

**Student Financial Aid Committee  
September 28, 2021**

**Members Present**

Melissa Creek  
Addison Dorris  
Allen Driggers  
David Larimore  
Judy Riggsbee  
Frank Tittle  
Donna Wallis

**Members Absent**

Debbie Barnard  
Madison Harris  
Lori Maxwell

**Guests**

Cassandra Gronendyke  
Brandon Johnson  
Mary C. McCaskey  
Kristyn Ogletree  
Jerri Winningham

Dr. Driggers called the meeting to order at 11:03 am.

**Approval of Agenda**

Dr. Driggers presented the agenda to the committee members. Ms. Riggsbee made the motion to approve and Ms. Wallis seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of April 13 Minutes**

Dr. Driggers presented the minutes to the committee members. Ms. Wallis made the motion to approve and Ms. Riggsbee seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Scholarship Program**

Dr. Driggers turned the meeting over to Dr. Johnson to present the new scholarship program. An internal message should be sent out this week prior to Preview Day. Information was sent out Monday in Tech Times. We have refreshed our incoming freshman scholarship program that will be replacing our High Flyer Program. Students who are currently on scholarship will not have a change in the amount awarded. Dr. Johnson shared the website that provides scholarship information for the Fall 2022 entering freshman class. These are guaranteed scholarships. The awarding will be determined on the student applying to the University by December 15. The students will automatically be awarded a

scholarship on being admitted to the University if he/she meets the criteria. We want the students to receive the information as soon as possible in order for the students to make decisions on where they choose to attend school. The primary focus of our scholarships is the Presidential Scholars.

We will continue to offer the Golden Opportunity Grant which is a need-based grant. Scholarship application will be required to be submitted by December 15.

Tech Promise is a need based, last dollar scholarship. This scholarship is to cover tuition and mandatory fees.

Department Scholarships will not change and the scholarship application will still need to be submitted in order to be considered.

The site should display the information clean and easy to follow.

Dr. Johnson shared where we were and where we are now. He presented how competitive scholarships are with an Excel spreadsheet that provided info on our scholarships along with others such as UTM, UTC, MTSU, ETSU, APSU, UTK. He wanted the members to see how much coverage there was by other schools on their scholarships. All the other schools are merit based. Tech has expanded who will receive and the amount awarded with The Presidential Scholar Program. The only thing that has stayed the same is the \$5,000 level. Previously, we did not guarantee. Everyone had to apply for scholarships.

He provided a spreadsheet that displayed the ACT and GPA requirements for scholarship awards for the Fall 2022 freshman class. Students will not be required to submit the scholarship application.

The new scholarship program is being communicated by postcard, social media, digital marketing, billboards, and Preview Day. Dr. Johnson asked if there were any questions.

Dr. Driggers questioned where the funds came to fund the scholarships. Dr. Johnson responded that there is a university operational scholarship budget. The University was at a point that we didn't have a choice. Other institutions are out awarding Tennessee Tech on the awarding of scholarships. Dr. Driggers questioned about scholarships being stacked for students. Admission scholarships cannot be stacked but other scholarships can be stacked on an admissions scholarship like departmental scholarships and scholarships awarded outside the institution along with Hope and federal aid. Dr. Tittle questioned about the verbiage for the new scholarship program and may we extend more offers than funds available? Dr. Johnson responded that the same strategy will be in place that we will award scholarships that we know will not be accepted by applicants. We have historical data on our previous program. We will know if the scholarship program changes are successful or not next September.

Dr. Tittle shared his concerns of the 23-26 ACT range with the student yield. He questioned if we had data from other schools. It will cost us more money to recruit the students. As long as we grow the freshman class over the next three years, we should be fine financially. There is a risk in rolling out a new scholarship program but there is also a risk in not rolling out the program. Dr. Larimore questioned what percentage of the student body is receiving this kind of aid. Dr. Johnson responded that we are just under 50 percent of students receiving scholarships and thinks we will move to approximately 60 percent of our new freshman receiving institutional scholarships.

Ms. Creek questioned if tuition will be increasing. Dr. Johnson shared with the committee members that we went up two percent this year but he wasn't sure about future increase. Fee changes usually come out in the spring. Based on historical trends we will increase a slight amount. Dr. Johnson informed the committee members we are more expensive than other state schools except for UTK. We need to continue to be mindful due to affordability and accessibility.

### **Such Other Matters**

Dr. Driggers asked the members if there were any other questions. Dr. Larimore questioned the current enrollment. He had heard that we were down 280 students. Our headcount and FTE are down compared to last year. Dr. Johnson responded that we had anticipated that enrollment would be down. We are fairly sound financially. He talked about the different categories of students that makeup enrollment. Dual enrollment students do not generate much revenue. We are down 48 to 50 new students compared to previous fall but transfer students are up. Tech is down 3.4 % compared to last fall in headcount and FTE. APSU was down 6.1% in headcount and 8.6% in FTE. ETSU was down 3.1% in headcount but 5.4% in FTE. MTSU was down 5.6% in headcount and FTE was down 6.1%. TSU was up 6.1% and FTE was up 3.9%. Memphis was down 2.6% in headcount and 4% in FTE. UTC was down 2% in headcount 3.0 % FTE. UTK was up 3.7% in headcount and 3.2% FTE. UT Southern was up 7.9% in headcount and 3.5% in FTE. They were up 60 students. We were in one of the better situations. There is a lot of energy around HBC institutions in the country. Dr. Johnson will be sharing enrollment information with the Board of Trustees at the meeting scheduled next week.

Dr. Driggers questioned if there were any other questions that were not on the agenda. Dr. Johnson shared a couple of updates. We have received our NASFA report and we are working through the action plan and concerns. The Department of Education federal review has not been resolved yet but hopefully it will be during this academic year.

Dr. Larimore made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Riggsbee seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.