

Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
May 7, 2026
Tennessee State University – Virtual

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Dimeta Smith Knight and Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Brown, Interim General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Erik Schmeller, Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs; Sterlin Sanders, Interim Chief Information Officer; Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President of Enrollment Management; Dr. Bridgett Golman, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Erica Lewis, Director of Student Conduct; Dr. Dorsha James, Director of Student Health Services

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Norfleet called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Committee Chair Norfleet requested that Secretary Brown conduct the roll call. The following committee members were present: Trustee Jeffery Norfleet, Trustee Terica Smith, and Chair Winton. The committee members participating electronically confirmed that they could hear and speak with the Board and that they were alone in the room. Following the roll call, Secretary Brown determined that a quorum was present.

III. OPENING REMARKS BY THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

In the opening remarks, Committee Chair Norfleet expressed appreciation to the institution for its work in preparing the documents and information for the meeting. He also recognized Trustee Tiriveedhi as the new faculty trustee and thanked him for joining the meeting.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Smith moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Chair Winton. A roll call vote was taken, with all present committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 20, 2026, STUDENT AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the February 20, 2026, meeting minutes of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee were approved with a correction to the spelling of Provost Melton's name. Trustee

Smith made the motion, and Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with all committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC UNITS ACTIONS

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item concerning proposed academic programs and academic unit actions and invited Dr. Erik Schmeller, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to present. Provost Schmeller noted that the two proposed academic actions were no-cost enhancements and had completed the University's curricular approval process.

Provost Schmeller first presented the establishment of a new concentration in the 4+1 accelerated BBA-MBA pathway. He explained that the pathway would provide high-achieving undergraduate students with an opportunity to begin graduate-level coursework during their senior year. Students with at least 60 credit hours and a minimum 3.0 GPA would be eligible to apply during their junior year and, if accepted, complete four graduate-level courses during their senior year. He noted that the pathway would allow students to reduce the cost and time required to complete an MBA while creating a pipeline into the University's graduate programs.

Provost Schmeller then presented a proposed Artificial Intelligence concentration within the Master of Science in Computer Science program. He explained that the concentration would utilize existing faculty and courses and provide students with additional preparation in areas including artificial intelligence, machine learning, generative AI, and applied deep learning. He noted that the concentration was intended to respond to industry demand and provide students with skills relevant to the current job market.

Committee members engaged in discussion regarding the proposed 4+1 BBA-MBA pathway, including potential faculty workload implications, the curriculum and available areas of study, and the relationship of the pathway to the University's existing MBA and Executive MBA programs. The trustees also asked about the relationship between the proposed Artificial Intelligence concentration and the University's existing master's program in data science. Provost Schmeller indicated that he would provide additional information in response to the questions raised.

Following discussion, Committee Chair Norfleet recommended holding the proposed academic actions for further consideration until the requested information could be provided. The Committee agreed to defer action and reconvene prior to the full Board meeting to consider the recommendations.

VII. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item concerning the Academic Affairs informational report and invited Interim Provost Schmeller to present. Provost Schmeller noted that the report provided an overview of recent accomplishments and activities within the University's academic units, including student and faculty achievements, grant activity, program reviews, student success initiatives, and efforts to strengthen enrollment pipelines.

Provost Schmeller highlighted several student and faculty accomplishments, including a political science student being named a Truman Fellowship finalist, accounting students' community service and financial literacy efforts, and Dr. Andrea Ringer receiving the Ohio Valley Conference Outstanding Faculty Award. He also highlighted recent grant successes and the progress of several academic program reviews, including the College of Education's reaccreditation process. Provost Schmeller encouraged Committee members to review the additional materials available in the Board portal for more detailed information regarding student accomplishments, research, grants, and service activities.

Provost Schmeller also provided an update on preparations for the fall semester. He reported that student success staff were actively advising students to support their return to coursework and noted that the University's spring freshman retention rate was 89 percent, the highest rate to date. He also provided updates on dual enrollment efforts, including continued work with Metro Nashville Public Schools to increase enrollment and revenue, as well as TRIO programs and related renewal efforts designed to strengthen the University's student pipeline.

