennessee Tech was not just counting numbers with involvement of students, but looking at the depth and impact of their involvement. He stated that Tennessee Tech was going to merge the best of what was high-tech and high-touch, meaning Tennessee Tech would have personal relationships with students while leveraging technology. He stated that interactive groups working together would replace rows of desks.

Mr. Stites stated that it was important to have the high-touch aspect. He asked if it was envisioned that faculty would be assessed to have the mentor quality as well as the teaching quality.

Dr. Zagumny answered that she believed mentor qualities were already a part of faculty assessments, but will become more integrated, as faculty work directly with students.

Ms. Harper stated that she would like the Strategic Planning Committee to think about what they were going to do about recruiting underrepresented students and making a more diverse student body.

Ms. Harper stated that she agreed with the Strategic Planning Committee in that the community and Tennessee Tech representatives needed to be made aware of the budget model.

President Oldham thanked the Strategic Planning Committee for all the work that it has done. He stated that his job was to stress the urgency to act on the committee's ideas.

President Oldham stated that everyone should pay attention to what Tennessee Tech would look like 10 years from now. He stated that the strategic plan focused on Tennessee Tech's attributes and qualities.

President Oldham stated that most institutions were focused on getting their students successfully graduated, but Tennessee Tech's plan was to focus through their graduations and into their careers and insure that every student that walked the campus has the opportunity for a successful career.

President Oldham then made a presentation on the actions Tennessee Tech was and could take to achieve this plan.

President Oldham's presentation included the following:

- Tech's Search for Identity—a book published by former faculty members, Drs. Harvey Neufeldt and Calvin Dickinson, *The Search for Identity: A History of TTU, 1915-1985* points out the journey of Tennessee Tech. Tennessee Tech continued to search for its identity, which led to the new strategic plan.
- Fundamentals— two things that Tennessee Tech did well was creating and disseminating knowledge, and identifying and developing talent.
- Retention & Graduation Rates—Tennessee Tech has seen a lot of progress in first-year retention rates. Student persistence to graduate was up substantially over the last five years. The six-year graduation rate continued to climb. Tennessee Tech's numbers were among the highest in the state of Tennessee.
- Cost & ROI (Returns on Investment)—Tennessee Tech was sensitive to higher education being costly and costs being a burden to students and their families. In-state tuition and fees rose two to five percent per year. ROI was eight percent annual return for students. Tennessee Tech was rated high on economic mobility.
- Student Loan Repayment Success—Tennessee Tech had the lowest default rate in the state of Tennessee, below five percent for a three-year cohort.
- Academic Programs & Delivery—Tennessee Tech had 79 programs on its inventory as tracked by Tennessee Higher Education Commission, which was the second lowest among all public universities in the state of Tennessee. Sixty percent of the jobs that 2030 graduates would be looking to fill did not exist.

Mr. Stites asked since Tennessee Tech has the fewest number of academic programs, would it be able to address the change that was going to happen in the job market.

President Oldham stated that it could, but it would not happen automatically. He stated that the strategic plan addressed how to infuse innovation and the rebirth of academic endeavor consistently within the culture of Tennessee Tech.

After answering the question, President Oldham continued his presentation, which included the following information:

- Research—an area in which Tennessee Tech needed to do better. In 2016, Tennessee Tech reported 11.5 million dollars in research expenditures. University of Alabama-Huntsville reported 97 million in research expenditures in the same year.
- Tech's Essential Action—embedded in the strategic plan was to continue to put students first. Tennessee Tech needed to expand its reach to students, markets, companies, and external communities and increase diversity. Tennessee Tech needed to be more responsive, more inclusive, aggressively develop new emerging academic programs, and consider dissolving programs with lesser value. Tennessee Tech should fully insure the absolute integrity of research enterprise by a rigorous review process and provide a transparent accountability for all personnel involved. Tennessee Tech must change to an enterprise model.

Chair Jones stated that Tennessee Tech's research expenditures concerned him. He stated that Tennessee Tech had been around since 1915 and was considered a major engineering university and yet Tennessee Tech had not developed industries around the community. He stated that it was critical, for revenue purposes, to participate in more partnerships and seek more opportunities to do paid research and developments.

Chair Jones stated that it was clear that Tennessee Tech needed to make improvements on the research process, which would generate more revenue for faculty, opportunities for students, and bring growth and a quality reputation to Tennessee Tech.

President Oldham stated that Tennessee Tech had a wide range of disciplines on campus that have opportunities for sponsored research, such as engineering and sciences. He stated that the reputational value of Tennessee Tech was dependent on the scholarship that was produced, whether it was sponsored financially or not.

Chair Jones stated that President Oldham's flight plan, strategic plan, and building infrastructure were critical to achieving the goal of growth.

