



**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING**

Thursday, November 20, 2025 Friday, November 21, 2025	Tennessee State University Main Campus The Barn Agricultural Building 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209
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**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

FINANCE COMMITTEE	
Thursday, November 20, 2025 12:00 p.m. CT	Tennessee State University Main Campus Farrell Westbrook Complex (The Barn) 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Opening Remarks by the Committee Chair
- IV. Adoption of Agenda
- V. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting (Action)
- VI. Approval of Bank Reconciliation Policy (Action)
- VII. FY 2026 Institutional Revised Budget (Action)
- VIII. Report on Institutional Advancement
- IX. Adjournment

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025, Finance
Committee Meeting

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Charles Traugher, Committee Chair

Background Information

The committee conducted the meeting(s) reference below. The document reflecting the minutes from the meeting(s) are included in the Board materials:

September 18, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Action

The Committee Chair will call for a motion recommending the adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: I move to approve the September 18, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, Board meeting.

Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Finance Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Charles Traughber, Jeffery Norfleet, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Terica Smith, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal; Oniqua May, Assistant General Counsel

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Traughber called the meeting to order at 1:59 p.m. Committee Chair Traughber offered opening remarks to frame the committee’s work, noting that TSU continues to face significant financial challenges and cannot operate as usual. He emphasized that trustees must exercise careful oversight, seeking clarity, accuracy, and transparency in all decisions, and ensure compliance with university bylaws and applicable laws. Chair Traughber commended the Memorandum of Understanding with the state while stressing the need to meet its obligations with discipline and integrity. He encouraged trustees to ask questions, seek details, and act boldly and collaboratively to position TSU to not only survive but thrive.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Traughber declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Attorney May conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Charles Traughber, Jeffery Norfleet, and Dakasha Winton.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Committee Chair Traughber opened the session with brief remarks before the adoption of the agenda. A point of order was raised under Section 23 of *Robert’s Rules of Order* concerning the omission of a real estate item that had been properly submitted for inclusion on September 12, 2025, with Secretary Brown copied. Committee Chair Traughber noted that, according to standard parliamentary procedure, the committee chair is responsible for setting the agenda, and the item—related to real estate—had not been included.

Chair Winton explained that the real estate discussion had originally been scheduled for the full board meeting the following day to allow all board members to participate fully, consistent with prior full board decisions such as the Memorandum of Understanding. She emphasized that this approach would ensure transparency and active engagement on matters of significant importance.

Discussion followed regarding whether the finance committee could address the item first. Chair Winton highlighted that while committee feedback is valuable, the significance of the real estate matter warranted full board consideration to provide direction and prevent duplicative work. The committee discussed the balance between committee review and full board participation, noting that deferring the item would maintain proper oversight while ensuring all members had input.

Following discussion, Trustee Norfleet made a motion to remove the real estate item from the finance committee agenda for the current meeting and place it on the full board agenda for the following day. Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – No
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes

The motion passed, and the real estate item was removed from the finance committee agenda.

Trustee Norfleet then moved to adopt the revised finance committee agenda, as amended. Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – No
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes

The motion passed, and the revised agenda was adopted.

IV. APPROVAL OF JUNE 12, 2025, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the June 12, 2025, meeting of the Finance Committee were approved as submitted, with Committee Chair Traughber making the motion and Chair Winton seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. UPDATE ON ENROLLMENT

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the next agenda item, an update on enrollment, and invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Jim Grady from Alvarez & Marsal to present.

Dr. Stokes provided an overview of the Fall 2026 enrollment cycle, highlighting strategic initiatives, recruitment efforts, campus visits, and data-driven planning. He emphasized that TSU's strategy builds on the six initiatives previously presented by RHB SIG, focusing on increasing enrollment while improving the academic profile of incoming students. Key focus areas include strategic initiatives, recruitment and travel, events, and campus tours.

He highlighted the launch of a new CRM system, Slate, to enhance student engagement, manage campus visits, support lead generation, and improve communication with prospective students. Training for Enrollment Management staff is underway, with additional training planned for

faculty and staff involved in recruitment. Lead generation efforts include purchasing ACT lists, integrating with the Common App and Common Black College App, and targeting high-achieving students through initiatives such as Tennessee Hope and THEC's Direct Admit program.

Dr. Stokes discussed recruitment and travel strategies, emphasizing a data-driven approach to prioritize high-yield regions, including Davidson and Shelby Counties, while maintaining outreach to other areas. Campus visits remain a key factor in student enrollment decisions, with investments in peer-led Tiger Tour Guides to provide high-quality experiences.

He clarified the roles of recruitment and admissions staff, noting three Admissions Counselors, one Director of Recruitment, and three Admissions Associates who process applications and assist with transfer student evaluations. Benchmarks for enrollment success include tracking applications, student engagement via Slate, event attendance, FAFSA completion, and confirmations for orientation.

Dr. Stokes also addressed improvements to TSU's website to make enrollment-related information more accessible and noted plans to align marketing and communications with recruitment strategies.

VI. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the next agenda item the finance and budget report and invited Jim Grady from Alvarez & Marsal to present.

Mr. Grady provided an update on enrollment and related budget implications. Tennessee State executed a student purge for the first time in nearly a decade, with the final purge date on August 29. Daily tracking leading up to the purge categorized students as fully registered and financially cleared, partially cleared, or requiring significant financial aid or administrative follow-up. Initial mid-July numbers showed approximately 4,200 registered students, with only about 280 financially confirmed. By the first purge date on August 11, registrations increased to 4,890, with more than 3,200 confirmed. Through coordinated outreach, a one-stop shop for student issues, and support from the TSU Foundation—including targeted scholarships, “close the gap” funds, and an additional \$3.3 million—only 188 students were ultimately purged. Emphasis was placed on graduating seniors, including those with GPAs between 2.0 and 2.5.

Trustees commended the cross-departmental effort, with administration, faculty, staff, and external partners all contributing. President Tucker highlighted teams assigned to current students, incoming freshmen, and targeted financial aid support. THEC also provided assistance with financial aid applications and training. Mr. Grady noted ongoing “after-action” reviews to identify lessons learned and ensure spring semester monitoring, particularly regarding continued foundation support. Fall FTE was 4,767, projecting to an annualized FTE of 4,555, aligning with the budget assumption of 4,250 FTE and accounting for an anticipated nine percent decline between fall and spring.

Trustee Qualls asked about loan usage. Administration reported that of the \$45–46 million aid pool, \$16 million came from federal loans, \$7.5 million from Pell grants, with the remainder from

state aid, institutional scholarships, and foundation support. Many students receive aid from multiple sources, making exact percentages difficult to isolate. Trustee Bruce emphasized clearer communication, as many students did not check emails or respond to calls. Administration indicated future improvements would include expanded use of the Slate system for reminders and scholarship/FAFSA follow-up. Technical issues with Flywire during the purge week were acknowledged, and efforts are underway to strengthen system performance.

Although enrollment exceeded projections, the University faces a \$39 million deficit. The FY26 proposed tuition revenue budget was \$59.2 million; with 4,555 FTEs, the latest forecast is approximately \$64 million, a \$5.2 million increase. In-state tuition averages around \$9,000, and out-of-state between \$16,000–\$18,000. Differences between the FY26 pro forma and current budget, including enrollment assumptions and tuition rate increases, account for a \$3.6 million variance. A revised October budget will be presented at the November board meeting. The purge improved cash flow by reducing bad debt risk, requiring a 25% deposit for payment plans, and encouraging use of federal aid. Most students are expected to maintain eligibility for spring aid.

Committee members discussed producing reliable financial reports. Using a “triangulation” approach—verifying data at least three times—has improved accuracy, exemplified by the October 2023 revised budget. Cash flow was prioritized initially, with additional data refining future forecasts. Under the MOU with the state, TSU meets with state officials 45 days after each quarter; reports are high-level (pro forma, budget, revenues, expenses, deficit projections) and reviewed by the Board beforehand.

Budget adjustments since June included “bad guys” (deficit-increasing) such as the TBR contract (\$850,000), recruitment initiatives (\$420,000), THEC financial aid contract (\$200,000), restoration of an audit position, Levi Watkins program staff support, Ingrid Group lobbying services, employee education assistance, and miscellaneous items (\$232,000). “Good guys” (revenue/savings) included the YMCA parking agreement (\$400–500K) and unfilled position salary savings (\$1.3 million). Net impact was a \$357,000 deficit increase, excluding an additional \$5 million positive adjustment. Deficit remains in the mid-\$30 million range.

Trustees discussed TBR and THEC contracts. The TBR \$850,000 figure is a maximum; charges apply only for engaged resources. Current onboarding includes one or two staff, with additional hires in progress. Consultants assist with operations, audit support, and staff training to ensure knowledge transfer. Funds exist in the budget to hire permanent staff (reflected in the \$1.3 million savings from vacancies). TBR has supported audit issues since FY23, with intensified support beginning July 2024. The YMCA parking agreement, which would make available approximately 100–150 spaces at Avon Williams, is under review to finalize actual availability before execution. Trustees agreed the Finance Committee should review and recommend approval to the full Board.

VII. APPROVAL OF THE BANK RECONCILIATION POLICY

Committee Chair Traugher introduced the next agenda item, the approval of the Bank Reconciliation Policy, noting that materials were included for review. Mr. Bradley White presented the proposed updates.

Mr. White explained that the primary change reduces the number of approvers for reconciliations from two to one. The updated policy also clarifies that all reconciliations must be completed within 30 days after month-end, removing the previously interpreted 45-day allowance for the June 30 reconciliation.

In response to questions from Trustees, Mr. White noted that the previous requirement for two signatures may have been procedural rather than policy-based. Trustees discussed whether two approvers would provide stronger checks and balances. Mr. White agreed that having two appropriate approvers could strengthen oversight but emphasized that approval by the designated controller remains sufficient.

Trustee Norfleet requested a redline version comparing the prior and proposed policies, along with information on other institutions' approval practices. Mr. White agreed to provide these materials.

The Committee agreed to defer action on the policy until the redline comparison and benchmarking information are available for review at a future meeting.

VIII. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Committee Chair Traugher introduced the final agenda item, an update on Institutional Advancement, and welcomed Ms. Eloise Abernathy Alexis, Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

Ms. Alexis noted that she was a few weeks into her new role and currently conducting a listening tour to engage with colleagues, alumni, students, and donors. She stated that her focus is to build a culture of engagement and giving that is significant and sustainable.

She identified three priorities: building trust among advocates and donors, inspiring giving through transparent and balanced storytelling, and driving data-informed, donor-centered results. Ms. Alexis emphasized collaboration, integrity, and accountability, and shared that she has begun meetings with the TSU National Alumni Association, the TSU Foundation Board, and university leadership to strengthen advancement efforts.

Ms. Alexis thanked the Committee and expressed enthusiasm for working with the Board and university partners.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Norfleet moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Chair Winton. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Approval of Bank Reconciliation Policy

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Bradley White, Interim Vice President of Business and Finance

Background Information

Bradley White will discuss a new university Bank Reconciliation Policy for the Board's approval.

Action

MOTION: I move to approve the Bank Reconciliation Policy, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, Board meeting.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT
BANK RECONCILIATION POLICY KEY CHANGES

Policy dated November 2022	Revised Policy
When the number of accounts and/or staffing issues prevents the timely completion of reconciliations on a regular basis, an exception allowing a longer time frame to complete reconciliations may be granted.	This paragraph has been deleted. The State requires bank reconciliations to be completed within 30 days of month-end.
The bank reconciliations will be reviewed and approved by the Director of General Accounting and Financial Reporting and the Controller.	Paragraph 4.0.II: In the financial management process, it is essential that Bank Account Reconciliations signed by the preparer undergo a thorough review by the Director of General Accounting before receiving final approval from the Controller. This three-step verification approach not only enhances the accuracy and integrity of financial records but also ensures accountability within the Business and Finance Department. By implementing such a protocol, TSU seeks to mitigate the risk of errors and discrepancies, ultimately fostering a more reliable financial reporting system.



BUSINESS AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT
General Accounting

Effective Date: Upon Approval

BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Policy Number	501-01
Approval Authority	TSU Board of Trustees
Responsible Administrator	Controller
Responsible Office	Business and Finance
Policy Contact	Director of General Accounting and Financial Reporting

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Tennessee State University Bank Reconciliations' policy requires all incoming and outgoing funds from its bank accounts to be recorded in the general ledger promptly. Monthly Bank Account Reconciliations are crucial for preventing fraud, identifying errors, managing cash flow, and ensuring that the university's funds are managed with fiscal responsibility and oversight. In essence, this bank reconciliation policy is key to maintaining the financial health, security, and integrity of the institution, safeguarding it against errors, fraud, and other risks.

2.0 IMPORTANCE AND REASON FOR THE POLICY

A bank reconciliation policy is crucial for ensuring accurate financial records and upholding the integrity of the university's accounting processes. Bank reconciliations must be completed promptly in accordance with governmental accounting standards and for audit purposes. A thorough bank reconciliation policy also aids in detecting fraud, quickly identifying errors, improving forecasting, preventing financial mismanagement, and ensuring the university is always audit-ready.

If the university neglects to perform the required bank reconciliations, it can lead to errors in financial records, including accounting misclassifications, unsupported expenditures, and missing documentation. These issues can have negative consequences, including:

- Difficulty in detecting fraud such as theft or altered checks
- Errors in accounting records leading to incorrect financial statements
- Flawed data leading to poor financial decision-making
- Negatively impacting the university's cash position

- Funding agencies may hold or withdraw funding

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- A. **Bank Account Reconciliation** – The “Bank Account Reconciliation” is the process of confirming that the bank statement is valid and accurate, that transactions are correctly reflected in the general ledger account, and that the ending balance on the general ledger account is accurate. Any differences should be identified, reconciling items investigated, and balances adjusted appropriately.
- B. **Bank Statement** – The “bank statement” is a paper or electronic record of all financial activity for a given month, provided by the bank.
- C. **General Ledger** – The “general ledger” contains all the university’s financial transactions.
- D. **Reconciling Item** – A “reconciling item” is a transaction or item that represents a difference between the general ledger and the balance in a subsidiary ledger, supporting schedule, or external document (e.g., bank statement). All reconciling items should be investigated and adjusted or explained and supported by appropriate documentation. A reconciling item of ‘bank-to-book’ represents a deposit/withdrawal that appears on the bank statement but not on the general ledger. A reconciling item of ‘book-to-bank’ represents a deposit/withdrawal recorded in the books but not yet reflected by the bank.

4.0 PROCEDURES

- I. Preparer. Bank Account Reconciliations are to be prepared by a designated staff member within the General Accounting department, ensuring accuracy and compliance with financial regulations. This role involves thoroughly reviewing and verifying the financial records against bank statements to identify discrepancies, thus contributing to the organization’s overall financial integrity. Preparers are also responsible for aging reconciling items and flagging any that exceeds the thresholds defined in Section V of this policy.
- II. Reviewer. In the financial management process, it is essential that Bank Account Reconciliations signed by the preparer undergo a thorough review by the Director of General Accounting before receiving final approval from the Controller. This three-step verification approach not only enhances the accuracy and integrity of financial records but also ensures accountability within the Business and Finance Department. By implementing such a protocol, TSU seeks to mitigate the risk of errors and discrepancies, ultimately fostering a more reliable financial reporting system.
- III. Reconciliation Timeframe. Each bank account should be reconciled within 30 days following the conclusion of each month. This ensures that all transactions are accurately

aligned with the bank statements, discrepancies are promptly addressed, and financial records remain up-to-date and precise.

- IV. Outstanding Ledger Items. Clearing account balances should be clearly identified and reported as outstanding items within the general ledger during the bank reconciliation process. This ensures that any discrepancies between the bank records and the university's financial records are accurately accounted for and addressed.
- V. Clearing Accounts Adjustments. When making adjustments to address any discrepancies that remain unreconciled through the use of clearing accounts, it is essential to ensure that these changes are accurately captured in the bank reconciliation process. These adjustments should not be classified as reconciled items, as they are still under review. This distinction helps maintain clarity and accuracy in financial reporting, ensuring that all outstanding differences are properly documented.
- VI. Aging of Reconciling Items and Resolution Plan. All reconciling items begin aging on the first calendar day following the month-end. Reconciling items should be categorized into the following aging groups by number of calendar days: 0-30, 31-60, 61-90, and >90. All reconciling items >\$10,000 and aged greater than 90 days must have a documented plan for resolution submitted to the Controller by the preparer or the Director of General Accounting. The Controller will review all reconciling items, regardless of amount, and aged greater than 90 days annually, and a plan for resolution will be required.
- VII. Supporting Documentation.
 - A. All adjustments must be supported by valid documentation. Supporting documentation for adjustments should include, but is not limited to, bank statements, general ledger records, subledger reports, calculation work papers, and notes from preparers/approvers, to ensure clarity and auditability.
 - B. Completed bank reconciliation documents are to include the bank reconciliation, bank statement, general ledger activity report, and copies of required journal entries.
 - C. All reconciliations must be dated, signed by the preparer and reviewer, and stored electronically in the financial system or a secure network location.
- VIII. Month-End Bank Reconciliation and Close. The Controller will conduct a thorough review and approve the finalized bank reconciliation following a comprehensive review by both the preparer and the reviewer. The signatures and dates of both the preparer and reviewer should be documented electronically using an approved e-signature platform. No entries will be made after the month-end close. Bank reconciliations must be based on the finalized general ledger balances as of the month-end close date. Any reconciling items identified after the close should be addressed in the following period.

5.0 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

This policy is issued under the authority of the Vice President of Business and Finance and is enforced by the Controller's Office. The Vice President of Business and Finance is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for approving any exceptions.

6.0 HISTORY

Policy Revised: November 2022

Last Reviewed: August 2025

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Approval of FY 26 Institutional Revised Budget

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Charles Traughber, Chair of Finance Committee
Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

Background Information

TSU Policy 4:01:00:00 (Budget Control) recognizes budgeting as the process whereby the plans of the University are translated into an itemized, authorized, and systematic plan of operation, expressed in dollars, for a given period. This policy also recognizes that a budget is a plan and that circumstances may necessitate revisions or changes to the original plan from time to time. To that end, the University submits three detailed budgets for approval each fiscal year.

Under Board policy, the original budget for each fiscal year is known as the Proposed Budget and is prepared in the spring of each year. This budget is based on the level of state funds recommended in the Governor's proposed budget as well as early estimates of factors such as enrollment growth, research activities, and availability of federal funds. The Proposed Budget is normally submitted to the Board for approval at the summer Board meeting. The Revised Budget is prepared in the fall of each year and is normally submitted to the Board for approval at the winter Board meeting.

The final budget submitted for each fiscal year is the Estimated Budget. It includes final adjustments to the current year budget and is the budget against which final year-end actual amounts are compared. It is prepared, submitted, and considered by the Board at the same time as the Proposed Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

The purpose of this agenda item is to consider approval of the Revised Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Committee Action

The Committee Chair will call for a motion recommending the below.

MOTION: I move to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Revised Budget, as contained in the Board materials for the Board's November 20, 2025, meeting.

**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
SUMMARY OF UNRESTRICTED FUNDS
OCTOBER REVISED BUDGET 2025-2026**

	October Revised Budget FY 2025-2026	% of Total
<u>Revenues</u>		
E&G		
Tuition and Fees	65,159,500	32.28%
State Appropriations	89,128,900	44.15%
Federal Grants and Contracts	4,500,000	2.23%
State Grants and Contracts	33,000	0.02%
Local Grants and Contracts	-	0.00%
Private Grants and Contracts	25,000	0.01%
Private Gifts	310,600	0.15%
Sales & Services of Educational Activities	66,400	0.03%
Sales & Services of Other Activities	4,267,500	2.11%
Other Sources	850,000	0.42%
Total E&G Revenues	164,340,900	81.41%
Sales and Services of Auxiliary Enterprise	37,531,000	18.59%
Total Revenue	201,871,900	100.00%
<u>Expenditures and Transfers</u>		
E&G		
Instruction	63,388,700	31.12%
Research	1,093,200	0.54%
Public Service	2,579,000	1.27%
Academic Support	10,229,700	5.02%
Student Services	18,495,700	9.08%
Institutional Support	22,085,600	10.84%
Operation and Maintenance of Plant	23,747,500	11.66%
Scholarships and Fellowships	25,364,100	12.45%
Total E&G Expenditures	166,983,500	81.99%
Mandatory Transfers		
Transfers to Principal & Interest (ROI)	2,047,400	1.01%
Transfers to (from) Renewals and Replacements	-	-
Total Mandatory Transfers	2,047,400	2,047,400
Non-Mandatory Transfers		
Transfers to (from) Unexpended Plant	-	-
Transfers to (from) Renewals and Replacements	-	-
Transfers to (from) Other Funds	-	-
Total Non-Mandatory Transfers	-	-
Total E&G Expenditures and Transfers	169,030,900	82.99%
Auxiliary Enterprise Expenditures	29,015,300	14.25%
Mandatory Transfers		
Transfers to Principal & Interest (ROI)	5,628,500	2.76%
Transfers to (from) Renewals and Replacements	-	-
Total Mandatory Transfers	5,628,500	5,628,500
Non-Mandatory Transfers		
Transfers to (from) Unexpended Plant	-	-
Transfers to (from) Renewals and Replacements	-	-
Transfers to (from) Unrestricted Fund	-	-
Total Non-Mandatory Transfers	-	-
Total Auxiliary Expenditures and Transfers	34,643,800	17.01%
Total Expenditures and Transfers	203,674,700	100.00%
Total Net Revenues to Expenses/Transfers	(1,802,800)	100.00%

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ORDER OF BUSINESS

VII. Fiscal Year 2026 Institutional Revised Budget

0

FY26 Proposed vs. FY26 October Budget

Tennessee State University
FY26 Proposed vs FY26 October Budget
(\$ in 000s)

	PROPOSED BUDGET	OCTOBER BUDGET	VARIANCE
	FY26	FY26	FY26
REVENUES			
1 Tuition & Fees	\$ 59,176	\$ 65,159	5,984
2 Less: Scholarships	(27,961)	(25,714)	2,247
3 State Appropriations	54,129	89,129	35,000
Other E&G Revenues	8,059	10,052	1,993
Total E&G Revenues	93,403	138,627	45,224
Total Auxiliary Revenues	37,369	37,531	162
Total Revenues	130,772	176,158	45,386
EXPENSES			
4 Personnel Costs	(100,789)	(106,197)	(5,409)
Non-Personnel Costs	(32,340)	(35,124)	(2,784)
Total E&G Expenditures	(133,128)	(141,321)	(8,193)
Personnel Costs	(4,364)	(5,049)	(685)
Non-Personnel Costs	(24,524)	(23,915)	609
Total Auxiliary Expenditures	(28,888)	(28,964)	(76)
Debt Service	(7,676)	(7,676)	-
Total Expenses	(169,692)	(177,960)	(8,269)
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (38,920)	\$ (1,803)	\$ 37,117

1 Favorable revenue latest thinking forecast as a result of more FTE enrollment than originally budgeted. Additionally, ~\$1M of Summer revenue being added to tuition & fees revenue in FY26.

2 \$2.6M of restricted State funds being used to offset institutional scholarship expenses for those students that qualify.

3 Grants IDC increase of \$1.5M, with additional added revenue from homecoming and other items.

4 Please see next slides for further information.

1

FY26 Revised Budget Adjustments – Revenue

Budget Adjustment	Justification	Value (\$, 000s)
State Funding - MOU	Included the \$35M operational funding draw from State MOU received in early July 2025.	35,000
Tuition & Fees Increase	Revised tuition & fees latest thinking forecast; higher enrollment than originally budgeted.	5,984
Grants IDC Increase	Revised grants indirect cost assumptions to align with Q1 trends while maintaining some conservatism given broader economic uncertainty.	1,500
Homecoming Revenue	Better homecoming revenue from tickets, suites, parking sales, etc. than originally budgeted.	493
Parking Revenue	Increased parking revenues; YMCA agreement.	162
Scholarships Expense Relief	(contra revenue) \$2.6M of State funding for scholarships not deployed in prior years, eligible to offset institutional scholarship expense in FY26 for qualifying students.	2,247
Total Net Impact		\$45,386

2

FY26 Revised Budget Adjustments – Personnel Expenses

Budget Adjustment	Justification	Value (\$, 000s)
Temp Faculty Benefits	Added benefits for temp contract faculty that were mistakenly left off the FY26 proposed budget.	(760)
Recruiting Strategic Investment	Investment into enrollment strategy proposed by AVP Stokes to drive meaningful recruitment in FY26, including new recruiter and enrollment management positions.	(570)
Internal Audit Positions	Re-opening of 2 internal audit positions to fill critical need not captured in zero-based reset process.	(284)
Police/Security Overtime	Increased funding for police/security overtime given recent on-campus events, including homecoming.	(210)
TECTA Accrued Time Payouts	The TECTA State grant was cancelled, leaving the University on the hook for accrued time payouts for employees no longer funded via the grant.	(160)
Levi Watkins Program Position	Re-opening of 1 Levi Watkins program management position to fill critical need not captured in zero-based reset process.	(122)
Employee Education Assistance	Employee education assistance benefit previously covered under Title 3, moving over to E&G.	(100)
Salary and Benefit Increases for Vacant Positions & Other	Systems issue with a lack of alignment between HR and Budget Office – vacant positions were previously automatically budgeted in line with outdated salary tables in HR. Fixing this issue required adjustments to increase budgeted salaries for these open roles to true annual market rates. Also includes additional small adjustments to salaries.	(3,888)
Total Net Impact		\$(6,094)

3

FY26 Revised Budget Adjustments – Non-Personnel Expenses

Budget Adjustment	Justification	Value (\$, 000s)
TBR Contract	Provide finance and accounting services to fill critical resource gaps and provide training for TSU staff.	(850)
Recruiting Strategic Investment	Investment into enrollment strategy proposed by AV/P Stokes to drive meaningful recruitment in FY26, including travel and other operating expense increases.	(394)
Insurance Premium Addition	Insurance premium historically budgeted in Athletics but missed through the zero-based process because coverage area had shifted in past years.	(221)
THEC Contract	Provide Financial Aid assistance and expertise to train TSU staff and flex on-ground staff in response to student demand for services.	(200)
Ingram Group Invoices	TSU lobbying services.	(100)
Bus Insurance	Bus insurance for previously purchased vehicles, mandated by the State.	(75)
Other Budget Increases	Various adjustments to rectify items missed in budgeting process or to capture unforeseen expenses.	(335)
Total Net Impact		\$(2,175)

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TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Report on Institutional Advancement

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Eloise Alexis, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Background Information

Eloise Alexis will present a report on institutional advancement.



Division of Institutional Advancement November Board Report

Thursday, November 20, 2025

0

Institutional Advancement Priorities: First 60 Days



Build Relationships

- Board Engagement (Trustees, Foundation, TSUNAA, Research & Sponsored Programs)
- Conversations and Listening Sessions
 - Cabinet, Deans, Directors, and Faculty/Staff to ensure open dialogue
 - Pre-Alumni Council and other Student engagement
- External Outreach
 - Corporate, Foundation, Community and Donors as valued collaborators and partners



Inspire Involvement and Giving

- Alumni Town Hall meetings to share updates, address concerns and build stakeholder trust
- Homecoming (Black Out, Fundraising Events, Donor Stewardship, Check Presentations)

1

Institutional Advancement Priorities: First 60 Days (cont.)



Drive Results

- Understand the existing fundraising infrastructure and capacity
 - IA Staff meetings and functional role assessments
 - Foundation Staff and Board conversations and collaborations
 - SIG Business Process Analysis (BPA)
 - Gift Processing and Scholarships
- Onboarding new Director of Fundraising
- Rehires via temp process to address loss of critical IA staff functions
- Pursue and respond to grant opportunities
- Changing the Alumni Giving Model
- Framing a Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign

2

CONSIDERATIONS



Staff Capacity

The volume of activities, events and high-touch required for effective alumni and donor engagement is a heavy lift for a small staff with limited automations, inconsistent technology and training.



Gift & Receipt Back Log

A backlog exists of gifts received through several online platforms and wire transfers, creating a delay in gift posting, receipting and acknowledgement.



Broken Processes

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and Payroll Deductions were disrupted when key staff members were released with no succession plan for vacated roles, creating gaps in knowledge, capacity and accountability.



Donor Fatigue

The sheer volume of event fundraising, membership dues and ticket sales creates confusion and frustration among current and potential donors.

3

FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

July 1 - November 7, 2025

- We have received and receipted **\$2,139,425** in philanthropic fundraising to-date:
 - Of note is the significant increase in the total gifts designated for scholarships this year compared to the last – up \$273K in endowed scholarships and up \$250K in immediate use scholarships.
 - There is a significant decrease in restricted use funds – down \$566K.
- The total reported to-date is **\$100,079** less than that raised during this same period last year, and down by 665 donors.
- It is also important to note a total of **\$136,250** in backlogged postings to the database that are **not** yet included in the overall fundraising total.
 - This will represent an actual increase in giving of **\$36,170.70** over last year once the additional gifts are posted.
- During this period, submitted grant applications and proposals total \$1,402,000.

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Year-to-Date Giving Comparison By Gift Category (Jul 1 - Nov 7)

GIFT CATEGORY	FISCAL YEAR 2025	FISCAL YEAR 2026	DIFFERENCE
Capital	\$21,581.33	\$1,250.00	(\$ 20,331.33)
Endowment (Scholarships)	\$156,852.79	\$429,893.84	\$273,041.05
Endowment (Other)	\$6,600.00	\$10,000.00	\$3,400.00
Restricted	\$1,420,724.32	\$854,512.55	(566,211.77)
Scholarships	\$471,501.14	\$721,623.53	\$250,122.39
Unrestricted Operating Funds	\$162,244.89	\$122,145.39	(\$ 40,099.50)
TOTAL	\$2,239,504.47	\$2,139,425.31	(\$100,079.16)

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Year-to-Date Giving Comparison By Donor Category (Jul 1 - Nov 7)

DONOR CATEGORY	FISCAL YEAR 2025	FISCAL YEAR 2026	DIFFERENCE
Alumni (Degree and non-Degree)	\$512,802.59	\$453,614.83	(\$ 59,187.76)
Alumni Estate	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	(\$ 2,500.00)
Alumni Organizations	\$7,985.00	\$6,200.00	(\$ 1,785.00)
Corporations/Businesses	\$1,305,897.11	\$666,467.90	(\$639,429.21)
Estates/Trusts	\$500.00	\$11,660.01	\$11,160.01
Faculty and Staff (Non-Alumni)	\$21,102.52	\$14,622.00	(\$ 6,480.52)
Foundations	\$56,813.34	\$170,497.60	\$113,684.26
Friends	\$179,098.23	\$104,531.81	(\$ 74,566.42)
Other Organizations	\$132,705.87	\$644,066.66	\$511,360.79
Parents	\$7,360.99	\$750.00	(\$ 6,610.99)
Religious Organizations	\$8,475.00	\$63,420.00	\$54,945.00
Students	\$4,263.82	\$3,594.50	(\$ 669.32)
TOTAL	\$2,239,504.47	\$2,139,425.31	(\$100,079.16)

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Year-to-Date Comparison By Donor Count (Jul 1 - Nov 7)

DONOR CATEGORY	FISCAL YEAR 2025	FISCAL YEAR 2026	DIFFERENCE
Alumni (Degree and non-Degree)	715	443	(272)
Alumni Estate	1	0	(1)
Alumni Organizations	5	6	1
Corporations/Businesses	74	55	(19)
Estates/Trusts	1	2	1
Faculty and Staff (Non-Alumni)	77	16	(61)
Foundations	5	9	4
Friends	370	155	(215)
Other Organizations	19	21	2
Parents	37	1	(36)
Religious Organizations	5	7	2
Students	85	14	(71)
TOTAL	1,394	729	(665)

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WHAT'S NEXT

Changing the Alumni Giving Model

Transition the Alumni Association from an independent, dues-based structure to an integrated model where all alumni are actively engaged through annual giving to the Foundation.



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THE REASONS

- 1 The University faces a multi-year budget deficit and significant scholarship funding gap
- 2 Less than 30% of TSU's funding comes from the state of Tennessee
- 3 In FY2025, roughly 2,312 (3.7%) alumni made a gift to the Foundation
- 4 Approximately 4% of the 61,650 contactable alumni are dues paying members
- 5 Funds raised in the name of the university are not being managed by the Foundation
 - *National and local dues*
 - *Individual chapters have created 501c3's*
- 6 Our current Alumni Giving model is inefficient. It's transactional; not transformative

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THE TRENDS

2024 Voluntary Alumni Engagement in Support of Education (VAESE) Key Findings:

- 93%** of alumni organizations choose not to offer their alumni any benefits, or they see little or no engagement from the low-value benefits they do offer.
- 80%** of all alumni organizations reported having a non-dues-paying model. That's an 8% increase from the 2020 study. (The trends suggest that the dues-paying model is slowly fading into obscurity.)
- 72%** of alumni report experiencing "solicitation fatigue," where constant asks for donations without engagement have reduced their willingness to participate or donate.
- 54%** of alumni organizations are no longer independent, a 35% increase, since 2016, in the number of schools that have integrated the alumni association under the umbrella of the institution.

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THE MODEL

• Membership Dues: No

- All contactable alumni are automatically recognized by the University and the Foundation
- Active alumni support the University and the Foundation annually through:
 - Charitable gifts
 - Tickets for Athletics, Academics and other authorized University events
 - Attending and volunteering for University and Foundation programs

• Structure:

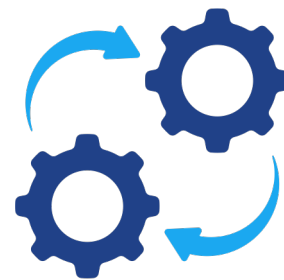
- University staffed and operated
- Integrated under an existing TSU 501c3
- Volunteer Board
- Chapters focus
 - Alumni engagement & giving
 - Student recruitment & mentoring

• Funding Sources:

- Endowment investment income
- Gift administration fees
- Affinity Partnerships (Insurance copies, credit cards)
- University and/or Foundation supplement

• Assets:

- All Association accounts managed by the Foundation



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THE TIMELINE

- Conversation with TSUNAA President (Nov 7)
- Town Hall w/TSUNAA Executive Board and Chapter Presidents (Nov 13)
- Mid-south Region Chapter Presidents Call (Nov 22 @ 9:00 a.m.)
- TSUNAA Members Town Hall (Dec)
- President's Remarks at Chapter Holiday Events
 - South Central (12/6)
 - Nashville (12/13)
- Final Collection of Dues (Dec 31, 2025)
- University and National finalize transition action items (Jan-Jun)
- Formal New Model launch (Jul 2026)

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WHAT'S NEXT

Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign



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CAMPAIGN PLANNING

TIMELINE

- **Goal:** \$100 million over 3 years
 - January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2027
- **Campaign Preparation**
 - Gift Processing and Acknowledgement
 - Database Migration
 - Budget
 - Staffing
 - Fundraising SWOT Analysis
- **Public Launch**
 - June 19, 2026 (Founders Day)
 - Launch Milestone: \$30 million in gifts and commitments

CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

- **Student Experiences**
 - Academic Initiatives
 - Leadership and Career Development
 - Scholarships and Support
- **Campus Infrastructure**
 - Residential and Student Spaces
 - Engineering Building Match
 - Football Stadium
 - Operations and Areas of Opportunity

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BOARD CALL TO ACTION

- Communicate the need to Change the Alumni Giving Model
- Support the Campaign Planning phase:
 - Inform the Fundraising SWOT Analysis – Share alumni and donor insights and experiences
 - Reimagine your personal philanthropic vision and share it with IA
 - Develop a list of 3-5 potential donors and ways to inspire their gifts

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**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

AUDIT COMMITTEE	
Thursday, November 20, 2025 1:30 p.m. CT	Tennessee State University Main Campus Farrell Westbrook Complex (The Barn) 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Opening Remarks by the Committee Chair
- IV. Adoption of Agenda
- V. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting (Action)
- VI. Report on Internal and External Audit Items
- VII. Internal and External Quality Assessments/Gap Assessment Results
- VIII. Review of Outstanding Audit Issues/Audit Plan Status
- IX. Adjournment of Public Session
- X. Non-Public Executive Session

Discussion of matters deemed not subject to public inspection under state law, confidential or privileged matters, litigation, audits, investigations, and other matters deemed not subject to public inspection pursuant to T.C.A. § 4-35-108(b)(1)-(3)).

