



ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 25, 2025

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting was streamed live via link found on this web page:

<https://www.tntech.edu/board/board-and-board-committee-meetings.php>

AGENDA ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees Academic & Student Affairs Committee met on September 25, 2025 in Roaden University Center, Room 282. Chair Rudd called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

Chair Rudd asked Mr. Lee Wray, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

- Camron Rudd
- Teresa Chasteen-Dunn
- Garry McNabb
- Michael Allen
- Braxton Westbrook

Other board members also in attendance were Rhedona Rose, Trudy Harper, Thomas Lynn, Fred Lowery, Barry Wilmore, and Tom Jones. A quorum was met. Tennessee Tech faculty and staff and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Rudd asked for approval of the minutes of the June 26, 2025 Academic & Student Affairs Committee meeting. Trustee Allen moved to approve the June 26, 2025 Academic & Student Affairs Committee minutes. Trustee Chasteen-Dunn seconded the motion. Trustee Rudd called a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

lee 12/17/25

AGENDA ITEM 3 – ENROLLMENT REPORT

Karen Lykins, Vice President for Enrollment and Communication, began her presentation by sharing the overall student headcount for fall 2025, which was up from last year. She shared new student numbers, breaking those numbers into new first-time freshmen, new transfer, new graduate, and new non-degree students.

Ms. Lykins then presented information about first-time freshmen for fall 2025, noting a strong academic profile reflected in average ACT scores and GPAs. She also highlighted the number of Presidential Scholars and National Merit Semifinalists, further showcasing the academic strength of the 2025 freshmen class. Additional demographic data highlights included geographic distribution, student age ranges, and the number of veteran/military-affiliated students. Ms. Lykins then presented the top 10 undergraduate majors and the top 5 graduate programs based on enrollment.

She concluded her presentation with an overview of the university's recruitment cycle, emphasizing the College Town Kickoff as a key event supporting recruitment and retention. She also shared early initiatives already underway for Fall 2026 recruitment, including key dates and planning efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – PROVOST'S REPORT

Interim Provost John Liu began his presentation by outlining the four pillars of academic excellence that guide students in choosing Tennessee Tech. He discussed student needs and family expectations, along with the metrics used to assess how these are being met. He also explained how these metrics relate to national rankings. He then reviewed the university's first-year retention rate, noting it has reached a record high. Additionally, he presented the university's 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rates, all showing a positive upward trend.

Next, Provost Liu announced that Tennessee Tech has been designated an "Opportunity University" by both the Carnegie Foundation and the American Council on Education—an honor recognizing institutions that combine high access with high post-graduation earning potential. He noted that while two public universities in Tennessee are considered high-earning, Tennessee Tech is the only one that is both high-access and high-earning.

Provost Liu then introduced Dean Mike Gotcher from the College of Emerging and Integrative Studies to give a focused update on the college. Dean Gotcher began his presentation by emphasizing the collaborative nature of the college, which works across departments and with faculty and staff to promote student success. He outlined the structure of the college including academic components and programs, degrees offered, number of faculty, and majors under each academic area.

lee 12/1/25

Dean Gotcher then discussed a few challenges that the university faces and how the college is actively working to address those challenges. These challenge areas included enrollment, retention, cost, and relevancy.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Expedited New Academic Program Proposal (ENAPP) for the Master of Science (MS) in Industrial and Systems Engineering

Interim Provost John Liu presented a proposal for a Master of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering (MSISE). He began by outlining the need for the new program, followed by an overview of its structure and key features. Dr. Liu also identified the target student population for the proposed program and concluded his presentation by sharing projected enrollment figures, anticipated instructional costs, and expected revenue. He then answered several questions from Board members.

Trustee Allen moved to send the Expedited New Academic Program Proposal (ENAPP) for the Master of Science (MS) in Industrial and Systems Engineering to the Board for approval and to be placed on the Board's consent agenda. Trustee McNabb seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Research & Economic Development Report

Interim Provost and VP for Research & Economic Development, John Liu, began his report with an update on research funding for Fiscal Year 2025, noting that total research funding is up and continues to trend upward. He credited this growth to the efforts of Tennessee Tech's faculty. Dr. Liu also shared data on research expenditures, which showed similar positive trends.

