Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
February 20, 2026
Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the "Barn")

MINUTES

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

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Robbie Melton, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President of Enrollment Management; Dr. Bridgett Golman, Vice President of Student Affairs

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Norfleet called the meeting to order at 9:02 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, Azana Bruce, and Artenzia Young-Seigler.

III. OPENING REMARKS BY THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

In the opening remarks, Trustee Norfleet recognized Provost Melton for being named a leading innovator in technology for African Americans. He commended Provost Melton's achievements and expressed appreciation for the hard work and contributions of all individuals present.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Norfleet proposed a modification to the agenda, recommending the removal of item number nine, Update on Research and Sponsored Programs, to be discussed at a later meeting. Trustee Smith moved to adopt the agenda as modified, and 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.

V. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 21, 2025, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the November 21, 2025, meeting of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved as submitted, with Trustee Young-Seigler 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.

VI. REPORT ON UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, the undergraduate enrollment report, and invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to present. Dr. Stokes provided an overview of Enrollment Management operations, including admissions, registrar functions, recruitment, orientation, scholarship administration, and enrollment communications.

Dr. Stokes reported significant progress on strategic enrollment initiatives, noting that nearly all key objectives are now in progress or completed, with one remaining initiative requiring a broader university-wide effort. He highlighted organizational enhancements within the division, including key hires and expanded use of the Slate CRM system to improve data management and communications.

He provided an update on spring 2026 enrollment, reporting increases in both freshman and transfer student enrollment, as well as an 87 percent freshman retention rate from fall to spring. Dr. Stokes also noted improvements in operational efficiency, including reduced turnaround times for transfer credit evaluations.

Regarding fall 2026, Dr. Stokes reported that applications and admissions are trending above the prior year, with improvements in academic quality indicators such as GPA and standardized test scores. He outlined multiple application sources contributing to growth, including institutional applications, the Common Black College Application, the Common Application, and the State of Tennessee Direct Admit initiative.

Dr. Stokes also discussed revised scholarship strategies aimed at improving financial sustainability while maintaining competitiveness, noting that a majority of admitted students have received scholarship offers. He emphasized enrollment goals for the upcoming fall class and presented projections based on application, admission, and yield rates.

He concluded with an overview of yield strategies, including expanded recruitment travel, targeted communications, enhanced financial aid outreach, and increased collaboration across campus units. Board members engaged in discussion regarding retention, scholarship continuity, recruitment strategy timelines, application duplication processes, graduate recruitment, and transfer partnerships. Dr. Stokes responded to questions and emphasized ongoing efforts to strengthen enrollment growth and student success.

Dr. Stokes concluded his presentation, and the committee thanked him for the report.

VII. STUDENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, the Student Affairs report, and invited Dr. Bridgett Goldman to present. Dr. Goldman provided an overview of the Division of Student Affairs, emphasizing its focus on student engagement, well-being, and retention through cocurricular programming and student support services aligned with the University's mission and board priorities.

Dr. Goldman reported that Student Affairs has hosted more than 300 programs during the semester, including over 135 student activities and more than 200 Residence Life programs led by resident assistants. She highlighted intentional programming designed to support student development, leadership, and wellness, as well as innovative initiatives aimed at increasing student participation and engagement.

She provided updates on student conduct, noting ongoing efforts to uphold the University's code of conduct, including case resolutions, interim suspensions, and disciplinary processes that support student accountability and development.

Dr. Goldman also reported on Residence Life and housing operations, noting an 85 percent occupancy rate in the fall and 77.5 percent in the spring. She highlighted operational adjustments, including single-room conversions that generated additional revenue, and the implementation of a new housing management system to improve efficiency and student experience.

In student health services, Dr. Goldman reported more than 1,450 clinic visits and expanded utilization of the TimelyCare platform, which provides 24/7 medical and mental health services. She also noted ongoing wellness initiatives, preventive health programming, and new partnerships to expand student access to care.

Dr. Goldman concluded with an overview of spring priorities, including continued focus on student engagement, wellness initiatives, data-informed decision-making, and operational improvements. A committee member emphasized the importance of increasing mental health awareness efforts, particularly among underrepresented student populations. Dr. Goldman concluded her presentation, and the committee thanked her for the report.

VIII. REPORT ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, the Academic Affairs report, and invited Provost Melton to present on behalf of the Office of Academic Affairs. Provost Melton noted that the report included both informational items and academic program actions requiring approval and began with an update on the University's institutional accreditation status.

At Provost Melton's request, Dr. Charlize Anderson provided an overview of the University's progress on its SACSCOC fifth-year interim report. She reported that the report has been completed through a collaborative effort involving faculty and staff across the University and will be submitted to the SACSCOC portal the following week. She noted that the review committee is expected to convene in late April, with official results anticipated in June or July.

Turning to student success metrics, Provost Melton provided updates on retention and progression for first-time, full-time freshmen. She reported that 92 percent of fall 2025 freshmen were enrolled in 15 or more credit hours after the purge period, reflecting progress in ensuring on-time degree pathways. She further reported that 378 of 427 freshmen returned in spring 2026, resulting in an

89 percent retention rate, a 10 percent increase over the prior year. She noted that non-retention was primarily attributed to financial challenges.

Provost Melton then presented academic program modifications for Board approval. Dr. Anderson outlined proposed changes, including the termination of select concentrations and graduate certificates, a renaming of the Ph.D. program in Agricultural Sciences to Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences with the addition of new concentrations, the establishment of an Artificial Intelligence concentration within the M.S. in Data Science program, and adjustments to admissions deadlines for select health sciences programs. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee approved the academic program actions as presented, with all members voting in favor.

Provost Melton also provided a spring 2026 graduation update, reporting that approximately 1,300 students are expected to graduate, with a total of 1,399 degrees anticipated to be awarded. She noted that five commencement ceremonies are planned to accommodate the large graduating class and improve the overall experience for students and families, while remaining within budget.

Board members engaged in discussion regarding retention definitions, alignment of academic programs with workforce demands, and graduation logistics. Provost Melton emphasized ongoing efforts to align academic offerings with market trends, particularly in high-demand fields such as business, health sciences, and technology, including artificial intelligence initiatives.

Provost Melton concluded her presentation, and the committee thanked her for the report.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Young-Seigler 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 motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.