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Approval of September 18, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dimeta Smith Knight, Committee Chair

Background Information

The committee conducted the meeting(s) referenced below. The document reflecting the minutes from the meeting(s) are included in the Board materials:

September 18, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Action

The Committee Chair will call for a motion recommending the adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: I move to approve the September 18, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, Board meeting.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Audit Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Dimeta Smith Knight, Marquita Qualls and Charles Traughber. Other Trustees present: Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Smith Knight called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Smith Knight declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Secretary conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Dimeta Smith Knight, Marquita Qualls and Charles Traughber.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Traughber moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Qualls. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF JUNE 12, 2025, AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the June 12, 2025, meeting of the Audit Committee were approved as submitted, with Committee Chair Smith Knight making the motion and Trustee Traughber seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. REPORT ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT ITEMS

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the report on internal and external audit items, noting that the materials were provided for informational purposes and that no Board action was required. She asked Dr. Renée Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that no external audits had been finalized since the last committee meeting. She stated that the University expects the FY 2025 Single Audit to be issued in March

2026 and that the FY 2024 financial statement audit is projected to be released by the end of September 2025.

Turning to internal audits, Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the review of the NCAA Student Assistance Fund was completed and submitted on July 25, 2025. In addition, the FY 2024 Single Audit Report of Action was submitted to the State on the morning of September 17, 2025, and to the Audit Committee Chair, the President, and the Interim Vice President of Business and Finance the evening prior.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Dr. Forbes-Williams summarized the four findings included in the FY 2024 Single Audit that remain uncorrected:

- Finding 2024-001 – The Financial Aid Office did not adequately reconcile its Direct Loan records to the federal loan servicing system, as required by federal regulations. While not corrected, revised policies and procedures have been implemented.
- Finding 2024-002 – The University did not consistently ensure that Title IV credits were refunded in accordance with federal guidelines. This issue remains uncorrected, though revised Banner-based procedures are being tested.
- Finding 2024-003 – The University did not report timely and accurate student enrollment status information for the Federal Direct Loan and Pell Grant Programs. This finding remains uncorrected.
- Finding 2024-004 – The University did not return Title IV funds in compliance with federal regulations. This finding also remains uncorrected.

Dr. Forbes-Williams confirmed that these findings mirror those previously discussed with the Committee and that they are included among the fifteen findings identified by the State. She noted that management, in coordination with Bradley White, is actively working to resolve them and that corrective actions must be addressed in the report due to the State by November 7, 2025.

VI. REPORT ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the report on internal and external assessments, noting that the materials had been provided in the Board's meeting materials. She invited Dr. Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that, as required by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) GAP assessment conducted by the M&A Group began on July 8, 2025, and is expected to be completed by the end of September. She stated that the results of the assessment will support the University's readiness for the IIA-mandated external review, which occurs every five years, and that a full report will be made available to the Board once finalized.

In discussion, Dr. Forbes-Williams confirmed that the final interviews for the assessment, including one with the Board Chair, had been completed and that the assessment team is now

finalizing its report. She noted that she has not yet received feedback but anticipates the final report will be released by the end of the month.

VII. REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING AUDIT ISSUES

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the review of outstanding audit issues, noting that the materials were provided for informational purposes and that no Board action was required. She asked Dr. Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the review continues to focus on the highest-risk areas, with procurement cards remaining a recurring concern. She noted that prior findings have included cardholders exceeding the \$1,000 single transaction limit without approval and cardholders failing to provide sufficient supporting documentation. An internal control audit is scheduled to begin shortly to address procurement cards and other high-risk areas.

Turning to external audit issues, Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the Report of Actions for the FY 2024 Single Audit was submitted to the State on the morning of September 19, 2025. She added that the FY 2023 Financial Statement Audit and the Endowment for Educational Excellence (EEE) Audit reports of action are both due November 7, 2025. She then deferred to Associate Vice President Bradley White to provide an update on management's progress in resolving outstanding audit findings.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Mr. White summarized the highest-risk outstanding audit issues:

- Bank Reconciliations – The University has restructured its reconciliation process and is leveraging new staff and a reconciliation script to address bulk deposits. Reconciliations are current through June 2025, with full completion (including October transactions) targeted for October 31, 2025. Temporary TBR staff are assisting until the backlog is resolved.
- Financial Aid – Return of Title IV Funds – Prior findings regarding untimely returns remain uncorrected. Corrective actions are in progress, and additional information on the number of affected students will be provided to the Committee.
- Financial Aid – Student Refunds – All Fall 2025 refunds have been issued within the required 14-day window. However, prior-year refunds remain unresolved and require case-by-case review.
- Procurement Cards – Past issues included cardholders exceeding the \$1,000 single transaction limit without approval and failing to submit adequate supporting documentation. An internal control audit focused on procurement cards is scheduled to begin soon.

Committee members discussed the adequacy of resources allocated to resolving longstanding findings and emphasized the need for project management oversight to ensure accountability. In response, President Tucker acknowledged the historical challenges but affirmed that progress is

being made through new permanent hires, additional TBR support, and improved financial stability. Mr. White confirmed that recruitment remains underway for the Controller position and that, in the interim, he and the lead member of the TBR support team are jointly performing Controller-level responsibilities.

VIII. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN UPDATE

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the update to the internal audit plan, noting that Dr. Forbes-Williams had requested that this agenda item be designated as an action item requiring Committee approval due to significant changes in the scope of work. She then asked Dr. Forbes-Williams to present the update on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams explained that the required audits outlined in the approved plan remain unchanged. However, in collaboration with an external firm, the University has expanded the audit scope to include several additional high-risk areas. She reported that 731 additional audit hours have been allocated to the external firm, funded by salary savings from a vacant audit position, and that interest meetings for these audits will take place at the end of September 2025.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Dr. Forbes-Williams summarized the key updates to the internal audit plan:

- Accounts Payable – Added to address risks related to vendor payment processes.
- Payroll – Added to review compliance and accuracy of compensation.
- Procurement – Added as a follow-up to issues with purchasing cards and approvals.
- Cash Collections – Added to strengthen oversight of cash handling.
- Travel – Expanded review included with external firm support.

Following discussion, the Committee reviewed a marked copy of the updated audit plan to confirm the additions. After returning from executive session, Committee Chair Smith Knight reconvened the meeting at 11:41 a.m. and called for a motion to approve the updated audit plan as presented. The motion was duly made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote of the Trustees.

With no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting by voice vote.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Traugher moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Qualls. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Report on Internal and External Audit Items

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No Action

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dimeta Smith Knight, Audit Committee Chair
Dr. Renée Forbes, Director, Internal Audit

Background Information

The Tennessee State University Board of Trustees Audit Committee Charter requires the Audit Committee to review the results of the University's Internal Audits and the Examinations of the Tennessee Comptroller Auditors.

The Director of Internal Audit will review the completed Internal and External Audits since the September 18, 2025, Audit Committee meeting.



November 7, 2025

Mr. Dwayne H. Tucker, President
Tennessee State University
3500 John A. Merritt Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37209-1561

Dear President Tucker:

The Office of Internal Audit presents this report on the follow-up regarding the management's implementation of the audit recommendations stemming from the findings of the Division of State Audit's 2023 Financial Statements of Tennessee State University.

This review was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing established by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

The results of the review are included in the attached report.

We wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation of the university staff contacted during our review.

Sincerely,

Renée L. Forbes

Dr. Renée L. Forbes, CPA
Director, Internal Audit
Tennessee State University Main Campus
Office Phone: 615-963-2579

Copied: Dakasha Winton, TSU Board Chair
TSU Board of Trustees Audit Committee
Mr. Bradley White, Interim Vice President for Business and Finance
Michael Campbell, Legislative Audit Manager, Comptroller of the Treasury

**Department of Internal Audit
Tennessee State University
2023 Financial and Compliance Audit
Report of Action
Executive Summary**

Key Areas: Division of Business and Finance

Auditor: Dr. Renée Forbes, CPA

Introduction: The Comptroller of the Treasury, Division of State Audit, issued a report related to the Tennessee State University 2023 Financial and Compliance Audit. The report included fifteen audit findings.

Objective: The objective of this review was to determine whether adequate corrective actions have been taken to address the audit findings, implement the audit recommendations, and mitigate the risks that either errors or fraud could occur and not be detected in a timely manner.

Finding 1

As noted in the prior audit, Tennessee State University (TSU) management lacks appropriate oversight, allowing a breakdown of controls that created an error-prone environment that has resulted in errors in the financial statements, inadequate daily operations, and deficiencies in oversight of federal programs, which contributed to subsequent cash flow deficits

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

Despite receiving support from third-party consultants and organizations, management continues to show inadequate controls, oversight, and knowledge in several critical areas of their accounting ledger and related systems. While engaging these external entities is a positive step toward addressing these issues, the ongoing deficiencies in controls and oversight remain a significant concern.

Current processes for recording entries, timely identifying errors, and conducting routine reconciliations are insufficient. As a result, existing errors persist, and new errors are allowed to enter the ledger. TSU still faces challenges with inadequate bank reconciliation procedures.

The university has not been preparing reconciliations for accounts or grants receivable, allowing significant errors in accounts receivable and revenues to accumulate. These specific weaknesses create an environment prone to errors and delayed detection. The failure in controls complicates the audit trail, even for simple activities, affecting both management and

auditors.

Furthermore, due to a current staff shortage, there is a lack of proper segregation of duties. On a positive note, management has recently hired a controller and a CFO, both of whom are set to begin their roles soon.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

Tennessee State University's current management fully recognizes the significance of the audit findings regarding the control breakdowns that have adversely affected the accuracy of financial reporting, the efficiency of daily operations, and the oversight of federal programs. We are approaching these findings and recommendations with the utmost seriousness and a deep commitment to rectification. We have already initiated or are planning to implement a range of corrective measures in consultation with external third-party consultants and organizations. These include but are not limited to strengthening governance structures and processes to ensure effective oversight and accountability, enhancing our internal control systems, developing/updating policies and procedures, investing in the training of our accounting staff, hiring qualified and experienced personnel for key positions, and implementing improvements to the financial system.

Through these comprehensive initiatives, our overarching goal is to restore and enhance the integrity of our financial systems and operational processes. We will closely monitor the progress of these initiatives, ensuring regular updates and transparent reporting to state governance and other relevant regulatory bodies, thereby reinforcing our commitment to accountability and transparency.

Finding 2

As noted in the prior six audits, Tennessee State University management continued to disregard basic financial controls by not sufficiently performing bank reconciliations, and management recorded unsupported financial transactions to improperly eliminate differences in the reconciliations

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

TSU is currently facing significant challenges in completing bank reconciliations on time. The reconciliations have not been prepared or reviewed according to schedule, and even the finalized versions contain discrepancies that require attention. Management has had to perform each month's reconciliation multiple times.

Management approved the March 2025 reconciliation on October 3, 2025; however, it revealed an unreconciled balance of \$291.00. On November 4, 2025, Internal Audit received another version of the March bank reconciliation, with an unreconciled balance, and also noted

outstanding checks dating back to July 9, 2019. Additionally, checks payable to students for COVID-19 funds are listed as outstanding.

Furthermore, the Office of Internal Audit identified errors in the March payroll bank reconciliations, which were also approved on October 3, 2025. There were outstanding checks listed that date back to October 13, 2023.

To help resolve these issues, management has hired a Controller and a CFO, both of whom are expected to start soon.

TSU Unclaimed Property Reporting Policy:

Property which is in the University's possession that has gone unclaimed or undelivered to the true owner for the statutory period of abandonment is classified as "unclaimed property". Examples of unclaimed property include operating checks unclaimed after five years and wages after one year. The Financial Analyst III in General Accounting is responsible for filing an Unclaimed Property Report and submitting the property to the State Treasurer's Office on or before May 1 of each year. The report must be filed whether holding unclaimed property or not. The report should include any property held which belongs to another person or organization and is deemed abandoned at December 31 of the previous year under the Tennessee Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act (TCA 66-29-101 through 66-29-159).

Tennessee's State Policy:

Tennessee's state policy on unclaimed funds requires holders of abandoned property to report it to the state's Unclaimed Property Division:

- *Report and remit: Businesses and organizations must report and submit all unclaimed property to the Tennessee Department of Treasury.*
- *Due diligence: You must perform due diligence, including sending a notice to the owner, and wait at least 60 days after the notice is sent before remitting the funds to the state.*
- *Payment: Payments to the state must be made electronically via ACH debit, ACH credit, or wire payment.*
- *Penalties: Failure to comply can result in significant penalties, including daily fines for negligent or willful non-compliance.*

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU's current management acknowledges the audit finding for fiscal year 2023 regarding untimely and incomplete bank reconciliations. We are fully committed to strengthening our financial controls and are currently implementing corrective measures. These efforts include enhanced monitoring, targeted staff training, and accountability protocols to ensure that all unreconciled items are addressed promptly and that reconciliations are consistently completed in accordance with policy

and best practices. TSU management is also dedicated to actively improving the bank reconciliation process to ensure greater accuracy and efficiency. We are committed to completing bank reconciliations for the university and foundation within 30 days after the end of each month. Our procedures include restrictions on making entries after the month-end close, the establishment of clear deadlines, and the implementation of documentation requirements to prevent unsupported adjustments. Additionally, discrepancies are reviewed and investigated, and system controls have been refined to prevent unauthorized entries.

The Vice President of Business and Finance, along with the Controller—whose duties are currently being handled by the Associate Vice President of Financial Services due to existing vacancies—plays a crucial role in promoting a systematic bank reconciliation process. This involves actively identifying any unreconciled items to prevent cash misappropriation or inaccuracies in bank transactions, thereby ensuring transparency, accuracy, and accountability in TSU’s financial operations.

Additionally, as part of the monthly review process, management will ensure that all transactions are accurately recorded in the general ledger, posted to the appropriate accounts and entities, and supported by adequate documentation. In accordance with our policy, any discrepancies between bank balances and accounting records will be investigated and resolved within a 30-day reconciliation period. While these reconciling items have historically been investigated and resolved, TSU acknowledges that resolutions have not always been timely. However, since fiscal year 2023, TSU has made considerable progress in improving its reconciliation process.

Finding 3

As noted in the prior eight audits, Tennessee State University management allowed controls to break down, resulting in errors in the financial statements

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

The Report of Action Finding 1 highlights that management has failed to maintain adequate controls over financial reporting. They have not addressed the deficiencies noted in the previous eight audits. As of fiscal year 2025, TSU has engaged third-party consultants and organizations, including the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), to enhance its financial processes. However, TSU has encountered difficulties in hiring employees with the requisite experience and skills necessary to ensure the accuracy of its financial statements. To help resolve these issues, management has hired a Controller and a CFO, both of whom are expected to start soon.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU and the foundation's current management acknowledge the ongoing deficiencies highlighted in the audit findings and are committed to taking corrective measures to improve financial controls and enhance the accuracy of financial reporting. To achieve these goals, we have implemented several processes and financial controls designed to enhance both the accuracy and timeliness of our financial statements.

Ensuring adequate staffing for the preparation and timely submission of accurate financial statements is our top priority. Building a strong team will lead to ongoing improvements in financial controls, helping to reduce errors. As of fiscal year 2025, TSU has secured external support from third-party consultants and organizations, including the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), to enhance its financial processes. Our transformation efforts also include hiring individuals with the appropriate experience and skill sets, strengthening accountability structures, and improving system automation and functionality.

TSU management also recognizes the importance of effective oversight, enforcement, communication, and collaboration among all personnel involved in accounting functions. As a first step, we are collaborating with external consultants to update our business and finance policies and procedures. As an integral part of this effort, we will clearly define roles and responsibilities related to the regular reconciliation of accounts, the preparation and review of financial statements, and support for financial audits.

TSU management is committed to delivering comprehensive training tailored to the specific needs of each staff member, aligning with their roles and responsibilities. TSU management plans to commence training no later than July 2025, with the goal of ensuring accurate classification and proper disclosure of the information presented in the financial statements and accompanying notes.

Regarding oversight, the Vice President for Business and Finance, along with the Controller (or individuals currently serving in these roles for TSU and the foundation), will conduct reviews of the financial statements and notes to verify their accuracy. TSU management recognizes that verifying financial reports is essential for informed decision-making within the university and the foundation, as well as for maintaining stakeholder trust.

Finding 4

Tennessee State University management did not have adequate controls over ledgers, grants, and subledgers and did not perform reconciliations

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

Management continues to highlight a significant staffing shortage. To address this issue, they have recruited five accountants from TBR to provide support in the General Accounting department. Additionally, to enhance financial oversight, a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and a controller have been hired and are scheduled to start soon.

However, the Office of Internal Audit has encountered challenges in verifying specific actions taken to ensure adequate controls over ledgers, grants, and subledgers, including reconciliations. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of the measures implemented and their overall impact on the organization's financial operations.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU's current management acknowledges the audit finding concerning the absence of reconciliations for accounts and grants receivable during the audit period, which led to errors in the financial statements. Management is committed to enhancing financial controls and ensuring that best practices are adhered to in all areas of financial management. We understand that the timely and accurate reconciliation of receivables is essential for maintaining the integrity of financial reporting and internal controls. In response to this finding, management is adopting a comprehensive and systematic approach to reconciling financial activities such as grants receivable, accounts receivable, residential life revenue, and transactions recorded in the ledger and subledgers.

Each reconciliation will include a documented sign-off, clearly indicating who performed and reviewed the reconciliation, along with the respective dates. Any unreconciled differences will be promptly investigated and resolved to ensure the accuracy and integrity of TSU's financial records. Additionally, management is implementing a review process for all assigned codes to verify the correct accounts and their impact.

Finding 5

As noted in the prior audit, Tennessee State University did not appropriately charge fees for some courses and did not charge student fees in accordance with the approved rates

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	
Disclaimer	√

Status:

The Office of Internal Audit has received evidence of an email sent by the Bursar's office concerning the review of course fees for Fall and Summer 2024, as well as Fall 2025. According to the Assistant Bursar, these emails are sent to faculty to gather their input on course fees. This practice of involving faculty in fee reviews is uncommon and deviates from industry standards, where governing boards typically set fees, while the Registrar's Office manages input and review of fees.

Furthermore, Internal Audit was unable to verify whether management has accurately charged fees for specific courses or whether student fees were assessed in accordance with the approved rates. Internal Audit requested that the IT department generate a report on students who received fee adjustments to their accounts. However, at that time, Internal Audit was informed that the Applications Director was no longer employed at the University, and efforts were ongoing to find a replacement.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU management has undertaken a series of measures to ensure that staff members accurately charge tuition and fees for all courses in accordance with the board-approved fee rates. The Bursar is tasked with developing the fee rules in the system and conducting multiple tests on the calculations. Additionally, the Assistant Bursar conducts an independent audit of fees for a separate sample of students. This validation process ensures that all tuition and fees are accurately applied to student accounts. Since these corrective measures were implemented, no issues have been reported for fall 2024 or spring 2025.

In the course creation process, the Assistant Vice President of Admissions and Records is responsible for entering courses into the Banner inventory after they receive final approval in *Curriculog*. The academic unit must confirm and/or add to the inventory the courses that will be offered in a specific semester. The Assistant Bursar is responsible for distributing a master list of Course Reference Numbers (CRNs) to the deans and chairs of the colleges for their review. This process ensures that all course fees are accurate. The deans then confirm the correct course fees and submit requests to amend any inaccuracies. Additionally, to strengthen

internal controls, access to the fee waiver checkmark is restricted to the Assistant Bursar, the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Assistant Vice President of Admission and Records, and the Associate Registrar.

Finding 6

As noted in the prior audit, Tennessee State University did not adequately support or identify student withdrawal dates and types

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	
Disclaimer	√

Status:

A new Purge Registration Policy came into effect on July 1, 2025. However, there is no evidence indicating that the Board approved this policy, if such approval was necessary. Emails are sent to ensure proper coordination regarding student withdrawals among the Offices of Financial Aid, Bursar, the Registrar, and Residence Life. Confirmations of these emails were provided to Internal Audit. However, management did not supply sufficient documentation to identify the dates and types of student withdrawals.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU reaffirms its commitment to providing accurate and timely reporting of student withdrawals, which is essential for determining the appropriate refund amounts to be returned both to students and to state and federal financial grantors. To enhance the effectiveness of this process, the university's Enrollment Management Office hired a Data Analyst on March 1, 2024. This individual's primary responsibility is to manage and oversee the enrollment reporting processes.

Additionally, the Registrar's Office has also reviewed and updated its procedures for withdrawals in collaboration with an external consultant. To ensure clarity and successful implementation of the withdrawal process updates, we have prioritized comprehensive communication and training. On February 4, 2025, a training session was conducted with external consultants who facilitated discussions and presented real-world scenarios to illustrate both official and unofficial withdrawal procedures. This interactive approach helped staff gain confidence in managing these processes.

On January 29, 2025, key personnel, including the Registrar, Associate Registrar, and Data Analyst, participated in essential Baseline Banner NSC Setup training. This session provided them with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of the enrollment reporting system effectively. By combining this targeted training with regular staff meetings, the Registrar's Office remains committed to ensuring that all team members are prepared to uphold the university's dedication to accurate reporting and strong student support.

Faculty Attendance Reporting and Training Policy Statement

To ensure compliance with federal regulations and institutional procedures, the Division of Enrollment Management will partner with Academic Affairs to ensure faculty are trained on the importance of documenting students' Last Date of Attendance (LDA). This training will be incorporated into the Faculty Orientation, tentatively scheduled for August 11, 2025, and reinforced with a clear rationale, emphasizing how accurate LDA reporting impacts financial aid eligibility, academic records, and institutional accountability.

Additionally, attendance notification emails containing specific instructions for reporting attendance and the LDA are sent to faculty throughout the term. Initial university-wide notifications are distributed by Enrollment Management at the start of the term, followed by weekly reminders from Academic Affairs targeting faculty who have not submitted their attendance. Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management will continue to collaborate closely to ensure consistent adherence to these reporting procedures.

Student Withdrawal Communication and Account Adjustment

During the fall and spring terms, the following schedule and percentages, programmed into the system, govern the refunds for students who drop or withdraw from a class.

- 100% before the first day of classes;
- 75% beginning the first day of classes through the fourteenth day (including weekends);
- 25% beginning the fifteenth day of classes through 25% of the term;
- 0% after the 25% refund period.

Additionally, to ensure proper coordination after student withdrawals, a daily withdrawal report is sent via email to the Offices of Financial Aid, the Bursar, the Registrar, and Residence Life. This report allows each office to take timely action based on the student's enrollment status. Additionally, the Office of Financial Aid uses internal reports that provide detailed information about student withdrawals, enabling them to make timely and accurate adjustments to financial aid awards. This coordinated communication helps the Bursar's Office promptly update student accounts in accordance with institutional policies and federal regulations.

Student Purge and Manual Deletion

TSU management is currently updating our purge policy, with an expected completion date of July 2025. Once finalized, the new policy will be consistently enforced across the university, accompanied by comprehensive training for all staff.

Manual deletions and student purges from course schedules or institutional records will only be conducted with formal approval from the university President, through the Bursar's Office. This process ensures financial accountability and compliance with institutional policies related to tuition, fees, and refunds.

Before any purge or deletion is executed, the Registrar's Office will coordinate with the Bursar's Office to verify the student's account status. This measure helps maintain the

integrity of student records and ensures that all account adjustments are properly authorized and documented.

Finding 7

As noted in the prior six audits, Tennessee State University personnel did not perform adequate collection procedures for accounts receivable

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	√
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	

Status:

TSU personnel have enhanced their accounts receivable collection procedures. During the Fall term, TSU implemented its purge policy. As of October 2025, a total of 7,029 students has been reported to the collection agencies: GRC (3,432 students), with outstanding balances totaling \$16,389,833.61, and S&S (3,394 students), with outstanding balances totaling \$17,239,219.89.

In October 2024, both agencies received over 3,000 student accounts each. After nine months, TSU transfers students who still owe balances from the first agency holding their account to the second agency for the second placement. If these students default with the second agency after nine months, TSU plans to write off their accounts by May 2026.

Note: A draft Accounts Receivable policy dated October 10, 2025, was submitted to Internal Audit.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

We concur. In June 2023, TSU hired a dedicated Collection Manager to improve the collection process. The university began utilizing new collection software in June 2024, which offers several key features. This system monitors student account balances during registration and automatically communicates with students by providing payment plans and sending reminders about outstanding balances.

Starting in Maymester 2025, the current TSU administration has announced that students who do not meet their payment deadlines will have their classes dropped before the first day of classes. For students who register during the late registration period and do not clear their balances, classes will be removed by the 14-day census date. The balance threshold for this policy is set at \$200 unless modified by TSU's President or their designee.

Students enrolled in payment plans who do not pay their semester balance by the end of the semester will be placed in a pre-collection account within the system. The system will send three final notice emails, spaced 30 days apart, before referring the accounts to a collection agency. If no payment is received after these three emails, the account will be sent to the first

collection agency. If payment remains outstanding for nine months, the account will then be transferred to a secondary collection agency. These agencies specialize in recovering debts and employ various strategies to engage with debtors. Additionally, they report delinquent accounts to credit bureaus, which significantly enhances the effectiveness of their collection efforts. This reporting can impact individuals' credit scores, creating a greater sense of urgency to address outstanding debts.

If an account is in default with the second agency for nine months, it will be returned to TSU for write-off. The Bursar's Office will compile a list of students' names, account balances, and the ages of the accounts. This list will be submitted to the state for approval. Once the state grants approval, the account balances will be cleared.

The Collection Manager and Assistant Bursar continuously monitor the system to ensure accuracy across all platforms. Since implementing corrective measures, we have collected over \$3.6 million to date, which includes \$2.6 million from the single entity addressed in the finding.

Finding 8 (EEE)

The Tennessee State University Foundation did not comply with asset allocation requirements or limits on the amount a single investment manager can manage for each investment class, as defined in investment policies

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

An updated policy defining investment managers has not been shared with the Office of Internal Audit. The Endowment Fund Investment Policy provided is dated December 2024. There is no evidence of any action taken regarding this finding.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

The foundation acknowledges the finding and is taking steps to address noncompliance with asset allocation and investment manager limits outlined in its investment policy. Management will work directly with the Investment Committee and Investment Consultants to ensure that all relevant individuals are aware of the requirements set forth in the Investment Policy Statement (IPS) and that policies are updated as needed, including consideration of additional requirements for the Title III Fund.

The foundation is also enhancing its monitoring procedures by implementing more frequent reviews and rebalancing. This will help to ensure that the overall portfolio risk remains within allowable ranges, that the investment mix aligns with policy guidelines, and that no single investment manager exceeds the established limits.

While the foundation acknowledges the broader findings, further due diligence and consultation with the Investment Manager indicate that some of the reported asset allocation violations may be erroneous. As previously mentioned, the foundation is taking steps to address non-compliance; however, there are extenuating circumstances regarding the timeline required to remedy the Non- Traditional Investments violation. Exiting early from a portion of the Non-Traditional Funds would trigger significant early redemption fees of approximately \$85,000; incurring fees to this magnitude would not be the most financially prudent path forward for the foundation.

It is also important to note that the audit violations being addressed for the fiscal year 2023 audit will not be a one-time issue. Rather, these violations will be noted again during the fiscal year 2024 and fiscal year 2025 audit periods due to the liquidation timeline required to avoid redemption fees.

Issues Identified in Error

Investment Manager Concentration

Management overconcentrated both funds into a single investment manager for global equities and nontraditional strategies. (See Figures 18 and 19.)

Response - Figure 18: Global Equities in Single Investment Manager

As of June 30, 2023, Global Equities comprised approximately 60.3% of the Title III portfolio and were allocated among 8 investment managers/funds managing 8 different strategies. The highest concentration manager managed two different investment styles (Large Cap Value and International) and had a combined allocation of approximately 18.6% of the overall Title III portfolio, which was far below the 30% maximum. The other 7 investment managers/funds each had allocations of less than 10% of the Title III portfolio.

Response - Figure 19: Nontraditional Strategies in Single Investment Manager

The 17.7% referred to was allocated to 4 different mutual funds, not a single manager.

Issue Identified

Management inappropriately invested 23.7%, or \$6,895,492, of the Title III Fund in nontraditional investments. Per the May 2004 Title III agreement, TSU's Title III Funds must stay invested in low-risk securities for a period of 20 years. These non-traditional investments do not meet the agreement's definition of low-risk securities.

Response

A portion of the Nontraditional Investments is being held in mutual funds that have daily liquidity and will be sold immediately to remedy a portion of the violation.

Alternative Asset Class Mutual Funds with daily liquidity

- Abbey Cap Futures Strategy Fund I (ABYIX)
- AQR Long-Short Equity Fund (QLEIX)
- Calamos Market Neutral Fund I (CMNIX)

- DWS Real Assets Fund Inst'l (AAAZX)

Alternative Investment Evergreen Funds without daily liquidity that will incur substantial early redemption penalties

- Partner Group (Private Equity) Invested in January 2025. The fund has a 2% fee if liquidated within 12 months of investment. This would be ~ \$16,000+ in additional fees on an \$815,000 investment.
- Apollo Debt Solutions (Private Credit) Invested in January 2025. The fund has a 2% fee if liquidated within 12 months of investment. This would be ~ \$20,000 in additional fees on a \$980,000 investment.

Nuveen Global Cities REIT (Real Estate) Invested in January 2025. The fund has a 5% fee if liquidated within 12 months of investment. This would be ~ \$49,000 in additional fees on a \$980,000 investment.

As discussed, the foundation believes it is in its best interest to maintain the current position in the aforementioned funds until February 2026 to avoid incurring substantial early redemption fees of approximately \$85,000. It is also important to note that the audit violations being addressed for the fiscal year 2023 audit will not be a one-time issue. Instead, these violations will be noted again in the fiscal year 2024 and fiscal year 2025 audits due to the timeline required to avoid incurring fees.

Auditor's Comment

Based on discussions, foundation management disagrees that they do not comply with investment manager concentrations as noted in Figures 18 and 19. Based on a review of the investment policy, we determined the investment manager concentrations are based on the firm's managing the foundation's investment portfolios. Foundation management has interpreted the investment managers as individual employees working for the investment firms. After reevaluating the investment policies and the contracts with the portfolio managers, we stand by the finding based on our interpretation of the investment policies. If the foundation intends to continue investing based on their interpretation, an update to the policies may be required that further defines an investment manager.

Finding 9

Tennessee State University continued not to follow federal guidance for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

A policy for scholarships, grants, and emergency funding is still being drafted. Limited action has been taken regarding this finding.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

Tennessee State University (TSU), through its legacy as an HBCU and land grant institution, remains committed to transforming lives and cultivating a diverse generation of leaders. To this end, TSU's goal is to ensure that the financial resources available not only assist students in achieving their educational objectives but also comply with the requirements set forth by funders at all levels, including federal, state, institutional, and community sources.

Since the initial findings, TSU has implemented a policy to govern scholarships, grants, and emergency funding. This policy delineates the procedures for assessing the total financial assistance available to eligible students and establishes a framework for evaluating their eligibility. It is also designed to ensure that our processes and applicants adhere to the criteria set forth by federal regulations and other relevant authorities. To provide oversight, the Director of Grants Accounting and the Associate Vice President for Financial Services will monitor and evaluate the implementation process throughout its life cycle, ensuring alignment with federal guidance and university policies. Additionally, the Vice President for Business and Finance will furnish written approval of the process.

Through these initiatives, TSU is committed to fostering a supportive educational environment by minimizing financial barriers and enabling students to focus on their academic and personal growth while still adhering to funder requirements.

Finding 10 (Single Audit Finding 2024 -001)

The financial aid office did not adequately reconcile its direct loan records to the Direct Loan Servicing System's records, as required by federal regulations, and therefore could not resolve discrepancies timely

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	√
Not Corrected	

Status:

The Financial Aid Office revised its policies and procedures regarding the reconciliation process, which is set to be implemented in Fall 2025. Monthly reconciliations for the 2024-2025 academic year have not yet been completed.

Due to changes in administration and the support from an external consultant team, the Financial Aid Office did not proceed with job postings for the two positions: Loan Coordinator and Assistant Director of Compliance, as noted in the Management Comments. Instead, the

office was advised to prioritize hiring a Director of Compliance and a Data Analyst. The Director of Compliance has been successfully hired, and efforts are ongoing to recruit a Data Analyst; however, a suitable candidate has yet to be identified.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU's Financial Aid Office has updated its policies and procedures to comply with federal regulations. Our revised procedures outline a three-step process for monthly reconciliation. This process begins with the Loan Coordinator performing the initial reconciliation. The reconciliation will then be submitted to either the Assistant Director of Compliance or the Director of Financial Aid for further evaluation. Finally, the Director of Grants Accounting will conduct a comprehensive review. This structured approach ensures that the financial aid office completes the reconciliation efficiently with oversight from three distinct parties. All documentation related to the completed tasks, along with an accuracy checklist with signatures, will be maintained for future reference.

The university is also committed to enhancing its financial aid operations by implementing the TSU Student Information System delivered processes to ensure thorough compliance with reconciliation standards. To support this initiative, we are collaborating with outside consultants, who bring valuable expertise to help us develop comprehensive, customized policies and procedures. We anticipate finalizing these documents by March 2025.

These roles are essential for driving our reconciliation efforts and ensuring optimal management of financial aid processes. Our primary objective is to achieve full reconciliation of the 2023–2024 Direct Loans by March 1, 2025. Additionally, we plan to start monthly reconciliations for the 2024–2025 loan disbursements in February 2025 to ensure accuracy and compliance.

During the interim period, while we work to fill the Loan Coordinator and Assistant Director of Compliance positions, the Director of Financial Aid will actively oversee the reconciliation process. The Director will also receive initial support from our outside consultants to ensure that all reconciliation activities are conducted smoothly and meet compliance requirements. This collaborative approach fosters a more effective and accountable financial aid system within the University.

Finding 11 (Single Audit Finding 2024 -002)

Tennessee State University did not have adequate procedures to ensure Title IV credits were refunded timely per federal guidelines

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	√
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	

Status:

The revised procedures include using Banner to ensure that Title IV credits are refunded in accordance with federal guidelines. Testing of these procedures is scheduled to occur during the Fall 2025 term, instead of the Spring 2025 refund period, as previously stated in the Management Comments. This test aims to evaluate their effectiveness and reliability before a larger-scale implementation.

Students are now proactively notified when their financial aid packages become available; these notifications were issued in Summer 2025.

Due to the change in administration, the support from an external consulting team and the lack of qualified candidates for the Accounting Manager position, the Bursar's Office has been advised to prioritize hiring a Financial Analyst rather than an Accounting Manager, as noted in the Management Comments. A job posting for the Financial Analyst position will be released soon.

Finding 11 update: An interview with the Interim Vice President of Business in Finance revealed that TSU issued refunds to students within 14 days during the Fall 2025 refund period. Refunds for students who do not require Financial Aid adjustments are current and processed on time.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

In response to this issue, the Financial Aid Office reactivated its automatic refund process for Spring 2025 as part of our pilot program aimed at enhancing our financial aid procedures and compliance with federal regulations. To support our efforts, TSU engaged outside consultants who conducted a comprehensive review of the current detail codes in use, methodically analyzing their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. The changes made are anticipated to enhance both the efficiency and clarity of the payment process, allowing for a more straightforward identification of non-refundable amounts, which in turn will facilitate the more efficient allocation of funds for necessary financial aid adjustments and ensure student accounts are refunded within 14 days of Title IV aid being disbursed.

In addition, TSU’s Financial Aid Office is taking proactive measures to inform students when their financial aid packages become available, ensuring that they are kept in the loop about their funding status. This process is confirmed to be operating smoothly for Spring 2025, ensuring students receive timely updates. The Financial Aid Office and our outside consultant will also check the job scheduling system regularly to verify that these processes are being carried out as intended.

We plan to complete all initiatives related to this process by July 2025, well ahead of the processing for Fall 2025 refunds. This timeline will allow for the seamless integration of improvements and ensure that students benefit from the enhancements in the financial aid process moving forward.

TSU acknowledges the urgent need to fill the Accounting Manager position within the Bursar's office to adhere to university protocols and regulatory standards. This role is crucial for overseeing reconciliation processes, managing refund operations, and enhancing our financial practices for the future. The Accounting Manager is essential not only for ensuring accuracy in financial reporting but also for proactively identifying and resolving any discrepancies that may occur. The Interim Vice President of Business and Finance has collaborated with the Bursar’s Office and the Human Resources Department to facilitate the timely recruitment and hiring of a qualified candidate. The position was posted on February 4 and closed on February 17, 2025. The Bursar’s Office is in the process of reviewing the applicant pool for this position.

