

Central research office reaches “crisis level”

MEGAN REAGAN
Reporter

Concern regarding staffing levels within the Office of Research and Economic Development has been on the minds of the Tennessee Tech Faculty Senate for nearly nine months, and now some faculty members describe the situation as dire.

The ORED has set a record of more than \$23 million in external funding for research, according to ORED Vice President Dr. Jennifer Taylor. She says this is a result of the growth that has been seen over the last few years.

However, concerned faculty members say although staffing issues are permeating university wide, they have reached “crisis level” in ORED.

Tech is a heavily research oriented university, and with the current staffing issues within the ORED, it is feared many faculty who depend on the external funding for research may not be able to meet the obligations required.

Some of the support staff that works within the ORED aids in completing paperwork, entering information and other clerical support work for grants thatm-



The Office of Research and Economic Development is in crisis, as issues with staffing may result in their inability to meet the obligations required to get external funding for research. Photo by Sarah Aku.

have already been awarded to the university.

“If that stuff doesn’t get done and our obligations for the grants are not met, we could lose those grants – or be forced to pay back what has already been given to us,” one faculty member said. “It is falling on the faculty to do all that, which they do not have the time to do properly.”

This issue was raised by the Faculty Senate on Nov. 29, 2021, according to meeting minutes and notes.

It was noted the ORED was reorganizing, and new hires would be made; but in the Feb.

7 Faculty Senate meeting notes, Senate President Luna is noted to have said she thought the reorganization of the ORED “is clouding the ability to hire new personnel” as no new hires were made.

Another faculty member said

see ORED pg. 2

Tech Committee in Violation of Tennessee Law



Junior Kobe Young works on his studies on the first floor of Crawford Hall where the OCM is now located. The Office of Communications and Marketing was moved from the RUC to Crawford, and now they are being relocated to Foundation Hall. Photo by Sarah Aku.

HAYLEY LEMING
SARAH AKU
Guest Contributors

Tech Campus Space Utilization and Allocation Committee has failed to post meeting minutes online since Sept. 29, 2021, a violation of the Tennessee Open Meeting Act.

The committee is responsible for monitoring the utilization and space allocation of academic and administrative buildings and facilities across campus. They plan and recommend changes of utilization and allocation of spaces based on

academic, financial and enrollment needs, along with receiving recommendation requests for the changing or creating of new spaces.

In an email from Dr. Mark Stephens, dean of the College of Graduate Studies and the director of the committee, “the administrative associate in my office keeps the official records, including the meeting dates ... I found where we had two meeting[s] after the September 2021 meeting. The meetings were on June 12, 2022 and July 26,

See Tech Committee Violation pg. 3

English professor files lawsuit against the university

MEGAN REAGAN
Reporter

Tech, over summer break, was named in a federal lawsuit after an associate professor claimed she was discriminated against when seeking a promotion.

Associate professor of English Kristen Deiter filed the federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee alleging civil and human rights violations.

Claims brought against the university stem from a “personnel decision” made by Provost Dr. Lori Bruce and President Phil Oldham in 2021 where Deiter was denied a promotion.

According to the court documents, Deiter has been pub-

lished in two internationally known peer-reviewed journals, published a book review and presented papers at international conferences domestically and abroad. She was also the recipient of Tech’s Scholar-Mentor Award, which honors faculty that display accomplishments in mentoring, scholarship, research and teaching.

“[Deiter] was qualified for the promotion to professor,” according to her attorney, Joseph Hubbard. “She received an overwhelming majority in favor of her promotion [in her department]: six of the eight evaluators voted to recommend her promotion.”

see Professor Lawsuit pg. 3



Associate professor of English Kristen Deiter filed a lawsuit against Tech, claiming she was discriminated against when seeking a promotion to professor. Photo from Pixabay.

