Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Student and Academic Affairs Committee Meeting
June 30, 2026
Tennessee State University – Virtual

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Jeffery Norfleet, Terica Smith, and Dakasha Winton.

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; Leah Louallen, Strategic Advisor to the President; Sterlin Sanders, Interim Chief Information Officer

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Norfleet called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Trustee Norfleet recommended to amend the agenda by removing Item Number 4, the approval of revisions to the academic tenure policy regarding tenure-track appointments and tenure criteria, from consideration at the meeting. He further requested that the administration engage in a comprehensive shared governance process with appropriate faculty, staff, and other institutional stakeholders to review, refine, and develop revisions before bringing the matter back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting. Chair Winton moved to adopt the agenda as amended. 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.

Chair Winton moved to adopt the agenda as modified and contained in the materials for the June 30, 2026, committee meeting. Trustee Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with all present committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF REVISIONS TO ACADEMIC TENURE POLICY REGARDING TENURE-TRACK APPOINTMENTS AND TENURE CRITERIA

Committee Chair Norfleet introduced the agenda item concerning the proposed revisions to the academic tenure policy regarding faculty discipline and invited Dr. Erik Schmeller, Interim

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to provide an overview of the proposed revisions prior to consideration of the action by the committee.

Provost Schmeller explained that the proposed revisions address recent state legislation providing university administration with additional flexibility in addressing faculty misconduct. He stated that the proposed policy establishes procedures for disciplining faculty members for adequate cause, including misconduct and unsatisfactory performance. Provost Schmeller noted that the proposed revisions were developed after reviewing policies at multiple institutions and largely incorporated elements of Middle Tennessee State University's policy.

Attorney Brown provided an overview of the legal requirements underlying the proposed revisions. She explained that the proposed policy provides separate processes for faculty discipline based on misconduct and unsatisfactory performance. The misconduct process would provide for notice and a hearing and would proceed through the Provost and President for a final determination, without faculty committee input, consistent with the requirements of state law. The unsatisfactory performance process would allow for faculty engagement, committee review, and department-level feedback concerning performance expectations.

Provost Schmeller further explained that documentation, annual evaluations of instruction, student evaluations, and other existing documentation would continue to be considered as part of the disciplinary process. He noted that the proposed revisions were being incorporated into the tenure policy, although further consideration through the shared governance process would be appropriate to determine how the provisions best fit within the overall policy.

Trustees discussed the proposed revisions and the need for additional work to ensure that the policy is comprehensive, sustainable, and appropriate for the institution. Committee Chair Norfleet expressed appreciation for the administration's work and due diligence in developing the proposed revisions and acknowledged the requirement to move forward in accordance with state law.

Following discussion, Committee Chair Norfleet called for a motion that the Student Academic Affairs Committee recommend to the full Board of Trustees approval of the revisions to the academic tenure policy regarding faculty discipline, with the express understanding that the administration immediately engage in a shared governance process and work collaboratively with appropriate institutional stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and sustainable policy. Committee Chair Norfleet further requested that the administration provide a final draft to the Student Academic Affairs Committee by September 15, 2026, for review and action at the Committee's November 5, 2026, meeting. Trustee Smith moved to approve the recommendation. Chair Winton seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, with all present committee members voting in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Norfleet 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:

- **Academic Tenure Policy Revisions and Shared Governance Process** – Committee Chair Norfleet requested that the administration immediately engage in a shared governance process and work collaboratively with appropriate institutional stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and sustainable faculty discipline policy. Committee Chair Norfleet further requested that a final draft be provided to the Student Academic Affairs Committee by September 15, 2026, for review and action at the committee's November 5, 2026, meeting. *Assigned to: Provost Schmeller*