Finding 12 (Single Audit Finding 2024-003:

For the federal Direct Loan and Pell Grant programs, Tennessee State University did not report timely and accurate information regarding students’ enrollment statuses

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

The staff completed two training sessions; one conducted by the National Student Clearinghouse and the other by the State of Tennessee. Efforts are currently underway to rectify the error reports. However, the errors identified during these reporting processes have not had corrective measures implemented within the expected timeframe of 5 to 7 business days. A data analyst has been hired to assist in this process.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

TSU reaffirms our commitment to delivering accurate and timely reporting for the federal Direct Loan and Pell Grant programs. We understand that accurate data is crucial not only for effective student financing but also for maintaining the integrity of our institution. By prioritizing thorough data management and reporting practices, our goal is to enhance transparency, support our students' financial needs, and uphold the standards expected in higher education. To improve the effectiveness of this process, the University's Enrollment Management Office has hired a Data Analyst whose primary responsibility is to manage and oversee enrollment reporting processes.

The Registrar's Office has also reviewed and updated its procedures for withdrawals in collaboration with an external consultant. This enhancement aims to ensure accurate and timely uploads of information to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSLDS), significantly reducing discrepancies and ensuring compliance with federal regulations. In accordance with the federal guidance in the Federal Student Aid Handbook Volume 2, Chapter 3, updates to the NSLDS will occur after the census date, followed by a regular reporting schedule every 30 to 45 days. This ensures that all enrollment changes, including withdrawals and status adjustments, are communicated promptly.

Moreover, the office has established a process to promptly address any identified errors during reporting. Corrective measures will be implemented within 5 to 7 business days, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the reported data. This initiative underscores the office's commitment to operational efficiency and reliable student records.

Finding 13 (Single Audit Finding 2024-004)

Tennessee State University continued not to return Title IV funds in compliance with federal regulations

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	
Not Corrected	√

Status:

The Office of Financial Aid plans to conduct a comprehensive review of Title IV funds for the 2023–2024 academic year in October 2025.

Communication between the Registrar's Office and Financial Aid has started, focusing on a detailed examination of the daily Withdrawal Report generated by the Registrar's Office. Although the reports are generated and emailed daily, there is currently no evidence that these reports are reviewed.

Although there were issues with the setup of the Banner system, it has now been corrected. In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Office of Financial Aid was not in compliance. Moving

forward, the Office aims to achieve compliance for the 2025-2026 academic year.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

The Financial Aid Office is scheduled to conduct a thorough review of Title IV funds for the 2023-2024 academic year in February 2025, with completion expected by the end of April 2025. Additionally, we have enhanced communication between the Registrar's Office and the Financial Aid Office. The initial communications will involve a detailed examination of the daily Withdrawal Report produced by the Registrar's Office. Following the receipt of this report, an acknowledgment email will be sent to confirm its review.

To facilitate accurate calculations regarding the return of funds, specific parameters will be established within the Banner system. These parameters will support the Funds Calculation process in determining the correct return amounts owed. Our team is actively working with outside consultants to restructure and enhance our financial aid processes. This collaboration aims to significantly update our existing policies and procedures, preventing compliance issues in the future while fostering a more efficient system.

Having the correct effective date is crucial for maintaining accurate academic records and complying with federal regulations. TSU, in conjunction with an outside consultant, will help to verify students' correct withdrawal dates with the Registrar's Office and will also work with Student Accounts to ensure that the appropriate institutional charges are used in all calculations.

Finally, the Withdrawal Report can be scheduled within the job scheduler to run automatically and on time each day. This scheduling will contribute to a smoother workflow, allowing for any necessary adjustments to be made efficiently. By employing the Banner-delivered process for funds calculation, we will ensure that the actual charges incurred by the student are used in the calculation of returns instead of the predetermined cost of attendance, leading to more accurate financial assessments.

Finding 14

Tennessee State University's Office of Financial Aid granted Title IV funds to ineligible students

Current Status:

Action	Status
Corrected	
Partially Corrected: Significant Improvement Made	
Not Corrected: Improvement Made	√
Not Corrected	

Status:

A new Assistant Director of Compliance and Technical Support has been appointed. However, the Office of Internal Audit could not determine if Title IV funds were awarded solely to qualified students.

TSU Action Plan Submitted to State Auditors:

In response to previous challenges, the Financial Aid Office has restructured the Associate Director of Loans position and created a new role, the Assistant Director of Compliance, both of which will report directly to the Director of Financial Aid. Additionally, TSU is diligently working to enhance its Banner processes, leveraging advanced tools designed to improve the efficiency and accuracy of student financial aid management. A key component of this initiative is the development of automated workflows. These workflows are intended to facilitate the timely and precise processing of student awards.

Furthermore, the Financial Aid Office is collaborating with external consultants to establish a quality control process. The process is comprised of routine monitoring and reporting of award distribution. Such measures are essential to ensure that students are not over-awarded and that funds are allocated solely to eligible individuals. Our goal is to ensure compliance with established financial aid policies, ultimately fostering transparency and confidence in our financial aid system.

Finding 15 (Confidential)

Tennessee State University did not provide adequate internal controls in two areas

**Tennessee State University
Conflict of Interest Review Report
Risk and Financial Compliance Office
Office of Internal Audit**

Background

In 2023, in accordance with the Tennessee State University Conflict of Interest Policy (01-07), the Internal Auditor distributed the Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure form to all cabinet members, asking them to pass it along to their direct reports. Over the course of 4 months, 1,053 individuals submitted the form to the Internal Auditor, resulting in a submission rate of 69.4%.

In 2024, the Internal Audit and Risk Management and Compliance Offices recommended that the Board approve automating the submission process to enhance submission rates, reduce errors, and improve tracking and reporting of disclosures. Following the Board's approval, we collaborated with the IT Department, specifically Karl Lehenbauer, to develop an electronic system using Dynamic Forms. This system was beta-tested by managers from the Business and Finance Department, who found the detailed explanations accompanying each question especially beneficial. The system was officially launched on October 16, 2024, with a submission deadline set for October 25, 2024. For that reporting period, we received 1,417 submissions, for an 83% return rate.

This year, we revised Question 2 of the Conflict-of-Interest form to ensure that the additional information obtained from the employee helps the COI review committee determine whether an actual conflict of interest exists.

As appears in 2024: Do you hold an office, directorship, or employment in an outside organization?

Revised in 2025: Do you hold an office, directorship, or employment in an outside organization? *(If yes, please include details such as the name of the organization, the business purpose of the organization, the position held, nature of the work, time commitment, and relationship to your current role at TSU.)*

Why this question? Affiliations outside Tennessee State University (TSU) can create potential conflicts of interest, particularly when external associations affect decision-making or the specific roles and responsibilities of employees within the university.

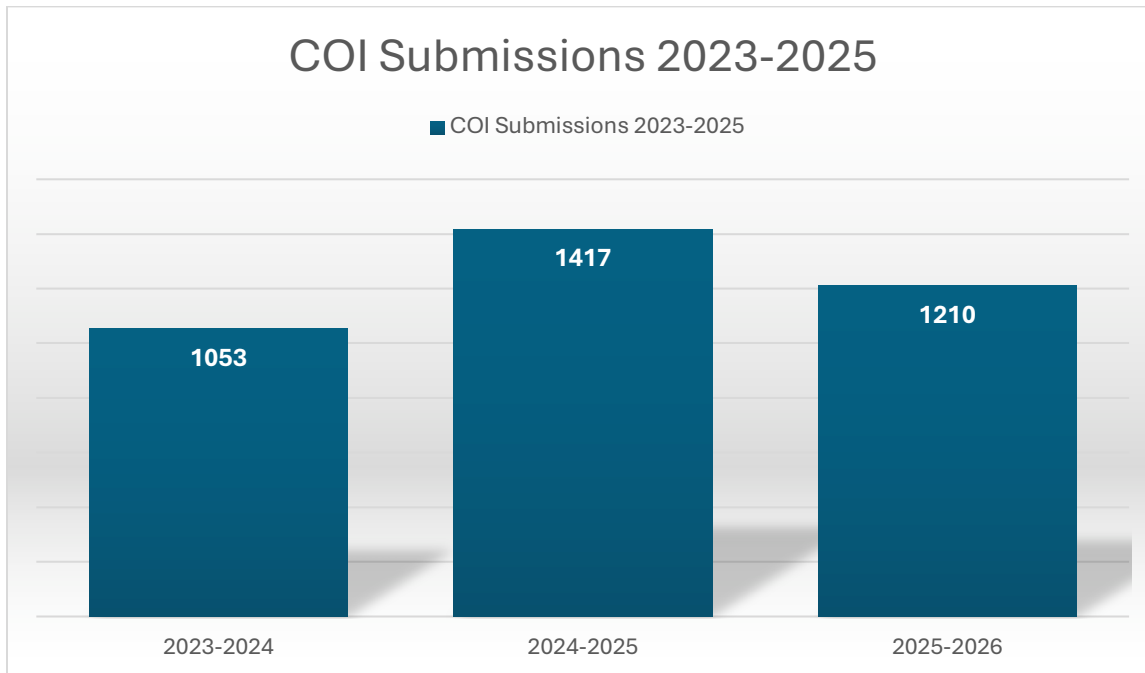
Timeline of Notifications for 2025-2026

This year, the initial notification regarding the upcoming COI submission was sent out via email on August 27, 2025. Due to confusion about the conflict-of-interest versus the confidentiality form required by the Human Resources Department, the final submission deadline was extended from October 15, 2025, to October 24, 2025.

Date	Content
8/27/2025	Initial Announcement sent, which included an Oct 15 th deadline to complete. Also included signature blocks for the University President, Internal Auditor, and the Risk and Financial Compliance office.
9/10/2025	Second notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
9/17/2025	Third notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
9/24/2025	Fourth notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/3/2025	Fifth notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/7/2025	Notice sent to Deans and Supervisors containing a list of individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/13/2025	Sixth notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/14/2025	Followed up with individual supervisors in reference to COIs still outstanding.
10/16/2025	Seventh notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding and announcing the October 24 th deadline extension.
10/17/2025	Notices sent to Deans and Department Heads with a cc to Cabinet Members with the names of individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/20/2025	Eighth notice sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding and announcing the October 24 th deadline extension.
10/21/2025 - 10/22/2025	Notices sent to Deans and Department Heads, with a cc to Cabinet Members, with the names of individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/23/2025	Ninth and final email sent to all individuals with COIs still outstanding.
10/23/2025 – 10/24/25	The Internal Auditor and the Risk and Financial Compliance Offices made and fielded phone calls regarding outstanding COIs.

COI Submissions for 2025-2026

This year, **only full-time employees** receiving compensation from Tennessee State University were included. For this reporting period, there are 1,210 **full-time employees**, with a **submission rate of 100%**.



Delays in Submissions

Based on telephone conversations with employees and supervisors, it appears that one reason for the delays in submission was confusion about the required Confidentiality form from HR and the Conflict-of-Interest form. Many individuals mistakenly believed that completing the HR Confidentiality form satisfied all requirements, leading them to overlook notifications related to the Conflict-of-Interest form sent from the TSUCOI email address. Additionally, in an effort to be helpful, someone shared the link to the HR Confidentiality form with some individuals who were still listed on the Conflict-of-Interest delinquency list, further complicating the situation.

**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Internal and External Quality Assessments/Gap Assessment Results

RECOMMENDED ACTION: None

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dimeta Smith Knight, Audit Committee Chair
Dr. Renée Forbes, Director, Internal Audit

Background Information

The Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) requires the Office of Internal Audit to conduct both Internal and External Quality Assessments. Universities need to perform gap and readiness assessments to prepare for the implementation of new standards regarding these quality assessments. Additionally, the IIA's guidelines state that the "chief audit executive" is responsible for ensuring that the internal audit activity conducts an internal assessment. This assessment must include ongoing monitoring and periodic self-assessments. According to Standard 1320, titled "Reporting on the Quality Assurance and Improvement Program," the results of the ongoing monitoring must be reported to the Audit Committee at least once a year. The Office of Internal Audit is collaborating with the Eminere Group to complete the necessary assessments.

The Director of Internal Audit will discuss the status of the Internal and External Assessment Review.

The GAP Assessments Results

The Gap Assessment is our initial step towards meeting both Internal and External Assessment requirements. The Eminere Group conducted this assessment to provide executive leadership, Audit Committee members, and the Office of Internal Audit with valuable insights into any existing gaps, improvement opportunities, and specific actions needed to ensure that Internal Audit complies with the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) Global Internal Audit Standards, which take effect in January 2025. The Gap Assessment findings were presented on October 29, 2025.

Additionally, the results of this assessment will aid in our preparation for the mandatory Quality Assurance External Review, as required by the IIA Global Internal Audit Standards, which is conducted every five years.

Executive Leadership/Audit Committee
➤ Evaluate TSU's Ethics program and enhance to include other anonymous hotline reporting. ➤ Coordinate efforts to update the TSU's Strategic Plan. ➤ Evaluate and enhance the institution's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) program. ➤ Review and approve updated Audit Committee and Internal Audit Charters. ➤ Provide feedback to CAE on internal audit needs, including human, financial and technology needs to support Internal Audit Strategic Plan in alignment with TSU's Strategic plan. ➤ Ensure the CAE is notified to be able to coordinate assurance activities. ➤ Review Internal Audit Quality Assurance Improvement Program.
Chief Audit Executive
✓ Update Audit Committee Charter to address new board responsibilities. ✓ Update Internal Audit Services Charter to include coordination of assurance services and evaluations of the institution's governance, risk and controls responsibilities. ➤ Solicit input from AC and Executive leaders to develop Strategic Plan and ensure adequate resources. ✓ Update the Audit department's policies and procedures manual to meet Global Standards requirements. ➤ Educate the Board, Audit Committee, Executives and other key stakeholders on Internal Audit's roles and responsibilities. ✓ Update Attestations to include expected behaviors and characteristics in accordance with Global Standards. ➤ Solicit feedback from Audit Committee and Board for enhancing internal audit reporting. ➤ Formalize the Quality Assurance Improvement Program.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Review of Outstanding Audit Issues/Audit Plan Status

RECOMMENDED ACTION: None

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dimeta Smith Knight, Audit Committee Chair
Dr. Renée Forbes, Director, Internal Audit

Background Information

Tennessee State University is subject to audits by its internal audit department and external entities. The audits, reviews, etc., can result in findings that require corrective actions by university management. The Tennessee State University Audit Committee is diligent in its commitment and responsibility to ensure university compliance. The Audit Committee requests quarterly updates on management's progress toward correcting issues cited in audit reports and the status of the Audit Plan. The status of management's progress towards correcting outstanding issues and Audit Plan status will be discussed.

The Director of Internal Audit will present a report on the Outstanding Audit Issues and Audit Plan Status for 2025-26.

**Tennessee State University
Office of Internal Audit
Audit Plan Status as of November 2025**

Rank/Status	Type	Area	Audit	Budget (Hours)	Estimated Start	Estimated Completion
Required/Completed/Reviewed	R	AT	NCAA Student Assistance Fund FY 2025	125	July 2025	July 2025
Required/Completed	R	FM	State Audit (Single Audit FY 2024) Follow-up	100	July 2025	October 2025
Required/In Process	R	IS	Quality Assessment Review- Internal	150	July 2025	September 2025
Required/Completed	R	FM	State Audit (Financial Audit 2023) Follow-up	150	July 2025	October 2025
Required/Completed	R	FM	State Audit (EEE Audit FY 2023) Follow-up	30	July 2025	October 2025
Required	R	FM	President's Expenses FY 2025	125	September 2025	December 2025
Follow-Up Review	F	IS	Follow-Up Reviews of Internal Audit Findings	600	July 2025	June 2026
Follow-Up Review	F	SS	(A) Admissions - Immunizations Compliance			
Follow-Up Review	F	FM	(B) Federal Work-Study			
Follow-Up Review	F	IS	(C) Department of Human Resources			
Follow-Up Review	F	AD	(D) Foundation Gifts			
Follow-Up Review	F	RS	(E) Grants Management			
Follow-Up Review	F	FM	(F) Procurement Card Review			
Follow-Up Review	F	FM/IT	(G) Inventory/Laptops			
Required	A/M	IS	Review Management's Risk Assessments	75	September 2025	December 2025
Risk-Based*	A	FM	Internal Controls Review – Accounts Payable/In Process Internal Controls Review – Payroll Internal Controls Review – Procurement/In Process Internal Controls Review – Travel/In Process Internal Controls Review – Cash Collection	600	September 2025	June 2026
Required/Completed	R	IS	Review of Conflict-of-Interest Forms	300	September 2025	January 2026
Investigation/Ongoing	I	IS	Unscheduled Audits/Projects/Investigations	650	Ongoing	Ongoing
Consultation/Ongoing	C	IS	Unscheduled Consultations	150	Ongoing	Ongoing
Risk-Based	A	FM	Student Housing Assignment Review	150	February 2026	March 2026
Risk-Based	A	AX	Bookstore and Food Services Revenue Review	225	March 2026	May 2026
Required	R	FM	Cash Counts	10	June 2026	June 2026
Required	R	IS	Quality Assessment Review- External	225	January 2026	June 2026
			Required	1290		
			Total	3665		
Risk-Based*	A	FM	External Firm	731	September 2025	June 2026

	Audit Types		Functional Area
R	Required	AD	Advancement
A	Risk-Based (Assessed)	AT	Athletics
S	Special Request	AX	Auxiliary
I	Investigation	FM	Financial Management
M	Management's Risk Assessment	IA	Instruction & Academic Support
C	Consultation	IS	Institutional Support
F	Follow-Up Review	IT	Information Technology
RS	Research	PP	Physical Plant
		SS	Student Services

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DISCUSSION ITEM

DATE: November 20, 2025

ITEM: Executive Session

RECOMMENDED ACTION: None

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dimeta Smith Knight, Audit Committee Chair
Dr. Renée Forbes, Director, Internal Audit

Background Information

Audit Committee Report - Executive Session - Discussion of Items Deemed Confidential under State Law

Adjournment of Open Session and Call to Order of Non-Public Executive Session to Discuss Audits, Investigations, Litigations, and Matters Deemed Not Subject to Public Inspection Pursuant to T.C.A. § 4-35-108(b)(1)-(3) (if necessary)



**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE	
Friday, November 21, 2025 9:00 a.m. CT	Tennessee State University Main Campus Farrell Westbrook Complex (The Barn) 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Opening Remarks by the Committee Chair
- IV. Adoption of Agenda
- V. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting (Action)
- VI. Academic Affairs Report
- VII. Student Affairs Report
- VIII. Enrollment Report
- IX. Adjournment

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Jeffery Norfleet, Committee Chair

Background Information

The committee conducted the meeting(s) reference below. The document reflecting the minutes from the meeting(s) are included in the Board materials:

September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Action

The Committee Chair will call for a motion recommending the adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: I move to approve the September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, Board meeting.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Artenzia Young-Seigler. Other Board members present: Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, and Charles Traughber.

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Norfleet called the meeting to order at 11:41 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Norfleet declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Secretary Brown conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Artenzia Young-Seigler.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Smith moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Young-Seigler. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**A. APPROVAL OF JUNE 13, 2025, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from the June 13, 2025, meeting of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Norfleet making the motion and Trustee Young-Seigler seconding the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. APPROVAL OF JULY 1, 2025, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from the July 1, 2025, meeting of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Norfleet making the motion and Trustee Smith seconding the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. CONSIDERATION OF 2024-2025 TENURE AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, consideration of the 2024–2025 tenure promotion recommendations. He invited Provost Melton, Dr. Schmeller, and Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi to present on behalf of the administration.

Dr. Schmeller opened the presentation by providing context regarding the University’s faculty composition, noting that TSU has a higher percentage of assistant professors compared to national averages and local Tennessee institutions. He explained that this imbalance reflects faculty turnover due to retirements and resignations, with some faculty members leaving for higher-paying opportunities elsewhere.

Provost Melton added that while TSU has comparatively more assistant professors, the University ranks lower in the number of associate and full professors. She stated that compensation remains a critical factor in faculty retention and progression, and that the University continues to work toward strengthening salary competitiveness and faculty development support.

Turning to the tenure and promotion process, Dr. Schmeller outlined the multi-level review structure, beginning with annual departmental evaluations and advancing through college-level, University Personnel Committee, Vice President, President, and ultimately Board review. He emphasized that the applicants presented have been vetted through this rigorous process and have submitted complete portfolios.

At the request of Committee Chair Norfleet, Provost Melton summarized the applications under consideration:

- Tenure only – 4 applicants
- Promotion only – 9 applicants
- Tenure and promotion – 13 applicants
- Total applications – 26 submitted, with 1 applicant withdrawn due to resignation, leaving 25 for approval

Provost Melton affirmed that the recommendations have been fully reviewed by the Office of Academic Affairs, are financially supported within the budget, and represent faculty who have demonstrated sustained excellence over a seven-year period.

Committee board members engaged in discussion regarding faculty development programming, including onboarding, annual evaluations, and professional development opportunities such as the University’s partnership with ACUE. Members also inquired about financial considerations, and

Provost Melton confirmed that all promotions and tenure awards are supported by the budget and that prior resignations reduced the financial impact.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Committee Chair Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the 2024–2025 tenure and promotion recommendations, as presented and modified in the meeting materials. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote of the Committee members present.

VI. APPROVAL OF POST-TENURE REVIEW POLICY

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, approval of the post-tenure review policy and invited Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi (V.T.) and Provost Melton to present.

Dr. Tiriveedhi explained that the Faculty Senate established a subcommittee to review post-tenure review (PTR) policies across all 13 LGIs in Tennessee, with a particular focus on the UT System and the University of Memphis. Based on this review, the Senate sought to balance the principles of academic freedom with the need for rigor in faculty accountability. The proposed policy was developed, presented to the Faculty Senate, and unanimously adopted.

Trustee Young-Seigler noted that the revised policy reflects faculty commitment to maintaining high standards and was supported broadly across the institution. She also acknowledged that prior concerns from the Board regarding the clarity of language triggering PTR had been addressed, with the revised language included in the meeting materials.

In response to questions, Dr. Kenneth Chilton explained the rationale for recommending a “triggered” rather than mandatory review process. He emphasized that TSU does not have the faculty size or administrative capacity to conduct mandatory PTR at scale, unlike larger institutions such as the University of Tennessee. He noted that rigorous annual evaluations already provide a mechanism to identify underperformance and initiate improvement plans where necessary. He further explained that requiring mandatory reviews for faculty who consistently perform at high levels would create unnecessary administrative burdens without meaningful benefits.

Dr. Chilton further explained that the annual performance review serves as the University’s first and most consistent accountability measure, covering teaching, research, and service. Faculty who receive unsatisfactory ratings in these annual reviews may be placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP). If performance does not improve under the PIP, this serves as a formal trigger for PTR. He emphasized that this linkage ensures PTR is not duplicative but rather serves as an escalated process for cases where annual evaluations have already demonstrated ongoing concerns.

Provost Melton added that five faculty members are currently on PIPs, which include specific, measurable goals tied to teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service contributions.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the post-tenure review policy, effective immediately, as presented in the September 18, 2025, committee materials.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Young-Sigler – Abstain

With two votes in favor and one abstention, the motion passed.

Provost Melton then provided an informational update on student retention, progression, and graduation. She reminded the Committee that the University's retention and graduation plan had been presented last fall and shared progress data for spring 2025. Out of approximately 5,500 enrolled students, 2,754 were named to the Dean's List. She noted significant progress in reducing students on academic probation, down from a prior high of 1,272 to 132, as well as reductions in suspensions.

Provost Melton attributed these improvements to enhanced student support services and the work of retention coaches, advisors, and academic affairs leadership. She also highlighted the University's graduation completion task force, which includes over 75 stakeholders, including students, to improve completion rates.

In addressing financial barriers, Provost Melton explained that data confirm students who are financially stable demonstrate higher retention, progression, and graduation outcomes. She reported that the fall retention rate for first-time freshmen improved significantly, rising from 33% to 58%, recovering from an anomalous year in 2022 when underprepared students required greater support.

Provost Melton further noted that for the first time, 96% of the fall freshman class enrolled in 15 credit hours, positioning them to remain on track for timely graduation. She emphasized that this milestone reflects the University's commitment to academic excellence and will positively impact progression and graduation rates in coming years.

Committee Chair Norfleet thanked Provost Melton for the report.

VII. STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item and invited Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, to provide the Student Affairs report.

Before turning to student affairs, Dr. Dukhie provided an enrollment update for Fall 2025. He reported a total headcount of 5,293 students, including 4,156 undergraduates and 1,137 graduate

students, reflecting a decrease of 1,225 students, or approximately 19%, compared to the prior year.

In response to trustee questions regarding the categories of “first-time high school” and “new first-time freshmen,” Dr. Dukhie invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to provide clarification. Dr. Stokes explained that “first-time high school” refers to dual-enrollment students earning college credit, while “new first-time freshmen” includes both recent high school graduates and students transferring with less than sophomore standing. He noted that some students may be classified as freshmen multiple years if they have not earned sufficient credit hours to progress. He also explained that “new transient” students are enrolled at other institutions but take courses at TSU on a non-degree basis with the intent to return to their home institutions.

Turning to graduate enrollment, Dr. Dukhie reported that of the 1,137 graduate students, 792 were continuing students, 267 were new first-time graduate and professional students, 47 were readmitted, and 31 were enrolled as non-degree or special students. He also provided full-time equivalent (FTE) counts: 735.25 for graduate students and 4,033.87 for undergraduates.

VIII. REPORT ON STUDENT HOUSING

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item and invited Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, to provide the Report on Student Housing.

Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, provided an update on residence life and housing operations. Dr. Dukhie highlighted enrollment reductions, noting a 19% decrease in overall enrollment and a 21.5% reduction in first-time freshman applications. Given these numbers, adjustments were made to residence hall assignments. Traditionally, Watson Hall houses first-time freshman males (with approximately 135 applicants), and Wilson Hall houses first-time freshman females (just over 300 applicants).

To better support first-year students, Wilson Hall was converted to a co-ed hall, consolidating all first-time freshmen into one space to enhance the first-year experience and foster a sense of community. Watson Hall, which would have been underutilized, was repurposed to offer single-occupancy rooms, addressing student demand for privacy and accommodating seniors who requested campus apartment housing. As a result, Watson Hall achieved 97% capacity, generating over \$356,565 in revenue, with projections of \$713,130 for the next semester. This financial flexibility supports maintenance and upkeep of residence halls. Dr. Dukhie clarified that Watson Hall has a capacity of 319 students and Wilson Hall 540 students. The single-occupancy rooms were priced higher, contributing to the increased revenue.

A discussion took place regarding room occupancy, housing priority, and graduate housing.

Dr. Dukhie concluded the report, noting that the adjustments to housing operations have improved student experience and financial outcomes.

IX. DISCUSSION REGARDING ADMISSION STANDARDS

A. APPROVAL OF MODIFICATION TO ADMISSION TESTING SCORES

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, discussion of admission standards for first-time freshmen. He invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to present on behalf of the administration.

Dr. Stokes explained that the current admission requirements include a minimum GPA of 2.5, an ACT score of 19, and an SAT score of 900. He noted that the SAT requirement is not aligned with the ACT requirement, as an SAT of 900 equates to a 16 ACT score. To provide greater clarity for students, parents, and school counselors, and to support the university's enrollment goals, Dr. Stokes proposed increasing the SAT requirement to 990 to align with the ACT score of 19. He emphasized that this adjustment promotes equity in the admissions process and helps ensure incoming students are better prepared academically.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the modification of admissions testing scores for first-time freshmen, as presented in the September 25, 2025, committee materials. The motion passed unanimously, with Trustees Norfleet, Smith, and Young-Singler voting in favor.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Norfleet moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Smith. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Academic Affairs Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Robbie Melton, Provost, Office of Academic Affairs
Dr. Charlise Anderson, Managing Exe. Dir., Institutional Effectiveness

Background Information

Dr. Melton and Dr. Anderson of the Office of Academic Affairs will present a report on the following items:

- SACSCOC 5th Year Accreditation Report Status
- Retention and Progression Data & Activities
- Graduation Rate Data and Strategic Plan
- Fall 2025 Graduation Plan
- Colleges' Fall 2025 Achievements Report

SACSCOC ACCREDITATION REVIEW MATTERS

I. University's Fifth-Year Interim Report

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), conducts a comprehensive review of its institutions every ten years. The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting agencies to monitor its institutions more often to ensure that institutions having access to federal funds continue to meet accreditation standards. To that end, SACSCOC developed a Fifth-Year Interim Report. TSU's scheduled Fifth-Year Interim Report is due March 2026.

Timeline for the Submission and Review of Fifth-Year Interim Report:

October 2023 – November 2025: SACSCOC Readiness Audit Team established and conducted a Readiness Audit. The purpose of the Readiness Audit was to ascertain the extent of the University's compliance with each SACSCOC standard or core requirement that is part of the required SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report and to identify initial evidence to support compliance or any compliance gaps. Monthly updates on the compliance status were provided to the Provost and VP Academic Affairs. In February 2024, the Readiness Audit Comprehensive Report was completed and submitted to Provost and VP of Academic Affairs and University President.

March 2024 –SACSCOC Steering Committee reconvened in furtherance of a comprehensive institutional analysis/self-evaluation, to collect all documentation to be submitted as evidence of the University's compliance, and to prepare the Compliance Certification document to be submitted to SACSCOC.

August 2024 – First Draft of the Fifth-Year Interim Report and QEP Impact Report completed.

February 2025 – Second Draft of the Fifth-Year Interim Report and QEP Impact Report completed.

July 2025 – Third Draft of the Fifth-Year Interim Report and QEP Impact Report completed.

October 2025 – Fourth Draft of the Fifth-Year Interim Report and QEP Impact Report completed (see Appendix for copy).

November 2025 – February 2026 - SACSCOC Steering Committee continues comprehensive self-evaluation, collection of documentation, and report preparation.

March 2026 - Fifth-Year Interim Report and QEP Impact Report submitted to SACSCOC.

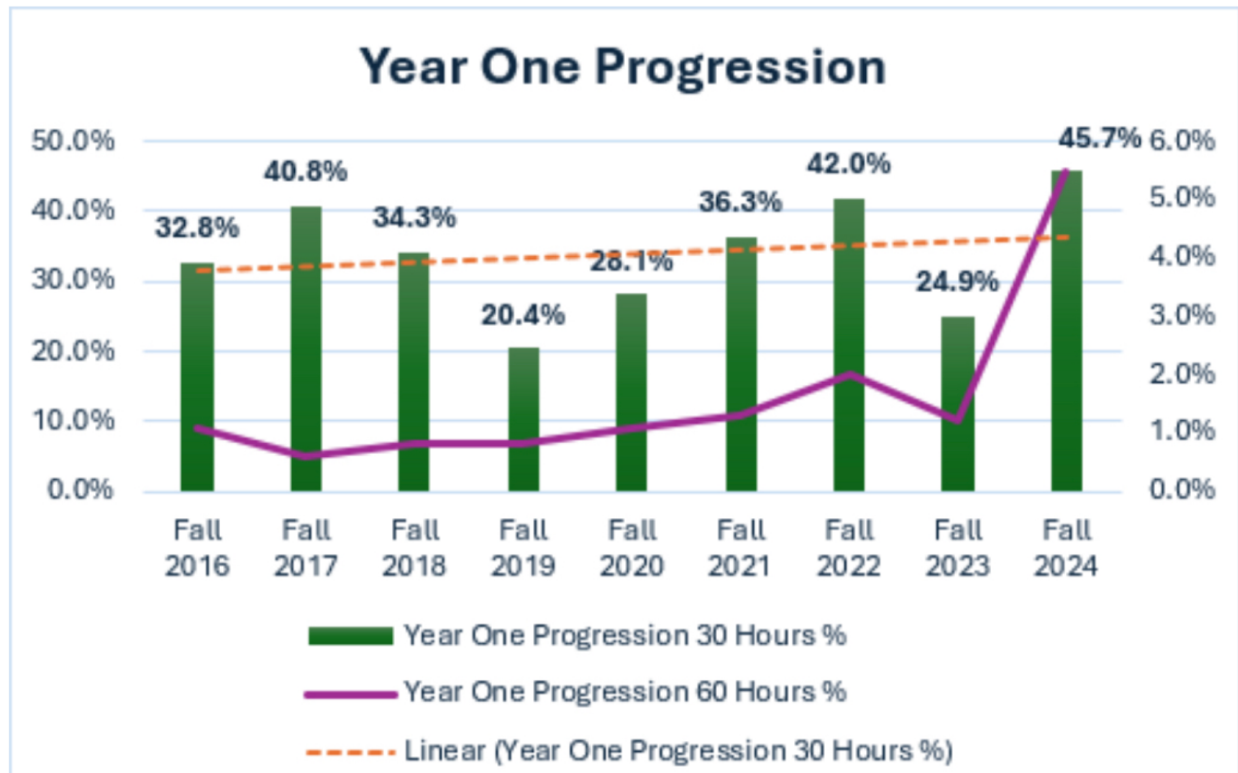
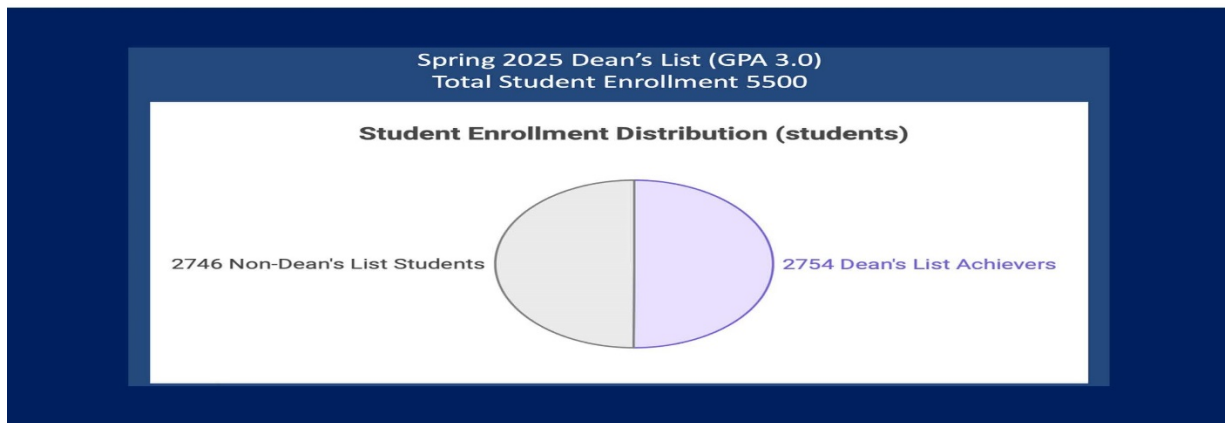
SACSCOC Review Process:

The Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee (Committee) will review the Interim Report and QEP Impact Report in April 2026. The Committee may recommend one of the following actions to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees:

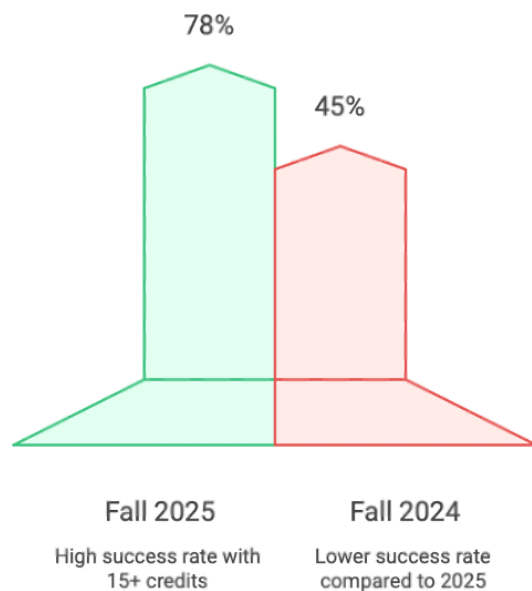
1. continue the institution in accreditation; if institution has failed to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the selected standards, refer the institution for review by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, and the institution submits a Referral Report or
2. continue the institution in accreditation; no additional report required.