Dr. Fleming thanked Dr. Mark Stephens for stepping in as provost when that position was vacant.

Dr. Geist stated that to be able to do research Tennessee Tech needed to recruit and hire the best tenured faculty with the capability and the resources to do so. She stated that was where Tennessee Tech would see its return on investment.

## AGENDA ITEM V—APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER FOR POLICY 780 PURPOSES

Chair Jones stated that Tennessee Tech had a Policy 780 matter in progress. He stated that on January 27 2018, a faculty member lodged an allegation with President Oldham, and on January 29, Tennessee Tech started the Policy 780 process, which was a lengthy, confidential process to protect the integrity of all involved.

Chair Jones stated that President Oldham recused himself from the Policy 780 process. He stated that Policy 780 did not address how to proceed in these circumstances. He stated that the Board or Executive Committee could not serve in that role because of the policy's confidentiality requirement.

Chair Jones proposed that the Board select someone in place of the president's role for the Policy 780 process. He stated that he asked Ms. Harper if she was willing to serve in that capacity.

Mr. Stites moved to allow Ms. Harper to serve in the role of the president for the purposes of the Policy 780 process. Ms. Vanhooser seconded the motion.

Ms. Harper clarified that the appointment related only to the January 27, 2018, complaint and that she was recusing herself from voting on the motion.

Mr. Stites asked if Ms. Harper should begin the task of improving the research process while serving in the role.

Ms. Harper then asked Dr. Huo, the Research Integrity Officer, to look at improving the research process.

Dr. Geist stated that she was concerned about Ms. Harper's involvement with the College of Engineering. She asked if there were others approached to take the role of the president regarding the inquiry.

Chair Jones stated that he went to the Vice Chair of the Board when he determined that he could not fill the role himself.

Ms. Harper stated that she was involved with the College of Engineering but she does not know any of the individuals involved in the matter or the company that was sponsoring the research.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried 6-1 with Dr. Geist casting the "Nay" vote. Ms. Harper recused herself from the vote and Mr. Oakley abstained.

## AGENDA ITEM VI.A.1 – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS—REPORT ON APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS—APPROVAL OF DR. LORI BRUCE TO THE PROVOST POSITION

President Oldham stated that Dr. Lori Bruce would join Tennessee Tech on April 16, 2018, as the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

## AGENDA ITEM VI.A.2— EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS—REPORT ON APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS—APPROVAL OF DR. BRANDON JOHNSON TO THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT AND CAREER PLACEMENT POSITION

President Oldham stated that Dr. Brandon Johnson would join Tennessee Tech on April 1, 2018, as the new Vice President for Enrollment and Career Placement.

President Oldham thanked the search committees who worked diligently to find and recruit the new hires.

## AGENDA ITEM VI.B— EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS—REGULAR AGENDA—TEMPLATE PRESIDENT’S CONTRACT

Chair Jones stated that at the August 2017 Board meeting the full Board voted to direct the Executive Committee to develop a proposed contract for the President.

Chair Jones stated that at the December 2017 meeting the Executive Committee reported progress on the contract but there was no action taken.

Chair Jones stated that the Executive Committee met in February 2018 and approved a draft contract template for the President and moved to present it to the full Board.

Chair Jones stated there was a suggestion to postpone the contract. He stated that because the full Board voted for it to be developed and the Executive Committee developed a contract and voted for it to be sent to the full Board, he could not postpone the matter.

Dr. Fleming stated that the contract protected Tennessee Tech. She stated that faculty received the contract via email two days prior to the meeting and some were concerned and wanted longer to review it. She stated that her concern was for the faculty and suggested the Board vote at a later date.

Chair Jones stated that the Board faculty member and Faculty Senate President had access to the contract on February 15, 2018. He stated that he could not say that the faculty did not have the opportunity to review the contract until two days ago.

Dr. Fleming stated she wanted the Board to be respectful of the concerns of some faculty.

Chair Jones stated that he was not inclined to delay action when there had been ample opportunity to review the contract.

Ms. Harper moved to approve the template president's contract as presented. Mr. Stites seconded the motion.

Dr. Geist stated that the contract listed the president was without tenure. She asked if the President was a tenured full professor at Tennessee Tech. Ms. Carpenter answered in the affirmative.

Dr. Geist stated that she did not understand why the Board pursued a contract with the President. She stated that she was not sure the contract protected Tennessee Tech. She stated that the contract stated that if the president was reassigned he would receive a base salary for five years.

Dr. Geist stated that if some of the contingencies listed on the template contract occurred, Tennessee Tech would be on the financial hook for five years. She asked the Board to change it to three years.

