

Faculty Senate issues a ‘Vote of No Confidence’ in Tech CFO



Dr. Stinson is responsible for disbursing all funds based on the annual budget. Photo from faculty directory.

MEGAN REAGAN
Reporter

Tech’s Faculty Senate, an advisory board to the university president, has passed a “Vote of No Confidence” in the university’s vice president.

The vote comes after it was discovered that some faculty and staff members received raises exceeding the 1-7% approved by the Board of Trustees for the 2020-2021 academic year — with some receiving upwards of 9-32%.

Data shows Academic Affairs saw only a 3% increase, while Planning and Finance saw a 9% increase.

In April 2022, the Senate moved for a “Vote of No Confidence” in Vice President Dr. Claire Stinson as a result of the discrepancies; however, the motion was later tabled pending the results of an internal and state audit.

Faculty Senate President Lori Maxwell said the senate revisited the vote Monday Nov. 21. “The motion for the vote was held again, and it passed overwhelmingly,” she said.

Maxwell said the salary distribution still remains the main reason for the senators’ lack of confidence in Stinson.

“That is still the primary issue,” she said. “We have met numerous times with the president, and we have also spoken with some of the trustees in an attempt to have a more mitigated response.”

One of the requests to the president was to move Human Resources from under Stinson’s directive.

“From 2020-2021, there were \$360,000 in what were called by administration ‘market equity raises,’ which were above and beyond the raises that went to the rest of the university, and were allocated primarily to the CFO’s own division. And we feel that is a conflict of interest,” Maxwell said.

She said despite the state and internal auditors finding no “illegalities,” they did feel it is a conflict of interest and a potential abuse of power.

Since last spring, she said the \$509,000 that was intended for travel abroad funds was moved elsewhere in the budget.

“We don’t have a specific end allocation of where they went,” she said. “Under the current CFO’s budgetary model, this kind of money — half a million dollars at a time — can be reallo-

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White Ribbon TN Brings Men in the Conversation in Preventing Gender-Based Violence

MEGAN REAGAN & BEE GOODMAN
Reporter

Preventing men’s violence against women is what the first-ever chapter of White Ribbon TN aims to do.

Executive director Andy Burgess explained that the majority of men believe violence against women and children is never acceptable.

“The purpose of White Ribbon TN is to grow a community that invites men to be part of a movement to end gender-based violence,” he said.

He and several others posted up at Tech’s Roaden University Center to spark conversation on campus to get students talking about gender-based violence and how they — especially the males — can play a part in preven-



Tenika Burgess, Andy Burgess and Leisa Loftis promote White Ribbon Day to bring awareness to domestic violence. Photo by Bee Goodman.

Tenika Burgess — Andy’s wife, co-founder of White Ribbon TN and an academic counselor at the university — explained how White Rib-

bon came to be through her husband’s support of women.

“The seeds have been there for a while, and then he has friendships with women who are survivors of abuse,” she said. “As a man, Andy was always going to these events like ‘Take Back the Night’ and human trafficking awareness events. Showing up to these places where women and girls are advocating for themselves to not be abused, and we’d look around and see he is the only dude there. You think, ‘What’s this about?’ And we see that is our problem.”

After referencing recent local events where a judge was suspended by the Board of Judicial Conduct for his alleged abuse of women who appeared in his court, Tenika said change does

See White Ribbon pg.3

University Counsel in Need of Assistance because of ‘So Much Litigation’

MEGAN REAGAN
Reporter

According to Oracle sources, Tech’s legal counsel has requested the hiring of an associate legal counsel.

Sources say it’s because “Tech faces so much litigation,” the need has arisen for University Counsel Troy Perdue to receive assistance.

The university has found itself the subject of multiple civil lawsuits within the last year – one claiming violations of civil rights and another claiming job discrimination. In both instances, the lawsuits were filed by faculty members.

In addition to the current and pending litigation brought against them, lawsuits in recent years have been brought against the

university for sexual harassment by a graduate and the mismanagement of financial aid by a former financial aid director.

The Office of the University Counsel’s duty is to provide legal advice and assistance to the Board of Trustees, Tennessee Tech administrators and employees who are acting within the scope of their official duties.