RETENTION AND PROGRESSION DATA AND UPDATE

The academic data for Tennessee State University (TSU) highlights both areas of success and significant challenges concerning student retention and progression. A positive indicator is the high academic achievement among the student body, with 2,754 students qualifying as Dean's List Achievers (GPA 3.0+) out of a Total Student Enrollment of 5,500 in Spring 2025, which represents nearly half of the student population. Furthermore, 75% of our first-time freshmen are on target with progression of 15+ credit hours. These metrics indicate that a growing proportion of students are successfully meeting key academic milestones early in their college careers.



1ST TIME FRESHMEN 2025 PROGRESSION INCREASE



Tennessee State University Probation Data (Fall 2019 – Spring 2025)

Semester	Total Enrollment	Students on Probation	% of Students on Probation
Fall 2019	5,875	84	1.4%
Spring 2020	4,842	171	3.5%
Fall 2020	6,000	766	12.8%
Spring 2021	4,554	259	5.7%
Fall 2021	6,375	836	13.1%
Spring 2022	5,041	316	6.3%
Fall 2022	7,678	729	9.5%
Spring 2023	5,978	259	4.3%
Fall 2023	6,765	948	14.0%
Spring 2024	5,095	157	3.1%
Fall 2024	5,057	346	6.8%
Spring 2025	4,581	132	2.9%

Tennessee State University Suspension Data (Fall 2019 – Spring 2024)

Semester	Total Enrollment	Suspensions	% of Students Suspended
Fall 2019	5,875	434	7.4%
Spring 2020	4,842	130	2.7%
Fall 2020	6,000	63	1.1%
Spring 2021	4,554	205	4.5%
Fall 2021	6,375	169	2.7%
Spring 2022	5,041	388	7.7%
Fall 2022	7,678	167	2.2%
Spring 2023	5,978	434	7.3%
Fall 2023	6,765	123	1.8%
Spring 2024	5,095	182	3.6%
Fall 2024	5,057	48	0.9%

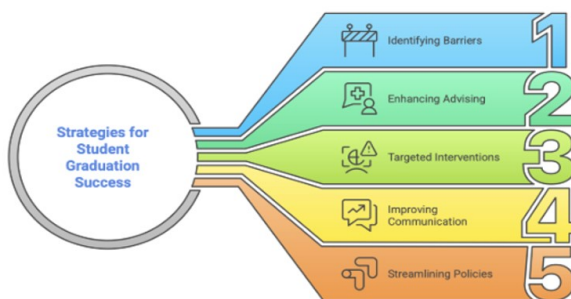
GRADUATION RATE AND STRATEGIC PLAN

(Refer to the attached slide images.)

Graduation Completion Task Force (75 stakeholders) Goal 5% overall Increase 2025 - 2026

- Identifying barriers to student retention and completion.
- Enhancing academic advising and support services.
- Developing targeted interventions for at-risk students.
- Improving communication and engagement with students regarding degree completion requirements.
- Reviewing and developing policies to streamline the path to **graduation**.

Strategies for Student Graduation Success



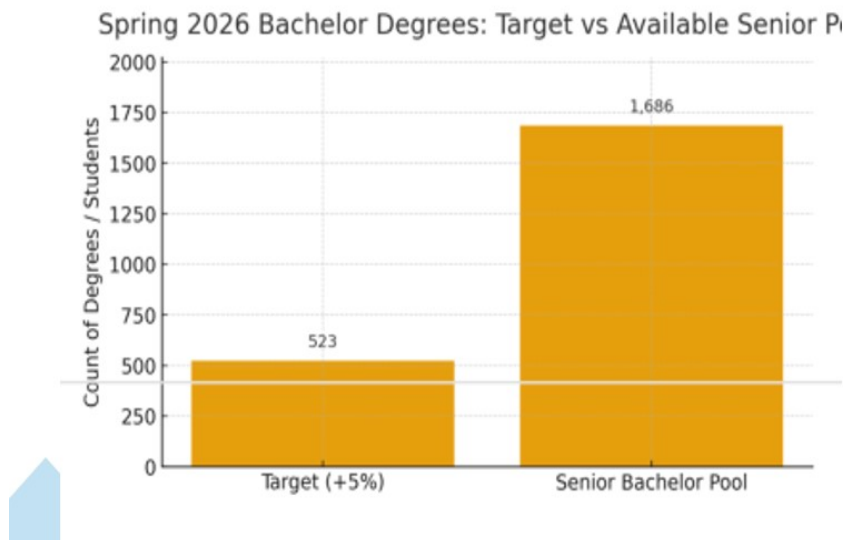
638 Graduating Candidates

Friday, December 5, 2025 9:00am	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Business	85
	College of Engineering	26
	College of Life and Physical Sciences	35
	College of Public Service	12
	TOTAL GRADUATES	158
Friday, December 5, 2025 4:00pm	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Education	44
	Graduate Students (All Colleges)	236
	TOTAL GRADUATES	280
Saturday, December 6, 2025 9:00am	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Agriculture	26
	College of Health Sciences	86
	College of Liberal Arts	88
	TOTAL GRADUATES	200



Projected to Exceed Benchmark Graduation Target of 523 Graduates for Spring 2026

***Significantly INCREASE in the graduation rate by 10% over the projected target.**



Reimagining Graduation to Be Student-Focused

We are pleased to share the plans for the **Tennessee State University Fall 2025 Graduation Ceremonies**, which have been reimagined with a **student-first approach** at the core of every decision. Guided by feedback from students, faculty, staff, and the broader university community, this year's commencement reflects a renewed commitment to creating a **personalized, meaningful, and inclusive celebration**.

Most importantly, students played a central role in shaping this year's ceremonies. Their recommendations have led to several important enhancements, including:

- **Student Speakers by College:** Each college will feature a student-selected speaker, with remarks limited to **5 minutes** to ensure a concise and engaging program.
- **Streamlined Stage Experience:** Graduates will have their official photos taken **after exiting the stage**, allowing for a smoother ceremony and preserving momentum.
- **Recognition of the Divine Nine:** Dedicated time will be set aside to celebrate members of the **Divine Nine fraternities and sororities**, honoring their legacy and rich contributions to TSU's culture.
- **Deeper Faculty and Dean Engagement:** With smaller, more focused ceremonies, graduates will have a more personal experience with their **deans, faculty, and fellow students**, fostering a stronger sense of academic identity and community.
- **More Time with Family and Friends:** The new format provides graduates and their loved ones with **more quality time to celebrate together**, both during and after the ceremony.

Additionally, **splitting the ceremonies by college** provides significant **logistical benefits**:

- **Increased Guest Capacity:** Smaller ceremonies allow students to **invite more family and friends**, extending the celebration to more of those who supported them throughout their TSU journey.
- **Improved Parking and Traffic Flow:** With ceremonies spread across multiple sessions, we anticipate a **more organized parking experience**, greater availability of spaces, and reduced congestion on and around campus.

These changes reflect our commitment to a **graduation experience that is personal, efficient, student-centered, and family-friendly**, while honoring the legacy and excellence of Tennessee State University.

Fall 2025 Graduation Ceremony Schedule

Friday, December 5, 2025

Ceremony I

- **Time:** 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Gentry Center
- **Participating Colleges:**

- College of Business
- College of Engineering
- College of Life & Physical Sciences
- College of Public Service

Ceremony II

- **Time:** 4:00 PM
- **Location:** Gentry Center
- **Participating Programs:**
 - Graduate Studies
 - College of Education

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Ceremony III

- **Time:** 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Gentry Center
- **Participating Colleges:**
 - College of Agriculture
 - College of Health Sciences
 - College of Liberal Arts

We look forward to celebrating the Fall Class of 2025 in a way that reflects their values, their accomplishments, and their community. We invite and encourage your attendance as we honor our graduates with the respect, recognition, and joy they so deeply deserve.

ACADEMIC COLLEGES AND UNITS FALL 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Aerospace Studies and AFROTC Detachment 790:

The Department of Aerospace Studies and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) Detachment 790 at Tennessee State University is dedicated to fostering the development of future leaders and officers in the aerospace sector and the Department of the Air Force. Our mission aligns closely with the university's vision of preparing students for impactful careers in a rapidly evolving workforce. Through a comprehensive educational framework, we emphasize leadership, discipline, and critical thinking, equipping our cadets with the skills necessary to excel in both military and civilian careers. As we strive for excellence, we remain committed to enhancing student engagement, retention, and overall academic success, ensuring our graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

In Fall 2025, our enrollment figures reflect static cadet enrollment and retention compared to the previous academic year, highlighting a reliable recruiting pipeline for our program. In Spring 2025, the Detachment commissioned 12 Second Lieutenants, the largest class in over a decade. The department also boasts its third consecutive year of improvement in Department of Defense viability metrics, yielding a "viable" annual assessment for the first time ever, which underscores our commitment to student support and success. Additionally, the Department partnered with the Air Force Recruiting Service to plan and execute a three-week university-hosted flight academy where 19 students were informed about commissioning pathways, inspiring pursuit of service in aviation.

This year, our faculty and staff were recognized with the prestigious Southeast Region Team of the Quarter Award for noted superior performance amongst all detachments in the nation's largest region. The Detachment Commander was also selected and entrusted to serve as a Detachment Instructor for the Detachment Commander Instructional Course where he briefed six AFROTC operational topics and evaluated teaching presentations, ensuring qualification of 25 new Commanders. Department faculty also led a complete re-write of the Cadet Medical Processing Guide, synchronizing and adjudicating all stakeholder inputs, resulting in updated Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures in processing medical clearances for use at 145 detachments across the nation. Multiple cadets were competitively selected for high-visibility Officer Development Training and scholarship opportunities based on their academic and military performance while in AFROTC.

Ongoing initiatives such as the Cadet Mentorship Program and community outreach events continue to demonstrate our impact, fostering a culture of leadership and service among our cadets. As we move forward, we remain focused on our mission to cultivate excellence, ensuring that our students are prepared to lead and excel as officers in the United States Air and Space Forces.

College of Agriculture:

The Tennessee State University College of Agriculture (TSUAg) continues to advance its 1890 Land-Grant mission by preparing students for leadership, innovation, and service in the food, agricultural, natural, and human sciences. Aligned with TSU's vision of excellence, access, and impact, the College provides rigorous academics, hands-on learning, and impactful research that prepare graduates to address the evolving needs of the agricultural and human sciences workforce. During Fall 2025, TSUAg achieved notable progress in scholarship, student success, research funding, and community engagement—strengthening its statewide and national impact.

Recruitment and Student Engagement

Between August and October 2025, TSUAg implemented an extensive recruitment campaign to expand awareness and engagement across Tennessee and neighboring states. Administrators, faculty and staff participated in more than 30 college and career fairs, including the Jackson Area-Wide College Fair, MLK Academic Magnet College Fair, Metro Nashville Public Schools College & Career Expo, Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences Fair. The College also increased its visibility through community and agricultural events such as festivals at the Nashville Farmers Market and Ag Field Day in Memphis—strengthening pipelines for future TSUAg students.

Research, Grants, and Awards

TSUAg faculty secured **29 grants totaling \$1,970,862** and submitted **63 proposals** requesting more than **\$49.1 million** in external funding during Fall 2025. Faculty and staff received multiple recognitions for excellence in teaching, research, and service at institutional and national levels, reflecting the College's strong academic leadership and innovation. Faculty and students produced **22 peer-reviewed publications** and **72 professional presentations**, underscoring national scholarly engagement.

Cooperative Extension Impact

As of October 2025, TSU Cooperative Extension facilitated **6,279 group meetings** and recorded **169,529 educational contacts** statewide. Extension programs also documented **55,712 volunteer hours**, valued at **\$1,667,460.16** in community contributions. Additionally, 130 individuals from four locations across the state of Tennessee participated in the seven-week, hands-on TSU New Farmers Academy. Building on this momentum, Cooperative Extension is launching a new **strategic operational plan** focused on:

- Expanding TSU Extension's presence across all 95 Tennessee counties
- Strengthening community engagement and partnerships
- Enhancing operational efficiency and administrative systems
- Advancing professional development, training, and mentorship
- Improving communication, visibility, and brand recognition

Student Achievements and Initiatives

Students achieved distinction through **six national awards**, **22 scholarly publications** (seven student-authored), and **31 professional presentations** at national conferences. Career-focused

engagement opportunities included the TSUAg Career Fair, USDA NIFA Director's Roundtable, and Bayer "Snack and Chat." Fall 2025 also marked the relaunch of the **TSUAg Ambassadors Program** and the **Human Sciences Dual Credit Partnership with Riverdale High School**.

College of Business:

Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation

- COB team visited and met prospective students in several community colleges: Columbia State Community College - Williamson Campus, Nashville State Community College - White Bridge Pike, Nashville State Community College – Southeast, Nashville Community College - North Davidson County.
- COB Team visited Montgomery Bell Academy for collaboration to increase enrollment.
- COB hosted 30 students from Kirkwood High School at our Avon Williams OCIS.
- COB is planning to bring more high school students to campus visits in Spring 2026.
- Implemented faculty-based advisement system to improve tracking, retention, and timely graduation.
- *Graduate programs highlights:* Students visited Jackson Financial, Carrier HVAC will host an information session on November 6th, planning an Open House, promoted our programs at the University-Wide Career Fair, reaching out to prospective students with incomplete applications through personalized emails and calls, reaching out to graduate alumni for mentorship and support, and created a database of local businesses and industry contacts for recruitment and collaboration.

Grants submitted and/or received

- Submitted several grants to implement internships and career pathways, for scholarships and technology:
 - A grant of \$500,000 to FedEx, a grant of \$200,000 to Cummins, a grant of \$110,500 to Boeing
- A COB faculty member is collaboratively working on a \$500,000 research project funded.
- A COB faculty member received the 2025 Seed Grant Award from the Office of RSP.

Awards and honors received by your college/faculty/staff

- Two faculty awarded travel costs to attend at Deloitte AI HBCU Faculty Symposium.
- Two faculty awarded travel costs to attend a Finance Conference.

Student achievements and awards

- Four students received TSCPA Journal scholarships for 2025.
- Team of students, ranked among the top-performing schools in the TVA Investment Challenge.
- The college organized company visits for students to Mars Petcare headquarters and Jackson Financial.
- Four student teams are competing against teams from Howard University in a case competition.
- Twenty-nine students and two faculty members attended the AFE Conference in Atlanta, GA.

- COB students participated in Dollar General’s virtual Supplier Spotlight Panel.
- One faculty with several students attended a conference in Las Vegas in July.
- Four students are recognized as TSCPA scholarship recipients.
- Two students with one faculty attended Investment Company Institute, ETF Conference in Nashville.
- Three students attended SFEPA National Conference in Washington, D.C.

Special Projects

- Organized the ICI Asset Management Event at the Avon Williams OCIS.
- Continued leadership of the SFEPA Financial Literacy Ambassadors program.
- COB is currently working to organize an international academic conference “Global Business and Technology Conference (GLOBETEC)” at the Avon Williams OCIS in Spring 2026.
- Launched new student organization led by Paige Shuma (Economics & Finance Major).
- A group of students are now getting industry certification training on Data Analytics and Computer Security.
- Continuing Bloomberg Terminal certification and SIE Exam Prep courses to enhance professional readiness.

Current Business and Industry Partnerships

- COB currently has five department/area specific industry advisory boards.
- Strengthened relationships with UBS Nashville, Jackson Financial, Wilson Bank & Trust, Old National Bank, Middle Tennessee Society for Human Resource Management, Dollar General, Cummins Inc.
- *Meet the Firms event*: Twelve companies attended to meet with our students and offer career opportunities.
- *International Partnerships*: Already signed MoU with Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT), and MoU with American University in Emirates (AUE) is in the final stages and is awaiting signature.

National Publications/Presentations

- Eight peer-review publications from COB faculty so far in Fall 2025.

Center for Extended Education

Fall 2025 Achievement Update
Reporting Period: June 25 – November 20, 2025

Mission & Strategic Impact

The Avon Williams Off-Campus Instructional Site, led by Dr. Deborah Chisom, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, serves as a vital extension of TSU's commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement. Through the SMART Innovation Center,

Open Educational Resources initiatives, and specialized adult education programs, the site bridges academic preparation and professional practice, providing direct pathways to employment in high-demand fields including technology, engineering, business, education, and healthcare.

Enrollment & Student Success

- **Amazon Cohort:** 24 students enrolled; 15 actively registered (62.5% active enrollment rate)
- **Fall 2025 Graduates:** 422 students approved for graduation (290 undergraduate, 132 graduate)
- **Adult Learners:** 44 undergraduate students aged 25+ completing degrees

Grant Funding & Resources

- **HBCU C² Apple Initiative:** Transformative partnership providing cutting-edge technology, professional development, and coding education; TSU serves as regional hub for HBCU network
- **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Grant:** Supports Open Educational Resources, reducing textbook costs and improving access to culturally relevant materials
- **Title III Grant:** Critical support for institutional capacity building, faculty development, and student support services

Faculty Recognition & Achievements

- **Dr. Robert Hassell:** Published *The AI Dissertation Advantage: Strategic Prompts to Fast-Track Your Research, Writing, and Defense* and *Artificial Intelligence for Theological Education Master Prompts for Seminary and Divinity Education*; Selected as a 2025-2026 The HBCU Center Research Network (HCRN) Research, Leadership, and Policy Practitioner Fellow
- **Ms. Chasitie Goodman & Dr. Quinetta Bartley:** Best-in-Track presentation at OLC Innovate 2025 on enhancing open educational cultures
- **Dr. Melton:** Successfully recruited 9 Metro Nashville Public Schools counselors at High School Counselor Breakfast

Business & Industry Partnerships

- **Technology Partners:** Apple Inc., Google, Microsoft, Oracle, T-Mobile, Grammarly Inc., Latimer AI, Sendsteps
- **Corporate Partner:** Amazon (cohort program, workforce development, facilities support)
- **Professional Organizations:** National Association of Collegiate Esports, HBCU Faculty Development Network, Online Learning Consortium, MERLOT, STEM Leadership Alliance

SMART Innovation Center Impact

- **Site Visits:** 43 scheduled events serving 837 participants
- **Peak Activity:** October 2025 with 17 events; largest single event: 200 students from Carter-Lawrence Engineering Magnet Elementary (Nov 6)

- **K-12 Partners:** Moses McKissack Middle, Kirkwood High, Donelson Middle AVID, Rosebank STEAM, Dinkins Middle Magnet
- **Community Partners:** Dream Centers of Tennessee, NABA Inc., Amazon BEN, New Hope Church
- **Higher Education:** Nashville State Community College Academic Leadership and School of Health Sciences

Major Events & Programming Avon Williams Off-Campus Instructional Site (Summer-Fall 2025)

LAF Clinic (Speech Pathology/Audiology) • TECTA Center-Based Orientation Training • NABA Career Awareness Conference • Mandela Washington Fellows Workshop • IEC Retreat • Meet the Firms Career Fair • Passport Fair • Physical Therapy White Coat Ceremony • Black Maternal Health Symposium & THRIVE Tour • Psychology Major Open House • Homecoming Tiger Strut • Forensics Reunion Banquet • Global Faculty Fellows Cohort

Pathways to Success
at Avon Williams Off-
Campus Instructional
Site



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Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement:

The Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement continues to demonstrate its commitment to institutional excellence and its mission of fostering student success and community engagement. Significant strides have been made in retention strategies, culminating in high satisfaction rates among our instructors following comprehensive training sessions. These initiatives have not only equipped faculty with vital tools for supporting at-risk students but have also fostered an engaging learning environment. Our community service events, notably the Freshman Day of Service and the 2025 Community Service Fair, have effectively connected students with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the community, reinforcing our commitment to civic engagement. Furthermore, robust partnerships with both internal and external organizations have enhanced our service-learning programs and broadened the reach of our initiatives, paving the way for future collaborative efforts.

In terms of retention and improvements, UNIV1000 (our new student orientation class) has successfully implemented mandatory instructor training sessions, resulting in 85% of instructors expressing high satisfaction with the training. This has led to the establishment of crucial mid-term progress meetings and regular check-ins with students, significantly enhancing support for at-risk individuals. The focus on attendance and participation has seen 87% of instructors submitting mid-term progress reports, demonstrating a proactive approach to student engagement and success. Overall, mid-term grades have seen an improvement from last fall with a 6% increase in the number of As, 8% in Bs, 1% in Cs, 1% in Ds, and a 10% decrease in F grades.

The Fall 2025 semester also witnessed impactful special projects, including the Freshman Day of Service, which engaged 112 students in a street cleanup initiative, and the John Merritt Classic Packing Party, attended by 64 students. These events not only foster a sense of community but also encourage student involvement in civic activities, thus aligning with our mission to cultivate responsible leaders.

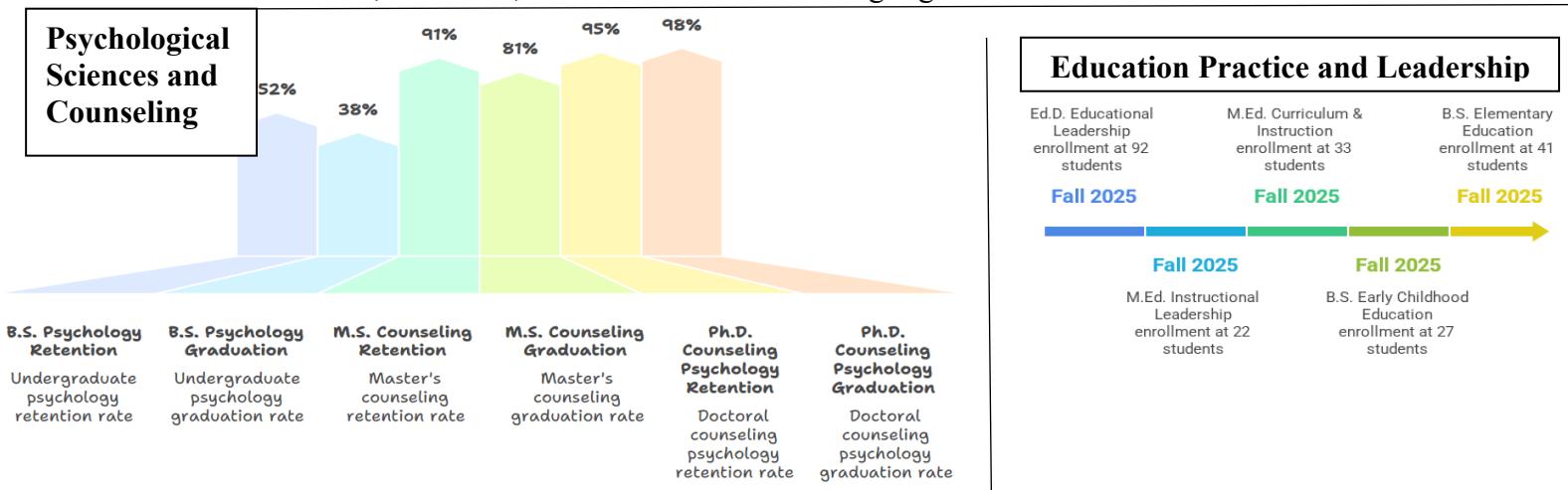
Tennessee State University has also strengthened its partnerships significantly this semester. Collaborations with the Office of Student Engagement & Leadership, Athletics, and the Student Government Association have facilitated various service events that enhance student engagement. Additionally, our external partnerships with over 40 agencies and organizations have expanded opportunities for students to engage in service-learning, further enriching their educational experience.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce the upcoming 2026 MLK Joint Day of Service, taking place on January 24. We anticipate 800 student volunteers from multiple Nashville universities. Returning to TSU's campus this year, MLK Joint Day of Service exemplifies our dedication to fostering a culture of service and engagement at Tennessee State University.

College of Education:

The College of Education is central to the mission of Tennessee State University, preparing highly skilled professionals to meet critical workforce demands in Psychological Sciences and Counseling, and Education Practice and Leadership.

1. Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rates – Highlights



2. Grants Submitted and/or Received - Faculty secured over \$549,990 in external grants and planning funds. This included two National Science Foundation (NSF) grants totaling \$449,990. These funds support research focusing on Social Cognitive Career Theory and STEM career development for African American students. Some examples include: Dr. Raquel Martin's \$100,000 Hopelab Fellowship, Dr. Marie Hammond's \$349,991 National Science Foundation grant and Dr. Twianie Roberts' SEED Grant for a Research & Publication Support Series for Graduate Students.

3. Awards and Honors Received by College Faculty and Staff (2023-2025) - Dr. Twianie Roberts was selected as a Fulbright Specialist for 2025-2028 and a 2025-2026 Global Faculty Fellow. Dr. Terrance McNeil received the "My HBCU Matters" 2025 Higher Education Educator of the Year. Drs. Brooke Rappaport and Marie Hammond received a 2023 Outstanding Publication of the Year Award and were invited to the 2024 Institute for Academic Feminist Psychologists. Dr. Elder received award for completing the highest number of dissertations during this period.

4. Notable Student Achievements and Awards - Students received awards from the American Psychological Association (APA). Five students were named President of the United States (POTUS) Scholars in 2024 (Jada Carter, Kennedy Parks, Nafis Ricks) and 2025 (Adam Jolly, J Stephenson). Raymond Popplewell and Kiara Tookes-Williams were named APA Fellows for 2025. Ed.D. student Nicole Segui co-presented research at the 2025 ATE Conference. DeeAnne Miree won the National Distinguished Principal 2024 award for the state of Tennessee.

5. Special Projects and Initiatives Launched for Fall 2025 - Key initiatives include Dr. Robin Oatis-Ballew's leadership role as a Member of the APA Commission on Accreditation (APA-

COA) and President of CCPTP. Drs. Thurman Webb and Lauren Rocha provide ongoing Mental Performance Coaching for TSU Athletics. Dr. Webb is also filming a Justice and Advocacy Documentary. Recruitment efforts were boosted by the Ed.D. Doctoral Research Symposium and the proposed M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction Job-Embedded Fast Track program.

6. Current Business and Industry Partnerships - Collaboration with Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) is robust, involving 30 Psychology majors as mentors, recruitment, and practicum sites. New/continued industry partnerships for leadership and mental health programming include Park & Battery, Lincoln Financial Group, and the TechOps Leadership Accelerator. The College also expands access via the VSCC + TSU Tribrid Program.

7. National Publications and Presentations - Faculty and students produced an expansive body of scholarship, with 18 national publications and 17 conference presentations. Notable publications included: Three book chapters accepted/in preparation, and two books authored by Dr. Thurman Webb published in 2025. Notable presentations were given at the APA Annual Convention and internationally in Athens, Greece.

College of Engineering:

Enrollment, retention, and graduation rates

The college has developed strategic recruitment and retention plans. The recruitment team has worked with university recruitment office to start extensive recruitment activities this Fall semester, including twenty high school visiting and five community colleges visiting. A blue and white scholarship has been set up in the college to attract incoming freshmen, Industrial partnerships. Alumni, faculty and staff are providing funding into the newly established College of Engineering Freshmen Scholarship- Blue and White scholarship. The goal is to attract 150 incoming freshmen with the blue-white scholarship. Target audience of the recruitment include high school students, community college transfer students, graduate students, and non-traditional students.

- State Building Commission has approved the new Engineering Building design with a proposed 71,000 ft² and a cost of \$60 M. With the new building, more students will be attracted to TSU engineering program.
- The goal is to increase the number of applications to the College of Engineering by 10% annually. Enrollment growth of underrepresented students by 15% over two years. Higher engagement on social media (e.g., 20% increase in Facebook page interactions).
- In the College of Engineering (CoE), the new approved Minor of Mining Engineering has been launched in Fall 2025. TSU is the first HBCU to have a mining engineering program. The new mining engineering program was funded by US Department of Energy \$800,000 grant.
- Civil Engineering program has a 3+1 join program with SWUST. The project has attracted over 250 civil engineering students in SWUST. So far, five of them have successfully completed the first two years of study at SWUST and transferred to TSU in Fall 2025 and Fall 2026.

Grants submitted and/or received this fall or currently implemented such as the Urban Grant, FBI, Center of Excellence, etc.

The College of Engineering faculty received 50 new and ongoing external research grants, with total amount of \$19M as PI or co-PIs. The active research faculty has increased to 35. The faculty published 30 articles and presented 30 conference papers. The faculty submitted 55 collaborative research proposals to security external research funding. Partial lists are shown below, it included Dr. Richard Mu received \$4.2 M of NSF PREM Grant to advance nano material research and three additional grants from DoE to support. Dr. Hong in Electrical Engineering received three grants to enable future wireless communication and promote intelligent and secure engineering systems and build cybersecurity labs. Cummins Inc. and Nissan donated equipment to enhance teaching infrastructure in the College.

- INROADS funded HBCU SCI Endowed Professorship in Sustainability Grant Endowed Sustainability Professorship, \$1,000,000 (PI: Dr. Lin Li)
- NSF: Artificial Intelligence-Driven Learning Analytics to Predict Student Performance in STEM Education, \$600,000 (PI: Dr. Jing Yan)
- NSF: Enhancing Thermal Transport in Polymers via Phonon Polaritons, \$1,000,000 (PI: Dr. Richard Mu)
- US Army: Exteroceptive Sensor Modeling, Simulation, and Virtualization: LIDAR, RADAR, Cameras with Application to UGV Simulation and Integration, \$500,000 (PI: Dr. Amir Shirkhodaie)
- NSF: Infusing Computational Fluid Dynamics into Mechanical and Architectural Engineering Curricula through an Integrated Multimodal Learning Framework, \$400,000 (PI: Dr. Zufen Wang)
- TDOT: Transportation Network Growth Opportunity Program, \$500,000 (PI: Dr. Deo Chimba)
- US Air Force: A Novel Approach to Denied Targets Recognition via Multi-Model Sensor Data Fusion and Generative AI Techniques, \$600,000 (PI: Dr. Amir Shirkhodaie)
- AMIE: AMIE Resilience Hub Summer Program, \$350,000 (PI: Dr. Lin Li)
- US Air Force: AIM HIGH Flight Academy at Tennessee State University, \$181,000 (PI: Ivan Mosley)
- NSF: Deep Clustering of Unlabeled Tabular Data for Transfer Learning in Heterogeneous Feature Space, \$200,000 (PI: Dr. Manar Samad)
- DOE: Copper Nanocomposites and Solar-Thermal Power systems, \$280,000 (PI: Dr. Richard Mu)
- DOE: Tennessee Quantum Materials Workforce Development and Training, an R2-HBCU-ORNL Partnership, \$550,000 (PI: Dr. Richard Mu)
- NSF PERM: Photonics and Quantum Information Lab setup and material research, \$4,200,000 (PI: Dr. Richard Mu)
- DOE Mining grant of \$800,000, purchased MTS Criterion 40: Electromechanical Universal Test System for rock mechanics, mining program (PI: Dr. Lin Li)
- TDOT supported two Redbird Flight simulators TD2 (\$34,000) (PI: Dr. Mosley)
- FAA grant supported one Redbird Flight simulator MCX (\$100,000) (PI: Dr. Mosley)
- DOE MSIPP grant of \$1,000,000, purchased Instron 8801: Fatigue Testing System for material fatigue property (PI: Dr. Landon)

- DOE Cybersecurity grant of \$1,600,000 for cybersecurity lab (PI: Dr. Hong)

Awards and honors received by your college/faculty/staff

- Textbook: The Immersion Method for Microbially Induced Calcite Precipitation: Applications for Sustainability, CRC Press, ISBN: 978-1-032-85739-8. 306 pages. (Dr. Lin Li, Dr. Shihui Liu)
- Textbook: Looking into The Skies/ Phyllis Hayes:
<https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/aviation-safety-and-aviation-meteorology-looking-skies>
- Ivan T. Mosley, Sr. - Served as the Vice-Chair for Annual Programs in the Engineering Technology Division with the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)
- Ivan T. Mosley, Sr. - Approved to be a consultant for the Association of Technology, Management and Applied Engineering (ATMAE)

Student achievements and awards:

- Fifty students attend BEYA Conference and AMIE Design Challenge
- NSBE Student Chapter Named as Best Student Chapter of the Year
- 15 students attended AMIE Resilience Summer hub and presented at Prairie View A& M for their projects.
- Electrical Engineering Major students Ms. Tabitha Tabb & Ms. Ja'Mya Brown, teamed up together at 2025 ACES (Accessing Careers in Energy Summit) Conference and won 1st Place!! The team provided a strategy for utilities to anticipate, detect, and defend against threats posed by large, fast-growing electrical loads, while also meeting regulatory expectations and keeping customers connected.
- Six mechanical engineering students participating in the vehicle challenge competition. Their team won a Judges Award for performance in Efficiency Race.

Special Projects

- Order of the Engineer reassume at the College of Engineering after 20 years break
- Established 1st Engineering Club at STEM Prep Academy (IEEE)

Current Business and Industry Partnerships

The College of Engineering has developed Industry Partnership Cluster that meets annually each April. The college has developed Industry Sponsorship Packet to provide detailed information for industry partnerships. The college has expanded its partnership with below examples:

- Cummins donated one diesel B6.7 CM2450 B155B Engine - Turkey Training Module to Mechanical Engineering Program
- Nissan donated two vehicles: Electric Nissan Ariya Platinum to Electrical Engineering Program and Infiniti AWD QX60 to Mechanical Engineering Program
- Honda Inc. provided \$100,000 for energy testbed in Electrical Engineering.
- Nyrstar Inc. provided \$10,000 scholarship
- SSOE Inc. provided \$15,000 scholarship
- Boeing Inc. provided \$50,000 scholarship
- Turner Construction Inc. provided \$50,000 scholarship

- Enbridge Inc. provided \$5000 scholarship
- ExxonMobil Pipeline provided \$27,000 for EEC camp
- General Motors Inc. provided \$50,000 for ECI
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power provided \$350,00 for Resilience Summer Hub

National Publications / Presentations

Nissan Fuels Innovation at Tennessee State University with Vehicle Donations on April 15, 2025: In a groundbreaking partnership aimed at propelling engineering students into the forefront of automotive innovation, Nissan has gifted two cutting-edge vehicles to the College of Engineering at Tennessee State University. This generous donation, featuring an electric Nissan Ariya Platinum+ e-4ORCE and an Infiniti AWD QX60, will empower students with hands-on learning experiences that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. (TSU Newsroom <https://tnstatenewsroom.com/nissan-fuels-innovation-at-tennessee-state-university-with-vehicle-donations/>)

TSU Leads Collaborative Research to Enhance Microgrid Resilience with March 2020 Tornado Simulation on May 30, 2025: On May 30, Tennessee State University Electrical Engineering Department partnered with local and federal organizations to conduct a virtual simulation of the March 2020 Nashville tornado. This initiative aims to enhance the resilience of Nashville's infrastructure through innovative microgrid systems and self-contained electrical networks designed to safeguard critical services during extreme weather events. (TSU Newsroom <https://tnstatenewsroom.com/tsu-leads-collaborative-research-to-enhance-microgrid-resilience-with-march-2020-tornado-simulation/>)

Team of graduate students (MS) participated in the 2025 TRB, National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCoE) graduate students' innovation challenge and secured the first prize. <https://www.tnstate.edu/engineering/NDOT.aspx>.

TSU Advances AI Education with Amazon's Machine Learning: Tennessee State University announces a new collaboration with the AWS-Machine Learning University (MLU) Educators Consortium and Transformation Alliance, a nationwide initiative helping college faculty integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) into their curriculum. Through this collaboration, faculty from TSU's Department of Computer Science and the SMART Center are gaining access to training, curated curriculum resources, and ongoing support to prepare students for careers in the rapidly growing field of AI/ML. (TSU Newsroom: <https://tnstatenewsroom.com/?s=TSU+Advances+AI+Education+with+Amazon%E2%80%99s+Machine+Learning>)

Global Online:

Tennessee State University Global Online continues to advance the University's mission to prepare diverse learners for the world of work through accessible, high-quality, technology-enhanced academic experiences. Guided by TSU's vision for excellence and innovation in higher education, Global Online remains a driving force in expanding access, promoting academic success, and aligning programs with workforce demands across Tennessee and beyond. Our sustained commitment to student-centered learning, institutional efficiency, and faculty excellence has positioned TSU as a national leader among HBCUs and public universities in developing digital pathways that transform lives, communities, and industries. TSU Global Online continues its work to ensure Course Program of Study (CPoS) alignment and a streamlined Degree Works integration are in place to enhance student navigation and in support of the University's retention and completion goals.