<h3>Student Debt Forgiveness Editorial</h3> <p>Predident Biden signed into law a plan to forgive up to \$20,000 in student. A step in the right direction.</p> <p><i>Page 2</i></p>	<h3>Tech Choral Director Feature</h3> <p>Craig Zamer continues to show his love for music as he begins his 16th year at Tech.</p> <p><i>Page 3</i></p>	<h3>Football Schedule</h3> <p>Tech opens 2022 season against Kansas on Friday, Sept. 2.</p> <p><i>Page 5</i></p>
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Student Loan Forgiveness is a Step in the Right Direction

LUKE HAYSLETTE
Managing Editor

On Wednesday, Aug. 24 Biden announced that those in debt with student loans would be eligible for loan forgiveness of up to \$20,000 in an attempt to remedy the student loan debt epidemic that plagues one in seven people living in this country.

Individuals with student loans that make less than \$125,000 a year or households that make less than \$250,000 qualify for up to \$10,000 in relief. Students who received the Pell Grant during their time in school qualify for \$20,000 in debt relief. The majority of people being directly affected by this plan are among the most desperate borrowers. An estimated 90% of the money is going to those making less than



Jere Whitson houses the Office of Financial Aid for Tech. On average, freshman at Tech borrow \$5,442 to assist with the cost of attending school. Photo by Luke Hayslette.

\$75,000 a year.

This sets up an estimated 43 million Americans to have their loan payment reduced and 20 million to have their loans forgiven entirely. Biden hopes that this debt reduction will help stimulate the economy.

“All of this means people can start to finally crawl out from under that mountain of debt to get on top of their rent and their utilities, to finally think about buying a home or starting a family or starting a business,” Biden said.

“This does have the potential to raise the living standards for tens of millions of people,” said Scott Horsley, NPR’s chief economic correspondent. However, Biden’s plan does not help those who choose not to go to college or could not go due to financial burdens or inaccessible education.

In March 2020, it was announced that the collection of student loans would be paused because of the coronavirus pandemic. However, the pause on paying back student loans ends in December. Now is the optimal time to provide relief to those unable to pay back their student loans starting in December.

Biden’s plan will help millions of Americans who do have student loans. There are many people rightfully excited at that prospect.

The issue of inaccessible education doesn’t change, however. Colleges will continue to force students who attend to borrow money that they don’t have while promising them a future in which they can pay off those loans.

The wealth gap in America continues to grow with the top 1% of households holding 32.3% of the country’s wealth and the bottom 50% holding just 2.6%, according to Federal Reserve data published for quarter four in 2021. This plan stands to benefit primarily households that either make less than \$250,000 per year or individuals that make less than \$125,000 per year. Biden’s plan might not immediately affect the wealth gap, but it is a step in the right direction.

Student on the Street

BEE GOODMAN
Reporter

Does the new student loan forgiveness bill offer any help for you?



Emma Esley
Freshman
Chemical Engineering

“It wouldn’t affect me just yet, don’t have any student loans acquired just yet.”

Lily Painter
Senior Preoccupational
Therapy Major

“Yes, it does. It’ll be super helpful, especially since I’m about to go to grad school and take out even more loans.”



Nicolais Zechki
Freshman Mechanical
Engineering Major

“The bill doesn’t affect me at the moment. I just started, so, no, no loan yet.”



ORED continued for pg.1

that at some point, it becomes “a leadership issue.”

“It has gotten down to where they only have one person in what is called pre-award and what is called post-award in the ORED,” the faculty member said. “As a faculty member, our job is to do the research. The support staff does all the paperwork so we can do the research that keeps the money flowing in.”

The concerned faculty member said

this issue puts faculty members at risk of non-compliance.

“Faculty are understandably very nervous,” the faculty member added. “If we mispend, it comes back on us. It is the university’s duty to provide us with support, and we’re not getting that.”

However, Taylor said currently all obligations are being met.

“I anticipate that we will continue to meet all obligations and get all grants and contracts submitted on time and in good shape,” she said. “Grant submissions and grant processing can be affected by a lot of

factors, but at Tech, the processing of grants has all been completed on time and will continue to be done on time.”

Taylor did, however, say that with the increase of grant submissions, ORED is needing to expand its support staff.