“While the University Counsel advises on legal risks associated with actions or proposed courses of action, Tennessee Tech administrators determine what level of legal risk is acceptable in the circumstances,” according to the Office of the University Counsel’s website.

Tennessee legislation passed last spring mis-

nomered as the “divisive concepts” bill introduces the opportunity for even more litigation to be filed against the university and the faculty.

University spokeswoman Karen Lykins said a budget request to support hiring an assistant general counselor was presented to the business office and discussed at Tech’s Budget Advisory Committee in the most recent meeting; however, It has not been approved at this time.

“No action has been taken on the request, but it could be approved in the future,” she said. “A limited number of requests are approved each year if budget dollars are available and the requests meet needs prioritized by the university.”



Tech hires additional legal counsel to manage large amounts of litigataions. Photo by Bee Goodman.

Voting Results

Results for Tennessee and Student on the Street if students should vote in their hometowns or in their college town.

Keaton Jones Feature

Tech percussionist Keaton Jones discusses the senior recital he held Nov. 13.

SPORTS

Tech basketball loses to Northern Kentucky University on Sunday Nov. 27. Womens basketball beat Trevecca Nazarene University.

Midterm Elections Makes History for Tennessee

AYRIANNA KIRAL-KING
Online Editor

The results of the mid-term election yield both wins and losses for each party. The Republicans have taken control of the House of Representatives after they surpassed 218 seats, giving them control of the chamber. However, the Democrats have retained control of the Senate and achieved this by gaining Pennsylvania.

So what does all this mean for Tennessee? Firstly, the Tennessee State Governor will remain Bill Lee, as the majority leaned right for this vote. State Legislature had an overwhelming right-wing dominant turn out with all three Governor, State Senate, and State House being Republican.

Regarding the U.S. House races, one out of nine Districts in Tennessee yielded Democratic results.

District one holds Diana Harshbarger with a 78.3% turnout. District two holds the votes at 67.9% for Tim Burchett. For district three 68.2% voted for Chuck Fleischmann. District four, at a 70.6% turnout, gives Scott Desjarlais the win. In the fifth, seat flipping the longtime Democratic reign is Andy Ogles with 55.8%. John Rose now holds district six with 66.3%. 59.9% turnout in the seventh district has Mark Green in House. District eight holds Davis Kustoff with 73.9%. In the ninth district, Steve Cohen the only Democrat out of districts one through nine, holds this with a 70.0% turnout. Each new member will carry out a two-year term.

Along with Governor, State Senate and State House amendments were also voted on.



Midterm elections took place on Nov. 8.. Photo provided by Getty Images.

Amendment one states that “workplaces would be banned from requiring union membership as a condition of employment,” and 70% voted yes. The second amendment was voted 75% yes and stated “ Create Gubernatorial Line of Succession and Process for Acting Governor.” The voting of Amendment three made history for Tennessee State voting; this

amendment fully abolished all forms of slavery within the state, “Remove Constitutional Language Allowing Slavery as Punishment” this had a yes vote of 80%. The last amendment voted on was “ Lift Ban on Clergy running for state senate” Lift Ban on Clergy Running for State Legislature” 63% voted yes.

Student On the Street

SARAH AKU &
ELLIOT PAYNE
Reporters

Question:
Should college students prioritize voting in their college town or hometown?



Kayla Pickett
Marketing
Freshman

“I would say hometown because you know it better and you can be with family”



Diyron Jones
Mechanical Engineering
Freshman

“I say that people should normalize voting in their hometown because I feel like they should vote with their family”



Emily Mills
Sociology
Freshman

“I think it should be in your college town because not everybody lives close to where it is easy to go vote, and voting matters”

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Originality is required, no plagiarism. For verification, letters and commentaries must include your name, email, hometown and classification or title.

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Submissions must be sent to oracle@gmail.com and received by 3 p.m. the Wednesday before publication.

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Senior Percussionist Takes Center Stage



Skylar Etherington (right) joins Keaton Jones for his senior recital. Photo by Bee Goodman.

JONAH HALL
Reporter

“Playing percussion has given me an outlet to express myself, make lifelong friends I’ve formed relationships with and given me some of the best moments of my life.”

