

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees**  
**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**November 20, 2025**  
**Tennessee State University – The Farrell Westbrook Complex (the “Barn”)**

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Trustees Charles Traughber, Jeffery Norfleet, Leticia Towns, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Azana Bruce, Trevia Chatman, Marquita Qualls, Dimeta Smith Knight, Terica Smith, and Artenzia Young-Seigler

**University Staff Present:** President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Bradley White, Interim VP of Business and Finance; Sterlin Sanders, Chief Information Officer; Jim Grady, Alvarez & Marsal

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Traughber called the meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

Committee Chair Traughber declared that a quorum was present. Board Secretary conducted the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustees Charles Traughber, Leticia Towns, and Dakasha Winton. Trustee Norfleet later joined the meeting virtually.

**III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chair Winton moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Towns. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Absent

The motion passed.

**IV. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2025, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes from the September 18, 2025, meeting of the Finance Committee were approved as submitted, with Chair Winton making the motion and Trustee Towns seconding the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes

- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Absent

The motion passed.

## **V. APPROVAL OF BANK RECONCILIATION POLICY**

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the first agenda item, the approval of the Bank Reconciliation Policy, noting that the proposed policy and supporting materials were included in the Board materials for the November 20, 2025, meeting. Mr. Bradley White, Associate Vice President of Business and Finance, presented the item.

Mr. White explained that the revised policy had previously been submitted to the Board in September and was returned for additional revisions, which have since been completed. He reported that the policy is now before the Committee for review and approval.

Mr. White further provided benchmarking information in response to prior Board requests, explaining that among locally governed institutions, two institutions utilize a model with one preparer and one approver, while three institutions, including Tennessee State University, utilize a model with one preparer and two approvers. He noted that approvers typically range from the Vice President for Business and Finance to the Assistant Controller.

Trustee Smith Knight raised a question regarding the policy's description of the approval process, noting that the language referred to a three-step process rather than accurately reflecting a preparer and two-approver model. Mr. White acknowledged the issue and agreed that the policy language should be corrected to reflect a two-approver process following preparation.

Trustees inquired whether the Internal Auditor had reviewed the revised policy and whether the policy adequately supports timely and effective bank reconciliations. Mr. White confirmed that the policy had been reviewed and stated that it is achievable, sufficient, and does not omit any necessary provisions.

Trustee Young-Seigler asked whether the policy addressed alternative approvers in the event an assigned approver is unavailable. Mr. White explained that while not explicitly stated in the policy, standard University practice allows approval to escalate to the direct supervisor of the designated approver. He acknowledged that this practice is not specifically articulated in the policy.

Following discussion, Trustee Towns made a motion and Chair Winton seconded the motion to approve the Bank Reconciliation Policy subject to the correction identified by Trustee Smith Knight clarifying the two-approver process. A roll call vote was taken:

- Trustee Traughber – Yes
- Trustee Towns – Yes
- Chair Winton – Yes
- Trustee Norfleet – Absent

The motion passed.

## **VI. FISCAL YEAR 2025 INSTITUTIONAL REVISED BUDGET**

Committee Chair Traugher introduced the next agenda item, the approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 revised institutional budget, noting that the materials were included in the Board's meeting packet. Jim Grady of Alvarez & Marsal was invited to present.

Mr. Grady explained that Tennessee public institutions submit three budgets annually: a proposed budget approved in June, a revised (October) budget reflecting finalized enrollment and updated assumptions, and an estimated budget projecting year-end results. He stated that the University was seeking approval of the revised FY 2026 budget.

Mr. Grady reviewed a comparison between the proposed budget approved in June and the revised budget, noting that the proposed budget reflected a net operating deficit of approximately \$39 million, while the revised budget reflects a net operating deficit of approximately \$1.8 million—an improvement of roughly \$37 million. He explained that the improvement was primarily driven by increased revenues, including \$35 million received under the State Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and approximately \$6 million in additional tuition and fee revenue resulting from stronger-than-projected enrollment.

Mr. Grady further explained revenue adjustments, including a \$1.5 million increase in indirect cost recovery (IDC) based on year-to-date performance and trends, increased homecoming and parking revenues, and an accounting adjustment recognizing previously unused state scholarship funds as scholarship expense.

Turning to expenditures, Mr. Grady reported an \$8.3 million increase in expenses compared to the proposed budget. He explained that approximately \$6.1 million of the increase related to personnel costs, primarily due to updated salary and benefit assumptions for vacant positions that were filled at current market rates rather than outdated salary tables. Additional personnel-related increases included temporary faculty benefits, recruiting investments, internal audit positions, police overtime, restoration of program positions, and employee education assistance.

Mr. Grady also reviewed approximately \$2.2 million in non-personnel expense increases, including the TBR services contract, recruitment and enrollment system investments (including Slate), insurance premiums previously omitted from the budget, THEC financial aid assistance services, lobbying services, transportation insurance, and miscellaneous departmental and operational expenses.

Following discussion, Chair Winton made a motion and Trustee Towns seconded to approve the FY 2026 revised institutional budget. Secretary Brown conducted a roll call vote, including Trustee Norfleet participating via Zoom. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VII. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT UPDATE**

Committee Chair Traughber introduced the next agenda item, an update on Institutional Advancement, and welcomed Ms. Eloise Abernathy Alexis, Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Committee Chair Traughber noted that materials were included in the Board's meeting packet.

Ms. Alexis provided an overview of her initial months in the role and reiterated that Institutional Advancement's charge is to build a culture of involvement and giving to Tennessee State University that is significant and sustainable. She identified three priorities: building trust, inspiring giving, and driving results.

Ms. Alexis reported that trust-building efforts have focused on engagement with alumni leadership, university-connected boards, students, faculty, corporate partners, foundations, and community stakeholders, including collaboration with the TSU National Alumni Association, the TSU Foundation Board, and student groups.

To inspire giving, Ms. Alexis emphasized transparent and consistent communication through alumni town halls, homecoming, and other engagement activities. She noted that Institutional Advancement has taken a coordinated approach to donor engagement across university and community events.

Ms. Alexis also discussed efforts to strengthen fundraising operations, including onboarding a new Director of Fundraising, restoring operational capacity, resolving gift-processing backlogs, and stabilizing electronic giving and payroll deduction systems. She reported that reconciled fundraising totals reflect modest growth compared to the prior year and that approximately \$1.4 million in private grant proposals have been submitted.

Finally, Ms. Alexis outlined two strategic initiatives underway: transitioning the alumni giving model to improve coordination and reduce donor fatigue, and preparing for a comprehensive fundraising campaign focused on student success, scholarships, and campus infrastructure.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Winton moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Towns. A voice vote was taken, with all Committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.