Committee Chair Norfleet thanked Provost Schmeller for his report and encouraged continued efforts to expand dual enrollment partnerships and establish additional memoranda of understanding with schools and school systems to strengthen the University's student pipeline. He also encouraged Provost Schmeller to continue working with Dr. Johnny Smith and Dr. Stokes on these efforts.

VIII. STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item concerning the Student Affairs Report and invited Dr. Bridgett Golman, Vice President, Division of Student Affairs, to present. Dr. Golman noted that the report provided highlights from the broader Student Affairs report available in the Board portal and covered student activities and leadership, student conduct, residence life, athletics and spirit programs, health and wellness services, and career development and support.

Dr. Golman provided an update on student activities and leadership, reporting 87 programs hosted from August through April, 81 active student organizations, and the induction of 35 students into Alpha Lambda Delta. She also highlighted Greek life engagement, with 277 new members across eight of the nine Panhellenic organizations conducting intake during the academic year.

Dr. Erica Lewis, Director of Student Conduct, provided an update on the Office of Student Conduct. She discussed efforts to expand the Student Affairs Disciplinary Committee, improve the efficiency of the student judicial process, and strengthen the Student Court program. She also highlighted training for campus users of the Maxient system, which is used to manage student conduct, residence life, and mental health alert records. Dr. Lewis reported that active conduct cases had decreased from 74 to 53 and that the Office of Student Conduct was developing a discipline awareness campaign and updating standardized Maxient correspondence for the upcoming academic year.

Dr. Golman then provided an update on residence life. She reported a 78 percent occupancy rate during the spring semester and provided current housing application figures for fall 2026. At the

time of the meeting, the University had 1,801 housing applications with deposits. Committee members discussed the housing deposit process and its role in providing a more accurate projection of incoming residential students.

Dr. Golman also highlighted activities and recruitment efforts for the Aristocrat of Bands, Cheer, and Dance programs. She reported performances at University and community events and discussed ongoing recruitment efforts following the graduation of a large student cohort. Committee members asked about the search for a permanent Band Director and projected band enrollment for fall 2026. Dr. Golman reported that efforts were underway to finalize the Band Director search and that approximately 200 students were expected for the band.

Dr. Dorsha James, Director of Student Health Services, provided an update on TimelyCare and the University's health and wellness services. She reported 328 TimelyCare visits from February through April and 1,078 completed virtual visits overall, including both medical and mental health services. She noted that TimelyCare provides on-demand medical and mental health services, scheduled counseling, psychiatric services, and digital health coaching. Dr. James also highlighted services provided through the Student Health Center, including blood pressure monitoring, STI testing, HIV prevention services, and health screenings.

Dr. James also discussed student health outreach initiatives, including the "Your Health Matters" campaign and the Club TSU event, which provided students with education regarding alcohol and drug use, peer influence, and personal risk awareness. She further reported on activities at the Health and Wellness Center, which recorded more than 21,000 visits during the year, and noted that the swimming pool received a 98 out of 100 rating from the Tennessee Health Inspector.

An update was also provided on the University Counseling Center. Dr. James reported that in-person counseling sessions resumed February 9 following the hiring of Dr. Kim Dale as Executive Director. Students have access to in-person counseling as well as additional virtual counseling through TimelyCare, with exceptions for students requiring a higher level of care. The University is also in the process of hiring an additional counselor.

Dr. Golman concluded the report with an update on career development and student support services. She reported more than 25 career-related events during the spring semester, including a career fair attended by more than 85 employers. She highlighted several students who received employment offers through the University's career development efforts. Additional updates included services provided through One-Stop Navigation, Veteran Affairs, Disability Services, International Student Services, and the Floyd Payne Campus Center.

Committee members thanked Dr. Golman and the Student Affairs team for the report and the services provided to students.