Tech hosted a senior recital Sunday, Nov. 13 at 7:30 p.m., inside the Bryan Fine Arts building’s Wattenbarger Auditorium as senior, Keaton Jones, demonstrated his ability to play percussion instruments. The instruments Jones played throughout the recital included, the snare drums, marimba, tambourine and timpani.

“Performing is something I

absolutely love doing and is a huge passion of mine. This recital was important to showcase all of my learnings during my undergraduate degree process throughout the performance,” Jones included. “All of the pieces and skills I’ve learned here were showcased during the recital.”

The percussionist said the senior recital was required for his major, music education. However, he noted his anticipation of the performance was beneficial as he continued to learn. Jones said he developed an interest in percussion at a young age from the music his parents shared with him.

“Percussion was one that really stood out to me and im-

mediately sparked my interest when it came time to choose instruments in elementary school band, and I’ve been playing ever since,” Jones cited. “Now, percussion plays a huge part in my life and who I am, and has helped shape my interests in life to lead me to where I am today.”

Jones included his hope attendees gained a stronger appreciation for percussion and the effort it requires. He cited his excitement to demonstrate his improvements as a percussionist, in comparison to past performances. Jones added he is appreciative of the opportunities Tech provides to students in preparation for their professional fields.

“Throughout my time here as an undergraduate, I have received lots of encouraging words from the music faculty, which has helped motivate me to continue doing what I love,” Jones claimed. “Their support means the world to me and I am deeply thankful for what they’ve done for me over the years.”

Tech’s appreciation for musical arts is evident as the school hosts events, such as recitals, consistently. Director of percussion, Jayce Clemons, said hosting recitals provides an opportu-

nity for attendees to familiarize themselves with the repertoire and develop critical listening skills.

“A recital is really a culmination of great preparation, planning and hard work as many months go into the recital,” Clemons added. “Indirectly, a recital also acts as a motivator and learning tool for other members in the percussion studio.”

Tech’s school of music is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, indicating they abide by the highest music education standards in the United States. Clemons said the school’s successful percussion program attracts quality students.

“The program itself is centered on becoming a well-rounded percussionist while also allowing for more individuality in the junior and senior years,” Clemons included. “Quality students put on quality recitals, and this nurtures a cycle of a great program.”

Tech is intentional in providing the highest level of music education to students to assist them in reaching their full potential as performers, instructors and citizens.

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The senate has other broad concerns that relate to the lack of funding, according to Maxwell.

“Despite numerous requests from the Office of Academic Affairs and the funding the Provost was able to secure this year, the Volpe Library remains funded at the lowest level in the state,” she said.

In addition to the lack of funding for the library, the Office of Research and Economic Development has reached critically low staffing levels — which could result in the loss of millions of dollars in grant funding, she said.

The campus police is another department that remains underfunded, according to Maxwell.

“Because of the CFO’s failure to fund units appropriately, the TTU Police Force began the Fall 2022 semester with only five full-time police officers, putting the students and campus at potential risk. TTU should operate with 10-15 officers and support staff,” she said.

Faculty senators passed the vote 32 for, two against and four abstentions.

“The Faculty Senate doesn’t take lightly a ‘Vote of No Confidence,’” Maxwell said. “Nevertheless, this is not our money, and we must speak when its stewardship is in question. We, as senators, are accountable to the tax-paying citizens and the tuition-paying students of the University. We are duty-bound to speak in support of its educational, research and service missions. We are most hopeful we will move forward in the spirit of collegiality, collaboration and respect that has been and will remain the hallmark of Tennessee Tech University.”

Tech Chief Communication Officer Karen Lykins said the grievances made by the senate are “grossly inaccurate.”

“University leadership strongly disagrees and deeply regrets the recent action taken by the University Faculty Senate,” she said.



The vote of no confidence from the faculty senate follows a faculty senate vote of no confidence in President Oldham in 2018. Photo by Sarah Aku.

“Dr. Stinson has been a highly respected and valuable leader on campus for over 15 years. As chief financial officer she has the most difficult job on any campus, consistently navigating often complex and critically important financial challenges on behalf of the entire University and our students. She has earned the respect of her peers throughout the state, being well known for both her technical skill with financial management and her impeccable integrity. Tennessee Tech is one of the best fiscally managed universities in the state and owes much of our current overall success to the disciplined leadership and relentless efforts of Dr. Stinson.”

