



# Board of Trustees News & Updates

## 2023 Fall Edition

### TRUSTEES

Deborah Cole (Chair), Pamela Martin (Vice Chair), Steve Corbeil, Andre Johnson, Bill Johnson, Richard Lewis, Obie McKenzie, Van Pinnock, Joseph Walker, and Shaun Wimberly



Dear TSU Community and Supporters,

As chair of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to share our next newsletter, the 2023 Fall edition, regarding the Board's activities, including actions taken to ensure we continue to carry out our oversight and governance responsibilities, and further our role in moving the University forward. This is extremely important to me as a two-time graduate of this great institution. I welcome you to read this newsletter, which reflects a summary of our most recent board meeting and activities. You can also find the newsletter at the Board of Trustees website on the Notices and News page.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah A. Cole

### President Dr. Glenda Glover Announces Her Upcoming Retirement

On August 14, 2023, President Glover announced her intention to retire after 10 years of dedicated service. President Glover's tenure will end, effective July 1, 2024. During President Glover's tenure as President, she has made significant and substantial contributions to TSU's progress, development, and success. President Glover's tireless work at TSU has elevated the standing of TSU statewide, nationally, and internationally, as well as within the federal government and the Nashville, Tennessee, and national corporate communities. The Board of Trustees will lead the search process for the selection of TSU's next President.

### TSU Board of Trustees Announces the Commencement of the Presidential Search Process

During its September 14, 2023, meeting, the Board of Trustees established the process by which the Board will select the next President. The Board's Executive Committee, along with Trustee Steve Corbeil, will serve as members of the Search Committee, along with other individuals appointed by Board Chair Cole. The Board set forth the process for the selection of a search firm, establishment of a timeline for the search process, and the development of a Presidential profile and statement of qualifications for the Presidential position.

Anyone selected as a finalist for the President position will undergo interviews with the campus community prior to being selected as President. In addition, the appointment of an individual to serve as President of TSU will be presented to and subject to the vote of the entire Board.

### TSU Board Set to Address Historic \$2.1 Billion Underfunding

On September 18, 2023, the Board of Trustees received a copy of a letter issued by the U.S. Department of Education in which the USDOE announced a striking disparity in funding between land-grant HBCUs and their non-HBCU land-grant peers. According to the USDOE, HBCUs have been significantly underfunded and were owed over \$12 billion in funding. TSU was at the top of the list of underfunded institutions, where it was reported that the State of Tennessee underfunded TSU by over \$2.1 billion.

TSU is one of two land-grant institutions in Tennessee, with the other being the University of Tennessee. Under the Second Morrill Act of 1890, states must provide an "equitable distribution" of funds between their land-grant institutions.



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In their letter to Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack stated:

*“Unequitable funding of the 1890 institution in your state [Tennessee State University] has caused a severe financial gap, in the last 30 years alone, an additional \$2,147,784,704 would have been available for the university. These funds could have supported infrastructure and student services and would have better positioned the university to compete for research grants. Tennessee State University has been able to make remarkable strides and would be much stronger and better positioned to serve its students, your state, and the nation if made whole with respect to this funding gap.”*

The Secretaries went on to note that other state legislatures have provided “significant state allocations” to address this issue, while, in other states, coalitions of students and alumni have obtained court orders to require states to allocate remedial funding. The Secretaries encouraged Governor Lee to work with them to resolve TSU’s significant underfunding and suggested “a combination of a substantial state allocation toward the 1890 deficit combined with a forward-looking budget commitment for a two-to-one match of federal land-grant funding for these institutions in order to bring parity to funding levels.”

As federal and state officials address TSU’s historical underfunding, the Board of Trustees will continue to work closely with the University’s administration and state officials to find immediate and impactful remedies for TSU. The Board of Trustees will address the underfunding issue more directly at its upcoming meeting on November 16, 2023.

### **Board of Trustees Addresses Key University Operational Matters at its September Meeting**

On September 14, 2023, the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees conducted its regularly scheduled meeting. The Board, including its committees, received and discussed key report items, and approved important academic, budget, and operational items critical to the University’s success. The Board reviewed outstanding audit issues, approved a Modified Fiscal Year 23-24 Audit Plan, received updates on the University Budget, master plan, and construction and facilities at TSU, and listened to and discussed reports on enrollment, scholarships, personnel, and customer service.

The Board also approved an academic program restructuring in the College of Agriculture to house five new departments: Department of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Environmental Sciences, Department of Food and Animal Sciences, Department of Agricultural Business and Education, and Department of Human Sciences. The restructuring will address rapid growth in the University’s agricultural programs over the last decade.

### **Trustees Continue to Monitor University Administration’s Progress on Board Resolution Items**

Since its inception, the Board has taken an active role in oversight of TSU operations. Based on its ongoing Board self-assessment process and in response to the Comptroller’s Report concerning TSU’s operations, the Trustees approved a Resolution at the Board’s March 2023 meeting to further enhance its oversight of TSU operational matters. The Board Resolution contained a 12-item action plan covering fiscal and operational matters, including enrollment, scholarships, housing, financial aid, personnel action and hiring, and customer service and responsiveness.

At the September 14, 2023, Board meeting, the Trustees received a report on the Board Resolution’s 12-item action plan. Items included a review of the University’s updated Scholarship Plan and a request for more detailed information regarding the same. Additionally, housing and enrollment data was provided to the Board and will be provided to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

During the Board meeting, a personnel action plan was presented, with additional information to follow at the next Board meeting. The Board also heard a report on efforts to construct two new residence halls to address housing concerns. Board Chair Coleman noted that the University continues to work on its customer service activities and charged the Administration



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to provide continued reports. President Glover will provide an updated report on the University's activities related to the Board Resolution at the Board's November 16, 2023, meeting.

### Board Approves 2024 Calendar Year Meeting Schedule

The Board approved the following 2024 calendar year meeting schedule during the September 14, 2023, Board meeting:

2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule
March 14, 2024
June 13, 2024
September 19, 2024
November 21, 2024

### Next Board Meeting set for November 16, 2023

The Board of Trustees next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2023. For meeting details, visit <https://www.tnstate.edu/board/meetings.aspx>.