IX. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the next agenda item, the enrollment management update, and invited Dr. Eric Stokes, Vice President for Enrollment Management, to present. Dr. Stokes provided an overview of spring recruitment activities, enrollment initiatives, technology

enhancements, and fall 2026 enrollment progress, emphasizing the collaborative efforts of admissions, recruitment, operations, the registrar, financial aid, academic affairs, student affairs, athletics, alumni, and other University partners.

Dr. Stokes reported extensive spring recruitment through Tigers on Tour, school visits, counselor and student influencer events, and on-campus programs throughout Tennessee and regional markets. He highlighted strong engagement from Memphis-Shelby County Schools, the success of Spring Preview Day, continued promotion of the Trailblazer Scholarship, and efforts to reengage students who had stopped out. He also recognized the contributions of the University's Tiger Ambassadors in supporting recruitment activities.

Dr. Stokes discussed enhancements to the University's applicant portal, which allows students to access admission letters, scholarships, enrollment confirmation, application checklists, financial aid information, events, and campus resources. He also reviewed a new enrollment management dashboard developed with Alvarez & Marsal that integrates with Slate and provides data to monitor applications, admissions, confirmations, academic indicators, and scholarships. He noted that the dashboard has helped the enrollment team identify areas requiring additional outreach and support.

Regarding fall 2026, Dr. Stokes reported 1,610 confirmed first-time freshmen who had paid the \$100 enrollment deposit, along with 174 confirmed transfer students. He noted that 1,110 students had registered for new student orientation and emphasized that enrollment growth had occurred without sacrificing academic quality. Most confirmed freshmen are expected to enroll in at least 15 credit hours, particularly because many scholarship and tuition-discount programs require full-time enrollment.

Dr. Stokes also reported that approximately 85 percent of confirmed students registered for orientation had submitted a FAFSA. He outlined continued efforts with financial aid staff, schools, counselors, students, and families to increase FAFSA completion. Comparative data showed increases in applications, admissions, and confirmations over the prior year, while GPA and ACT indicators remained generally consistent with or above the previous year. Transfer applications and academic performance also remained strong.

He provided updates on new student orientation and yield initiatives, including high school signing days, social media engagement, direct communications, and a new digital financial aid resource within the applicant portal. The resource is intended to help students and families understand their awards, estimated costs, remaining balances, and payment options and reduce enrollment losses related to nonpayment. He also discussed a postcard initiative allowing academic deans, faculty, and advisors to personally connect with admitted students during the summer, as well as the continued Cultivate campaign targeting high school sophomores and juniors.

Following the presentation, Committee Chair Norfleet and Trustee Smith Knight commended Dr. Stokes and his team and discussed opportunities to strengthen recruitment and financial support through alumni associations, churches, community organizations, NPHC organizations, and other partners. Dr. Stokes noted that alumni had become an important extension of the University's

recruitment efforts and highlighted ongoing partnerships with community organizations, summer camps, and other groups.

Dr. Stokes also discussed enhancements to the dual enrollment application process and the University's partnership with Nashville State Community College, noting that additional community colleges had expressed interest in similar partnerships. In response to a question from President Tucker, Dr. Stokes clarified that the 1,610 confirmed freshmen, combined with 174 confirmed transfer students, represented approximately 1,780 students in the enrollment pipeline.

President Tucker commended Dr. Stokes and the Enrollment Management team for rebuilding the division's infrastructure and resources and achieving substantial progress toward the University's enrollment goals. Provost Schmeller also noted Academic Affairs' collaboration with Enrollment Management on Tigers on Tour recruitment activities and reported that dual enrollment revenue had exceeded \$185,000 for the year.

Dr. Stokes concluded his presentation, and the trustees thanked him and his team for the report.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Winton moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Trustee Smith. A roll call vote was taken, with all committee members present voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

COMMITTEE FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- **Artificial Intelligence Concentration and Data Science Program Alignment** – Committee members requested additional information regarding the relationship between the proposed Artificial Intelligence concentration and the University's existing master's program in data science. *Assigned to: Provost Schmeller & Dr. Robbie Melton*