Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting
February 19, 2026
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the "Barn")

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Terica Smith, Trevia Chatman, Leticia Towns. Other Board members present: Azana Bruce, Dimeta Smith Knight, Artenzia Young-Seigler.

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Secretary Brown conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Terica Smith, Leticia Towns, and Trevia Chatman. Following the roll call, Secretary Brown determined that a quorum was present.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: NOVEMBER 21, 2025, GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING.

The minutes from the November 21, 2025, meeting of the Governance and Governmental Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Chatman making the motion and Trustee Towns seconding the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all present Committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Committee Chair Smith announced the first agenda item as the Legislative Update and recognized Leah Dupree Love of the Ingram Group to provide an overview of legislative matters affecting the University.

Ms. Love began by commending University leadership and partners, noting that since November Tennessee State University has engaged in several meetings and interactions with the legislature. She specifically recognized President Tucker, Chair Winton, CFO Ms. Robinson, and consultant

Mr. Grady for their multiple appearances before the legislature over the past three months, stating that their preparation, clarity, and professionalism have been exemplary and have made the legislative process more effective.

Ms. Love noted that she had not included written materials in the Board packet due to the frequency of legislative changes and advised that she would provide a comprehensive summary of all legislative activity following the conclusion of the session.

Ms. Love provided an overview of the upcoming sunset review process, explaining that as part of the State's standard audit and review procedure, the University's governing board is subject to periodic evaluation. She noted that following prior review, the board was recommended for a three-year extension, and that implementing legislation was subsequently introduced in both chambers. Ms. Love reported that the measure has passed the Senate and is scheduled for consideration in the House Committee on March 9, after which it would proceed through the legislative process before becoming law.

Ms. Love outlined the budget process for public universities, explaining that institutions appear before legislative committees as part of the Governor's budget cycle. She noted that the University's funding request had been presented to the Senate Education Committee and passed out of committee. She further explained that, on the House side, higher education institutions will be presented collectively through the state's higher education structure, with Dr. Nolan of ETSU serving as the representative spokesperson. University presidents will be present during the hearings to respond to questions as needed.

Ms. Love reviewed current higher education legislation, noting that approximately thirty bills are being tracked, with four directly impacting the Board. She reported that a bill restricting the conferral of new tenure status had been taken off notice by the sponsor and would not proceed at this time. She also described a bill requiring institutions to adopt policies distinguishing between tenure decisions and disciplinary actions, noting that it had passed the higher education subcommittee and would continue through the legislative process. Additionally, she referenced a bill proposing the installation of a memorial courtyard for civil debate on public university campuses, which had been delayed in committee. Ms. Love further explained proposed changes to gubernatorial appointment timelines for public university boards, including adjustments to confirmation timing to align appointments with the legislative session.

Ms. Love provided clarification regarding Board appointment provisions and legislative drafting structure, noting that certain statutory language reflects prior changes to the University's governing board structure.

Ms. Love concluded by reviewing the University's funding outlook, explaining that appropriations are currently being considered across multiple funding categories, including land-grant funding, capital needs, operational funding, and other designated appropriations. She noted that the Governor's proposed budget includes a $1 million increase in land-grant matching funds to ensure alignment with anticipated federal allocations. Ms. Love stated that a comprehensive breakdown of the final budget would be provided once the legislative process is complete.

Following Ms. Love's presentation, members engaged in brief discussion and questions regarding the legislative proposals, including clarification on the tenure-related bill and its intended policy distinctions. Ms. Love responded that additional detailed information would be provided once legislation is finalized.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Smith stated that she would consider a motion to adjourn. Trustee Towns moved to adjourn, and Trustee Chatman seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, with all present Committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.