According to Lykins, decisions are routinely negotiated on campus throughout the year through the normal budget process with input and involvement of numerous leaders.

White Ribbon Day continued from Pg. 1

“Just seeing what happens in politics in our communities and how the good ‘ole boy system is still here, what do you do to take that down?” she said. “You can’t do it from the top. It has to come from the bottom where we start to have these conversations. Talk to college students, guys in fraternities and on sports teams. Ask them how they would treat their sister, mom or aunt. If somebody was abusing them, would you step in?”

“At the end of the day, we’re not out here saying men are garbage,” Tenika added. “Most men are pretty decent human beings and wouldn’t stand for anyone being hurt.”

Andy said White Ribbon TN is about men having the courage to stand up rather than being a passive bystander when women are getting abused.

“Men hold each other accountable, and that is why this is so powerful,” he said.

Andy, also referencing the suspension of the local judge who subsequently was unseated by a female opponent, said that people from all sides came together.

“That’s when I knew we had to do something. That was our launch date for this,” he said. “Change was a requirement. So much abuse stems from privilege and entitlement. Violence is always a choice, and it is never okay. So many Tennessee men are against gender-based violence.”

Andy said the founders began searching to find a model for their organization and found something similar in White Ribbon Australia.

“They kind of guided us and



White Ribbon Day was declared on Nov 17 in effort to raise awareness to domestic violence. Photo by Bee Goodman.

helped set us up,” he said.

Thursday night, Cookeville Mayor Laurin Wheaton signed a proclamation in support of White Ribbon TN as a part of worldwide initiative against gender-based violence.

“The White Ribbon Day campaign believes that the majority

of men wish to make a positive contribution toward ending this violence,” she said. “By reimagining manhood we can break down the rigid gender roles and power dynamics that contribute to and foster gender-based violence.”

Sports

Tech Loses in Final Seconds to NCCU

BRADEN WALL
Reporter

After a fierce battle with No. 25 North Carolina Central University, the Tech football team fell 22-20 after a last-second field goal.

With the loss, the Golden Eagles ended their season at 4-7 overall. NC Central advances to 9-2 overall, and they will play in the Celebration Bowl.

“I told my guys after the game that I couldn’t be more proud of them if we scored one more point than they did as far as how hard we played,” said head coach Dewayne Alexander. “That’s five straight weeks we’ve been in games that came down to the last possession. We won three of them and lost two of them, and that’s the reality of it. Such is life, and football is a great microcosm of life.”

Tech took a 20-19 lead with 2:43 left in the final quarter after a rushing touchdown from Jeremiah Oatsvall.

They tried for a 2-point conversion, but couldn’t convert it. “We had already decided to go for two because of what the score was,” Alexander said. “We were trying to make North Carolina



Tech’s tight end, Number 88 Hunter Barnhart, runs in a 21 yard pass into the endzone. The pass was thrown by quarterback Jeremiah Oatsvall. Photo provided by Ben Craven.

Central need a field goal just to put the game into overtime. That’s one of our 2-point plays we’ve not run yet this year, but he was wide open. We just had a little edge pressure, and Willie (Miller) had to throw it a little sooner than he wanted. It was the right decision, but we were just a little short on the execution.”

NC Central looked to be stopped for good in the fourth

quarter after an apparent fourth-down stop from the Tech offense. After the officials reviewed the play, NCCU received the first down. The visiting Eagles took the ball down to the TTU 19-yard line. “He was short (on the 4th-down conversion). I don’t know what all the camera angles the replay booth has to see, but I was standing right on the down marker. He was short by at least half a yard, but we also

had the opportunity to end the game with an interception on the play before.”

NC Central started off with momentum in the first quarter, taking a 10-0 lead with a 37-yard touchdown run and a field goal. By halftime, Tech clawed back with a 8-play, 64 yard drive that ended in a 1-yard touchdown from Jayvian Allen (13-7).

Tech’s defense shut out NCCU in the third quarter and took their first lead of the game (14-13) with a 21-yard pass to Hunter Barnhart.