Projects and Initiatives:

- Developed a process in collaboration with TSU-IT to batch update advisor assignments in Banner 9; conducted a training session on the new process with academic department chairs and staff assigned to run the process. This has led to more accurate advisor information being posted to a student's myTSU and EAB profile pages.
- Activated CPoS error alert in EAB which notifies students and their advisor of any CPoS issues during an active registration window allowing time for correction and/or schedule adjustments needed for full compliance.
- Established a process in Banner 9 that requires students to self-register for the appropriate English and/or Math workshop course for students based on the student's respective ACT score or SAT sub-score.
- Provided targeted training for faculty teaching online courses with a focus on accessibility standards, outcome-based assessments and effective LMS tool management and usage. The team also redesigned the Faculty Master Shells (FMS) model so that faculty can work on their online courses any time prior to the creation of the semester shells. This model provides the team time to review each course prior to semester start and has led to improvements in the number of courses that have approved content on the first day of class and quality of course content.

Awards and Honors:

- Tennessee State University continues to distinguish itself as a national leader in virtual learning after recently earning a top ten spot on Forbes' 2025 list of Best Online Programs among Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

College of Health Sciences:

Progress Report on the College of Health Sciences Initiatives

The College of Health Sciences at Tennessee State University is committed to preparing students for successful careers in the healthcare sector. Our mission is to equip students with essential skills and promote experiential learning and community engagement, ensuring alignment with the demands of the workforce. Strong enrollment and retention rates reflect our commitment to student success, as we continuously enhance educational experiences through innovative projects and partnerships. The college offers a diverse range of degree programs across various departments, fostering a robust academic environment. Our focus on grants and community partnerships further strengthens our capacity to deliver quality education and services.

A Snapshot of Enrollment & Retention Progress for Some Programs

- Dental Hygiene: 26 enrolled (30 admitted); Retention: 87.5%; Graduation: 77%.
- Human Performance: 283 majors; Graduation: 64%; Retention: 60%.
- Physical Therapy: Graduation: 91%; 100% employment within one year.
- Nursing: 117 enrolled; Retention: 70.9%; Projected Graduation: 69%.

Grants and Awards: The total grant amount awarded to the College of Health Sciences is \$4,775,392.14. Prof. Janice Williams was recognized as a TSU Global Faculty Fellow, and Dr. Wendelyn Inman received the Dr. Hildrus A. Poindexter Award. Mrs. Candace Brown is the Staff Senate Chair.

Student Achievements: The Tiger Fit Majors' Club won "Best Community Service Program" for its impactful outreach. Calandra Henry co-presented at the TNOTA State Conference, showcasing student engagement. Graduates have been accepted into prestigious graduate programs, including Ivy League institutions – Brown University.

Special Projects: The College has initiated several significant projects to enhance the educational experience. New equipment was acquired for the Dental Hygiene program through Title III grant funding. The Department of Human Performance and Sport Sciences established five Professional Sports Consortia, providing unparalleled access to industry experiences. The inaugural PhD class in Public Health commenced in Fall 2025, expanding academic offerings.

Business Partnerships: The College has formed strategic partnerships to enhance student learning, including externship sites with Meharry Dental School. Collaborations with professional sports teams in Tennessee and local businesses, such as Gresham Smith, offer practical learning experience.

Publications/Presentations: Dr. Laura Carpenter presented a course on "Sleep Smart" at the TNOTA State Conference. Dr. Charles and Dr. King will present at the AAOMPT conference, while Dr. Bowman and Dr. King published a chapter on pelvic health in a textbook. Faculty in Public Health completed a new textbook on multicultural health, and published peer-reviewed

articles on colorectal cancer, family planning and other topics, enhancing TSU's national visibility.

Honors College:

The University Honors College at Tennessee State University is dedicated to preparing students for successful careers in a rapidly changing workforce. Our mission emphasizes academic excellence, leadership development, and community engagement, ensuring that our students are well-equipped to meet the demands of today's job market. This fall, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity and personal growth. While we faced challenges in enrollment numbers, our focus on continuous improvement, innovative programming, and strategic partnerships has positioned us for future success. We remain aligned with TSU's vision of empowering students to become impactful leaders in their communities and beyond.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, the University Honors College has enrolled a total of 727 students, marking an 11% decrease from the 816 students recorded in Fall 2024. Despite this decline, we welcomed 92 new students this semester, including 33 first-year students at TSU, and continued to receive new applications. Our retention rate stands at an impressive 93.21%, exceeding our goal of retaining a minimum of 90% of our Honors students from Fall 2024 to Fall 2025. This reflects our commitment to providing robust academic support and engagement opportunities.

Notable achievements among our students include several selections for the prestigious American Heart Association Scholars Program for the 2025-2026 academic year, highlighting the caliber of our student body. Additionally, eight Honors students have been chosen to compete in the National Association of African American Honors Programs (NAAAHP) competitions, which will take place from November 6-9, 2025, in Birmingham, Alabama. They will showcase their talents in Research, Poster Presentation, Quiz Bowl, and Honors Got Talent, competing against 25 other HBCUs.

We have also expanded our partnerships with local organizations, including McKissick Middle School, Jeni's Ice Cream, Hillsboro High School, Vanderbilt University, and Meharry Medical College. These partnerships enhance our curriculum and provide vital resources for our students. Furthermore, Dr. Coreen Jackson, Dean of Honors College, will present a paper and moderate the Deans & Directors Roundtable at the NAAAHP Conference, reinforcing our commitment to academic leadership and national dialogue.

Ongoing initiatives this fall have fostered significant engagement among our honors students. Events such as the Jeni's Ice Cream Fundraiser, the Pop the Balloon Resume Event, and the Inaugural Homecoming Honors Alumni Brunch have strengthened our community bonds and provided platforms for students to showcase their academic and personal achievements. Our calendar of events, including the Honors T.E.D. Talk and peer tutoring sessions, reflects our dedication to creating a vibrant learning environment.

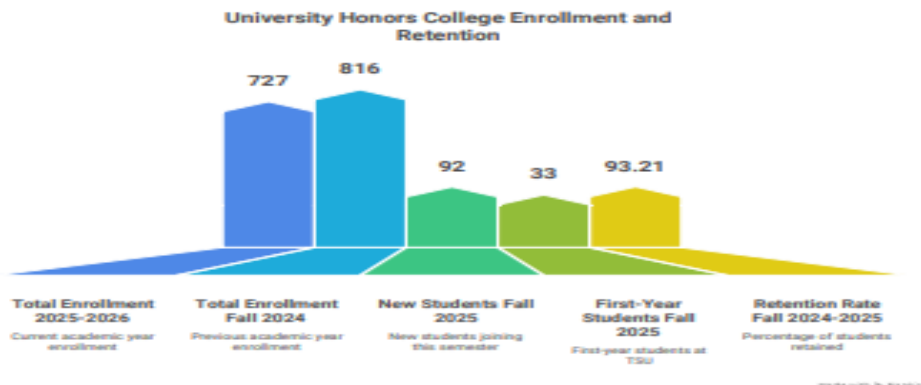
In summary, while we acknowledge the challenges presented by enrollment fluctuations, the University Honors College at Tennessee State University continues to exemplify excellence and progress. Our achievements, initiatives, and community engagement underscore our commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders. We are excited about the future and look forward to leveraging our strengths to enhance the Honors experience for all students.



Honors College Fall 2025 Achievement Update Report

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International Affairs:

The Office of International Programs and Academic Global Engagement (IPAGE), which includes the International Education & Global Learning (IEGL) and the Intensive English Center (IEC), is foundational to Tennessee State University's mission as an HBCU and land-grant institution, dedicated to transforming lives and preparing a diverse population of global leaders. These units champion the comprehensive internationalization of the campus, ensuring that TSU students develop the cross-cultural competencies, global awareness, and professional skills critically needed to succeed in a rapidly evolving, interconnected workforce. By managing high-impact international exchanges, cultivating global partnerships, and building essential language and academic foundations, our work directly supports the university's vision to achieve prominence through innovation, research, and service.

Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Improvements with Specific Metrics

The IPAGE units demonstrated strong academic outcomes, particularly in student success and progression rates. The IEC's ten-level ESL program achieved an average progression rate of 92% for 2024–2025, exceeding the institutional benchmark of 85%. Notably, Levels 4–10 showed exceptional consistency, with progression rates between 90% and 100%, confirming instructional quality and curriculum alignment with CEFR standards. In terms of degree completion, IPAGE is successfully managing the pipeline for international students matriculating into TSU's academic programs. The office estimates approximately 40 international students are scheduled to graduate in December 2025. Additionally, the IEC will graduate 11 students in December 2025, with five already on track to start academic programs at TSU. The IEGL sub-unit successfully relaunched TSU's study abroad operations and reported measurable growth in student advising activity and program interest through expanded availability for advising, virtual sessions, and classroom visits.

Grants Submitted and/or Received During 2024-2025 or Currently Being Implemented

IPAGE's capacity for securing and administering external funding was highlighted by the successful implementation of two major programs funded by Grants received from the U.S. Department of State. These major federal grants are for the prestigious Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Institute and the Humphrey Fellows Enhancement Workshop, which was hosted by IPAGE in March 2025. These grants position TSU as a leading institution for international leadership development.

Awards and Honors Received by College Faculty, Staff, or the Institution

Dr. Jewell Winn, IPAGE Executive Director, was selected and participated in the esteemed Fulbright International Education Administrators Program (IEA) to France and Senegal, a highly competitive honor that elevates TSU's international profile.

Notable Student Achievements and Awards

The IPAGE supported approximately 40 international students toward their anticipated December 2025 graduation. Students engaged in competitive study-abroad pathways, international programming, and scholarship applications with expanded institutional support. Students also demonstrated strong global leadership and academic excellence through participation in international learning opportunities and advising programs.

Special Projects and Initiatives Launched for Fall 2025

IPAGE launched several initiatives, including driving the successful execution of high-engagement activities during International Education Week (IEW) from November 17–20, 2025, which includes a Virtual Study Abroad Fair. IPAGE is also coordinating the implementation of AI for education training for faculty to modernize teaching and enhance global learning delivery. For IEGL, special projects included the relaunching of study abroad operations and aligning systems with federal and institutional compliance standards. IEGL also created a new faculty-led application process and risk-management plan and hosted a faculty training workshop on updated global program procedures. The Global Faculty Fellows Program (GFFP) concluded Cohort II in September 2025, and a new Cohort III was selected through a peer-driven nomination process.

Current Business and Industry Partnerships Established or Expanded

Dr. Jewell Winn led a high-level mission from August 18–22, 2025, to Argentina to foster U.S. and Argentina Higher Education Partnerships. Furthermore, she is currently concluding a mission to Bangkok, Thailand, working to foster meaningful and lasting partnerships between U.S. and Thai higher education institutions, directly expanding TSU's global footprint and creating new experiential learning and study abroad opportunities for our students. The Humphrey Fellows Enhancement Workshop involved collaboration with local government and community leaders, including a meeting with Mayor Freddie O'Connell and Team and a session involving the Tennessee Black Caucus. The IEC is currently working on creating strategic partnerships with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and other higher ed institutions in local and foreign settings.

National Publications and Presentations by Faculty or Staff

IEC Director, Vladimir S. Betancur, successfully presented at the EnglishUSA Conference in Alexandria, VA in October 2025. His topic was "Volunteering: A Tool to Empower Language Learning," where he displayed results achieved by the volunteer's program at the IEC. The IPAGE also contributes to the national discourse with National publications and presentations supported by the office, raising TSU's profile in national-level international education best practices.

Ongoing initiatives that show continued impact

Ongoing work by IEGL includes strengthening compliance systems, building faculty-led global program pathways, expanding scholarship advising, and increasing outreach to academic units to embed global experiences into academic frameworks. The GFFP continues to see a marked increase in faculty interest in leading study abroad and virtual exchange programs. The IEC is implementing targeted interventions to address lower progression rates in Levels 1–3, including the review of curriculum pacing and alignment with CEFR benchmarks and the design of a curriculum and syllabus following CEA suggestions.

College of Liberal Arts:

This executive summary highlights student engagement, retention, graduation, and includes faculty and program achievements. The College of Liberal Arts (CoLA) continues to advance its mission through academic innovation, experiential learning, and community partnerships.

Student Engagement, Retention, and Graduation

CoLA fosters student success through internships, research forums, performances, and civic engagement programs. Enrollment for Fall 2025 includes 806 students across majors and 3,549 in General Education courses. Curricular innovations and faculty support initiatives aim to improve retention and graduation outcomes.

Faculty and Program Achievements

Faculty earned national recognition, including Grammy Music Educator Award semi-finalist honors and Liberal Arts Teaching Awards. Programs hosted major events such as the Robert N. Murrell Oratorical Contest, Research Forum for the Arts, and Theatre productions. Faculty contributed to scholarship through publications, presentations, and leadership roles in national conferences.

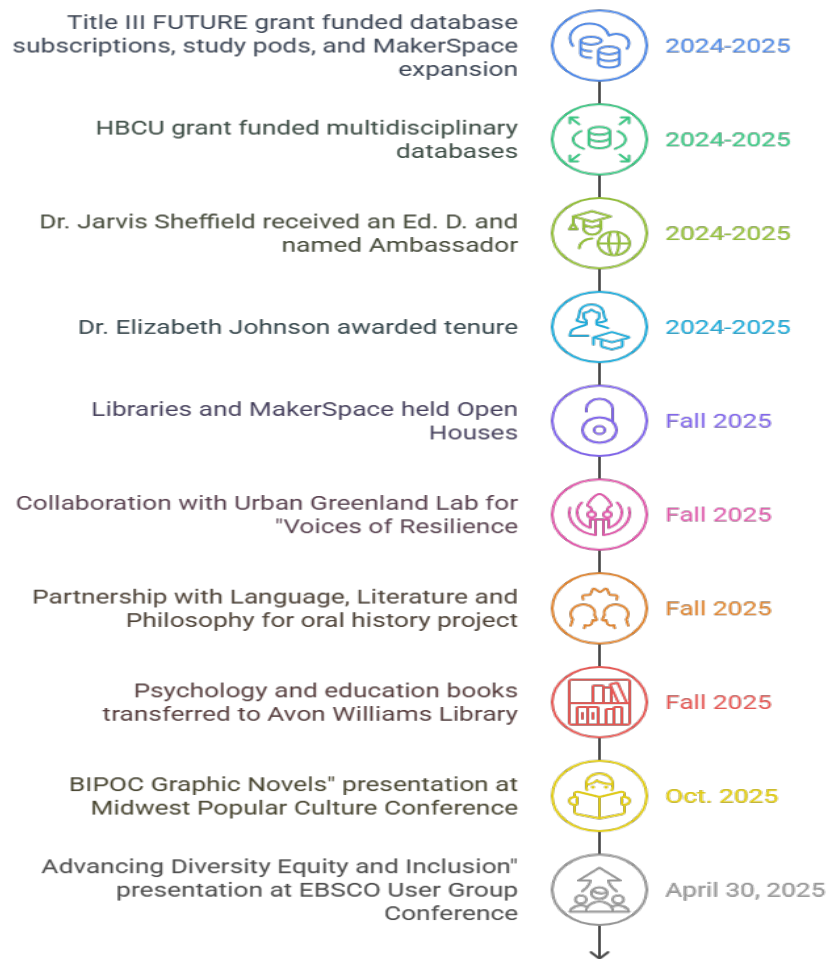
Summary of Key Achievements

Category	Highlights	Impact
Student Engagement	Internships, Oratorical Contest, Theatre Production	Enhanced career readiness
Faculty Recognition	Grammy Semi-Finalist, Teaching Awards	National visibility
Program Initiatives	SHOWcase Project, Tiger Tech Time, Lunch with Liberal Arts	Technology integration & campus visibility.

Libraries and Media Center:

The Libraries and Media Center have a mission for providing services and resources that support the university curriculum. By fulfilling this mission, we are strongly encouraging enrollment, retention, and progress toward graduation. Enrollment and retention are impacted by delivering relevant resources. Confidence that the Libraries and Media Center can meet the needs of their academic program, promotes persistence toward graduation. Services such as the embedded librarian program, interlibrary loan, ASK-A-Librarian, and information literacy instruction make content more accessible to students.

Libraries and Media Center Achievements 2024-2025



Made with Napkin

Life and Physical Sciences:

MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

The Department of Mathematical Sciences along with Academic Affairs hosted the National Association of Mathematicians Annual MATHFest Undergraduate Research Conference October 10 – 12, 2025. The local organizing committee was led by Dr. Noel Bourne, Assistant Professor of Mathematics.

For the first time in at least 20 years, the Department of Mathematical Sciences at TSU had students, Ty’kuan Smith (under advisement of Dr. William Taylor) and Deja Story (under advisement of Dr. Michael Reed) give presentations at the National Association of Mathematicians Annual MATHFest Undergraduate Research Conference, October 10-12, 2025. Ty’kuan Smith received the first-place award for oral presentations at the conference. The Department of Mathematical Sciences together with the Mathematics Center in the Academic Success Center has hosted review/tutoring sessions throughout the semester for students in MATH 1710. By the end of the semester there will be nine review sessions for students to receive help with MATH 1710 content. This effort has been led by Dr. Martene Stanberry and Mr. Mohsen Shirani.

The following faculty had research papers/conference proceedings published as follows:

- Dr. Talon Johnson – Ren, J; Patel, N; Johnson, T; Querry, R; Shearin, S. “Skeletal Muscle 31P Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy Study of Patients with Parkinson’s Disease: Energy Metabolism and Exercise Performance”, *Diagnostics* 2025, 15, 2573. [https://doi.org=10.3390/diagnostics15202573](https://doi.org/10.3390/diagnostics15202573)
- Dr. John Kelly – Mathis, Clausell; Hiba, Assi; Neuhart, Ian; Kelly, John; Azam, Syed Hassan. Cultural Resources in Physics Sensemaking: What Students Reveal Through Formative Assessment”, *Physics Education Research Conference* 2025. Washington, DC: 2025. Pp. 264-269 or PER Conference.

CHEMISTRY

Dr. Sujata Guha will be hosting the American Chemical Society (ACS) on campus on November 6, 2025. The ACS President, Dr. Dorothy Phillips, will visit TSU along with the ACS officers from Washington, DC and Ohio.

Dr. Kimberly Madison will be teaching General Chemistry I lecture and lab at Southwest University of Science and Technology in Mianyang, Sichuan, China. The dates are 11/10/2025 to 11/28/2025 (online teaching) and 12/01/2025 to 12/26/2025 (in-person teaching).

Dr. Tasneem Siddiquee has rejuvenated the Chemistry Club for AY 2025-2026 with the election of students on its Executive Board. In celebration of National Chemistry Week, the students participated in the ACS Program-in-a Box event.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning, and Assessment:

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, Planning, and Assessment (OIERPA) is dedicated to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of programs and services at Tennessee State University (TSU). Our mission closely aligns with the university's commitment to academic excellence and strategic planning, fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making and systematic assessment and evaluation practices. By collaborating with various units across the institution, we facilitate continuous quality improvement that supports both institutional and programmatic accreditation, administrative effectiveness, and student learning outcomes. In Fall 2025, our efforts culminated in significant advancements that underscore our commitment to excellence in higher education, ultimately contributing to the strategic goals of the Division of Academic Affairs and the broader mission of TSU.

Among our notable accomplishments this semester, the successful completion of the fourth draft of the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report is a notable achievement. This process involved leading the SACSCOC Steering Committee in a thorough evaluation of our compliance with accreditation standards, resulting in the identification of both strengths and areas for improvement. Our proactive approach, which included comprehensive evidence collection and stakeholder involvement, enabled us to finalize the fourth draft of the Compliance Report ahead of schedule, ensuring that we met all necessary deadlines. Additionally, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) published vital annual reports, including the Fall 2025 Quick Facts and updates to key performance indicators such as retention and graduation rates. These reports highlight our dedication to transparency and informed decision-making.

Furthermore, we achieved a major milestone in faculty credentialing by developing the Faculty Credentialing Maps, which align course offerings with the appropriate faculty qualifications, thereby enhancing the quality of education at TSU. This initiative was completed in collaboration with academic departments and is now accessible on the university's website, providing essential resources to ensure compliance with accrediting standards. Our innovative projects, such as the Course Planning Agent (CPA) and the "Paws for Success" initiative under the CADENCE Quality Enhancement Plan, demonstrate our commitment to enhancing student engagement and academic planning. These tools empower students with timely information and support, significantly improving their retention and success rates.

In recognition of our achievements, the CADENCE initiative has received the Suitable Innovator Award, highlighting our leadership in fostering student engagement and promoting a holistic approach to learning. As we move forward, the OIERPA remains steadfast in its mission to support institutional effectiveness, ensuring that TSU continues to thrive as a leader in higher education.

College of Public Service:

The College of Public Service at Tennessee State University has experienced remarkable growth and achievement in Fall 2025, underscoring our commitment to excellence in public service education. Our mission is to cultivate leaders who are equipped to address the complex challenges facing our communities. This semester has seen significant increases in enrollment across our programs, substantial funding through grants and partnerships, and numerous accolades for our dedicated faculty. These accomplishments not only enhance our educational offerings but also strengthen our engagement with the broader community, aligning with our vision of fostering impactful public service.

Enrollment Highlights

This fall, the Urban and Regional Planning and Studies (URBS) program has seen an impressive 63% increase in enrollment, growing from 22 to 35 students compared to Fall 2024. Additionally, our PhD in Public Administration (PPA) has experienced a remarkable 91% increase in enrollment since Fall 2023, with numbers rising from 22 to 35 and then to 42 students in Fall 2025. These increases reflect the growing interest in our academic programs and the value placed on public service education.

Grants and Contracts

Our faculty have successfully secured significant funding to support innovative research and community initiatives. The Urban Studies department is currently implementing the HUD Equitable Innovation Region (EiR) Grant, totaling \$1,000,002, which has led to the establishment of the Urban and Community Research Center in its first year. Furthermore, Dr. Stanley renewed a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Correction, securing an additional \$45,000 to facilitate the enrollment of 20 students in the graduate certificate program in Public Administration Executive Leadership.

Awards and Honors

Our faculty's dedication to their fields has been recognized through various prestigious awards. Dr. Triplett has been selected for the 2025-26 Future Leaders of Schools of Public Service Mentee Program, while Dr. Jones received the 2025-26 American Association of University Women Postdoctoral Fellowship. Dr. Robinson was selected for the Big Bold Bordeaux Land Policy Team, earning a certification in land policy and planning. Additionally, Dr. Paez was chosen for the NASPAA NEXT cohort, a leadership development program for early-career faculty, and Dr. George was elected to the Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities. Dr. Slay was appointed to the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education Board, and Dr. Kim will attend the Thurgood Marshall College Fund 2025 Faculty Research Seminar, with expenses covered.

Selected Publications and Presentations

Our faculty have made significant scholarly contributions, with Dr. Bagley publishing “How Minority Serving Institutions Infuse Social Justice into their Curriculum” in *Advances in Social Work*. Drs. Chilton and Paez co-authored a book chapter, "Housing policy and affordability: pressures on local policy making," accepted for *The Handbook of Urban Planning & Social Justice*. Faculty members have also actively engaged in professional discourse, presenting at various conferences. Notable presentations include Dr. Chilton, Dr. Robinson, and Dr. Stanley's discussion on "Housing, Affordability & Financialization" at the Tennessee Chapter of the American Planning Association, and Dr. Kim's presentation at the 2025 Public Management Research Conference.

Special Events

The College hosted a successful Homecoming event on October 15, featuring MPA alum Dr. Alfred Degrafinreid II and drawing 62 attendees. This event fostered community engagement and highlighted the accomplishments of our alumni.

Partnerships

Dr. Streams has established a new partnership with the Public Service Network, an international organization focused on public sector IT knowledge sharing. Two successful roundtables have already been held for Tennessee public sector professionals at Avon Williams, promoting collaboration and innovation in public service.

As we reflect on these achievements, the College of Public Service remains steadfast in its commitment to excellence, community engagement, and the preparation of future leaders in public service. Together, we continue to make a meaningful impact on the communities we serve.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ORDER OF BUSINESS
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Informational Update Items

SACSCOC 5th Year Accreditation Report
Retention and Progression
Graduation Rate
Fall 2025 Graduation
Academic Colleges/Units Achievements/Accomplishments

0

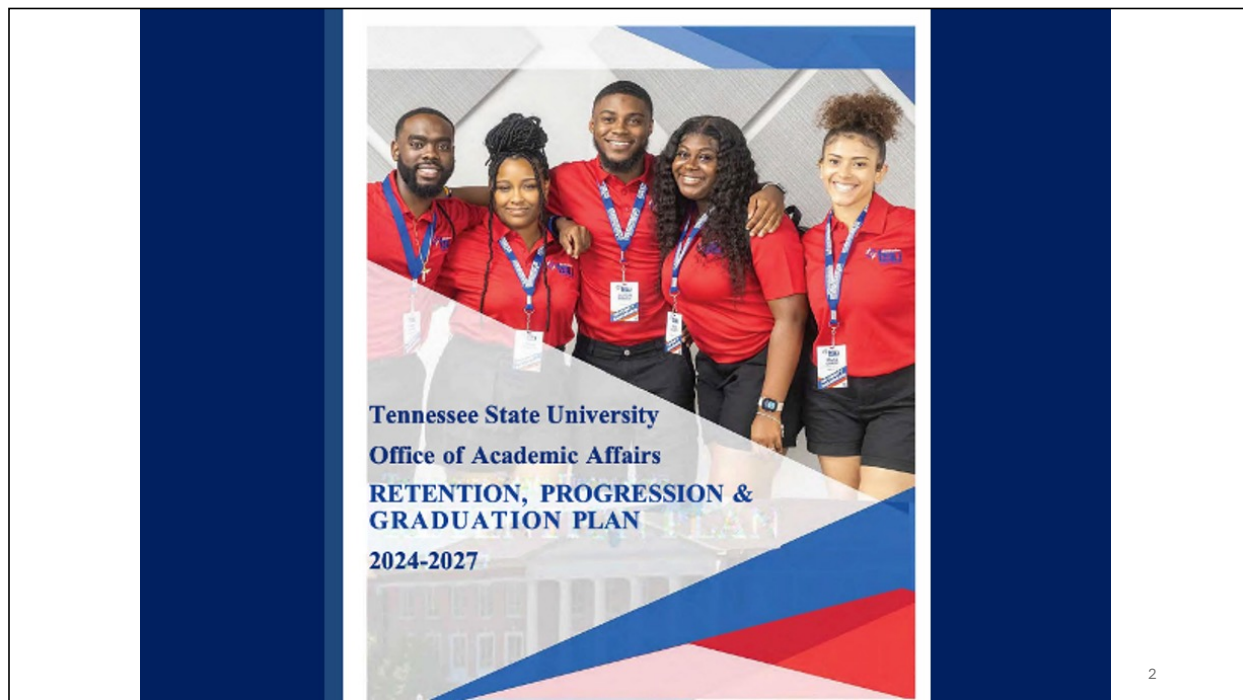
The Southern Association of Colleges
and Schools Commission on Colleges



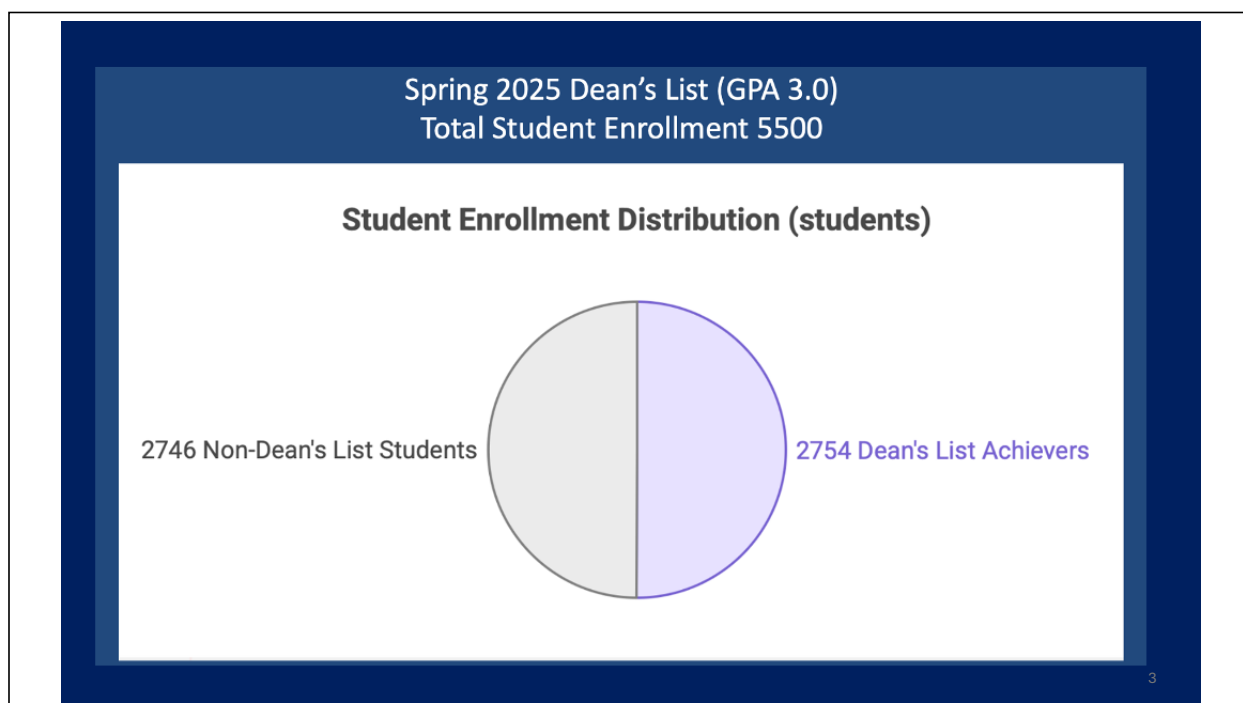
TSU National Accreditation
5th Year Report

Presentation by Dr. Chalise Anderson
TSU SACSCOC

1

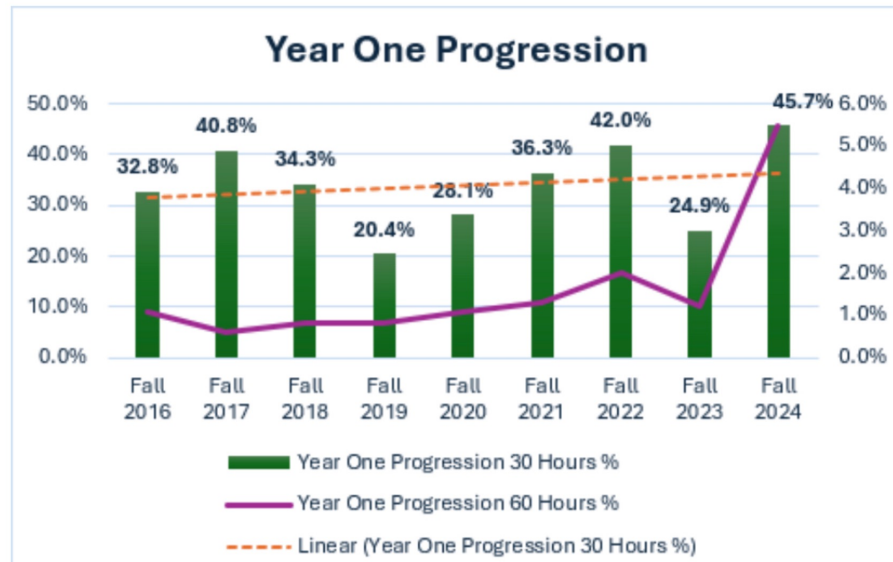


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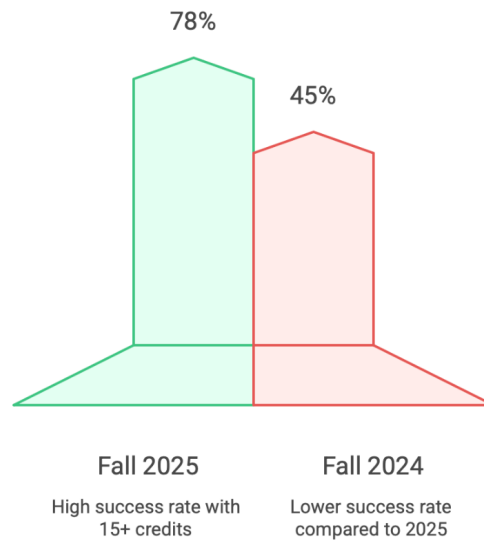
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Increase in TSU Progression Rates: 2016-2024



4

1ST TIME FRESHMEN 2025 PROGRESSION INCREASE



5

Tennessee State University Probation Data (Fall 2019 – Spring 2025)

Semester	Total Enrollment	Students on Probation	% of Students on Probation
Fall 2019	5,875	84	1.4%
Spring 2020	4,842	171	3.5%
Fall 2020	6,000	766	12.8%
Spring 2021	4,554	259	5.7%
Fall 2021	6,375	836	13.1%
Spring 2022	5,041	316	6.3%
Fall 2022	7,678	729	9.5%
Spring 2023	5,978	259	4.3%
Fall 2023	6,765	948	14.0%
Spring 2024	5,095	157	3.1%
Fall 2024	5,057	346	6.8%
Spring 2025	4,581	132	2.9%

6

Tennessee State University Suspension Data (Fall 2019 – Spring 2024)

Semester	Total Enrollment	Suspensions	% of Students Suspended
Fall 2019	5,875	434	7.4%
Spring 2020	4,842	130	2.7%
Fall 2020	6,000	63	1.1%
Spring 2021	4,554	205	4.5%
Fall 2021	6,375	169	2.7%
Spring 2022	5,041	388	7.7%
Fall 2022	7,678	167	2.2%
Spring 2023	5,978	434	7.3%
Fall 2023	6,765	123	1.8%
Spring 2024	5,095	182	3.6%
Fall 2024	5,057	48	0.9%

7

Graduation Completion Task Force (75 stakeholders)

Goal 5% overall Increase 2025 - 2026

- Identifying barriers to student retention and completion.
- Enhancing academic advising and support services.
- Developing targeted interventions for at-risk students.
- Improving communication and engagement with students regarding degree completion requirements.
- Reviewing and developing policies to streamline the path to **graduation**.

