

1. History and Characteristics

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) was established by an act of the General Assembly in 1915. Its first grounds and buildings belonged to Dixie College, a private institution founded in 1911. The campus is located in Cookeville, the largest and most centrally located city in the Upper Cumberland region.

The University operates two farms in the region: the 1,800-acre Oakley Farm, which is home to one of the largest beef cattle operations in the state and the 300-acre Shipley Farm, which includes the Hyder-Burks Agricultural Pavilion and the Shipley Heritage Farm Center, currently in development.

The University is committed to the lifelong success of its students, and while its open admissions policy allows it to serve students from around the country and world, it maintains a special commitment to enrich the lives of those representing the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. In Fall 2011, TTU's headcount enrollment was 11,768 students, with approximately 97 percent of them hailing from Tennessee. Approximately 10 percent of the student body represent a minority group, and about half of all students are women.

Best known for engineering and science-related disciplines, Tennessee Tech University offers more than 40 bachelor's degree programs across five colleges: Arts and Sciences, Agricultural and Human Sciences, Business, Education, and Engineering, plus the Whitson-Hester School of Nursing, the Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Extended Education. Students can earn graduate degrees in 20 programs, including the Ph.D. in engineering, environmental sciences, and education. Tennessee Tech also hosts two chairs of excellence in business and three multi-million dollar "Accomplished Centers of Excellence" in engineering.

Tennessee Tech University was ranked one of the Top Public Universities in the South by *U.S. News & World Report* for 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2012, as well as being recognized for graduates carrying the lightest debt load in the region. TTU students also have the highest mid-career salary potential of any public university graduates in the state, according to PayScale.com. The University is a Best Value College, according to the 2007, 2008, and 2010 editions of *The Princeton Review* and a Best in the Southeast university in 2012.