He then provided an overview of Tennessee Tech's Carnegie research activity rankings and National Science Foundation (NSF) research expenditure rankings. To provide clarity, Dr. Liu offered a detailed explanation of the distinctions between grants, activations, and expenditures. He concluded his portion of the report by emphasizing the value that enhanced research brings to the university and its students.

Dr. Liu then introduced Dr. Michael Aikens, Associate Vice President for Research and Economic Development, who outlined goals for research activations for the current year and detailed the strategies in place to achieve them, noting that progress is already in place toward several of those goals. Dr. Aikens concluded the Research and Economic Development Report by sharing an overview and update on the university's economic development efforts. His update included how research drives economic development, counties served, student involvement in economic development activities, types of economic development initiatives, and overall impact of these efforts.

12/17/25

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Student Affairs Update

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Mr. Marc Burnett, began his presentation by outlining the divisions under the Office of Student Affairs. He then highlighted the success of Fall 2025 move-in, sharing data on the number of students who moved into residence halls during move-in days, as well as total occupancy for both residence halls and Tech Village. He concluded this section by noting that a new residence hall is currently in the design phase.

Next, Mr. Burnett shared information about the fall's week of welcome, highlighting the various and large number of events held on campus and in the local community during this period.

He then presented highlights from Intercultural Affairs for the 2024–2025 academic year, focusing on the growth in programming, new initiatives, and increased collaboration across campus.

Mr. Burnett also recognized the Tennessee Tech Police Department providing updates on restitution secured, response rates, and officer training and professional development commitments.

He also provided an update on campus recreation, including usage data for the fitness center and participation levels in intramural sports and other recreational activities.

Lastly, Mr. Burnett shared updates on Health Services, highlighting the number of students utilizing medical services and offering insight into counseling and mental health services provided on campus.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Athletics Update

Athletics Director, Casey Fox, discussed a new strategic plan for athletics that will be implemented after the first of the year. He began by highlighting four core values that will guide the athletic department moving forward and serve as a foundation of the new strategic plan. Mr. Fox then discussed the recent conference change, highlighting Tennessee Tech's transition from the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) to the Southern Conference (SoCon). He provided comparative data on how Tennessee Tech compares with peer institutions in both conferences and explained the strategic rationale behind the move, noting the benefits and alignment with the university's long-term goals. He concluded his presentation with a brief update on the stadium project and responded to questions from Board members.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Dr. Kevin Braswell, Vice President for University Advancement, began his presentation by

Lee 12/17/25

sharing an update on the ongoing, multi-year “It’s Personal” campaign. He shared the focus area goals and overall goals of the campaign, as well as current numbers. He then shared the current money raised for these areas before sharing the total raised for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Dr. Braswell then highlighted fundraising totals for the last ten fiscal years. He shared the amount of fundraising dollars committed for several major projects that help enhance student experiences. He also shared information about the university’s scholarship strategy, particularly the role of donor funded scholarships.

Next, Dr. Braswell shared committed dollars for faculty support and discussed how philanthropy can play a role in increasing Tennessee Tech’s research activity. Dr. Braswell also shared information on giving by source over the last ten years and provided a side-by-side comparison of the number of proposals placed for FY15-19 and FY21-25.

Dr. Braswell concluded his presentation with updates on efforts to increase alumni and donor engagement, developments related to the Foundation Board, and an overview of the next steps for the campaign.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Academic & Student Affairs Committee adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Approved,
 12/17/25

Lee Wray, Secretary



AUDIT & BUSINESS COMMITTEE

September 25, 2025

Roaden University Center, Room 282

MINUTES

Meeting was streamed live via link found on this web page:

<https://www.tntech.edu/board/meetings/>

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Call to Order

The Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees Audit & Business Committee met on September 25, 2025, in Roaden University Center Room 282. Chair Tom Jones called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

Chair Jones asked Mr. Lee Wray, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members were present:

- Tom Jones
- Thomas Lynn
- Barry Wilmore

Other board members also in attendance were Michael Allen, Teresa Chasteen-Dunn, Trudy Harper, Fred Lowery, Garry McNabb, Rhedona Rose, Camron Rudd and Braxton Westbrook. A quorum was physically present. Tennessee Tech faculty, staff, and members of the public were also in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

Chair Jones asked for approval of the minutes of the June 26, 2025, Audit & Business Committee meetings. Thomas Lynn moved to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2025, Audit & Business Committee. Barry Wilmore seconded the motion. Chair Jones asked for a voice vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Lee 12/17/25

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Financial Update

Dr. Stinson gave the committee an update on university finances including comparison of end-of-year budget to actual end-of-year expenditures and tuition and fee revenue projections based on fall 2025 semester enrollments. Also presented was the University educational and general debt and days of cash on hand as of June 30, 2025.