She said one new hire has been made and part-time assistance has been obtained while interviews are being conducted.

“Sometimes people get anxious, but the processing of grants has been done on time and will continue to be done on time,” she said.

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The Oracle encourages readers to write letters and commentaries on topics of interest. A few guidelines:
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Letters may not run every edition due to space. The Oracle reserves the right to edit for style, grammar, length and clarity.
Submissions must be sent to oracle@gmail.com and received by 3 p.m. the Wednesday before publication.

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Choral director conducts his 16th year at Tech



Dr. Craig Zamer directs Concert Choir ensemble in the Bryan Fine Arts Building. Photo by Elliot Payne.

Having his eyes open to a denser catalog of music and feeling more culturally enriched by it, Zamer finds it important to give students a similar experience through his leadership and music choices.

A former student of Zamer, Isabel Berry-Womack, said, “I really respect Dr. Zamer because he always tried to incorporate different kinds of music every single semester in Chorale. Not only does he incorporate foreign pieces, he gives you background and story to all of them.”

An example of this diversity appeared when Tech Chorale ventured to Costa Rica in the spring of 2022. They performed songs like “Congorí Shangó” and “Zancudo con Dengue,” which were easily recognizable to local audience members. Zamer recalled, “Our audiences just lit up. They were electrified by the fact that we sang something from their country.”

Aside from leveling cultural barriers, Zamer believes music can offer students the same comfort it brought him at a young age. He said, “Ultimately, my goal for my ensembles is for them to feel like a place where students can have that feeling of belonging. Students, even here in college, can struggle with where they fit in, so I treat my ensembles like a family.”

FRANKLIN MCCARTHY
Reporter

Dozens of voices echo off the vaulted ceiling and stained glass of the Iglesia la Soledad. Smiles occupy the faces of the Costa Rican locals sitting in the pews. As harmonic tones vibrate from wall to wall, the audience hangs on every note, captivated by the melody’s will.

In an instant, silence is summoned by the gesture of a hand. The crowd stands and applauds as conductor Craig Zam-

er turns, bowing to them with a smile spanning from ear to ear.

Zamer is the director of choral activities at Tech and is beginning his 16th year at the university this fall.

He recalled his love for music taking root at the beginning of his high school career. Zamer said, “It’s where I felt like I fit in. In middle school, I definitely had a rough time, but through music – through singing – I kind of found my confidence, and I kind of found my thing that I

love to do.”

In high school, Zamer participated in his school’s Madrigal choir, whose members donned 16th century style outfits and only sang music from the same era.

Later, he joined honors choirs and had his musical horizons expanded. “Being in those larger choirs—it was those experiences that I found extremely impactful to me, and ultimately I found what I wanted to do in my profession,” Zamer said.

Tech Committee Violation Continued from pg. 1

2022. We may have had others in this time span but that is all I can find on my calendar.”

According to article 8-44-104 of the Open Meeting Act, “the minutes of a meeting of any such governmental body shall be promptly and fully recorded, shall be open to public inspection, and shall include, but not be limited to, a record of persons present, all motions, proposals and resolutions offered, the results of any votes taken, and a record of individual votes in the event of roll call.”

Additionally, the committee has failed to post a notice of public meetings. Article 8-44-103 Notice of Regular Meetings states, “Any such governmental body which holds a meeting previously scheduled by statute, ordinance, or resolution shall give adequate public notice of such meeting.”

The committee’s failure to keep the public informed in a prompt and detailed manner does not aid in the process of finding solutions to current campus issues.

The Office of Communications and Marketing (OCM) was elected to move from its offices on the third floor of the RUC to the bottom of Crawford Hall. This move did not last long as half of the marketing department had to relocate to the opposite side of Crawford three weeks into settling in their office. After three relocations, it is now in Foundation Hall.

“In the spring, there was a campus-wide conversation about how to provide more student space in the Roaden University Center. At the time, Crawford Hall was available for flex space, so the Office of Communications and Marketing moved to Crawford,” said Bailey Phonsnasingh, Director of Brand Communications.