Ms. Harper stated that she had spent a lot of time researching presidents' contracts. She stated that according to Association of Governing Boards it was best practice for a university to have a president's contract. She stated that Tennessee Tech needed to adopt a contract for the President.

Chair Jones stated that if a president was terminated for cause, the president would not receive any salary.

Dr. Geist stated that it was important to have on record that there were concerns with taking a big step of approving a contract for the President.

Chair Jones stated that the Executive Committee was asking the Board to accept the draft template that was presented. He stated that once the Board approved the template, the Board could then change the template when offered to the President.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried 7-2 with Dr. Fleming and Dr. Geist casting the "Nay" votes.



## AGENDA ITEM VII—CONTRACT FOR PRESIDENT OLDHAM

Chair Jones stated that there were faculty concerns and that he understood and appreciated their concerns. He stated that he had spent many hours with President Oldham discussing those concerns. He stated that he found no reason that would make him second-guess the decision to move forward with a contract. Chair Jones stated that he would like to see the contract go forward as a vote of confidence, stability, and protection for the President and for Tennessee Tech.

Ms. Harper moved to offer the template president contract to President Oldham. Mr. Oakley seconded the motion.

Dr. Geist stated that there were issues of concern on campus. She stated that across campus people are not included in the vision of Tennessee Tech and that the Board looked disconnected when only the positives were discussed.

Dr. Geist moved to amend the motion to revise the contract from a five-year term to a three-year term for the purpose of offering it to President Oldham. Dr. Fleming seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion failed 4-5 with Ms. Harper, Mr. Oakley, Mr. Saggurti, Mr. Stites, and Capt. Wilmore casting the “Nay” votes.

Chair Jones stated that the Board was back on the motion to offer President Oldham the five-year contract as presented.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried 8-1 with Dr. Geist casting the “Nay” vote.

## AGENDA ITEM VIII.A—ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION—REGULAR AGENDA—APPROVAL OF LETTER OF NOTIFICATION FOR NEW M.S. IN ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Dr. Fleming stated that the proposed new master’s degree in engineering management has the full support of the faculty.

Dr. Fleming moved to approve the Letter of Notification for the new M.S. in Engineering Management Program. Capt. Wilmore seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously, with Mr. Oakley absent from the vote.

**AGENDA ITEM VIII.B—ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION—REGULAR AGENDA—APPROVAL OF PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS FOR ED.S. IN COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGY**

Dr. Fleming moved to approve the program modifications for Ed.S. in Counseling & Psychology. Dr. Geist seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The vote carried unanimously, with Mr. Oakley absent from the vote.

**AGENDA ITEM VIII.C— ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION—REGULAR AGENDA—APPROVAL OF CHANGE IN GMAT WAIVER REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF ACCOUNTANCY**

Dr. Fleming moved to approve the change in GMAT waiver requirements for Master of Accountancy. Capt. Wilmore seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The vote carried unanimously, with Mr. Oakley absent from the vote.

Chair Jones thanked Dr. Mark Stephens for his service as Provost. He stated that Dr. Mark Stephens is a true asset to Tennessee Tech.

**AGENDA ITEM IX.A—AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS—CONSENT AGENDA—PLANNING AND FINANCE POLICIES—POLICY 580 (CAPITAL PROJECTS MANAGEMENT) POLICY 581 (IN-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE PROJECTS INCLUDING GIFT-IN-PLACE PROJECTS) POLICY 582 (ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL OF REAL PROPERTY) POLICY 583 (LEASE PROCUREMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES)**

Ms. Vanhooser moved to approve all items on the Audit & Business Committee's consent agenda. Mr. Saggurti seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The vote carried unanimously, with Mr. Oakley absent from the vote.

## AGENDA ITEM IX.B—AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS—REGULAR AGENDA—APPROVAL OF 2018-2019 NON-MANDATORY FEES (PARKING PERMITS AND HOUSING FEES)

Ms. Vanhooser moved to approve the 2018-19 non-mandatory fees, with the clarification that the parking permit fee was for the duration of the ten-year plan. Mr. Saggurti seconded the motion.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Carpenter took a roll call vote. The motion carried 7-1 with Dr. Geist casting the “Nay” vote and Mr. Oakley absent from the vote.

## AGENDA ITEM X—OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Jones stated that Tennessee Tech was going through a challenging time but should not allow any single matter to define the institution. He stated that there were issues and problems to correct and that he had full faith in the Board.

Chair Jones stated that he hoped the faculty understood the Board was not ignoring their concerns or issues. He stated that the Board had to do a better job at supporting the faculty, paying the faculty, and providing them opportunities to excel.

## AGENDA ITEM XI—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Approved,

  
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Kae Carpenter, Secretary