



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

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**HASLAM ANNOUNCES LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD FOR TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

University to Have Increased Autonomy with Local Governing Board

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam today announced the eight appointees to the newly created Tennessee State University (TSU) local governing board, giving the university increased autonomy to support student success as the state continues its Drive to 55 initiative.

Tennessee State University’s governing board is one of six to be appointed by the governor, a result of the governor’s FOCUS Act passed by the General Assembly earlier this year.

The appointees to the TSU board (additional details attached) are:

- Dr. Deborah Cole, president and CEO of Citizens Savings Bank & Trust Co.;
- Stephen Corbeil, president of TriStar Division of Hospital Corporation of America;
- Bill Freeman, chairman of real estate development firm Freeman Webb, Inc.;
- Dr. Richard Allen Lewis, owner of Lewis & Wright Funeral Home;
- Pam Martin, president of Cushion Employer Services and member of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission;
- Obie McKenzie, managing director of BlackRock, Inc.;
- Dr. Edith Peterson Mitchell, president of the National Medical Association and clinical professor of Medicine and Medical Oncology for the Kimmel Cancer Center; and
- Bishop Joseph Walker III, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Nashville and International Presiding Bishop of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship.

“There is incredible momentum around Tennessee’s college enrollment rate, which increased to a historic high of 62.5 percent in 2015. With Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect we’ve been successful in increasing access to higher education, but as we change the conversation and culture of expectations in our state we have to ensure our colleges and universities are supported in their efforts to create student success,” Haslam said.

“These six local governing boards will provide more focused support to the institutions as we continue the Drive to 55, our push to have 55 percent of Tennesseans with a degree or credential by 2025,” Haslam added.



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Haslam also appoints members to local governing boards for Austin Peay State University, East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee Technological University and the University of Memphis.

Subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, the board appointments are effective January 16, 2017. If confirmed, board members will undergo orientation and professional development delivered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The TSU board will assume responsibility upon the first called meeting by Haslam.

The six state universities will have increased autonomy with the authority to appoint the campus president, manage the university budget and set tuition, and oversee other operational tasks.

About the Drive to 55

In 2013, Governor Haslam launched the Drive to 55 to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or certificate to 55 percent by 2025. As a result, the Drive to 55 has established the Tennessee Promise program, the nation's first scholarship and mentorship program that provides high school graduates last-dollar scholarships to attend two years of community or technical college free of tuition and fees; reduced the number of college freshmen requiring remediation through the SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support) program; provided free technical college for adults through TCAT Reconnect Grants; created Tennessee Reconnect + Complete to help more adults return to college to complete unfinished degrees; developed a more comprehensive state approach to serving student veterans; and leveraged technology to enhance classroom instruction and college advising.

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