At the end of the third quarter, NC Central intercepted a pass from Oatsvall on Tech’s 35-yard line.

The Eagles capitalized on their interception quickly, breaking past the pylons on the first play of their drive in the fourth quarter with a 35-yard run to make it 19-14 (two-point conversion was no good).

Three of the Golden Eagles losses this season came down to a field goal. They finished 2-3 in the conference. At home, Tech went 2-3. On the road, they went 2-4. Tech will not compete in the FCS playoffs.

Northern Kentucky Snaps Techs Two Win Streak

AVERY NETTLES
Sports Editor

Tennessee Tech played on Sunday, Nov.27 at Northern Kentucky. The final score was 85-77 and Tech lost on the road this was after Tech was coming off a two-game winning streak. Tech is now 3-4 with 3 home wins and 1 loss, with 0-3 on the road. Tech has played seven games so far this season with an average 72.1 points a game, they have a 42.8% field goal percentage, a 35.9% for 3 points, a 68.5 % free throw percentage, 38.9 rebounds per game and 17.3 assists per game so far this season.

Tech’s game leaders for Sunday’s game against Northern

Kentucky were on offense number 2 Tech’s forward Jaylen Sebree with 12.4 points. Number 5 Tech’s guard Brett Thompson with 4 assists. Number 12 Erik Oliver, Tech’s guard with a 54.4% field goal percentage. On the defense, it was Sebrees with 7 rebounds and 0.6 blocks and Thompson with 2.3 steals.

Tech’s next game is on Wednesday, Nov.30 at 6 p.m. The Golden Eagles will be facing Chattanooga at home. Upcoming in December, they will be on the road for the next two games against Butler, Troy, and Lipscomb before returning home to play Western Carolina. All these are available to watch on ESPN+.



Tech lost to Copplin Sate in overtime 90-85. Tech continues the season 3-4, they take on Chattanooga at home on Nov 30. Photo by Bee Goodman.

Women’s Basketball Beats Trojans to Bring Season to 3-1



Number 2 Jordan Brock, Tech’s gaurd returns for the season after an injury. Brock scores to advance Tech’s lead on Nov 17. Photo by Callie Smith.

CALLIE SMITH
Sports Reporter/Social Media

The Tennessee Tech Golden Eagles swooped in on November 17 defeating the Trevecca Nazarene Trojans in a comfortable win finalizing at 69-52. The Golden Eagles were led to a victory by senior guard Maaliya Owens who contributed 21 of The

Eagles 69 total game points on offense and led the team on defense as well. The game started out hot for The Eagles as they took a 12-4 lead against The Trojans. However, The Trojans were able to fight back and cut the score to a one possession game. It wasn’t long though before TTU was able to extend their lead back to 21-11, ending the first quarter of the game. It was these early points and 10-point lead

that established a comfortable lead for Tennessee Tech to lean on the rest of the game. The last three quarters of play were a lot closer in their scores with Tennessee Tech only being able to outscore Trevecca Nazarene by 7-points total within the next three quarters.

Defense is the best offense, and this was true for The Golden Eagles on November 17 as exactly 1/3 of Tennessee Tech’s final score of 69 was contributed by their defense. TTU forced 17 turnovers on Trevecca Nazarene, which resulted in 23 points for The Golden Eagles.

Tennessee Tech’s offense was led by Maaliya Owens with 8 field goals, 5 of which being 3-pointers to give Owen’s 21 points for the night. Owens and Reghan Grimes led in rebounds with 7 each, and combined for 10 offensive rebounds. Reagan Hurst, Jada Guinn, and Cayla Cowart contributed 3 assists each to the final score.

Tennessee Tech’s defense was also led by Maaliya Owens as she led the team in blocks with 5 of the team’s total 6 for the time. Owens along with Alex Walker lead defensive rebounds for the team with 3 each. TTU ended the night with 8 steals with Jada Guinn taking 3 for herself.

This game leaves The Golden Eagles with a 3-1 seasonal stand. The next home game will be Saturday, December 10 against Alabama A&M at 1:00pm. All Tennessee Tech Golden Eagle games can be watched on ESPN+.