Being one of Tech’s largest freshman classes, Crawford began reprogramming to have its space fully utilized as a residence hall for incoming students.

“As Crawford fully reopened and became home to more than 100 students, OCM asked to be moved to Foundation Hall temporarily in order to allow facilities the flexibility to prioritize the needs of



Baily Phonsnasingh is the direction of brand communications at the OCM. Photo provided by Bailey Phonsnasingh.

students moving into the building,” Phonsnasingh concluded.

A permanent solution has not been proposed for the Office of Communications and Marketing as the last posted open minutes from the committee meetings were dated Sept. 29, 2021.

Professor Lawsuit continued from Page 1

Despite her qualifications and peer recommendation, Bruce allegedly recommended that Deiter not be promoted and did not provide “justifiable reasons for her disagreement with the prior recommendations” as required by Tech policy, according to the lawsuit.

“Contrary to TTU policy, Dr. Bruce did not write a letter to the plaintiff’s unit peers, to the plaintiff, to the unit chairperson, or to the dean explaining the reasons for her disagreement,” the lawsuit says. “Instead,

Dr. Bruce summarily concluded that ‘there is not adequate documented evidence to satisfy these criteria.’”

The lawsuit alleges the rejection was discriminatory in that male associates have been promoted to the rank of professor “with fewer or an equal number of peer-reviewed publications.”

“The attitude of Dr. Oldham towards the plaintiff in singling out the plaintiff for treatment that differed from TTU’s standards for promotion and that differed from

TTU’s treatment of similarly situated male associate professors is evidence of the discrimination against the plaintiff,” the documents stated.

Deiter asks that this case be set for trial and that she be awarded compensatory damages and the court order for the university to promote her into the position “she would have had.”

Tech attorneys have not yet filed a response disputing the claims.

What You Might Have Missed



The Golden Eagle volleyball team gives the community a look at their talent during the Purple and Gold Scrimmage in the Hooper Eblen Center on Friday, Aug. 20. Photo by Ronald Metz.



Junior Megan Reagan and senior Braden Wall were awarded second place prizes at the Tennessee Press Association's annual award ceremony for their work at the Herald-Citizen on Aug. 26. Photo provided by Megan Reagan.



Tech Fall Semester 2022 kicks off with a picnic on Aug. 17 at the Marc Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center with food and games .The Campus Recreation, University Housing, Residential Life and Academy Sports and Outdoors hosted this event with hopes of increasing student invovlment. Photo by Ronald Metz.



Tech hosts the 2022 Baja SAE competition at the Hyder-Burkes Pavillion on May 12 through 15. Ninety-five university engineering teams from Canada, Mexico and the United States with 1,300 students and faculty participated. The 4-hour endurance run to test the machine and its operator is not a race for your typical Sunday driver. Photo by Ronald Metz.



The Golden Eagle Marching Band kicks off the 2022 freshman convocation at the Hooper Eblen Center on Aug.16. The band ignites school spirit in the hearts of the new students. Photo by Hannah Koster.



Students dive right into the Fall semester with Mix and Mingle on Tuesday, Aug. 16. Organizations and clubs show off and compete to attract new members. Photo Ronald Metz.

Sports

Volleyball Starts off Slow, Drops to 0–3 on the season

SPORT’S STAFF
Sports

Tech Volleyball got off to a slow start to the 2022 season with losses to Central Arkansas and Missouri State on Friday, and Oral Roberts on Saturday. The losses occurred at the Dr. Mary Jo Wynn Invitational in Springfield Missouri.

In the loss to Central Arkansas, Tech lost three matches to one. The Golden Eagles won the first set of the season 25-23, but lost the next three 25-21, 25-10 and 25-22.

Tech Outside Hitter Madolyn Isringhausen led the team with 19 kills during the match. Right-side hitter Morgan Gish was second in kills with 13. As a team, Tech’s kill percentage was .279 versus .310 for Central Arkansas.