Strategies for Student Graduation Success



8

638 Graduating Candidates

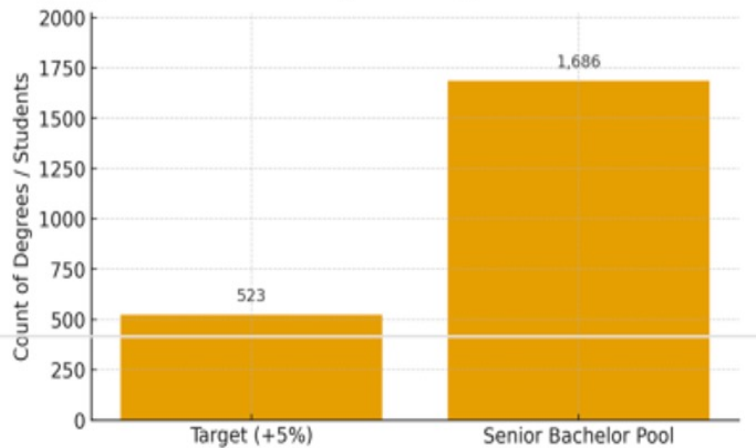
Friday, December 5, 2025 9:00am	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Business	85
	College of Engineering	26
	College of Life and Physical Sciences	35
	College of Public Service	12
	TOTAL GRADUATES	158
Friday, December 5, 2025 4:00pm	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Education	44
	Graduate Students (All Colleges)	236
	TOTAL GRADUATES	280
Saturday, December 6, 2025 9:00am	College	Number of Graduates
	College of Agriculture	26
	College of Health Sciences	86
	College of Liberal Arts	88
	TOTAL GRADUATES	200



9

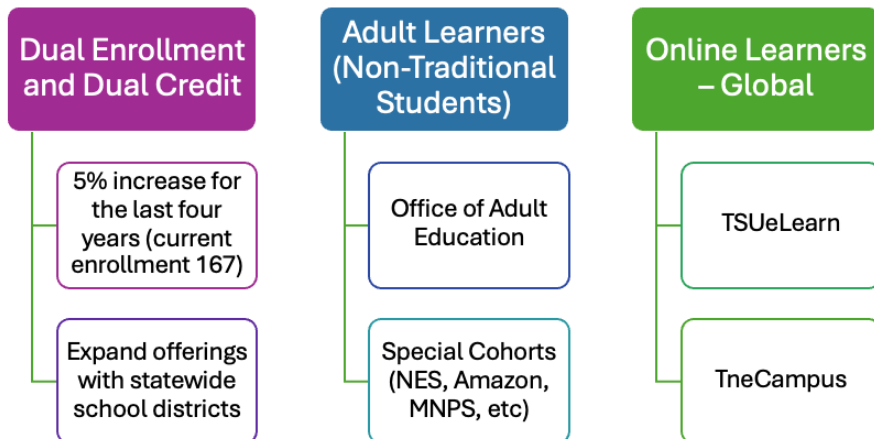
Projected to Exceed Benchmark Graduation Target of 523 Graduates for Spring 2026
***Significantly INCREASE in the graduation rate by 10% over the projected target.**

Spring 2026 Bachelor Degrees: Target vs Available Senior Pool



10

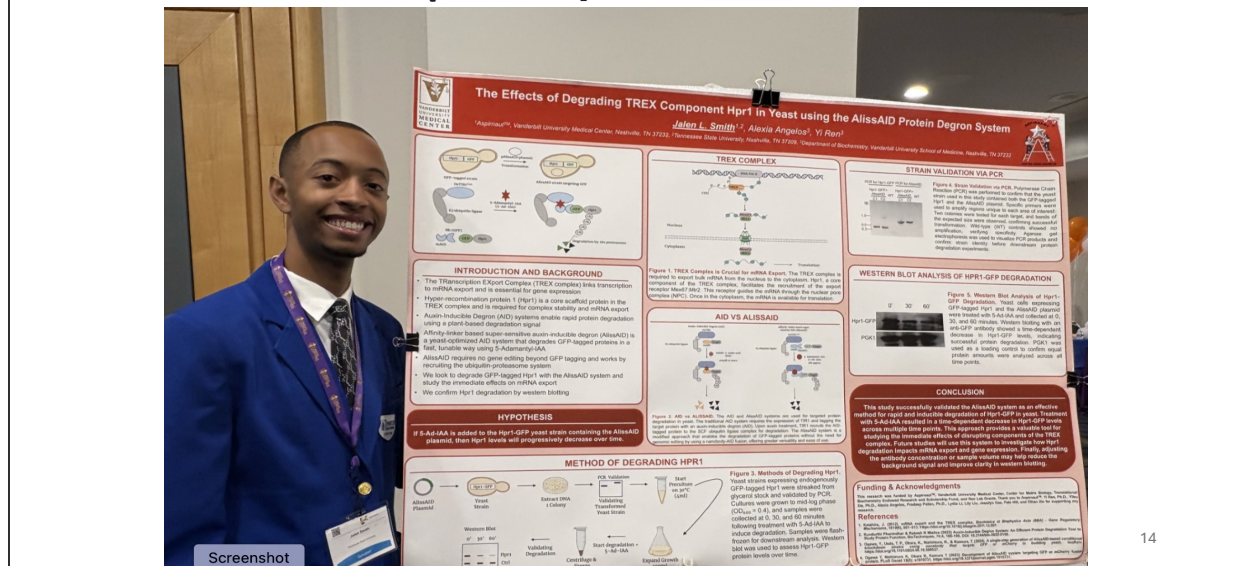
Academic Affairs & Enrollment Management New Areas for TSU Enrollment Growth



11



Tennessee State University Honors College Reclaims Championship at National HBCU Conference



ARTIFICIAL

TSU SMART & APPLIED A.I. RESEARCH CENTER

INTELLIGENCE

Leading in Artificial Intelligence Application for Teaching,
Learning, Research, and Workforce Preparedness

Explore the Future of Artificial Intelligence at TSU

Located at Avon Williams Off-Campus Instructional Site, the TSU Smart & Applied A.I. Research Center is your hub for and workforce development. From A.I. research and training labs to podcasting, virtual reality, and robotics, we're here to lead. [Learn more.](#)

15

FUTURE DOCTORS START HERE

TSU's Dr. Levi Watkins Scholars Lead in Healthcare



From TSU to medical school in three years! Where are they now? Cohort 1 students of the Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Institute are making history as the program's inaugural class, and they're thriving in medical and dental school. Now it's your turn! The program is looking for qualified high school seniors to join Cohort 5 this fall. Apply by June 30. [Read more.](#)

16

Tennessee State University breaks ground on \$90 million agriculture buildings



The TSU College of Agriculture recently announced the impending construction of two new academic and research buildings. These buildings accommodate the Departments of Food and Animal Sciences and Environmental Sciences.

17

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & COMPUTER SCIENCE



BUILD A CAREER
THAT *matters*

#1

BUILDER IN THE
UNITED STATES

GLASSDOOR'S
100 BEST PLACES
TO WORK



TSU Engineering Awarded \$700,000 SMART Grant
to Advance Traffic Safety in Nashville



ENGINEERING THE FUTURE

\$60M Facility Coming Soon



\$60M State-of-the-Art Engineering Facility

Tennessee State University is taking a step toward a future-ready campus through the construction of a nearly 70,000-square-foot engineering building. Approved by the Tennessee State Building Commission, the \$60 million facility will serve as a hub for innovation, collaboration, and research, while reflecting TSU's mission of access, sustainability, and impact. [Read more.](#)

19

TSU & Bank of America Curriculum to Careers – Partnership Model

Preds, Nissan Host Smashville Seminar to Give TSU Students One-of-a-Kind Experience in Hockey

Human Performance and Sport Science Students Gain Wealth of Knowledge on Sports and Entertainment Industry



<https://bit.ly/3wipxxk>

20

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Student Affairs Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No Action

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Bridgett Elliott Golman, Vice President for Student Affairs

Background Information

Dr. Golman will provide reports on Student Affairs.

"The quantity and quality of student involvement in campus life is positively related to student satisfaction and persistence. In other words, the greater the student's involvement in academic and extracurricular activities, the more likely the student is to remain in college and to be satisfied with the college experience."

Citation:

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25(4), 297–308.

A full calendar of events for the Fall 2025 semester can be found at:

[TSU Student Activities Calendar.](#)

Tennessee State University
Division of Student Affairs Board Report
Reporting Period: Fall 2025
(as of November 2025)

1. Office of Student Engagement and Leadership (OSEL)

Unit Focus: The Office of Student Engagement & Leadership (OSEL) drives student retention by aligning intentional programming with **Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development**.

This holistic approach engages the various departments in Student Affairs —Residence Life, Student Activities, Greek Life, First-Year Students, Health Services, Office of Disability Services, Student Conduct, Counseling Center, Career Development, and Wellness Center—to create a comprehensive programming framework.

	Theme	Vector	Key Department(s)
S	Self-Identity	5: Establishing Identity	Counseling Center, Student Activities, Residence Life
T	Task Competence	1: Developing Competence	Career Development Center
U	Understanding Emotion	2: Managing Emotions	Counseling Center, Student Conduct, Wellness Center
D	Dependence to Dependability	3: Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence	Residence Life
E	Emotional Connections	4: Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships	Student Activities, Residence Life
N	Navigating Goals	6: Developing Purpose	Career Development
T	Trusting Ethicality	7: Developing Integrity	Student Conduct

This nationally recognized framework ensures holistic growth across competence, emotional management, identity, purpose, and integrity, fostering a truly comprehensive student experience.

1.1. Student Development Programming

During Fall 2025, OSEL successfully delivered **38 distinct initiatives**, with several cross-listed across developmental vectors. Programming was strategically focused on the critical first six weeks for new student acclimation, belonging, and academic confidence.

Developmental Vector	Total Initiatives	Key Program Examples	Attendance Notes
Developing Competence	9	NPHC Greek Etiquette, Fall Elections Info, SUBG – Tiger Fish	500 (NPHC), 136 (Open House)
Managing Emotions	9	<i>Bro, You Good</i> (Mental Health Week), <i>Sis, You Good?</i> , <i>Hex the Stress</i>	27 (<i>Bro, You Good</i>), 25 (<i>Hex the Stress</i>)
Autonomy to Interdependence	4	Restocking the Pantry, The Cozy Competition, Official 2029 Study Break (First Year Experience)	126 (Study Break)
Mature Relationships	8	Jefferson Street Clean Up, The Class Slam Jam, Battle of the Blue: Family Feud	190 (Clean Up), 193 (Class Slam Jam)
Establishing Identity	3	Stride 29 Field Day, Cinema Under the Stars, Blazing Tiger Battle	143 (Cinema Under the Stars)
Developing Purpose	4	TSU Career ROAR, SGA Inauguration, Tiger's Den	127 (Inauguration)
Developing Integrity	1	Financial Literacy with Regions Bank	20 (Financial Literacy)

1.2. Organizational Support

The office currently supports **73 registered student organizations**. Proactive Hazing prevention education was provided to **1,024 students**, and **4 NPHC chapters** successfully completed membership intake processes.

2. Department of Residence Life and Housing

Unit Focus: To create a supportive and engaging living environment for students that promotes community, personal growth, and academic success. We aim to foster a safe and inclusive campus community, support student retention, and maintain a focus on service excellence and effective housing management.

2.1. Occupancy and Revenue Snapshot

As of the end of Fall 2025, campus housing occupancy has remained stable with minimal loss since late August registration.

- **Current Residents:** 2,901 students
- **Capacity:** 3,431 beds
- **Occupancy Rate: 85%**
- **Projected Fall 2025 Revenue: \$9,357,378.00** (Comparable to Fall 2024, maintained due to a 4% rent increase, tiered pricing in new facilities, and innovative concept of combining residence halls and offering private room options).

2.2. Process Improvements and Technology

The Department has focused on internal operational enhancements to improve efficiency and consistency in service delivery.

- **Winter Break Housing:** Established a new committee review process and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to ensure transparent and equitable break housing decisions.
- **Maintenance Streamlining:** Conducted an internal review with JLL Facilities to significantly improve communication, reduce response times, and implement standard procedures for maintenance operations.
- **Software Migration:** Currently in the testing phase for migrating to the **StarRez** housing management software, replacing the retired Mercury system. The StarRez application process is scheduled to open in February 2026 for the Fall 2026 academic year.

2.3. Engagement and Community Building

Marketing efforts, supported by five student workers, led to increased digital visibility, including **617,138 views** on the @tsu_reslife Instagram account over the last 90 days.

- **Key Programs:** Hosted *Decor Wars* (winners earned priority housing selection) and the *Miles of Hope Walk* for Breast Cancer Awareness, drawing over **212 participants** in collaboration with campus groups and Ascension.
- **First-Year Experience:** The Wilson Hall Living Learning Community (LLC) centralized programming, which contributed to **71%** of surveyed freshmen identifying social events and sense of belonging as their most positive early experiences.
- **Programming Calendar:** Published **188 planned events** for the semester on the Department's website.

3. One Stop Navigation Center

Unit Focus: The Navigation 1 Stop Center focuses on alleviating administrative and financial barriers to academic success by providing targeted, accessible student support, timely resource referrals, and proactive outreach.

- **Streamlined Online Presence:** Collaborated with **fifteen departments** to update information and establish a unified online presence for student services, including current registration and important date QR codes for mobile access.
- **Targeted Student Outreach (The You Belong Team):** Conducted personalized outreach, including twice-weekly virtual sessions in July, to accepted new students who had not yet confirmed attendance. Also extended support invitations to continuing students in good standing who did not return after Spring 2024.
- **Centralized Communication:** Served as the backup for the main TSU phone line ('5000'), providing essential navigation and answering general inquiries, especially during peak periods like Homecoming. Email (navigation1stop@tnstate.edu) remains the most effective mode for addressing complex student issues.

4. Veteran's Affairs Office

Unit Focus: The Veterans Affairs Office continues to be a vital support pillar for the military-affiliated community, focusing on benefits certification, immigration compliance, and promoting holistic academic success and transition support.

4.1. Current Caseload and Benefit Utilization

The office actively supports **185 students** receiving VA benefits this semester.

- **Enrollment Breakdown:** 26 Graduate, 41 Seniors, 50 Juniors, 27 Sophomores, and 41 Freshmen.
- **Top Benefits Used:** CH 35 DEA (103 students) and CH 33 Post-9/11 GI Bill (45 students).

4.2. Core Services and Advocacy

The office maintained strict compliance with VA record-keeping requirements, ensuring students received the correct in-state tuition rate and accurate enrollment certifications.

- **Advocacy during Shutdown:** The office provided critical personalized guidance and care coordination during the recent Federal Government shutdown, which caused delays in benefit payouts. Staff proactively communicated with students to mitigate financial anxiety and connect them with emergency resources, ensuring financial stability was maintained.

- **Future Growth:** The Office is actively working to secure dedicated space for a **Veteran's Center**.
- This centralized hub will provide a critical sense of belonging, study space, and coordinated resource access, significantly enhancing support for this key student demographic.

5. Student Health Services (SHS)

Unit Focus: Our primary goal is to deliver safe, timely, professional, and high-quality healthcare in a supportive and positive environment for all students. We empower students with the knowledge and resources necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

5.1. Expanded Telehealth and Mental Health Services

SHS utilized the **TimelyCare** platform to provide 24/7 medical and mental health support to enrolled students, significantly expanding access nationwide.

- **Utilization:** Total of **243 visits** and **189 new registrations** to date this academic year.
- **After-Hours Access:** **28.4%** of visits occurred outside of regular business hours, underscoring the platform's value for urgent needs.
- **Service Breakdown:** 103 MedNOW (on-demand medical), 93 Scheduled Counseling, 26 TalkNOW (on-demand counseling), and 21 Psychiatry appointments.

5.2. Proactive Health Outreach and Engagement

The "Your Health Matters" theme drove increased health literacy and preventive care across campus.

- **Major Events:** Hosted Sickle Cell Trait testing, American Red Cross blood drive sign-ups, and collaborated with the Metro Health Department and Music City PrEP Clinic for **STI testing and education, reaching 59 students**.
- **Preventive Care:** Screened students for high blood pressure during visits and offered home monitoring devices for ongoing follow-up. Educational efforts in October focused on **Breast Cancer self-examination training**.

5.3. Operational Enhancements

- **Access & Convenience:** Introduced **appointment-based scheduling** to reduce wait times. Planning the implementation of a student-facing portal for secure appointment booking and record review.
- **Referral Network:** Developed a referral track with the **Young Adult Clinic** to provide students with timely, low- or no-cost access to a higher level of medical care beyond the campus site.

- **Collaboration:** A newly added **Student Success Liaison** is dedicated to enhancing communication and integrated programming between SHS, the Counseling Center, Residence Life, and other campus partners.

6. University Counseling Center (UCC)

Unit Focus: The University Counseling Center (UCC) aims to provide exceptional and comprehensive mental health services, including mental health assessments, counseling, crisis support, and preventative education, to foster a supportive learning environment that enhances both personal and academic success.

6.1. Utilization and Accessibility

The UCC significantly increased utilization and expanded its services to support student retention and mental wellness.

- **UCC Utilization (Fall 2025):** Recorded **473 clinical contacts** (as of November 5, 2025), representing a substantial increase from Summer 2025 (76 contacts).
- **TimelyCare Mental Health:** Supported an additional **140 sessions** via the TimelyCare platform, ensuring continuity of care and access outside of regular hours.

6.2. Wellness Initiatives and Programs

- **Wellness Spaces:** Continues to offer the **Zen Room** for de-stressing and is actively planning to add a new **Meditation Room** next semester to expand passive wellness options.
- **Key Events:** Successfully led the "**Hope and Help: Suicide Prevention Week**" campaign and tabletop event. Commemorated **World Mental Health Day** with targeted outreach and a social media campaign.
- **Targeted Outreach:** Planned the **Men's Mental Health Panel** in November to normalize help-seeking behavior and dialogue among male students.
- **Cross-Campus Partnerships:** Active partnerships with TSU Police, Residence Life, and Athletics have increased visibility and facilitated timely intervention in crisis situations.

7. Career Development Center (CDC)

Unit Focus: The Career Development Center is committed to empowering students with the tools and resources necessary to successfully navigate their career paths. We provide comprehensive services focused on career readiness, professional development, and connecting students directly with employers for job and internship placements.

7.1. Measurable Program Impact The CDC reported significant operational successes, strong employer engagement, and national recognition this semester.

Metric	Fall 2025 Achievement
Fall Career Fair	Hosted 119 companies , saw 791 students checked in , generating \$55,000 in revenue.
National Ranking	Recognized as a Top 40 Handshake account out of 1,600 universities, reflecting outstanding student and employer engagement.
Employer Engagement	Hosted high-impact Lunch & Learns with FedEx (55 students, resulting in internship offers), Bank of America (50 students), and other key partners.
Alumni Collaboration	Hosted an Alumni Open House during Homecoming, engaging 25+ alumni interested in mentoring and professional partnerships.
Staffing Growth	Expanded staff and work aide positions, supported by the Empower Grant , enhancing service capacity.

7.2. Outreach and Digital Engagement

- **Proactive Outreach:** Conducted weekly classroom visits (e.g., UNIV 1000, engineering courses) and provided individualized follow-up after major career events to ensure students utilize resources effectively.
- **Social Media:** Instagram achieved **16,345 total views** in 30 days, with 43.2% from non-followers. LinkedIn saw a **5,045% spike** in post impressions, underscoring growing professional visibility among employers and students.
- **Event Schedule Highlights:** Executed a dense schedule of professional development and recruiting events between August and November, including the Campus-Wide Career Fair (Sept 19), FedEx Lunch & Learn (Oct 23), and the First Gen Networking Mixer Fair (Nov 7).

8. Wellness Center and Campus Recreation

Unit Focus: The Tennessee State University Wellness Center is dedicated to enhancing student engagement and retention by providing a wide range of accessible health and fitness programs. Our mission is to create a supportive and motivating environment that encourages students to prioritize their physical and mental well-being.

8.1. Facility and Access

The Center is located in the Ralph H. Boston Wellness Center adjacent to the Gentry Center pool and features a state-of-the-art workout room (weights, cardio) and a 1,300+ sq ft aerobic/dance studio. A valid TSU ID is required for entry.

8.2. Utilization and Aquatics

Utilization remained robust, demonstrating high student and staff engagement across the board.

- **Total Attendance (July 1 – October 30): 10,417 students and 605 staff/faculty.**
- **Group Activities: 62 participants** in all group classes (Yoga, Apple/HIT Fitness).
- **Aquatics:** Following the successful hiring of additional lifeguards, the pool reopened on September 7th, allowing for expanded lesson and lap swim hours. Total swimming pool participants reached **346** between September 7 and October 30.

8.3. Programming Themes

Monthly programming successfully integrates health awareness with physical activity.

- **October:** Breast Cancer Awareness Month (Dr. Davis MC'd the Campus Walk).
- **November Theme:** American Diabetes Month and Men's Health Awareness Month. Includes dedicated conversation and Q&A sessions.
- **December Theme:** "Fitness in Finals" (Aids Awareness) and preparation for maintaining health over the holidays.

9. Student Auxiliaries

9.1. The Aristocrat of Bands (AOB)

Unit Focus: To elevate the University's reputation through dynamic musical performances, strategic community engagement, and national visibility. The program remains committed to fostering student growth and maintaining excellence in music education.

- **Current Membership: 176 students** (156 Instrumentalists, 16 Sophisticated Ladies, 4 Drum Majors).
- **Performance Highlights:** National brand visibility included NFL Halftime Shows (Atlanta Falcons, Tennessee Titans) and signature events like the John Merritt Classic and Homecoming.
- **Recruitment and Development:** Focused on "**Tennessee Takeover**" regional visits and the revival of the Summer Band Camp.
- Program enhancements include a Fundamentals Class for current members and a computerized inventory system.

9.2. Sophisticated Ladies Majorettes (SLM)

Unit Focus: To showcase precision, artistic excellence, and professionalism in dance auxiliary performance while upholding the legacy of the program.

- **Focus:** Operating under the new Director with the theme, **Legacy in Motion: Forward from Our Foundation.**
- **Excellence & Collaboration:** Shared fellowship and performances with other elite HBCU dance auxiliaries (N.C. A&T Golden Delight, Alabama State Liquid Gold,

Alabama A&M Dancin' Divas). They also performed with the Tennessee Titans Cheerleaders.

- **Alumni Support:** Supported by a robust network of **over 100 alumni** who provide financial assistance, uniform essentials, and professional mentorship (including doctors, CPAs, and a Broadway actress).

9.3. TSU Cheerleaders

Unit Focus: To serve as visible, positive ambassadors of the Big Blue Spirit, emphasizing **athleticism, scholarship, and service** while supporting TSU Athletics and promoting the HBCU spirit tradition nationally.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Key collaborations with Creative Girls Rock, Cane Ridge High School, MLK Magnet High School, and Wright Middle School for youth mentoring and skill clinics. These clinics reached over **250 local athletes**.
- **Professional Visibility:** Continued involvement with the **USASF National Conference** (as demonstrators of HBCU excellence) and the **HBCU Cheer Combine**. Performed in collaboration with the Tennessee Titans and Nashville Sounds.
- **Impact:** Elevated the visibility of HBCU Spirit Programs and actively inspired local middle and high school athletes to pursue higher education.

9.4. TSU New Direction Gospel Choir (ND)

Unit Focus: To serve as a vibrant, musical ambassador for the University, inspiring the community through high-quality Gospel performance and upholding a standard of excellence, fellowship, and faith.

○ **ND Groundbreaking Achievements (Fall 2025 Highlights):**

- **National Recognition:** On May 24, the choir won the **How Sweet the Sound Gospel Choir Competition** in Washington D.C., earning titles of **Best HBCU Choir** and **People's Choice Winner**.
- **Stellar Awards:** Performed live as an Emerging Artist at the **40th Annual Stellar Award Show** in Nashville, TN, on August 16.
- **Campus Kickoff: September 5:** Led the musical selections for the University Convocation and Founder's Day ceremony, marking the start of the academic year.
- **Community Outreach:** September 21: Performance at **Pastor San Franklin's Love Day** in Nashville, TN.
- **Church Engagement:** September 28: Special guest performance at **Lee Chapel Church** in Nashville, TN, for their College Sunday.
- **Regional Visibility: October 19:** Guest performance at the **Memphis City-Wide Gospel Summit**, expanding regional outreach and recruitment efforts.

- **Campus Tradition:** October 12: Participated in the **Annual TSU Homecoming Gospel Explosion**.
- **Church Engagement:** October 26: Special guest performance at **Jefferson St. Church** for their Sunday Service.
- **Athletic Support:** November 3: Sang the **National Anthem** at the **Fisk vs TSU Basketball Game**.
- **Upcoming Performances:** November 7: Scheduled to sing the **National Anthem** at the Men's Basketball Game, "Faith and Family Night". November 15: Will perform the **National Anthem** at the **TSU Football Game**.

10. International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)

Unit Focus: The Office of International Affairs is committed to fostering a globally inclusive campus by providing comprehensive services that support international students, scholars, and exchange visitors. Our focus is to enhance international student enrollment, ensure immigration compliance, and promote cross-cultural engagement.

10.1. New Scholars (Fall 2025)

- **Total Enrollment: 224 International Students** are currently enrolled.
- **New Enrollment: 40 students** (10 Undergraduate, 30 Graduate).
- **Visa Delay Challenge: 23 students** deferred their I-20 admission to Spring 2026 due to delays in securing necessary visa interview openings. This reflects a persistent national trend that requires ongoing mitigation.

10.2. Outreach

- **Virtual Outreach:** Participated in a virtual recruitment fair targeting **Sub-Saharan Africa**, interacting with **123 potential students**.
- **Scholarship MOU:** Engaged with the Bahamian Ministry of Education to discuss the renewal of a government-sponsored scholarship Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

10.3. Student Engagement

- **Professional Development:** Hosted multiple **Optional Practical Training (OPT) Workshops** in partnership with the Career Development Center.
- **Cultural Integration:** Organized cultural and integration events, including *Coffee & Conversations*, the *International Cup Soccer Tournament*, attendance at the TSU Homecoming Parade, and a visit to the Dia de los Muertos event at Cheekwood Botanical Gardens.

11. Office of Student Conduct (OSC)

Unit Focus: To ensure the safety and well-being of students by effectively managing student conduct issues, promoting a positive campus environment, and upholding the standards outlined in the student handbook. The office focuses on fair, consistent, and proactive behavioral interventions.

11.1. Current Operations and Performance

The Office of Student Conduct has undergone a leadership transition and successfully managed a high-volume caseload while initiating strategic planning for the next academic year.

- **New Leadership: Dr. Erica Lewis** has recently been appointed as the new Director of Student Conduct, bringing fresh leadership and direction focused on establishing consistent procedures.
- **Caseload Management:** The office is currently responding to and mitigating **88 new incident reports** and managing **236 active cases** in Maxient. Immediate priorities include addressing an appeal to the Vice President of Student Affairs and concluding two fighting investigations.
- **Policy Review:** The office is focused on revising key policies for Student Conduct, Title IX, Residence Life, and Student Organizations to ensure alignment and clarity.
- **Resolution & Training:** The Student Court successfully heard its first case of the fall semester on October 3, demonstrating commitment to timely conduct resolution. Graduate Assistant Amani Dotson significantly contributed by conducting bias training and developing a bank of consistent hearing questions.

11.2. Strategic Initiatives (2025/2026 Focus)

The initial assessment has led to the identification of six critical strategic goals for the coming cycle to enhance effectiveness and compliance:

1. Update the **Student Code of Conduct** to address current issues, remove outdated language, and align with best practices.
2. Establish **Standard Operating Procedures** for Adjudication to ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency across all case resolutions.
3. Define Roles and Create a **Manual for the Student Court** to clearly outline responsibilities, procedures, and resources for court members.
4. Implement a comprehensive **Training Program for Student Court Members**.
5. Provide Updated **Training for Maxient Users** across the Division to ensure proficiency in case reporting and management.
6. Launch a **Discipline Awareness Campaign** focused on educating students about common discipline issues (e.g., smoking/vaping, alcohol use, fighting) through educational workshops and peer education programs.

12. Office of Disability Services (ODS)

Unit Focus: To ensure equitable access to education and support for all students by providing reasonable, timely accommodations and fostering an inclusive campus environment. The goal is to empower students with disabilities to succeed academically and socially.

12.1. Operational Status and Outreach

The Office of Disability Services has maintained essential services while focusing on process improvement and external collaboration, despite the ongoing onboarding process for the new Director.

- **Core Service Delivery:** A total of **141** students are registered to receive services with the ODS for fall 2025.
- **Accommodation memorandums** continue to be produced and distributed promptly for all students requesting them according to their verified needs, ensuring academic access is not interrupted.
- **Peer Best Practice Guidance:** Staff successfully engaged with the Director of Accessibility/Disability Services from **three peer institutions** to gather office-specific best practice guidance, informing future policy and procedure revisions.
- **Professional Development:** Staff attended recent professional development webinars, including *Advancing Equity Through Standardized Clinical Accommodations* and *Options and Resources for Dealing with Disability Accommodation Concerns*, ensuring the office's practices align with current national standards.

12.2. Awareness and Future Initiatives

The office is working proactively to demystify the accommodation process and increase general campus awareness.

- **Process Transparency:** Made significant progress toward the creation of an **ODS informational video** intended to improve/increase awareness of the accommodation request process. The video is scheduled to be shot in November, targeting a Spring launch to new students.
- **Community Engagement:** The office will participate in three upcoming outreach activities focused on recruitment and community connection: the Special MNPS tour (November 14th and 21st) and the Disabilities College Fair hosted at Riverdale High School (November 18th).

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Enrollment Report

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Background Information

Dr. Stokes will present a report on university enrollment.



Meeting of the TSU Board of Trustees

Friday, November 21, 2025

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TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Friday, November 21, 2025

VIII. Enrollment Report

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Division of Enrollment Management

Presentation Topics:

1. Strategic initiatives Update
2. Key Accomplishments for Enrollment Management
3. Spring 2026 Admissions Update
4. Fall 2026 Admissions Update
5. Scholarships 2026-2027



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6 key initiatives to strengthen TSU's enrollment future

Initiative	Target project start	First significant milestone
Scholarships: Simplify, clarify and communicate an array of market-competitive TSU scholarships that will help TSU increase net student revenue	May 2025	July 2025 Website updated with new scholarship info
CRM: Implement Slate, the best-in-class college admissions communications and application management system.	May 2025	Late summer 2025 Application launched
Restructure enrollment functions into single division comprising undergraduate admissions, graduate admissions, financial aid and operations	June 2025	August 2025 Financial aid and admissions integrated
Develop and execute a strategic enrollment management plan encompassing recruitment and retention environment, goals and strategies for TSU	June 2025	August 2025 Plan approval
Develop and launch an enrollment marketing communications plan to build the top of the funnel, drive applications and improve yield	June 2025	Fall 2025 First application generation campaigns launched
Develop and execute lead generation (i.e., search) campaigns for 10th and 11th graders to build inquiry pool and applicant pool for 2027 and 2028.	September 2025	Winter/Spring 2026 Campaigns launched

Division of Enrollment Management

Key Accomplishments for Enrollment Management

1. Slate implementation
2. Admissions process
3. Campus visit experience
4. Recruitment events and travel
5. Transfer credit evaluation
6. Partnerships (MOUs)



Slate Implementation Victories

- ✓ Prospect management
- ✓ Document management
- ✓ 2026 application
- ✓ Applicant workflow review
- ✓ Admission decisions
- ✓ Communication campaigns
 - Apply
 - Admit-to-Commit
- ✓ Campus Tours & Events
- ✓ Data & Reports
- ✓ Scholarship awarding (Dec.1)

Home
Instructions
Profile
Application Details
Residency
Education History
Test Scores
Signature
Review

Applicant Profile

Name

First Name *

Middle Name

Last/Family Name *

Suffix

Preferred First Name

List any other Last/Family names that may be shown on official documents such as school records and transcripts. If you do not have alternate names, you can leave this field blank.

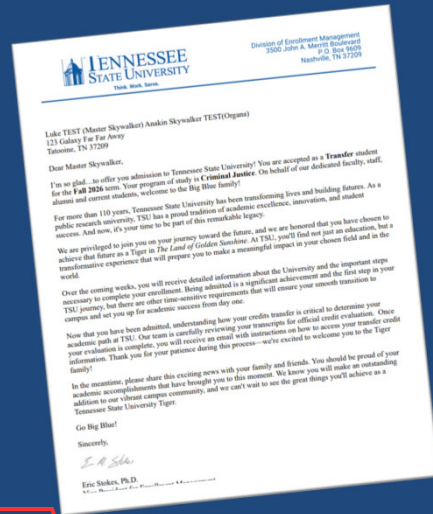
Other Last Names Used

Addresses *

We require a **permanent** address on file to process your application. If your mailing address is different from your permanent address, you may add that as well.

Address Type	Street Address	Location	Country
Add Address			
Permanent	123 Galaxy Far Far Away	Tatooine, TN	United States

Admissions Process



Enrollment Process



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**Luke ! I'm So Glad
You're In.**

Welcome to Tennessee State University,
your new academic home and the next
step in your journey.



YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED TO
**TENNESSEE
STATE
UNIVERSITY**
#TSUBOUND



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Campus Visits & Events



- 2 team members to oversee campus visits and events
- 26 Tiger Tour Guides
- Big Blue Breakfast for School Counselors
- Big Blue Explosion
- Admitted Student Events (spring 2026)

9

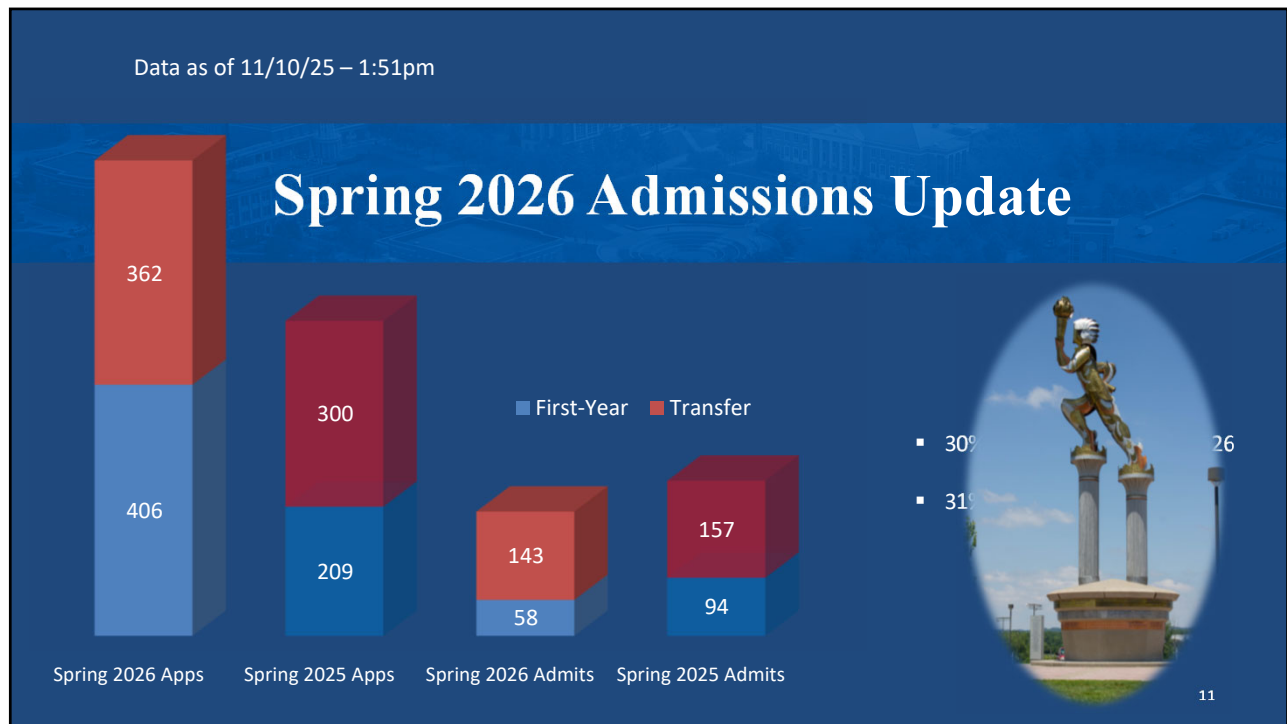
Division of Enrollment Management

Key Accomplishments for Enrollment Management

1. Slate implementation
2. Admissions process
3. Campus visit experience
4. Recruitment events and travel
5. Transfer credit evaluation
6. Partnerships (MOUs)



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Institutional Merit Scholarships

Academic Year: Fall 2026-Spring 2027

SCHOLARSHIP	OPEN TO	GPA (weighted)		ACT (Composite)	SAT (Composite)	IN-STATE AMOUNT	OUT-OF- STATE AMOUNT	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
The Presidential Scholars ¹	First-time Freshman	3.5 or higher	and	28 or higher	1300 or higher	Tuition, Housing, Meals, & Fees,	Tuition, Housing, Meals, & Fees,	Complete a separate application and essay
The Dr. Levi Watkins ¹	First-time Freshman	3.5 or higher	and	28 or higher	1300 or higher	Tuition, Housing, Meals, & Fees,	Tuition, Housing, Meals, & Fees,	-Must be a biology or chemistry major. -Essay and Interview
The TSU Renaissance ^{1,2}	First-time Freshman	3.75 or higher	or	28 or higher	1300 or higher	\$5,500	\$8,500	N/A
The 1912 Heritage ^{1,2}	First-time Freshman	3.25-3.74	or	25-27	1200-1290	\$4,500	\$6,500	N/A
The TSU Torch Scholars ^{1,2}	First-time Freshman	3.0-3.24	or	20-24	1030-1190	\$3,500	\$4,500	N/A
The Tiger Transfer ¹	Transfer & International Transfer	3.0 (cum.college)		N/A	N/A	\$3,000	\$3,000	Submission of all previous transcripts
The MNPS Trailblazer ¹ (MNPS graduates only)	In-State First-time Freshman	Hope GPA: 3.0 or higher	or	21 or higher	1060 or higher	Tuition & Fees	N/A	Must also be TN Hope eligible

* Also open to first-time international freshmen students.

NOTE! Students can only be awarded ONE merit scholarship¹

Division of Enrollment Management

Questions & Discussion



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**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE	
Friday, November 21, 2025 11:00 a.m. CT	Tennessee State University Main Campus Farrell Westbrook Complex (The Barn) 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Opening Remarks by the Committee Chair
- IV. Adoption of Agenda
- V. Approval of Minutes: June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting (Action)
- VI. Legislative Update
- VII. Adjournment

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Approval of Minutes: June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Terica Smith, Committee Chair

Background Information

The committee conducted the meeting(s) reference below. The document reflecting the minutes from the meeting(s) are included in the Board materials:

June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Action

The Committee Chair will call for a motion recommending the adoption of the agenda.

