

## **University Assembly**

**November 19, 2025**

### **TEAMS Meeting**

**Members Present:** Atkinson, Baier, Brown, Browning, Carroll, Carver, Chitiyo, Comer, Craven, Creter, Dewar, Donadio, Field, Foster, Grimes, Hall, Hanna, Hasan, A. Hill, C. Hill, Hu, Jenkins, Kalyanapu, Kennedy, Killman, Liu, Mabry, MacKenzie, Manginelli, Gotcher, Null, O'Connor, Olsen, Owens, Park, Payne, Rajabali, Seiler, Shank, Shipley, D. Smith, Snider, Stinson, Suters, Tennant, Timmerman, Trent, Warren, J. Wendt (for Zagumny), S. Wendt, Wilson, Winkle, Xu

**Members Absent:** Bare, Brown, Carlile, Cecil, Christen, Elliott, Fox, Gannod, Guadalupe, Le Borne, Majors, Mann, McCulley, Natrass, Nichols, Ojo, Peng, Reagle, Rosacia, Russell, Seitz, Slater, Spears, Tidwell, Yu

**Others Present:** Baker, Braswell, Cannon, Chavez, Denson, Huo, Luna, Lykins, Oldham, Saltsman, B. Smith, Vedder, Winningham, Wright, Wray

#### **Summary of Proceedings:**

Approved agenda

Approved minutes from April 16, 2025

Received report of the Academic Council for Fall 2025

Received report of the Administrative Council for Fall 2025

Received remarks from President Oldham

Other such matters

#### **Proceedings:**

President Oldham called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm. Stacey Browning motioned to approve the agenda and Mike Gotcher seconded. Motion APPROVED.

A motion to approve the minutes from April 16, 2025, was made by Andrew Donadio and seconded by Gotcher. Motion APPROVED.

Kimberly Winkle presented the report of the Academic Council for fall 2025. Academic Council met three times during the fall semester. On September 3, 2025, a repeal of the MBA program dismissal policy and Policy No. 207 Tenured Faculty were approved. The council received Policy No. 220 Instructional and Assignment Use of Artificial Intelligence, which was approved out of cycle, and received a first reading of Policy No. 274 Graduate Assistantships. On October 1, 2025, the council received the first reading of Policy No. 732 Intellectual Property, approved the amendment of the graduate certificate in Chemical Engineering, approved the termination of the Child Life concentration in Human Ecology, and approved the AI program modification in Computer Science. On November 5, 2025, the council approved Policy No. 732 Intellectual Property and Policy No. 274 Graduate Assistantships. Two new academic program proposals were approved and first readings of Policy No. 272 Graduate Studies Executive Committee, Policy No. 283 General Graduate Transfer Credit Requirements, and Policy No. 282 Graduate Faculty Appointment and Responsibilities. Darron Smith motioned to approve the fall 2025 report of the Academic Council. Brenda Wilson seconded. Motion APPROVED.

Donadio presented the report of the Administrative Council. Administrative Council met three times during the fall semester. On August 27, 2025, the council approved Policy No. 207 Tenured Faculty and received Policy No. 141 Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment, Policy No. 142 Title VI, Policy No. 419 Clery Act Compliance, and Policy No. 511.1 Fee Charges, Refunds, and Fee Adjustments which were approved out of cycle, and received an update on Talon. On September 24, 2025, the council approved revised Administrative Council procedures and revised Policy No. 504 Collection of Accounts Receivable and Policy No. 511 Payment of Student Fees and Enrollment. Policy No. 536 Solicitation and Acceptance of Gifts and Policy No. 732 Intellectual Property were received as first readings. On October 29, 2025, the council approved Policy No. 536 Solicitation and Acceptance of Gifts and Policy No. 732 Intellectual Property. Policy No. 1103 University Social Media and Policy No. 1110 University Publications were received as first readings. Browning motioned to approve the fall 2025 report of the Administrative Council. Darron Smith seconded. Motion APPROVED.

President Oldham began his remarks by noting it had been an active semester. Tennessee Tech was ranked the number one public university in Tennessee according to Money Magazine. Women's cross-country and soccer were the 2025 conference champions in the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC). Both competed in regional activities for the NCAA tournament and had done well. Football held a top ten national ranking and would be finishing out the season on Saturday, November 22, 2025, against UT Martin to win the conference. Oldham hoped everyone would attend as it would be one of the biggest football games held on Tennessee Tech's campus. Tennessee Tech was also in the process of transitioning to the Southern Conference after being in the OVC for 76 years. This would be a great opportunity not only for athletics but for recruiting new students as well. Oldham had recently written an op-ed piece for the Tennessean's online edition regarding football and a president's perspective on why college football is played.

