

Staff Advisory Committee
March 26, 2026 – 1:30 p.m.

Members Present: Brian Allen, Caira Benton (for Joyce Arnold-Hesson), Christa Blair, Jennifer Dewar, Emily Disbrow, Jennifer Goad, Liam Harder, Melanie Mabrey, Tammy Martorana, Irene Mauk, Peggy Nettenstrom, Cathleen Walker, Catherine Warren, Savannah Yarbrough

Members Absent: Danny Birdwell, Ashton Estes, Peggy Nettenstrom, Deborah Yu

Others Present: President Oldham, Lee Wray, Aleta Cannon

Summary:

Approved Agenda

Approved January 15, 2026 minutes

Discussed Staff Day planning updates

Comments by the President

Proceedings:

Chair Melanie Mabrey called the meeting to order at 1:34 pm. Jennifer Dewar motioned to approve the agenda for March 26, 2026. Liam Harder seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Savannah Yarbrough motioned to approve the January 15, 2026, minutes. Irene Mauk seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Chair Mabrey explained that a group had met on February 5, 2026, to continue planning Staff Day 2026. The group had discussed potential dates for the event: Friday, July 31, 2026, and Friday, August 7, 2026. Aleta Cannon noted that President Oldham would be unavailable on Friday, July 31. The following weeks approaching the fall 2026 semester would be too close to the new semester start and would be difficult for staff to work around. It was decided to host the event on Friday, August 7, 2026.

The group had discussed potential speakers for Staff Day: the new Emergency Management coordinator on campus teaming up with UPD Chief Nichols, a Cookeville Community Response employee, Dr. Rob Owens and Dr. Susan Wells, TWRA or a park ranger, and Shan Stout, the director of tourism for the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. There was discussion of looking for props to borrow from other departments for photo opportunities at the event. Shirts and giveaways were discussed, and it was decided to ask for pricing on long sleeve shirts and crewnecks as well as tote bags. Cannon explained the pricing provided by Cookeville

Promo for the shirt and tote options and displayed the designs on the screen. The group liked the tote bag, and it was noted that the long sleeve shirt would be a great option as well.

Awesome Eagle was booked to come to the event. UPD had approved one of the SUVs to be filled with food pantry donations. A QR code would be posted at the event so if attendees did not bring items for donation, they could scan the code to donate. Cannon was working on a slide show to display at the event with Staff Advisory committee members' names, photos, and departments so attendees could identify members for assistance.

President Oldham began his comments by discussing the new issue of Visions magazine that had recently released and the Tennessee Tech identity. He felt Tennessee Tech had found its identity in its "teen years". It had been ten years since the FOCUS Act was signed into law and Tennessee Tech had established its Board of Trustees. Much had happened since that time; the Board had grown from ten to twelve members, two SACSCOC cycles without recommendations, five consecutive years of clean state audits, four times more research funding, and many other major accomplishments in enrollment, academic program creation, and increased rankings. Notably, Tennessee Tech had provided a \$7 billion-dollar economic impact to the state of Tennessee.

Lee Wray noted that he had been involved in interviews for three positions over the last several weeks and multiple candidates had many great things to say about Cookeville and Tennessee Tech, and this was due to the hard work of people on campus like the committee members.

Caira Benton asked for an update on the road paint near the Hooper Eblen Center. Chair Mabrey stated she had reached out to both Parking and Facilities about this but had not received an answer yet. She would be meeting Facilities AVP Dan Warren soon and would ask about this.

Harder asked if the new parking vehicle's camera was able to scan for vehicles parked in locations that are non-parking spaces because he had not seen any tickets on the cars. Chair Mabrey answered that parking tickets were now emailed to the account on file when the license plate was scanned. Tammy Martorana and Harder both commented that speeding had been an issue on campus. Chair Mabrey noted that UPD had recently added speeding signs on Dixie Avenue through a state grant to assist with this problem. Pedestrian crossing education would also be a part of the efforts to assist with this. Christa Blair asked about skateboard and scooter education on campus, and it was something UPD wanted to utilize but needed the resources to do so.

Jennifer Goad asked if there was a way to make more staff across campus aware of the committee and what it did. Cannon offered to submit Tech Times announcements throughout the year with information on the committee and said an email could be distributed to staff across campus as well.

Yarbrough motioned to adjourn. Mauk seconded. Adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Aleta Cannon, recorder