Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
May 13, 2026
Tennessee State University – Virtual

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Dakasha Winton. Other Board members present: Marquita Qualls

University Staff Present: President Dwayne Tucker; Ginette Garza 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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Norfleet called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.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 noted that the meeting was a continuation of the previous week's discussion regarding proposed academic programs. He explained that the committee had reconvened to receive additional information and invited Dr. Erik Schmeller, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to lead the committee through the discussion.

IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

V. PROPOSED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIC UNITS ACTIONS

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the continued agenda item concerning proposed academic programs and academic unit actions and invited Dr. Erik Schmeller, Interim Provost and Vice

President for Academic Affairs, to provide additional information requested by the Committee prior to consideration of the proposed actions.

Provost Schmeller clarified that the proposed actions involved concentrations rather than new academic programs and would not require additional costs or faculty. He noted that the courses associated with the concentrations were already part of the University's existing course inventory and that the proposed changes represented the lowest level of program modification requiring only notification. He also noted that the proposals had completed the University's curricular approval process.

Provost Schmeller provided additional information regarding the proposed 4+1 BBA-MBA concentration, explaining that the pathway would provide high-performing undergraduate students with an opportunity to complete four graduate-level courses during their undergraduate program. He noted that the pathway would allow students to take graduate coursework at the undergraduate tuition rate and was intended to encourage students to continue into the MBA program.

Provost Schmeller also clarified the proposed Artificial Intelligence concentration within the Master of Science in Computer Science program. He explained that the concentration is designed for students with a computer science background, while the University's existing data science concentration is more broadly accessible to students from different academic majors. He noted that the two offerings therefore serve different student populations and are not duplicative.

Committee members discussed the proposed academic actions, including questions regarding student persistence and the potential financial impact for students transitioning from undergraduate financial aid to graduate financial aid in the fifth year of the 4+1 pathway. Provost Schmeller indicated that this issue was not specifically addressed in the proposal and agreed to provide additional information.

Following discussion, Committee Chair Norfleet called for a motion to recommend approval of the proposed academic programs and academic unit actions to the full Board. Chair Winton made the motion, which was seconded by Trustee Smith. A roll call vote was taken, with all present Committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Smith moved to adjourn, with the motion seconded by Chair Winton. 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:

- **4+1 Pathway Student Persistence and Financial Aid Impact** – Committee members requested additional information regarding student persistence and the potential financial impact on students transitioning from undergraduate financial aid to graduate financial aid during the fifth year of the proposed 4+1 pathway. *Assigned to: Provost Schmeller*