Office of the Provost

TENNESSEE TECH

Dear Campus Community,

One of my core beliefs is that, regardless of who serves as provost, that individual should be visible, engaged with people across campus, and approachable. Our "Go for a Walk" initiative is one way I am putting that belief into practice. I'm pleased with the interest these opportunities have generated, and we will continue to offer them.

Pictured is Casey Garrison from the Whitson-Hester College of Nursing, who joined me for our first campus walk. Casey was also kind enough to join me in my ongoing practice of picking up trash along the way! We are exploring additional ways to create opportunities for members of our campus community to connect with me, so stay tuned for future announcements.



Now that I have been here for four months, I have spent considerable time reflecting on our opportunities and how we can continue to move this great institution forward. I welcome your input and want to share a few thoughts and initiatives that I hope will engage and inspire our campus community.

Advancing Our Academic Mission

First, I recognize the extraordinary talent across this campus. That talent was on full display at our Victory Circle event in late October, serving as another reminder of the tremendous expertise, creativity, and potential within our university community.

With that in mind, I want to invite your ideas on how we can advance an academic opportunity that distinguishes our institution and positions us for future growth.

While there is certainly a place for developing new academic programs, I am particularly interested in identifying opportunities to leverage or expand what we already have in place—initiatives we can build upon relatively quickly to create distinction and support growth.
I am also interested in ideas that respond to the issues shaping higher education across Tennessee, including post-pandemic trends in college-going rates, dual enrollment, 90-credit-hour pathways, access, affordability, industry alignment, and workforce demands.
The point is simple: We have an incredible number of talented and thoughtful people on this campus, and I want to hear from you. What opportunities do you see? What existing strengths could we build upon? What ideas could help advance our academic programs and further distinguish this great institution?

Please share your thoughts and ideas by completing the form by close of business on November 15. After the submission period closes, I will aggregate the responses, share the emerging themes with the campus community, and identify potential next steps.

Two Initiatives Moving Forward

In addition to seeking your ideas for advancing our academic mission, I want to share two initiatives already underway. Both will bring together colleagues from across campus to explore opportunities for meaningful progress, with plans to showcase our work in late spring 2027.

1. Artificial Intelligence and the Academic Experience

As a technology-infused university, we should aspire to be a national leader in this space. We want to explore how artificial intelligence can be meaningfully integrated into the academic experience to enhance teaching, learning, and education more broadly. We will also consider opportunities to leverage AI across the broader campus community to support innovation and improve how we work.

2. Student Success

Our second initiative focuses on student success. We want to better understand the factors that contribute to students leaving the university and identify ways we can address those factors to help more students persist and graduate.

By listening to students, examining their experiences, and better understanding the challenges they face, we can identify opportunities to strengthen our support, improve retention, and help more students achieve their educational goals.

Learn more about either initiative, share your thoughts, or volunteer to serve on a task force.

We envision both initiatives drawing on the broad perspectives and expertise of our campus community, with smaller subgroups focused on specific areas of work. Our goal is to bring together diverse voices, identify meaningful opportunities for action, and make measurable progress in both areas. We look forward to sharing our progress and highlighting the work of these teams with the campus community in late spring, ahead of graduation.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our university and to the students we serve. I look forward to hearing your ideas, working together on these initiatives, and continuing to move our institution forward.



Wings Up!



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