MOTION: I move to approve the June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, Board meeting.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
June 12, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Terica Smith, Trevia Chatman, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Charles Traugher, Jeffery Norfleet (virtual), Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Artenzia Young-Seigler.

University Staff Present: Interim President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; LoLita Toney, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Smith called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Smith declared that everyone was present. Secretary Brown conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Terica Smith, Dakasha Winton, and Trevia Chatman.

III. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Committee Chair Smith announced the next agenda item, which was the Legislative Update. Committee Chair Smith introduced Leah Dupree Love to provide the Board with a summary of the most recent legislative session.

Ms. Love began by extending thanks to Interim President Tucker for his active engagement with the legislature during the 2025 session, noting that his participation significantly strengthened relationships with both legislative and executive branch stakeholders. She emphasized that his involvement made the work of the Ingram Group and TSU’s advocacy efforts more effective.

Ms. Love reported that the 2025 legislative session began on January 14, 2025, with a special organizational session, which required the rescheduling of TSU Day at the Hill. While the event did not occur in its traditional format, the University successfully coordinated with THEC and Dr. Mosby to participate in HBCU Day at the legislature. Students, faculty, and staff attended, delivering swag bags and plants, which were well-received and reflected positively on TSU.

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block harmful proposals. Out of approximately 43 bills tracked that impacted higher education, around a dozen passed. Key topics included Athletics Department updates related to name, image, and likeness policies, pronoun usage, and anti-discrimination measures concerning race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, and religion.

Ms. Love also reported that the administration worked with the legislature on twelve resolutions, including those related to the confirmation of Board members. She noted that these confirmations proceeded smoothly and were approved.

In terms of the state budget, Ms. Love provided a detailed review of TSU's budget allocations for 2025, emphasizing the University's status as a land-grant institution. The following funding buckets were included:

- TSU McMinnville Center: \$1.6 million
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Next, Ms. Love discussed legislation affecting university boards. She explained that previously, each Board consisted of ten members: eight gubernatorial appointees, one student, and one faculty member. The new legislation expands boards to twelve voting members while reducing gubernatorial appointees from eight to six. It introduces appointments by the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. She clarified that student and faculty appointments remain internal and are unaffected by the legislature. She reviewed the current Board members' terms. She explained how the new appointments would phase in as existing terms expire, noting some uncertainty in cases where multiple members' terms end simultaneously, but reaffirmed that reappointments remain possible.

Ms. Love also addressed legislation enabling the redirection of non-committed capital outlay funds. She outlined the process: the University submits a request to the Comptroller, who, in consultation with the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, the institution, and THEC, executes a memorandum of understanding to approve or deny the request. This allows the University flexibility to utilize funds that had previously been earmarked but unspent.

Ms. Love concluded with an update on the FOCUS Act's sunrise-sunset audit process. She explained that TSU, like all public universities, undergoes a periodic review of finances and operations, with audits examining improvements on prior findings. TSU's Board received a two-year extension in 2024, with the next audit and subsequent legislative recommendations expected

prior to the June 2026 sunset. Ms. Love noted that the Board would be kept informed of developments and that the process is standard across public institutions.

Ms. Love concluded by updating the Board on federal matters, including the resignation of Congressman Mark Green and the upcoming special election affecting TSU's congressional district. She confirmed that she would provide ongoing updates to the President, Chair, and General Counsel, ensuring timely dissemination to the Board.

Trustee Smith asked about the scope of the audit. Ms. Love explained that it covers finances, operations, repeated findings, and progress on previous observations. President Tucker provided additional context regarding the timing and coordination with the Comptroller.

Trustee Qualls inquired about the timeline for new legislative appointments. Ms. Love responded that while there is no specific deadline, the vacancies will likely be filled in the coming weeks. Until the new process is implemented, existing vacancies will be treated as gubernatorial appointments.

Trustee Traugher asked about the changes to the Sunshine Law legislation. Ms. Love referred to Secretary Brown, and they both noted that the legislation primarily codifies existing practices regarding closed meetings and has a limited impact on Board operations.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Smith stated that she would consider a motion to adjourn. Chair Winton moved to adjourn, and Trustee Chatman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with Trustees Smith, Winton, and Chatman voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

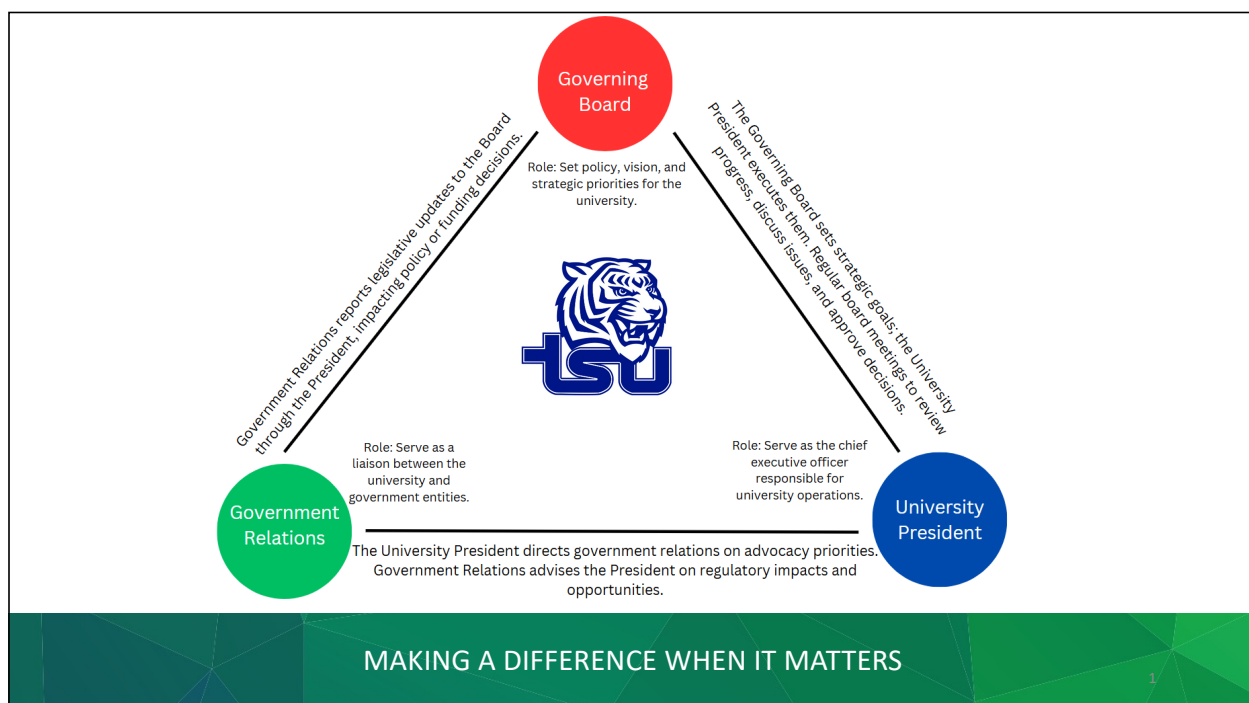
ITEM: Legislative Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Leah Dupree Love, The Ingram Group

Background Information

Leah Dupree Love will present a report providing an update on recent legislative matters.



November

Budget Presentations

- The Governor's Office hears budget presentations from all departments and universities.
- This process helps him finalize his budget that's presentation to the legislature prior to his State of the State.
- Higher Education Hearing – President Tucker represented the LGIs.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

2

December

Sunset Hearing

- Sunset Termination June 2026
- Questions for the Board of Trustees (purpose, statutory duties, and staff, organization, *financial information, public meetings, oversight responsibilities, reports, and accomplishments*)
- 16th – Board appears before Ed., Health & GW Joint Sub of Gov Op

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

3

January

- 13th –General Assembly convenes at noon (CST).
- Second year of 114th General Assembly (*committee assignments, constitutional appointment, ands, and office assignments previously made; committees open*)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

4

February/March

- 2nd –The State of the State Address will likely be presented.
- Trustee confirmations (*if vacancies filled*)
- TSU leadership appears before both the House and Senate - presents budget based on state allocations.
- Prior to the hearings, there will be pre-meetings with the committee chairs and members to go over our presentation and ask the university questions. TSU attendees – President, CFO, Internal/External Affairs, Chief of Staff.
- Board members are encouraged to attend the actual budget hearing.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

5

March/April

- TIG will present a comprehensive list of bills that impact the university.
- Bills impacting higher education are traveling through committees. TIG may need assistance from subject-matter experts who can help with talking points. Ex bills: Name, Image, Likeness (NIL), teacher certification, alcohol or guns on college campuses.
- The Governor's budget is presented to the legislature. The legislature makes final decision on what remains or is added to the budget.
- Session typically wraps up at the end of April/early May.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

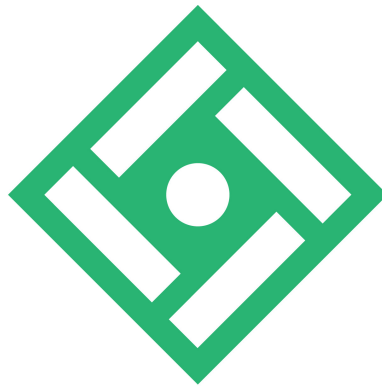
6

Federal

- Congressional District 7 Special Election
 - Vacated by former Rep. Mark Green
 - 13 counties, including part of Davidson (TSU)
 - Election Day - Tuesday, December 2, 2025

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WHEN IT MATTERS

7



THE INGRAM GROUP

8



**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING**

Friday, November 21, 2025 11:30 a.m. CT	Tennessee State University Main Campus Farrell Westbrook Complex (The Barn) 3500 John A. Merritt Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209
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AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Opening Remarks by the Chair
- IV. Recognition of Outstanding Scholars
- V. Adoption of Agenda
- VI. Approval of Consent Agenda Items (Action)
 - A. June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
 - B. June 13, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
 - C. August 5, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
 - D. September 18, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes
 - E. September 18, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
 - F. September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
 - G. September 19, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

Note concerning consent agenda items: The Bylaws of the Board provide that any item unanimously approved by a committee may be designated by the Chair for unanimous consent at the full Board meeting. Such items must be separately identified and be voted on by a single motion. Therefore, any item that is not unanimously approved in committee will be moved to the regular agenda of the Board. Further, any Trustee may request that an item on the consent agenda of the Board be moved to the regular agenda, even if unanimously approved in committee, by notifying the Secretary in writing prior to the meeting. The request must then be approved by a majority of those members of the Board present and voting.

- VII. Committee Reports

- A. Audit Committee
- B. Finance Committee
- C. Student and Academic Affairs Committee
- D. Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee

VIII. Federal Funding Update

IX. President's Report

X. Other Business

Under the Bylaws of the Board, items not appearing on the agenda may be considered only upon an affirmative vote of a majority of those members of the Board who are present. Other business necessary to come before the Board at this meeting should be brought to the Chair's attention before the meeting.

XI. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ACTION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Approval of Consent Agenda Items

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval

PRESENTED BY: Trustee Dakasha Winton, Board Chair

Background Information

The only items on the consent agenda are meeting minutes. The Board conducted the meetings referenced below. The document reflecting the minutes from the following Board and committee meetings are included in the Board materials:

Approval of June 12, 2025, Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
Approval of June 13, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes
Approval of August 5, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
Approval of September 18, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes
Approval of September 18, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Approval of September 18, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
Approval of September 19, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

Action

The Chair will call for a motion approving the consent agenda items, which include past Board minutes and committee meeting minutes recommended for approval by the committees.

MOTION: I move to approve the consent agenda items, as contained in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, meeting.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
June 12, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Terica Smith, Trevia Chatman, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Charles Traugher, Jeffery Norfleet (virtual), Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Artenzia Young-Seigler.

University Staff Present: Interim President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; LoLita Toney, Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Smith called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Smith declared that everyone was present. Secretary Brown conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Terica Smith, Dakasha Winton, and Trevia Chatman.

III. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Committee Chair Smith announced the next agenda item, which was the Legislative Update. Committee Chair Smith introduced Leah Dupree Love to provide the Board with a summary of the most recent legislative session.

Ms. Love began by extending thanks to Interim President Tucker for his active engagement with the legislature during the 2025 session, noting that his participation significantly strengthened relationships with both legislative and executive branch stakeholders. She emphasized that his involvement made the work of the Ingram Group and TSU’s advocacy efforts more effective.

Ms. Love reported that the 2025 legislative session began on January 14, 2025, with a special organizational session, which required the rescheduling of TSU Day at the Hill. While the event did not occur in its traditional format, the University successfully coordinated with THEC and Dr. Mosby to participate in HBCU Day at the legislature. Students, faculty, and staff attended, delivering swag bags and plants, which were well-received and reflected positively on TSU.

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block harmful proposals. Out of approximately 43 bills tracked that impacted higher education, around a dozen passed. Key topics included Athletics Department updates related to name, image, and likeness policies, pronoun usage, and anti-discrimination measures concerning race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, and religion.

Ms. Love also reported that the administration worked with the legislature on twelve resolutions, including those related to the confirmation of Board members. She noted that these confirmations proceeded smoothly and were approved.

In terms of the state budget, Ms. Love provided a detailed review of TSU's budget allocations for 2025, emphasizing the University's status as a land-grant institution. The following funding buckets were included:

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Next, Ms. Love discussed legislation affecting university boards. She explained that previously, each Board consisted of ten members: eight gubernatorial appointees, one student, and one faculty member. The new legislation expands boards to twelve voting members while reducing gubernatorial appointees from eight to six. It introduces appointments by the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. She clarified that student and faculty appointments remain internal and are unaffected by the legislature. She reviewed the current Board members' terms. She explained how the new appointments would phase in as existing terms expire, noting some uncertainty in cases where multiple members' terms end simultaneously, but reaffirmed that reappointments remain possible.

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Ms. Love concluded by updating the Board on federal matters, including the resignation of Congressman Mark Green and the upcoming special election affecting TSU's congressional district. She confirmed that she would provide ongoing updates to the President, Chair, and General Counsel, ensuring timely dissemination to the Board.

Trustee Smith asked about the scope of the audit. Ms. Love explained that it covers finances, operations, repeated findings, and progress on previous observations. President Tucker provided additional context regarding the timing and coordination with the Comptroller.

Trustee Qualls inquired about the timeline for new legislative appointments. Ms. Love responded that while there is no specific deadline, the vacancies will likely be filled in the coming weeks. Until the new process is implemented, existing vacancies will be treated as gubernatorial appointments.

Trustee Traugher asked about the changes to the Sunshine Law legislation. Ms. Love referred to Secretary Brown, and they both noted that the legislation primarily codifies existing practices regarding closed meetings and has a limited impact on Board operations.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Smith stated that she would consider a motion to adjourn. Chair Winton moved to adjourn, and Trustee Chatman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with Trustees Smith, Winton, and Chatman voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
June 13, 2025
Tennessee State University – the Barn**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Trustees Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Dimeta Smith Knight, Charles Traugher, Dakasha Winton, Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: Interim President Dwayne Tucker; Dr. Robbie Melton, Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel & Board Secretary; Sterlin Sanders, Interim Chief Information Officer; Renée Forbes-Williams, Director of Internal Audits; Greg Robinson, Chief of Police; Will Radford, Assistant Vice President of Planning, Design & Construction and Campus Operations; Dr. Mikki Allen, Director of Athletics; Dr. Quincy Quick, Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Winton called the meeting to order at 1:42 p.m. Chair Winton announced that the trustees were confirmed by the Tennessee General Assembly the day prior.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Winton declared that a physical quorum was present. Committee Secretary conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Trevia Chatman, Dimeta Smith Knight, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Charles Traugher, Dakasha Winton, and Artenzia Young-Seigler. A quorum was present.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Winton requested a motion to adopt the meeting agenda as presented in the materials for the June 13, 2025, meeting. A motion was made and duly seconded. Chair Winton opened the floor for discussion and provided an opportunity for members to suggest amendments to the agenda. No amendments were proposed, and the motion to adopt the agenda proceeded.

Following the adoption of the main agenda, Chair Winton entertained a motion to add an additional item to the agenda. The proposed item was to authorize Chair Winton and the University President to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Comptroller of the Treasury, the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, and the Secretary of Finance. The purpose of this MOU is to redirect capital outlay funds in accordance with T.C.A §49-7-3103. A motion was made and duly seconded. The motion to add the MOU item to the agenda was approved by majority vote.

Chair Winton noted a need to go slightly out of order to introduce another proposed amendment to the agenda. Trustee Qualls recommended a motion to remove item number two from the Student Academic Affairs Committee report, which concerned the approval of academic program modifications. Trustee Norfleet made the motion and Trustee Young-Seigler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. With this, two modifications to the agenda were formally approved.

IV. APPROVAL OF A DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Chair Winton introduced the first action item on the agenda, consideration of the approval of a delegation of authority to the Board Chair and the President to execute a MOU with the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Commissioner of Finance and Administration in order to redirect capital outlay funds in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-7-3103. Trustee Norfleet made the motion and Trustee Smith seconded the motion.

During discussion, Trustee Chatman requested that, prior to execution, the final MOU be circulated to the full Board. Chair Winton confirmed the request.

Trustee Traugher asked for a brief overview of the current status of the agreement. Chair Winton explained that the General Assembly had recently passed legislation permitting Tennessee State University to redirect certain funds originally appropriated for capital outlay projects toward operational expenses. She stated that, to access these funds, the State required execution of an MOU outlining benchmarks that the University must achieve, as well as timelines for the release of funds. She emphasized that the goal of the agreement is to support TSU's financial stability and continued operations.

Chair Winton further explained that multiple negotiations had occurred among University leadership, Interim President Tucker, representatives of Alvarez & Marsal, the Comptroller's Office, and the Commissioner of Finance and Administration. She noted that while some technical items remain unresolved, the agreement is nearing completion, with the goal of execution before the end of the month.

President Tucker added that the remaining open items were minor in nature and that, in his view, the agreement was fair, reasonable, and achievable for the University.

Following discussion, the motion was clarified to include the amendment offered by Trustee Chapman: that the final MOU be circulated to the full Board prior to execution.

Chair Winton recommended a motion to approve a delegation of authority to the Board Chair and the President to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Commissioner of Finance Administration. This action is intended to redirect capital outlay funds in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-7-3103. Before execution, the Board of Trustees will receive the MOU for review. The motion was approved by a majority vote and carried.

V. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Winton presented the items on the consent agenda, which included the following minutes for approval:

- March 12, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
- March 13, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes
- March 13, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- March 14, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
- April 28, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- April 30, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and duly seconded. The motion passed by voice vote.

VI. ACTION ITEMS AND REPORTS

A. Appointment of Student Trustee

Chair Winton introduced the next item on the agenda, the appointment of the student trustee pursuant to the FOCUS Act. She noted that the Act requires a Tennessee State University student to serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees for a one-year term.

Chair Winton reminded the Board that at its April 26, 2024, meeting, the Board adopted a student trustee recommendation process for the 2024–2025 fiscal year. The process included action and input from the Tennessee State University Student Government Association, along with institutional interviews involving Interim President Tucker and other campus leaders.

President Tucker provided an overview of the process and introduced the recommended candidate, Ms. Azana Bruce. He shared that Ms. Bruce is a rising senior double majoring in Political Science and Urban Studies, with a minor in Nonprofit Leadership. During the past semester, she interned in the Tennessee General Assembly, and over the summer she worked with nonprofit organizations in Memphis. President Tucker added that Ms. Bruce identified her key goals as student trustee to be increasing student turnout at Board meetings and improving communication between students and the Board.

President Tucker, along with other University leaders who participated in the interview process, recommended Ms. Bruce for appointment. A copy of her resume was included in the Board's meeting materials beginning at page 32.

Following the recommendation, a motion was made and seconded to appoint Ms. Azana Bruce as student trustee for the 2025–2026 fiscal year. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Winton introduced the next agenda item, which was committee reports.

B. Audit Committee Report

Trustee Smith Knight reported that the Audit Committee met to receive reports and consider several items and to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters deemed confidential by state law. The Committee received reports on internal and external audits and recommended approval of the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Audit Plan, which was approved by the full Board as outlined in the June 13, 2025, meeting materials.

C. Finance Committee Report

Trustee Traugher reported that the Finance Committee met to receive reports and consider several items. The Committee also heard a report from the Office of Institutional Advancement, which included updates on alumni engagement, donor relations, and giving trends. In addition, the Committee recommended approval of the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 tuition and mandatory fee increase, the Fiscal Year 2024–2025 estimated budget, and the Fiscal Year 2025–2026 operating budget, and the motions were approved by the full Board as contained in the Board materials for the June 13, 2025, meeting.

D. Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Report

Chair Winton reported that the Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee met to receive an informational update from Attorney Leah Dupree Love on government affairs. No action items were presented for consideration.

E. Student and Academic Affairs Committee Report

Trustee Norfleet reported that the Student and Academic Affairs Committee met to consider action on one item and receive reports on four items. The committee voted to recommend the approval of low-producing programs, and the motion was approved by the full Board as contained in the Board materials for the June 13, 2025, meeting.

VII. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Tucker provided the President’s Report, focusing on the university’s multi-year financial turnaround plan. He acknowledged the hard work of the cabinet and staff in managing cash flow through the end of the academic year and reviewed the five-year pro forma presented to the SBC on February 19, 2025. The plan outlines projected cash needs, including a net deficit of roughly \$35 million for 2026 and \$25 million for the following year, with a path toward financial sustainability and long-term institutional stability.

President Tucker emphasized that the budget reflects these plans, noting that short-term enrollment fluctuations are anticipated as part of necessary infrastructure adjustments. He framed these challenges as opportunities to reset and reimagine Tennessee State University for the next 100 years.

He also provided an update on the MOU and funding from the legislature, including access to previously allocated funds for deferred maintenance, operational expenses, infrastructure projects,

and College of Agriculture buildings. He expressed confidence that finalization of the MOU is imminent, projecting that the university is days away from completing the agreement.

In closing, President Tucker highlighted TSU's achievements, including AI initiatives and the New Direction Gospel Choir's first-place win at the Sweet to Sound Finals in Washington, D.C., celebrating the university's talent and accomplishments. He concluded by sharing the choir's performance with the Board.

VIII. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Winton delivered the Board Chair's Report, opening with appreciation for the patience of the Board and recognition of the staff's efforts in preparing materials in advance, which allowed for thorough review. The Chair emphasized the importance of collaboration among Board members, the president, and staff to ensure Tennessee State University operates in the best possible position.

The Chair acknowledged that faculty tenure was not addressed during the meeting due to ongoing financial considerations but reassured that this delay is temporary and not a denial. The Board remains committed to carefully reviewing and supporting faculty tenure and promotion decisions once the university is in a stronger position.

Finally, the Chair expressed gratitude to President Tucker for his voluntary service, long hours, and dedication, highlighting the early-morning calls and overall commitment to TSU. The Chair affirmed the Board's commitment to taking appropriate steps toward appointing a permanent president, with further information to be shared with Board members soon.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Winton asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Trustee Smith Knight moved to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Trustee Chatman. Secretary Brown took a roll call vote on the motion. The motion passed.

Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
August 5, 2025
Tennessee State University – Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Trustees Dakasha Winton, Charles Traughber, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: Interim President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Winton called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Winton declared that a physical quorum was not present and moved that electronic participation by a quorum was necessary, which was approved. Board Secretary conducted the roll call. The following Board members were present: Trustees Dakasha Winton, Charles Traughber, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler.

III. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS AND THE SELECTION OF A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Board Chair Winton announced the first agenda item, which was the presidential selection process. She reminded members that under Board Policy No. 4, the Board has the authority to appoint the president of the University and to determine the appropriate selection process. She emphasized that the Board's actions must reflect consultation with the campus and broader community, while also ensuring stable leadership during a critical period for the institution.

Chair Winton reviewed the history of the presidential selection process to date. She noted that in the summer of 2024, the Board formed a presidential search committee, chaired by Trustee Qualls, which developed candidate qualifications. These qualifications included demonstrated ability in organizational leadership, financial management, external relations, and team development. The Board subsequently retained a national search firm to assist in identifying candidates.

In December 2024, the Board appointed Mr. Dwayne Tucker as Interim President during a time of financial and organizational challenges. Mr. Tucker agreed to serve for six months without compensation. Chair Winton explained that in early 2025, the presidential search process was paused, and on June 17, 2025, the Board entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

with the State of Tennessee. This MOU requires leadership capable of addressing audit findings, restoring financial stability, improving enrollment and morale, and strengthening the University's reputation.

Chair Winton stated that under the Board's bylaws, it is not obligated to conduct additional search steps and retains the discretion to proceed directly with a presidential appointment. She then opened the floor for discussion.

Trustee Traughber raised a point of order, noting that the agenda had not yet been formally adopted. He moved to amend the agenda to include a discussion item for possible ratification of the extension of Interim President Tucker's contract before proceeding with the presidential selection item. The motion was seconded.

The amendment was carried by a roll call vote, and the amended agenda was adopted.

Following the adoption of the agenda, Trustee Traughber inquired about the status of Interim President Tucker's contract and whether Chair Winton had acted unilaterally to extend it. Chair Winton confirmed that she had extended the contract on a month-to-month basis, citing authority delegated by the Board in December 2024.

Trustee Traughber expressed concern that the contract language appeared to require Board approval rather than unilateral action by Chair Winton. After further discussion on governance responsibilities, interpretation of contract provisions, and the scope of authority, Trustee Traughber moved to ratify the extension of Interim President Tucker's contract as executed by Chair Winton. The motion was seconded by Trustee Chatman.

The motion was put to a roll call vote and failed with the votes casted below.

- Trustee Chatman – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – No
- Trustee Qualls – Yes
- Trustee Smith – No
- Trustee Smith-Knight – Yes
- Trustee Towns – No
- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Chair Winton – No
- Trustee Young-Seigler – No

Chair Winton then returned to the agenda item regarding presidential selection. She invited discussion on whether the Board should rely on the existing presidential profile previously developed with the search firm or consider updating it to reflect current conditions and the requirements of the MOU.

Several Trustees raised questions about the MOU, including whether it explicitly required the Board to name a president and whether state officials had communicated such an expectation. Chair Winton responded that while the MOU may not contain direct language to that effect, both

legislative and executive officials had conveyed their desire for the University to appoint a permanent president.

Chair Winton aimed to refocus the meeting on the agenda item regarding the selection of a candidate for the next president of Tennessee State University. She explained that before any nominations could be considered, the Board needed to conduct a formal vote to outline a process

Following the discussion, Trustee Smith made the motion proceed with outlining a presidential selection process. Chair Winton seconded the motion. The motion passed with the votes casted below.

- Trustee Chatman – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Qualls – No
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Smith-Knight – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

Then Chair Winton outlined that the selection process could be that the process would be name a president directly. Following the discussion, Trustee Smith made the motion to proceed with a direct and immediate vote and Chair Winton seconded the motion. The motion passed with the votes casted below.

- Trustee Chatman – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Qualls – No
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Smith-Knight – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

Chair Winton then nominated Interim President Dwayne Tucker to serve as the permanent president of TSU. She cited his longstanding commitment to the University, his leadership experience in both public education and the corporate sector, and his effective service during a period of institutional transition. She emphasized that Mr. Tucker had helped restore confidence and unity across the TSU community and had earned strong support from students, faculty, and alumni.

Trustee Chatman made a motion to appoint Mr. Tucker and Trustee Smith seconded the motion. Prior to the vote, Trustee Qualls expressed appreciation for Mr. Tucker's contributions but clarified that her concerns were procedural in nature and not a reflection on the nominee himself—the motion to appoint Mr. Tucker as president passed by roll call vote with the votes casted below.

- Trustee Chatman – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Qualls – Abstained
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Smith-Knight – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Traugher – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

Chair Winton congratulated President Dwayne Tucker and thanked him for his continued service to the Board, the University, and the broader TSU community.

IV. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

Chair Winton introduced the next agenda item regarding the delegation of authority to the Chair to execute agreements related to the appointment and employment of the president. She explained that in hiring Mr. Tucker as president, the Board would need to execute one or more agreements outlining the standard terms of presidential employment, including the length of the contract, compensation, and other conditions. Chair Winton requested a motion to approve the delegation of authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to finalize and execute these agreements.

Trustee Towns made the motion regarding the delegation of authority to the Chair Winton and Trustee Smith seconded the motion.

During the discussion, Trustee Traugher asked about the extent of the “consultation” with the Executive Committee, specifically how it would be implemented in practice. Chair Winton responded that she envisaged circulating any proposed agreement to Executive Committee members before signing and subsequently sharing the final version with the full Board, in line with past practices.

Trustee Traugher noted that, to his knowledge, such consultation had not previously occurred with presidential or interim presidential contracts. Chair Winton reiterated her focus on the current motion and expressed her willingness to involve the full Board if broader input was preferred.

Trustee Chatman clarified that consultation should include collaboration on the terms and conditions of employment. She suggested that given the Board's collective expertise in executive employment, the process should allow for wider participation from the full Board. Trustee Young-

Seigler agreed, observing that relying solely on the Executive Committee could create the impression that other trustees were being excluded from meaningful participation.

Trustee Towns proposed a compromise, suggesting that the Chair and Executive Committee negotiate the agreement, but that the final employment contract be returned to the full Board for ratification. She emphasized that negotiating terms with a group of ten or more trustees would be inefficient, but that final review by the Board would ensure transparency and allow for meaningful input.

Trustee Smith-Knight added that many boards maintain a standing personnel committee for such matters and suggested creating an ad hoc group of trustees with relevant expertise to assist in drafting the agreement. Several trustees supported this idea, noting that it would balance efficiency with inclusivity.

After extended discussion, Chair Winton determined that consensus had not been reached. She made a motion to withdraw the pending motion and Trustee Young-Seigler seconded the motion. Chair Winton announced that the item would be tabled. She asked trustees to submit comments or suggested terms for the presidential employment agreement in writing, so that draft provisions could be prepared and circulated to the Board before a subsequent meeting.

V. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC ACTIONS – LOW PRODUCING PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

Chair Winton introduced the next item on the agenda: the approval of academic program modifications. She invited Trustee Norfleet, Chair of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee, to present the committee's recommendation.

Trustee Norfleet reported that the committee met on July 1, 2025, to review proposed academic actions, which included modifications to low-producing programs and the reorganization of certain academic units. The committee voted to recommend approval of these actions as outlined in Table One of the Board's materials. Furthermore, they recommended authorizing the appropriate officers of the University to collaborate with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to implement the approved actions. Trustee Norfleet made the motion to approve the actions regarding the modifications to low-producing programs and the reorganization of certain academic units and Trustee Young-Seigler seconded the motion.

During the discussion, Trustee Qualls expressed concern about the proposal to consolidate four departments within the College of Business into three. She noted that a search for a new dean was currently underway and suggested that the incoming dean should participate in shaping the reorganization. She inquired whether a "yes" vote would constitute approval of all proposed program changes, even if a trustee disagreed with one specific item. Trustee Norfleet confirmed that the vote would be collective.

Provost Melton clarified that all curriculum-related proposals originated with faculty committees at the department and college levels and underwent multiple layers of academic review before

reaching the Board. She emphasized that, while not all faculty members may have agreed with each recommendation, the process adhered to established shared governance practices.

After further discussion, the Board proceeded to a roll call vote and the motion passed with the votes casted below.

- Trustee Chatman – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Qualls – No
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Smith-Knight – No
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Winton stated that she would consider a motion to adjourn. Chair Chatman moved to adjourn, and Trustee Norfleet seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with all committee members voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Audit Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Dimeta Smith Knight, Marquita Qualls and Charles Traughber. Other Trustees present: Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Smith Knight called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Smith Knight declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Secretary conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Dimeta Smith Knight, Marquita Qualls and Charles Traughber.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Traughber moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Qualls. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF JUNE 12, 2025, AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the June 12, 2025, meeting of the Audit Committee were approved as submitted, with Committee Chair Smith Knight making the motion and Trustee Traughber seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. REPORT ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT ITEMS

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the report on internal and external audit items, noting that the materials were provided for informational purposes and that no Board action was required. She asked Dr. Renée Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that no external audits had been finalized since the last committee meeting. She stated that the University expects the FY 2025 Single Audit to be issued in March

2026 and that the FY 2024 financial statement audit is projected to be released by the end of September 2025.

Turning to internal audits, Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the review of the NCAA Student Assistance Fund was completed and submitted on July 25, 2025. In addition, the FY 2024 Single Audit Report of Action was submitted to the State on the morning of September 17, 2025, and to the Audit Committee Chair, the President, and the Interim Vice President of Business and Finance the evening prior.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Dr. Forbes-Williams summarized the four findings included in the FY 2024 Single Audit that remain uncorrected:

- Finding 2024-001 – The Financial Aid Office did not adequately reconcile its Direct Loan records to the federal loan servicing system, as required by federal regulations. While not corrected, revised policies and procedures have been implemented.
- Finding 2024-002 – The University did not consistently ensure that Title IV credits were refunded in accordance with federal guidelines. This issue remains uncorrected, though revised Banner-based procedures are being tested.
- Finding 2024-003 – The University did not report timely and accurate student enrollment status information for the Federal Direct Loan and Pell Grant Programs. This finding remains uncorrected.
- Finding 2024-004 – The University did not return Title IV funds in compliance with federal regulations. This finding also remains uncorrected.

Dr. Forbes-Williams confirmed that these findings mirror those previously discussed with the Committee and that they are included among the fifteen findings identified by the State. She noted that management, in coordination with Bradley White, is actively working to resolve them and that corrective actions must be addressed in the report due to the State by November 7, 2025.

VI. REPORT ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the report on internal and external assessments, noting that the materials had been provided in the Board's meeting materials. She invited Dr. Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that, as required by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) GAP assessment conducted by the M&A Group began on July 8, 2025, and is expected to be completed by the end of September. She stated that the results of the assessment will support the University's readiness for the IIA-mandated external review, which occurs every five years, and that a full report will be made available to the Board once finalized.

In discussion, Dr. Forbes-Williams confirmed that the final interviews for the assessment, including one with the Board Chair, had been completed and that the assessment team is now

finalizing its report. She noted that she has not yet received feedback but anticipates the final report will be released by the end of the month.

VII. REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING AUDIT ISSUES

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the review of outstanding audit issues, noting that the materials were provided for informational purposes and that no Board action was required. She asked Dr. Forbes-Williams to present on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the review continues to focus on the highest-risk areas, with procurement cards remaining a recurring concern. She noted that prior findings have included cardholders exceeding the \$1,000 single transaction limit without approval and cardholders failing to provide sufficient supporting documentation. An internal control audit is scheduled to begin shortly to address procurement cards and other high-risk areas.

Turning to external audit issues, Dr. Forbes-Williams reported that the Report of Actions for the FY 2024 Single Audit was submitted to the State on the morning of September 19, 2025. She added that the FY 2023 Financial Statement Audit and the Endowment for Educational Excellence (EEE) Audit reports of action are both due November 7, 2025. She then deferred to Associate Vice President Bradley White to provide an update on management's progress in resolving outstanding audit findings.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Mr. White summarized the highest-risk outstanding audit issues:

- Bank Reconciliations – The University has restructured its reconciliation process and is leveraging new staff and a reconciliation script to address bulk deposits. Reconciliations are current through June 2025, with full completion (including October transactions) targeted for October 31, 2025. Temporary TBR staff are assisting until the backlog is resolved.
- Financial Aid – Return of Title IV Funds – Prior findings regarding untimely returns remain uncorrected. Corrective actions are in progress, and additional information on the number of affected students will be provided to the Committee.
- Financial Aid – Student Refunds – All Fall 2025 refunds have been issued within the required 14-day window. However, prior-year refunds remain unresolved and require case-by-case review.
- Procurement Cards – Past issues included cardholders exceeding the \$1,000 single transaction limit without approval and failing to submit adequate supporting documentation. An internal control audit focused on procurement cards is scheduled to begin soon.

Committee members discussed the adequacy of resources allocated to resolving longstanding findings and emphasized the need for project management oversight to ensure accountability. In response, President Tucker acknowledged the historical challenges but affirmed that progress is

being made through new permanent hires, additional TBR support, and improved financial stability. Mr. White confirmed that recruitment remains underway for the Controller position and that, in the interim, he and the lead member of the TBR support team are jointly performing Controller-level responsibilities.