This was an informational item; therefore, no action was required.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Capital Budget Update

The Capital Budget Update was presented for informational purposes only. Updates were provided to the Trustees through Diligent, and the item was available for discussion and questions.

This was an informational item; therefore, no action was required.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Master Plan Amendment

Dr. Stinson presented amendment # 5 to include the acquisition of 505 East 15th Street to provide an opportunity to relocate the administrative offices of the Facilities Service Complex which are currently situated on the west side of campus.

Committee member Barry Wilmore left the meeting during the presentation. Per Policy 005, Board Committees, III.B.4, *The Board Chair shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing committees, entitled to vote.*

Thomas Lynn moved to send the master plan amendment to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board's regular agenda. Rhedona Rose seconded the motion. Lee Wray took a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Organizational Chart Change

Dr. Stinson gave an overview of the crosswalk of organizational changes to include moving Career Development from Student Success to Academic Support and renaming the Women's Center to The Gretta Stanger Center.

Thomas Lynn moved to send the Organizational Chart Change to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board's regular agenda. Rhedona Rose seconded the motion. Lee Wray took a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

lee 12/17/25

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Performance Evaluation & Performance-Based Compensation

Kevin Vedder, Associate Vice President of Human Resources, presented an overview of FY2025 performance evaluation process. The criteria for non-faculty were Core Competencies (20%), Wings Up Way (20%) and Position-Specific Duties (60%). The criteria for faculty were based on teaching, advisement, administration, service/outreach, and research/scholarship/creative activity.

The performance-based salary increase was a 2.6 percent pool (0.6% allocated to classification and compensation study and 2% allocated for merit-based performance) based on the eligibility of faculty scores to be acceptable or better rating and staff scores to be meets expectations or better rating. Eligible employees must have been hired on or before December 31, 2024, and the employee not placed on a performance improvement plan during the fiscal year (July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025). The minimum individual increase was 1% with the maximum individual increase being 7%. Details of the distribution were provided.

This was an informational item; therefore, no action was required.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Classification and Compensation Study Update

Kevin Vedder provided the key outcomes of the classification and compensation study. Information was provided showing the outcomes of moving to market median of each phase for faculty and staff broken down by college and staff level. He updated the Committee that Tennessee Tech was named to the 2025 “Best Places to Work in Tennessee” list by Best Companies Group and the Tennessee Society for Human Resources as well as ranking #67 by Forbes Magazine on their list of best employers in the state of Tennessee.

This was an informational item; therefore, no action was required.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – Tenure Upon Appointment Recommendations

Dr. Liu requested the tenure appointment of Dr. Steven Thomas, Dr. Shoaib Usman, and Dr. KeKe Wu who were hired after the June 2025 Board meeting. Dr. Steven Thomas was hired as Chair/Professor for the Department of English. Dr. Shoaib Usman was hired as Professor for the Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering. Dr. KeKe Wu was hired as Associate Dean for the College of Business. Recommendation for tenure for each of these individuals was supported by their respective department faculty, college dean, and the provost. Supporting documents were provided in Diligent.

Thomas Lynn moved to send the Tenure Upon Appointment Recommendations to the Board for approval and to place it on the Board’s regular agenda. Rhedona Rose seconded the motion. Lee Wray took a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

LEE 12/17/25

AGENDA ITEM 10 – Internal Audit Plan Review

Amy Wilegus reported that the quarterly Internal Audit Plan Update was available in Diligent.

This was an informational item; therefore, no action was required.

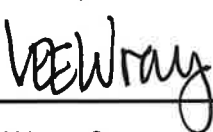
AGENDA ITEM 11– Adjournment of Open Session & Call to Order on Non-Public Executive Session

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m. After a short break, the Non-Public Executive Session began at 12:07 p.m. Trustees and Administration were present at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – Adjournment

There being no further business, the Non-Public Executive Session adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Approved,

 12/17/15

Lee Wray, Secretary