In the second match of the season, the Golden Eagles lost three sets to one versus Missouri State. Tech dropped the first set 25-18, but came back and took the second set 25-21. In a race to the best of five, Tech lost the match as the dropped the third set 25-10, and the fourth set 25-22.

Errors and inconsistency in scoring by the Golden Eagles proved to be too much to overcome in versus Missouri State, and the tournament host team finished off the Tech in four matches. Missouri State was led by Manuela Ibarguen with 15.5 points, followed by Iva Halacheva with 13 points.



Tech Scrimmages in the Hooper Eblen Center, Friday August 20. Tech started the season the season slow going 0-3, and will host the Golden Eagle Invitational beginning Friday September 2. Photo by Ronald Metz.



















Saturday August 27 was a new day however the results were the same. The Golden Eagles dropped the match to Oral Roberts three sets to one. Oral Roberts raced out to a two-set lead by winning the first set 25-14 and the second 25-19. Tech struck back by winning the third set 25-17. However Oral Roberts proved to be too much as they won the fourth set 25-18.

Oral Roberts had 52 kills with a .276 hitting percentage, while holding Tech to just 41 kills and a .130 attack percentage.

Taylor Dorsey led all Tech scorers with 15 points, and Isringhausen was second in scoring with 10 points. Dorsey also led the team with 13 kills.

Tech Volleyball has a chance to rebound and get into the win column as they host the Golden Eagle Invitational starting Friday September 2 in a match against Northwestern. Tech will also matchup against Western Carolina on Friday September 2, and conclude the tournament with a match against Evansville.

Golden Eagles Volleyball Continues Season against Northwestern

			 LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND		
Friday September 2 Home vs. Northwestern 10:30 a.m. Golden Eagle Invitational	Friday September 2 Home vs. Western Carolina 7:30 p.m. Golden Eagle Invitational	Saturday September 3 Home vs. Evansville 2:00 p.m. Golden Eagle Invitational	Friday September 9 at Loyola Maryland 3:30 p.m. Bobcat Invitational	Saturday September 10 at Bradley 9:30 a.m. Bobcat Invitational	Saturday September 10 at Ohio 6:00 p.m. Bobcat Invitational
					
Friday September 16 at W. Kentucky 11:00 a.m. WKU Invitational	Friday September 16 at Indiana 5:00 p.m. WKU Invitational	Saturday September 17 at. Texas A&M 12:00 p.m. WKU Invitational	Friday September 23-24 at North Alabama 6:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.	Thursday September 29-30 at TSU 6:00 p.m.	Friday October 7-8 at Lindenwood 2:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.
					
Wednesday October 12 - 26 Morehead State 5:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Friday October 14-15 Home vs. SIUE 6:00 p.m. & 12:00 p.m.	Friday October 21-22 at SEMO 6:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.	Friday October 28-29 Home vs. Little Rock 6:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.	Friday November 4-5 at E. Illinois 6:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.	Friday November 11-12 Home vs UT Martin 6:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.



Number 6 Katie Toney Tech’s forward is stealing the ball from Furman. Tech won this game 4-1 Thursday August 25 against Furman. Photo by Bee Goodman.



Katie Toney number 6, is going in for the headshot hoping to score a goal. Tech won the match against Furman to go 2-3-1 on the season. Photo by Bee Goodman.

Sports

Football Preseason Ends with Gathering of Eagles Game

Braden Wall
Reporter

Tech football’s preseason ended with the Gathering of Eagles scrimmage Saturday, Aug. 20.

“I feel great about this first game,” Golden Eagles’ quarterback Jeremiah Oatsvall said. “We’re getting better each week and each practice. We just can’t hurt ourselves and lock in on the details because when it comes to Kansas, it’s not going to be easy. This is Power Five football. If we aren’t minding our P’s and Q’s, we can get embarrassed.”

In the scrimmage, the Golden Eagles had a few noticeable errors needing to be corrected before week one, according to head coach Dwayne Alexander.

Despite the errors, some big plays emerged and showed promise for the purple and gold.

“If we would have had all of these errors we had tonight in a game, we would’ve had a hard time winning a football game even with as many big plays as we made,” Alexander said. “Those things have to get cleaned up.”