For capital projects, there had been two groundbreaking for new buildings. The Advanced Construction and Manufacturing Engineering (ACME) building was one of those, and construction would be starting around April 2026. Completion of the project was scheduled for spring 2028. The other groundbreaking ceremony was for the J. J. Oakley Innovation Center and Residence Hall, which would be a 400-bed facility. This project was scheduled to be completed

in fall 2027. The dedication of Wilmore Way was on October 31, 2025, and Captain Wilmore was in attendance for the event and homecoming weekend. Johnson Hall renovation was in full swing, with a scheduled spring 2027 completion date. The west side of Tucker Stadium was scheduled to be completed by fall 2026. A few other projects were in design, including the Football Operations Center and a student spirit and event center to be at the south end of Tucker Stadium, to be presented to the Board of Trustees. A master landscape plan for campus would lay out a 20–30-year vision of landscape projects, which included a Tennessee Tech tower that would be placed in the circle in front of Volpe Library.

Research funding continued to reach all-time highs and exceed expectations year after year. In the last year, enrollment continued to grow toward the goal of 12,000 students. Current enrollment was at 10,700 students and was the fourth year in a row to bring in around 2,000 or more freshmen. One-third of the freshman class had a perfect 4.0 high school GPA, and the average ACT score was 24.1. Fall 2025 was the first time that first year retention rates had reached 80.1%. THEC had recently approved a master's degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering program, and a new Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence was upcoming as well. The master's program for Social Work was underway and a PhD in Biology was being worked on as well. Tennessee Tech's nurse practitioner program was ranked the number one online nurse practitioner program in the state. Dr. Rory Roberts in Mechanical Engineering was named the inaugural Jon Yarbrough Endowed Professor. Sherrie Cannon, Chief Fred Nichols, and Melanie Mabrey were all honored by the Putnam County Commission for helping save a colleague's life.

In the last two freshman classes, the state FFA presidents have enrolled as Tennessee Tech students. Last year's FFA president, T. Wayne Williams, had been elected as a national FFA officer and was serving as the southern region vice president for national FFA. The next Board of Trustees meeting would be on Thursday, December 4, 2025, and Lighting the Quad would take place that same week on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 5:30 pm. The Board of Trustees meetings would take place in the Roaden University Center multipurpose room. There were three new trustees, as the state had changed the format of the board to become a 12-member board. The three new trustees were Garry McNabb, Teresa Chasteen-Dunn, and Allen Foster. Rhedona Rose, a College of Agriculture class of 1974 alum, had assumed chairmanship of the board. Oldham thanked everyone for their work and encouraged them to keep it up.

Lee Wray shared the conceptual rendering of the landscape plan for the circle and walkway in front of Volpe Library, including the Tennessee Tech tower and event space. Mark Creter wanted to congratulate the Backdoor Playhouse for having recently closed on seven sold-out performances of the Stephen Sondheim production *Into the Woods*, directed by Dr. Wendy Mullen. Linda Null asked if President Oldham had heard the rumor that no building on campus could be higher than Derryberry Hall and asked if the Tennessee Tech tower would be higher than Derryberry. Oldham answered that it had not been fully designed at the time, so he was unsure, but it could be comparable. Null noted that the tower could possibly be a few inches shorter to keep with tradition. Karen Lykins read a note of positive feedback from a recent parent that brought their potential freshman to campus for a tour and thanked everyone for contributing to the positive environment and interactions the family had on campus.

Oldham noted that that partnerships with the community, the city of Cookeville, and the Cookeville-Putnam County Chamber of Commerce were outstanding. They all recognized Tennessee Tech's importance to the broader community and were willing to partner on almost anything. The College Town Kickoff event had exceeded expectations and there was an estimated 8,000 in attendance that fall. Footage from the event was being used in a new commercial spot. Wray also wanted to thank the Golden Eagle Marching Band for their fantastic job at football games and helping the team win.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:02 pm.

Becky Smith, recorder

Documents on file with minutes:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of April 16, 2025
3. Received report of the Academic Council for Fall 2025
4. Received report of the Administrative Council for Fall 2025