VIII. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN UPDATE

Committee Chair Smith Knight introduced the next agenda item, the update to the internal audit plan, noting that Dr. Forbes-Williams had requested that this agenda item be designated as an action item requiring Committee approval due to significant changes in the scope of work. She then asked Dr. Forbes-Williams to present the update on behalf of the Audit Committee.

Dr. Forbes-Williams explained that the required audits outlined in the approved plan remain unchanged. However, in collaboration with an external firm, the University has expanded the audit scope to include several additional high-risk areas. She reported that 731 additional audit hours have been allocated to the external firm, funded by salary savings from a vacant audit position, and that interest meetings for these audits will take place at the end of September 2025.

At the request of Committee Chair Smith Knight, Dr. Forbes-Williams summarized the key updates to the internal audit plan:

- Accounts Payable – Added to address risks related to vendor payment processes.
- Payroll – Added to review compliance and accuracy of compensation.
- Procurement – Added as a follow-up to issues with purchasing cards and approvals.
- Cash Collections – Added to strengthen oversight of cash handling.
- Travel – Expanded review included with external firm support.

Following discussion, the Committee reviewed a marked copy of the updated audit plan to confirm the additions. After returning from executive session, Committee Chair Smith Knight reconvened the meeting at 11:41 a.m. and called for a motion to approve the updated audit plan as presented. The motion was duly made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote of the Trustees.

With no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting by voice vote.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Traugher moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Qualls. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Finance Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Charles Traughber, Jeffery Norfleet, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Terica Smith, Leticia Towns, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal; Oniqua May, Assistant General Counsel

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Traughber called the meeting to order at 1:59 p.m. Committee Chair Traughber offered opening remarks to frame the committee’s work, noting that TSU continues to face significant financial challenges and cannot operate as usual. He emphasized that trustees must exercise careful oversight, seeking clarity, accuracy, and transparency in all decisions, and ensure compliance with university bylaws and applicable laws. Chair Traughber commended the Memorandum of Understanding with the state while stressing the need to meet its obligations with discipline and integrity. He encouraged trustees to ask questions, seek details, and act boldly and collaboratively to position TSU to not only survive but thrive.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Traughber declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Attorney May conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Charles Traughber, Jeffery Norfleet, and Dakasha Winton.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Committee Chair Traughber opened the session with brief remarks before the adoption of the agenda. A point of order was raised under Section 23 of *Robert’s Rules of Order* concerning the omission of a real estate item that had been properly submitted for inclusion on September 12, 2025, with Secretary Brown copied. Committee Chair Traughber noted that, according to standard parliamentary procedure, the committee chair is responsible for setting the agenda, and the item—related to real estate—had not been included.

Chair Winton explained that the real estate discussion had originally been scheduled for the full board meeting the following day to allow all board members to participate fully, consistent with prior full board decisions such as the Memorandum of Understanding. She emphasized that this approach would ensure transparency and active engagement on matters of significant importance.

Discussion followed regarding whether the finance committee could address the item first. Chair Winton highlighted that while committee feedback is valuable, the significance of the real estate matter warranted full board consideration to provide direction and prevent duplicative work. The committee discussed the balance between committee review and full board participation, noting that deferring the item would maintain proper oversight while ensuring all members had input.

Following discussion, Trustee Norfleet made a motion to remove the real estate item from the finance committee agenda for the current meeting and place it on the full board agenda for the following day. Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – No
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes

The motion passed, and the real estate item was removed from the finance committee agenda.

Trustee Norfleet then moved to adopt the revised finance committee agenda, as amended. Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – No
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes

The motion passed, and the revised agenda was adopted.

IV. APPROVAL OF JUNE 12, 2025, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the June 12, 2025, meeting of the Finance Committee were approved as submitted, with Committee Chair Traughber making the motion and Chair Winton seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. UPDATE ON ENROLLMENT

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the next agenda item, an update on enrollment, and invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Jim Grady from Alvarez & Marsal to present.

Dr. Stokes provided an overview of the Fall 2026 enrollment cycle, highlighting strategic initiatives, recruitment efforts, campus visits, and data-driven planning. He emphasized that TSU's strategy builds on the six initiatives previously presented by RHB SIG, focusing on increasing enrollment while improving the academic profile of incoming students. Key focus areas include strategic initiatives, recruitment and travel, events, and campus tours.

He highlighted the launch of a new CRM system, Slate, to enhance student engagement, manage campus visits, support lead generation, and improve communication with prospective students. Training for Enrollment Management staff is underway, with additional training planned for

faculty and staff involved in recruitment. Lead generation efforts include purchasing ACT lists, integrating with the Common App and Common Black College App, and targeting high-achieving students through initiatives such as Tennessee Hope and THEC's Direct Admit program.

Dr. Stokes discussed recruitment and travel strategies, emphasizing a data-driven approach to prioritize high-yield regions, including Davidson and Shelby Counties, while maintaining outreach to other areas. Campus visits remain a key factor in student enrollment decisions, with investments in peer-led Tiger Tour Guides to provide high-quality experiences.

He clarified the roles of recruitment and admissions staff, noting three Admissions Counselors, one Director of Recruitment, and three Admissions Associates who process applications and assist with transfer student evaluations. Benchmarks for enrollment success include tracking applications, student engagement via Slate, event attendance, FAFSA completion, and confirmations for orientation.

Dr. Stokes also addressed improvements to TSU's website to make enrollment-related information more accessible and noted plans to align marketing and communications with recruitment strategies.

VI. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the next agenda item the finance and budget report and invited Jim Grady from Alvarez & Marsal to present.

Mr. Grady provided an update on enrollment and related budget implications. Tennessee State executed a student purge for the first time in nearly a decade, with the final purge date on August 29. Daily tracking leading up to the purge categorized students as fully registered and financially cleared, partially cleared, or requiring significant financial aid or administrative follow-up. Initial mid-July numbers showed approximately 4,200 registered students, with only about 280 financially confirmed. By the first purge date on August 11, registrations increased to 4,890, with more than 3,200 confirmed. Through coordinated outreach, a one-stop shop for student issues, and support from the TSU Foundation—including targeted scholarships, “close the gap” funds, and an additional \$3.3 million—only 188 students were ultimately purged. Emphasis was placed on graduating seniors, including those with GPAs between 2.0 and 2.5.

Trustees commended the cross-departmental effort, with administration, faculty, staff, and external partners all contributing. President Tucker highlighted teams assigned to current students, incoming freshmen, and targeted financial aid support. THEC also provided assistance with financial aid applications and training. Mr. Grady noted ongoing “after-action” reviews to identify lessons learned and ensure spring semester monitoring, particularly regarding continued foundation support. Fall FTE was 4,767, projecting to an annualized FTE of 4,555, aligning with the budget assumption of 4,250 FTE and accounting for an anticipated nine percent decline between fall and spring.

Trustee Qualls asked about loan usage. Administration reported that of the \$45–46 million aid pool, \$16 million came from federal loans, \$7.5 million from Pell grants, with the remainder from

state aid, institutional scholarships, and foundation support. Many students receive aid from multiple sources, making exact percentages difficult to isolate. Trustee Bruce emphasized clearer communication, as many students did not check emails or respond to calls. Administration indicated future improvements would include expanded use of the Slate system for reminders and scholarship/FAFSA follow-up. Technical issues with Flywire during the purge week were acknowledged, and efforts are underway to strengthen system performance.

Although enrollment exceeded projections, the University faces a \$39 million deficit. The FY26 proposed tuition revenue budget was \$59.2 million; with 4,555 FTEs, the latest forecast is approximately \$64 million, a \$5.2 million increase. In-state tuition averages around \$9,000, and out-of-state between \$16,000–\$18,000. Differences between the FY26 pro forma and current budget, including enrollment assumptions and tuition rate increases, account for a \$3.6 million variance. A revised October budget will be presented at the November board meeting. The purge improved cash flow by reducing bad debt risk, requiring a 25% deposit for payment plans, and encouraging use of federal aid. Most students are expected to maintain eligibility for spring aid.

Committee members discussed producing reliable financial reports. Using a “triangulation” approach—verifying data at least three times—has improved accuracy, exemplified by the October 2023 revised budget. Cash flow was prioritized initially, with additional data refining future forecasts. Under the MOU with the state, TSU meets with state officials 45 days after each quarter; reports are high-level (pro forma, budget, revenues, expenses, deficit projections) and reviewed by the Board beforehand.

Budget adjustments since June included “bad guys” (deficit-increasing) such as the TBR contract (\$850,000), recruitment initiatives (\$420,000), THEC financial aid contract (\$200,000), restoration of an audit position, Levi Watkins program staff support, Ingrid Group lobbying services, employee education assistance, and miscellaneous items (\$232,000). “Good guys” (revenue/savings) included the YMCA parking agreement (\$400–500K) and unfilled position salary savings (\$1.3 million). Net impact was a \$357,000 deficit increase, excluding an additional \$5 million positive adjustment. Deficit remains in the mid-\$30 million range.

Trustees discussed TBR and THEC contracts. The TBR \$850,000 figure is a maximum; charges apply only for engaged resources. Current onboarding includes one or two staff, with additional hires in progress. Consultants assist with operations, audit support, and staff training to ensure knowledge transfer. Funds exist in the budget to hire permanent staff (reflected in the \$1.3 million savings from vacancies). TBR has supported audit issues since FY23, with intensified support beginning July 2024. The YMCA parking agreement, which would make available approximately 100–150 spaces at Avon Williams, is under review to finalize actual availability before execution. Trustees agreed the Finance Committee should review and recommend approval to the full Board.

VII. APPROVAL OF THE BANK RECONCILIATION POLICY

Committee Chair Traugher introduced the next agenda item, the approval of the Bank Reconciliation Policy, noting that materials were included for review. Mr. Bradley White presented the proposed updates.

Mr. White explained that the primary change reduces the number of approvers for reconciliations from two to one. The updated policy also clarifies that all reconciliations must be completed within 30 days after month-end, removing the previously interpreted 45-day allowance for the June 30 reconciliation.

In response to questions from Trustees, Mr. White noted that the previous requirement for two signatures may have been procedural rather than policy-based. Trustees discussed whether two approvers would provide stronger checks and balances. Mr. White agreed that having two appropriate approvers could strengthen oversight but emphasized that approval by the designated controller remains sufficient.

Trustee Norfleet requested a redline version comparing the prior and proposed policies, along with information on other institutions' approval practices. Mr. White agreed to provide these materials.

The Committee agreed to defer action on the policy until the redline comparison and benchmarking information are available for review at a future meeting.

VIII. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Committee Chair Traugher introduced the final agenda item, an update on Institutional Advancement, and welcomed Ms. Eloise Abernathy Alexis, Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

Ms. Alexis noted that she was a few weeks into her new role and currently conducting a listening tour to engage with colleagues, alumni, students, and donors. She stated that her focus is to build a culture of engagement and giving that is significant and sustainable.

She identified three priorities: building trust among advocates and donors, inspiring giving through transparent and balanced storytelling, and driving data-informed, donor-centered results. Ms. Alexis emphasized collaboration, integrity, and accountability, and shared that she has begun meetings with the TSU National Alumni Association, the TSU Foundation Board, and university leadership to strengthen advancement efforts.

Ms. Alexis thanked the Committee and expressed enthusiasm for working with the Board and university partners.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Norfleet moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Chair Winton. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
September 18, 2025
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Artenzia Young-Seigler. Other Board members present: Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, and Charles Traughber.

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Norfleet called the meeting to order at 11:41 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Norfleet declared that all members were present, constituting a quorum. Secretary Brown conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Artenzia Young-Seigler.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Smith moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Young-Seigler. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

A. APPROVAL OF JUNE 13, 2025, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the June 13, 2025, meeting of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Norfleet making the motion and Trustee Young-Seigler seconding the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. APPROVAL OF JULY 1, 2025, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the July 1, 2025, meeting of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Norfleet making the motion and Trustee Smith seconding the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. CONSIDERATION OF 2024-2025 TENURE AND PROMOTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, consideration of the 2024–2025 tenure promotion recommendations. He invited Provost Melton, Dr. Schmeller, and Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi to present on behalf of the administration.

Dr. Schmeller opened the presentation by providing context regarding the University’s faculty composition, noting that TSU has a higher percentage of assistant professors compared to national averages and local Tennessee institutions. He explained that this imbalance reflects faculty turnover due to retirements and resignations, with some faculty members leaving for higher-paying opportunities elsewhere.

Provost Melton added that while TSU has comparatively more assistant professors, the University ranks lower in the number of associate and full professors. She stated that compensation remains a critical factor in faculty retention and progression, and that the University continues to work toward strengthening salary competitiveness and faculty development support.

Turning to the tenure and promotion process, Dr. Schmeller outlined the multi-level review structure, beginning with annual departmental evaluations and advancing through college-level, University Personnel Committee, Vice President, President, and ultimately Board review. He emphasized that the applicants presented have been vetted through this rigorous process and have submitted complete portfolios.

At the request of Committee Chair Norfleet, Provost Melton summarized the applications under consideration:

- Tenure only – 4 applicants
- Promotion only – 9 applicants
- Tenure and promotion – 13 applicants
- Total applications – 26 submitted, with 1 applicant withdrawn due to resignation, leaving 25 for approval

Provost Melton affirmed that the recommendations have been fully reviewed by the Office of Academic Affairs, are financially supported within the budget, and represent faculty who have demonstrated sustained excellence over a seven-year period.

Committee board members engaged in discussion regarding faculty development programming, including onboarding, annual evaluations, and professional development opportunities such as the University’s partnership with ACUE. Members also inquired about financial considerations, and

Provost Melton confirmed that all promotions and tenure awards are supported by the budget and that prior resignations reduced the financial impact.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Committee Chair Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the 2024–2025 tenure and promotion recommendations, as presented and modified in the meeting materials. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote of the Committee members present.

VI. APPROVAL OF POST-TENURE REVIEW POLICY

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, approval of the post-tenure review policy and invited Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi (V.T.) and Provost Melton to present.

Dr. Tiriveedhi explained that the Faculty Senate established a subcommittee to review post-tenure review (PTR) policies across all 13 LGIs in Tennessee, with a particular focus on the UT System and the University of Memphis. Based on this review, the Senate sought to balance the principles of academic freedom with the need for rigor in faculty accountability. The proposed policy was developed, presented to the Faculty Senate, and unanimously adopted.

Trustee Young-Seigler noted that the revised policy reflects faculty commitment to maintaining high standards and was supported broadly across the institution. She also acknowledged that prior concerns from the Board regarding the clarity of language triggering PTR had been addressed, with the revised language included in the meeting materials.

In response to questions, Dr. Kenneth Chilton explained the rationale for recommending a “triggered” rather than mandatory review process. He emphasized that TSU does not have the faculty size or administrative capacity to conduct mandatory PTR at scale, unlike larger institutions such as the University of Tennessee. He noted that rigorous annual evaluations already provide a mechanism to identify underperformance and initiate improvement plans where necessary. He further explained that requiring mandatory reviews for faculty who consistently perform at high levels would create unnecessary administrative burdens without meaningful benefits.

Dr. Chilton further explained that the annual performance review serves as the University’s first and most consistent accountability measure, covering teaching, research, and service. Faculty who receive unsatisfactory ratings in these annual reviews may be placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP). If performance does not improve under the PIP, this serves as a formal trigger for PTR. He emphasized that this linkage ensures PTR is not duplicative but rather serves as an escalated process for cases where annual evaluations have already demonstrated ongoing concerns.

Provost Melton added that five faculty members are currently on PIPs, which include specific, measurable goals tied to teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service contributions.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the post-tenure review policy, effective immediately, as presented in the September 18, 2025, committee materials.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Young-Sigler – Abstain

With two votes in favor and one abstention, the motion passed.

Provost Melton then provided an informational update on student retention, progression, and graduation. She reminded the Committee that the University's retention and graduation plan had been presented last fall and shared progress data for spring 2025. Out of approximately 5,500 enrolled students, 2,754 were named to the Dean's List. She noted significant progress in reducing students on academic probation, down from a prior high of 1,272 to 132, as well as reductions in suspensions.

Provost Melton attributed these improvements to enhanced student support services and the work of retention coaches, advisors, and academic affairs leadership. She also highlighted the University's graduation completion task force, which includes over 75 stakeholders, including students, to improve completion rates.

In addressing financial barriers, Provost Melton explained that data confirm students who are financially stable demonstrate higher retention, progression, and graduation outcomes. She reported that the fall retention rate for first-time freshmen improved significantly, rising from 33% to 58%, recovering from an anomalous year in 2022 when underprepared students required greater support.

Provost Melton further noted that for the first time, 96% of the fall freshman class enrolled in 15 credit hours, positioning them to remain on track for timely graduation. She emphasized that this milestone reflects the University's commitment to academic excellence and will positively impact progression and graduation rates in coming years.

Committee Chair Norfleet thanked Provost Melton for the report.

VII. STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item and invited Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, to provide the Student Affairs report.

Before turning to student affairs, Dr. Dukhie provided an enrollment update for Fall 2025. He reported a total headcount of 5,293 students, including 4,156 undergraduates and 1,137 graduate

students, reflecting a decrease of 1,225 students, or approximately 19%, compared to the prior year.

In response to trustee questions regarding the categories of “first-time high school” and “new first-time freshmen,” Dr. Dukhie invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to provide clarification. Dr. Stokes explained that “first-time high school” refers to dual-enrollment students earning college credit, while “new first-time freshmen” includes both recent high school graduates and students transferring with less than sophomore standing. He noted that some students may be classified as freshmen multiple years if they have not earned sufficient credit hours to progress. He also explained that “new transient” students are enrolled at other institutions but take courses at TSU on a non-degree basis with the intent to return to their home institutions.

Turning to graduate enrollment, Dr. Dukhie reported that of the 1,137 graduate students, 792 were continuing students, 267 were new first-time graduate and professional students, 47 were readmitted, and 31 were enrolled as non-degree or special students. He also provided full-time equivalent (FTE) counts: 735.25 for graduate students and 4,033.87 for undergraduates.

VIII. REPORT ON STUDENT HOUSING

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item and invited Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, to provide the Report on Student Housing.

Dr. Brent Dukhie, Executive Director for Residence Life and Housing and Dean of Student Engagement, provided an update on residence life and housing operations. Dr. Dukhie highlighted enrollment reductions, noting a 19% decrease in overall enrollment and a 21.5% reduction in first-time freshman applications. Given these numbers, adjustments were made to residence hall assignments. Traditionally, Watson Hall houses first-time freshman males (with approximately 135 applicants), and Wilson Hall houses first-time freshman females (just over 300 applicants).

To better support first-year students, Wilson Hall was converted to a co-ed hall, consolidating all first-time freshmen into one space to enhance the first-year experience and foster a sense of community. Watson Hall, which would have been underutilized, was repurposed to offer single-occupancy rooms, addressing student demand for privacy and accommodating seniors who requested campus apartment housing. As a result, Watson Hall achieved 97% capacity, generating over \$356,565 in revenue, with projections of \$713,130 for the next semester. This financial flexibility supports maintenance and upkeep of residence halls. Dr. Dukhie clarified that Watson Hall has a capacity of 319 students and Wilson Hall 540 students. The single-occupancy rooms were priced higher, contributing to the increased revenue.

A discussion took place regarding room occupancy, housing priority, and graduate housing.

Dr. Dukhie concluded the report, noting that the adjustments to housing operations have improved student experience and financial outcomes.

IX. DISCUSSION REGARDING ADMISSION STANDARDS

A. APPROVAL OF MODIFICATION TO ADMISSION TESTING SCORES

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, discussion of admission standards for first-time freshmen. He invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to present on behalf of the administration.

Dr. Stokes explained that the current admission requirements include a minimum GPA of 2.5, an ACT score of 19, and an SAT score of 900. He noted that the SAT requirement is not aligned with the ACT requirement, as an SAT of 900 equates to a 16 ACT score. To provide greater clarity for students, parents, and school counselors, and to support the university's enrollment goals, Dr. Stokes proposed increasing the SAT requirement to 990 to align with the ACT score of 19. He emphasized that this adjustment promotes equity in the admissions process and helps ensure incoming students are better prepared academically.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith to recommend to the full Board approval of the modification of admissions testing scores for first-time freshmen, as presented in the September 25, 2025, committee materials. The motion passed unanimously, with Trustees Norfleet, Smith, and Young-Singler voting in favor.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Norfleet moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Smith. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 19, 2025
Tennessee State University – the Barn**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Trustees Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, Charles Traugher, and Artenzia Young-Seigler.

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Acting Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Winton called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Chair Winton declared that a physical quorum was present. Board Secretary conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Dakasha Winton, Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Jeffery Norfleet, Marquita Qualls, Terica Smith, Dimeta Smith Knight, Leticia Towns, Charles Traugher (arrived during the Adoption of the Agenda) and Artenzia Young-Seigler. A quorum was present.

III. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Board Chair welcomed Trustees, President Tucker, distinguished guests, faculty, staff, students, and members of the public, expressing appreciation for their continued support and commitment to the university.

Board Chair noted that the meeting marked another important moment in TSU's history and reaffirmed the Board's commitment to academic excellence and student success while recognizing ongoing challenges. She thanked students, faculty, and staff for their dedication and resilience in shaping the university's future.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Board Chair called for a motion to adopt the meeting agenda as contained in the materials for the September 19, 2025, Board meeting. Trustee Smith moved to adopt the agenda, and Trustee Young-Seigler seconded the motion.

During discussion, Trustee Qualls noted that the consent agenda included two items—the June 13, 2025, Board meeting minutes and the August 5, 2025, special meeting minutes—that should be removed. The Board Chair confirmed that these items would be addressed separately during approval of the consent agenda.

Trustee Qualls also asked about adding discussion related to Title III and research. The Board Chair stated that these topics could be raised under “Other Business” at the end of the meeting.

Hearing no further discussion, the Board Chair called for a voice vote, and the motion to adopt the modified agenda was approved.

V. ACTION ITEMS AND REPORTS

A. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Winton presented the items on the consent agenda, which included the following minutes for approval:

- June 12, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting Minutes
- June 12, 2025, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
- June 13, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
- July 1, 2025, Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

The June 13, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes and the August 5, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes were removed from consideration, as they were not included in the board materials.

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Smith and seconded by Trustee Norfleet. The motion passed by voice vote.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chair Winton introduced the next agenda item, which was committee reports.

1. Audit Committee Report and Recommendations

Trustee Smith Knight reported that the Audit Committee met to receive reports and consider several items related to internal and external audits. The Committee recommended approval of the updated Internal Audit Plan, the motion was made by Trustee Smith Knight and seconded by Chair Winton. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Student and Academic Affairs Committee Report and Recommendations

Trustee Norfleet reported that the Student and Academic Affairs Committee met to receive reports and consider several action items. The Committee reviewed and acted on three primary items and also received updates on student affairs, housing, and academic affairs. Key discussions included:

Trustee Norfleet noted that the Committee carefully reviewed the tenure and promotion packets, including faculty accomplishments, teaching effectiveness, scholarship, and service contributions, the motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Qualls. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Norfleet explained that the Committee reviewed updates to the post-tenure review policy, which included clarifications to evaluation procedures and timelines, the motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith. A roll call vote was then taken. The motion passed with all trustees voting in favor except Trustee Young-Seigler, who abstained. The motion passed.

Trustee Norfleet reported that the Committee considered recommendations from the admissions office regarding updated testing thresholds to better align with academic standards and student preparedness, the motion was made by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Young-Seigler. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Finance Committee Report and Recommendations

Trustee Traugher reported that the Finance Committee met to receive reports on enrollment, finance, budget, and institutional advancement. The Committee discussed proposed changes to the bank reconciliation policy and requested additional information before final approval. This concluded the Finance Committee report.

VI. PRESIDENTIAL CONTRACT

The Board Chair introduced the next agenda item, the presidential contract. She noted that each Board member received a proposed contract and that paper copies were available for review. She outlined options for discussion, including: (1) proceeding line by line during the meeting, or (2) moving into an executive session to discuss the full terms with only Board members, followed by next steps, noting that additional discussions with President Tucker would be necessary to finalize the contract.

After discussion, Trustee Smith Knight moved to enter executive session, and Trustee Young-Seigler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Upon returning from executive session, the Board Chair thanked members for their patience and opened the floor for action on the presidential contract. She called for a motion to approve the permanent presidential contract and to delegate authority to the Board Chair to execute the contract, the motion was made by Trustee Smith and seconded by Trustee Chatman. A roll call vote was then taken. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. REAL ESTATE DISCUSSION

The Board Chair introduced the next agenda item, the real estate discussion. The Board Chair noted that while it was discussed in the Finance Committee, the full Board should have an opportunity to engage. The goal was to set the terms for moving forward.

Chair Winton explained that the focus was on ensuring the Board and university were collectively involved in decisions required under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). She recommended the university commence the process and establish an advisory committee to help the Board conduct oversight of real estate decisions outlined in the MOU. This committee would include both university staff and external experts to provide a holistic perspective, especially in preparation for the upcoming master plan.

Discussion followed about the advisory committee's structure and timing. President Tucker noted he would propose a list of members within two weeks and could begin some preliminary work. The committee's work would be coordinated with existing resources, including financial analysis from relevant university teams. The Board clarified that the plan needed to be submitted to the State of Tennessee by December 1.

Trustees raised questions about the feedback loop and Board oversight. It was emphasized that the advisory committee would operate under the Board's direction, with the administration leading the effort and providing information back to the Board. The discussion clarified that while the advisory committee gathers data and makes recommendations, the Board—through the Finance Committee—retains oversight authority for all real estate matters.

Chair Winton noted that this approach differs from the usual committee process because the MOU did not go through a committee. The aim was to involve the full Board in reviewing the plan from the outset, without bypassing existing policies. Trustee Smith moved that the Board delegate authority to President Tucker to establish a Real Estate Advisory Committee to develop a plan in accordance with the MOU. Trustee Towns seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Traughber – No
- Trustee Chatman – No
- Trustee Smith Knight – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes
- Trustee Qualls – No
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

The motion passed.

Trustee Smith Knight moved that the Real Estate Advisory Committee report its work to the full Board to ensure all members are informed of its activities. Trustee Norfleet seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Traughber – No
- Trustee Chatman – No
- Trustee Smith Knight – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Yes

- Trustee Qualls – No
- Trustee Smith – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Trustee Young-Seigler – Yes

The motion passed.

VIII. ADOPTION OF 2026 TSU BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING CALENDAR

Chair Winton introduced the final action item on the agenda: the adoption of the Board of Trustees' 2026 calendar year meeting schedule, which was included in the board materials. She asked if there was any discussion regarding the proposed schedule.

Hearing none, Chair Winton called for a motion to approve the 2026 calendar year meeting schedule as presented in the September 19, 2025, board materials. The motion was made by Trustee Young-Seigler and seconded by Trustee Smith. Trustees Winton, Traughber, Smith Knight, Norfleet, Qualls, Smith, Towns, and Young-Seigler voted in favor of the motion. Trustee Chatman was not present for the vote.

During brief discussion, a trustee asked whether the schedule would include an opportunity for a Board retreat. Chair Winton confirmed that a retreat is in the works, though the timing will depend on logistics and available funding.

IX. NAMING OF ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

The Board Chair introduced the next agenda item, the naming of additional committee members and new committee chairs and vice chairs. She noted that the information was included in the Board materials for the September 19, 2025, meeting. Referring to Policy No. 2, *Committees of the Board of Trustees of Tennessee State University*, Section Three, Subsection A, Chair Winton emphasized that the Board chair determines the composition of and makes appointments to standing and special ad hoc committees.

At the meeting, Chair Winton appointed Trustee Bruce to the Student and Academic Affairs Committee and Trustee Towns to the Finance Committee and the Governance & Government Affairs Committee.

Chair Winton reminded the Board that, under Subsection B of the policy, the chair may delegate the selection of committee chairs and vice chairs to each standing committee. She noted that each standing committee is to have a chair and vice chair serving a one-year term, with the most recent appointments made in May 2024.

She stated that no new chairs or vice chairs would be appointed at this time, as the current chairs and vice chairs' terms have exceeded one year. Since her term as board chair ends in April 2026, she indicated that it is appropriate for the continued service of the current chairs and vice chairs

until May 2026, at which time appointments for new committees, chairs, and vice chairs will be made by the new Board chair.

X. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chair Winton introduced the next agenda item, the President's Report, and recognized President Tucker to present. President Tucker provided an update on the university's pathway to sustainability, emphasizing efforts to identify new revenue opportunities and highlighting partnerships that support TSU.

He outlined three key priorities: fostering a student-centered culture, improving customer service, and ensuring timely internal processes. Examples included standardizing response times and treating internal and external stakeholders as customers. He also shared student-led transformation projects on campus, including redesigns of common areas and dorm spaces, demonstrating student engagement in campus improvements.

President Tucker detailed plans to reimagine homecoming, including enhanced security, centralized campus activities, family-friendly events, and partnerships with sponsors and the foundation. He explained the introduction of VIP and corporate event spaces, controlled merchandise sales, and additional fundraising initiatives.

He concluded by emphasizing transformational change as essential for achieving financial and academic goals, noting progress in enrollment, revenue generation, cost reduction, and ongoing partnerships. Chair Winton thanked President Tucker for his report and leadership, recognizing the steps being taken to strengthen the university's performance.

XI. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Winton introduced the final item on the agenda, the Board Chair's Report, and stated that she would not be making a formal report at this time. Before concluding, Trustee Qualls noted one additional item under Other Business.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Winton invited Dr. Quincy Quick to address questions from the board regarding his earlier report and executive summary. Discussion focused on faculty research participation and grant submissions. Dr. Quick explained that approximately 17% of faculty account for 84% of proposal submissions, noting ongoing efforts to expand faculty engagement in research through targeted development and investment initiatives. He highlighted new funding for the College of Life and Physical Sciences and the growing success of the university's seed grant program, which received 104 applications.

Dr. Quick also discussed the university's indirect cost (IDC) rate, currently set at 42% and under provisional status. He explained that this status has caused some challenges with certain agencies withholding IDC funds but noted that a revised rate proposal is being prepared for submission to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Traughber confirmed quorum and called for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was moved by Trustee Norfleet and seconded by Trustee Smith. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INFORMATION ITEM

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Federal Funding Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Quincy Quick, Associate Vice President Research
and Sponsored Programs/Chief Research Officer

Background Information

Dr. Quick will present an update on Grant Awards and Submission Data, Federal Government R & D funding, and proposed FAIR model to replace current F&A (IDC) model

RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES NOVEMBER 2025 QUARTERLY REPORT

GRANT AWARDS AND SUBMISSIONS DATA: YEAR-OVER-YEAR COMPARISON

Metric	FY2025*	FY 2026*	Change (\$)	% Change
Total Direct Awards	\$44,221,191	\$28,291,991	–\$15,929,200	–36.0%
Total Indirect Costs Requests	\$4,690,045	\$2,001,182	–\$2,688,863	–57.3%
Total Project Awards	\$48,911,236	\$30,293,173	–\$18,618,063	–38.1%
Number of Awards	94	56	–38	–40.4%
Requested Amount (Submissions)	\$101,141,658	\$70,531,132	–\$30,610,526	–30.3%
Number of Submissions	103	88	–15	–14.6%

- Overall number of awards declined by 38
- Indirect cost request dropped by over 57%
- Proposal submission volume remains relatively strong, but funding yield per proposal is lower

***Note: Data presented is representative of new awards and/or IDC requests for that FY and not carried over from a previous FY; additionally IDC requests do not reflect actual expenditures**

FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING UPDATE

The FY 2026 federal R&D outlook reflects a major nationwide contraction, led by steep reductions in the Executive Branch’s proposed budget. The White House request signals the strongest decreases across agencies, marking a sharp reprioritization of research investments. In contrast, the Senate maintains modest increases in select areas, demonstrating efforts to preserve research continuity, while the House proposal mirrors a more restrained approach, offering smaller reductions.

Within the USDA, both the Agriculture Research Service (ARS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) experience overall declines, though the Senate moderates these cuts slightly. NIFA’s White House request is significantly lower, with limited offsets from the House and Senate. **Of particular concern to Tennessee State University are the severe proposed reductions to the 1890 Land-Grant programs, which threaten to erode long-term research capacity at HBCUs.**

Similarly, the National Science Foundation (NSF) faces deep White House cuts, while the Senate preserves near-level funding to stabilize core scientific programs. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) remains a notable exception—Congressional increases from both chambers offset the Executive reduction, maintaining biomedical research momentum.

Agency / Program	White House FY26 Request	House FY26 Request	Senate FY26 Request
Total U.S. R&D (All Agencies)	\$155 B (– 42%)	\$184 B (– 13%)	—
USDA – Agriculture Research Service (ARS)	\$1.7 B (– 7.2%)	\$1.812 B (– 1.1%)	\$1.869 B (+ 2.1%)
USDA – NIFA	– 37.5%	– 1.5%	+ 1.3%
NIFA – 1890 Research (HBCU Capacity Program)	– 68.9%	– 44.7%	– 44.7%
NSF – National Science Foundation	– 56.9%	– 22.7%	– 0.7%
NIH – National Institutes of Health	– 39.3%	+ 2%	+ 2.3%

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF CURRENT IDC MODEL WITH FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN RESEARCH (FAIR) MODEL

- The Joint Associations Group (JAG) proposes the implementation of the FAIR model
- Aligns reimbursement with actual project needs, replacing the current F&A model that is applied across all research types at an institution with tailored support that reflects the specific type and cost of each research project.
- Block federal action to cap or otherwise change existing negotiated F&A rates until OMB and federal agencies have worked with the stakeholder community to develop a clear plan for implementation of a new system based on the FAIR model.
- Ensure at least a two-year transition period for agencies and institutions to make the necessary changes to accommodate a new model.
- Preserve the existing F&A reimbursements system until the new model is fully implemented and operational across federal research funding agencies.



**TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING**

Friday, November 21, 2025	Tennessee State University Main Campus The Barn Agricultural Building 3500 John A. Merrit Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209
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APPENDIX

I. Executive Summary: Title III Update

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DATE: November 21, 2025

ITEM: Title III Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION: No action

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Andrea Tyler, Executive Director, Title III
Administration

Background Information

Dr. Tyler presents the following update on Title III.

Title III Executive Summary Board of Trustees - November 2025

Tennessee State University's (TSU) Title III funding has served as a critical catalyst for institutional growth, enabling the university to expand its capacity to provide high-quality, student-centered education. Title III support has empowered TSU to reinforce its academic infrastructure, modernize campus operations, and cultivate an environment where students can thrive. This investment has positioned the university to meet evolving educational needs while advancing student perceptions and engagement.

An area of impact has been student services. Title III support has enabled TSU to enhance advising, tutoring, mentoring, and career-readiness programs, ensuring students receive the holistic support necessary for persistence and graduation. Initiatives such as expanded supplemental instruction, first-year experience programs, and career development initiatives have strengthened engagement opportunities. These improvements reflect the university's commitment to fostering a nurturing and academically rigorous environment that supports students from enrollment through degree completion.

Title III funding has played a pivotal role in transforming learning spaces across campus, ensuring that students have access to modern, technology-enhanced environments that support deeper engagement and academic success. Through this support, classrooms have been equipped with updated instructional technologies, upgraded workstations, smart boards, upgraded laboratory equipment, and improved digital connectivity. As a result, faculty are better able to deliver innovative instruction, and students benefit from enhanced instructional spaces.

In addition to revitalizing instructional learning spaces, Title III funding has strengthened the university's broader infrastructure by improving the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of campus facilities. Investments have supported essential upgrades to building systems, renovations to academic and student support areas, and improvements to campus safety and technological infrastructure. For example, Title III funds were used to accelerate IT modernization and facilities upgrades that are essential for a 21st-century learning environment. From enhancing digital connectivity and cybersecurity infrastructure to upgrading Wi-Fi at the Avon Williams off-site learning Center, these improvements have transformed TSU's academic and operational landscape. These improvements not only enhance the daily experiences of students, faculty, and staff but also help the institution operate more effectively and sustainably. By modernizing its physical and technological foundation, Tennessee State University is better positioned to support long-term growth, institutional resilience, and a high-quality educational experience for all students.

Tennessee State University received an additional \$8.5 million in supplemental Title III funding for the 2025-2026 funding cycle. These funds will provide a significant boost to the ongoing efforts to strengthen academic quality, student support, and institutional infrastructure. This additional funding enables the university to accelerate key initiatives aligned with the University's Strategic Plan.

The total funding awarded in the 2025-2026 funding cycle is \$21,004,388.00.

2025-2026 Title III Funding

Total Funding-\$21,004,388