“The effort of this team has been outstanding all preseason camp. This is a competitive football team. These guys get after each other. They’ve been practicing hard,” Alexander said. “Tonight was a physical practice. There was a lot of hard hitting. These guys are being aggressive, but there were too many mistakes.”

During the scrimmage, there was a snap over the quarterback, an ineligible receiver downfield, some offsides calls and a false start in the red zone.

“Those are situations you have to go through, but you have to learn from them. After making mistakes in practice, you just line up and do it again. In games, you only play 11 guaranteed games. That’s all you get. One time. You have to be on point and ready every time you play those games,” Alexander said.



Tech football scrimmages at Tucker stadium on August 20, 2022. The Golden Eagles concluded their preseason with the Gathering of Eagles scrimmage. Tech is traveling to Kansas to kickoff the 2022 season. Photo by Bee Goodman.

Receiver Quavel Thornton opened the scoring for Tech with a 73-yard touchdown reception from Lem Wash’s pass in the fifth series of the contest. Hayden Olsen added three more points with a 46-yard field goal.

After catching a pitch, running back O.J Ross looked to be down while getting swarmed in the backfield, but after breaking two tackles, he bolted out from the left side of the line for a 52-yard touchdown run. Ross and Justin Pegues found their way into the end zone late. Both had 4-yard touchdown runs.

Ethan Roberts, quarterback for the Golden Eagles, scored on a draw play up the middle.

Jeremiah Oatsvall, Tech’s starter under center and a transfer from Memphis, caught a touchdown pass after a pitch from Pegues to Willie Miller was thrown to him by Miller.

Oatsvall connected with Metrius Fleming in the back-left corner of the end zone for a

score.

“It’s a good thing we have nine football practices before we play our first game,” Alexander said. “We’ll have a lot of meeting time. We’ll watch film, lift weights, do treatment and have practice all next week. They’ll have Saturday off and we’ll come back Sunday and get ready to go to Kansas. When we’re getting ready for an opponent, we’ll cut a lot of stuff down, get our game plan in and simplify things.”

“The great news is it’s hard to get your team to hit hard and play hard, and these guys will do that. The other stuff is correctable. There wasn’t a thing out here tonight that can’t be fixed. We have some speed, some athleticism and more depth than I’ve had with a football team since I’ve been here,” Alexander said.

The Golden Eagles will open their regular season against Kansas on Friday, Sept. 2 in Lawrence Kansas.

Tech opens 2022 Football Season against Kansas

 <p>Friday, Sept. 2 at Kansas 7:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Sept. 10 Home vs. Texas A&M Commerce 6:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Sept. 17 Home vs. Samford 6:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Oct. 1 at UT Martin 2:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Oct. 8 at SE Missouri 2:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Oct. 15 Home vs. TSU 6:00 p.m.</p>
 <p>Saturday, Oct. 22 at Kennesaw State 2:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Oct. 29 at Eastern Illinois 2:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Nov. 5 Home vs. Lindenwood 1:30 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Nov. 12 at North Alabama 4:00 p.m.</p>	 <p>Saturday, Nov. 19 Home vs. NC Central 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p>* Saturday, Sept. 17 vs. Samford Family Weekend</p> <p>** Saturday, Nov. 5 Home vs. Homecoming</p>

Dates to Remember for Golden Eagle Athletics

Men and Women’s basketball tip-off their seasons on Thursday, Dec. 29 with a double header versus SIUE. This season marks the 75th season Tech has competed in the Ohio Valley Conference.

Tech Golf tees off on Sunday, Sept. 11 at the Golfweek Fall Challenge in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina at the True-Blue Golf Club. Golf and cross country are the only Golden Eagle sports that begin in the fall and run through the spring semester.

Tech Athletics will be adding women’s beach volleyball to the spring 2023 sporting lineup. With the addition of beach volleyball, Tech now has 15 intercollegiate teams. Across the country, there are now 86 universities that compete in beach volleyball.