

Tennessee Tech University
--- Office of Research and Economic Development ---

Minutes of the Meeting of

University Research Advisory Committee

The University Research Advisory Committee met at 3:30 pm Wednesday, October 7, 2020, via TEAMS, with Dr. Jeff Boles presiding.

Members Present: Dr. Jeff Boles, Dr. Steven Anton, Dr. Jason Beach, Dr. Jeremy Blair, Ms. Julie Brewer, Ms. Nia Buntin on behalf of Ms. Kelly Bell, Dr. Kristen Deiter, Ms. Deborah Gernt, Mr. Cody Godwin, Dr. Adam Holley, Dr. Shelia Hurley, Dr. Brian Leckie, Dr. Satish Mahajan, Dr. Hayden Mattingly, Dr. Ramchandran Natarajan, Dr. Terry Saltsman, Dr. Mark Stephens, and Dr. Jennifer Taylor, Executive Officer

Members Absent: Dr. Tania Datta and Mr. Greg Holt

Others Present: Dr. Francis Otuonye and Ms. Sandra Storie

1. Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2020

The minutes from the April 28, 2020 meeting were reviewed, with a motion to approve by Dr. Anton and a second by Mr. Godwin. Motion carried.

2. Introductions and Overview of Research at Tennessee Tech

The committee members introduced themselves and discussed their involvement with research at Tennessee Tech. Dr. Taylor offered information to the group regarding the university's research goals. The university is working to double externally funded research, and the University Research Advisory Committee plays an important role in reaching that goal.

3. Strategies for Increasing Externally Funded Research

Dr. Taylor, Dr. Saltsman and Dr. Boles provided information on Tennessee Tech's strategies for increasing research funding:

- Cornerstone Government Affairs Group assists the university in identifying nontraditional funding opportunities. At the beginning of the relationship, Tennessee Tech committed to a one-year trial of Cornerstone's services. Cornerstone helped to secure a \$1 million contract for research funding as a result of a \$30,000 investment in their services. Based on this success, Tennessee Tech reached a longer-term agreement with Cornerstone. Cornerstone is working in this new fiscal year to secure additional appropriation funding. An appropriation is three years, and an authorization is five years. Faculty can support these efforts by developing relationships with peers at government research laboratories as well as administrative staff at these institutions; once these connections are made, Dr. Saltsman can help with identifying opportunities for research at Tennessee Tech that may interest the potential funder. For the current fiscal year, the university asked that white papers be submitted early in Fall Semester to allow for review and prioritization for the best use of Cornerstone's services.
- The university supports research through seed funding programs, such as the Faculty Research Committee Grants. Dr. Taylor spoke about how seed funding programs can be leveraged to support future scholarly activity from a wide range of funders such as foundations, industries, and governments. URAC members have collected information in the past on Tennessee Tech's seed funding efforts, and Dr. Boles will share the information gathered thus far with URAC members.

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4. Purpose of the University Research Advisory Committee

Dr. Boles reviewed the purpose of the committee, which is to advise the President and President's cabinet on strategies to stimulate growth in scholastic and externally funded research and innovative/creative activities in the university community. The committee reviewed URAC Procedures, with an emphasis on the objectives in the University's "Tech Tomorrow" strategic plan that impact research. Dr. Boles asked the members of the committees to share their ideas in support of Tennessee Tech's research program.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Storie, Committee Support Personnel

Date approved by committee: 10/21/2020