

## “Defining the Future”

*Draft 1/Executive Summary Version*

# The Next Decade for the University of Tennessee

## Introduction

The University of Tennessee System, composed of four campuses and two institutes, has been educating the state’s citizenry since its founding in 1794 and is an intrinsic part of Tennessee’s leadership, workforce, economic development, health and well-being. With a presence in each of Tennessee’s 95 counties as a land-grant institution, UT has sent more than 320,000 alumni to live, work and contribute to their state, nation and world.

Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph A. DiPietro, the 25<sup>th</sup> president who assumed office in January 2011, the University-wide Administration launched a Strategic Planning project to strengthen and advance UT’s stature as a “best in class” university through the educational, discovery, creative and outreach programs of all UT campuses and institutes. This collaborative project engaged the campuses, institutes, University-wide Administration, Board of Trustees and multiple constituencies in a new planning project following the System’s last strategic plan of 2006.

The University of Tennessee University-wide Administration’s Strategic Plan comes at a pivotal time for higher education in the United States and in Tennessee, with ambitious national and state agendas driving bold efforts to raise enrollment and graduation rates, ensure student achievement and success, expand economic and workforce development and respond to the urgent challenges and opportunities of globalization. Outcomes-driven, the Strategic Plan provides a vision for the next decade to support and increase UT’s impact on education, workforce development, economic impact and other areas critical to its influence, relationships and community-building.

Directed by the President, led by a Steering Committee and with close involvement of the Board of Trustees, the Strategic Plan also responds to the objectives of the Complete College Tennessee Act (CCTA), a comprehensive reform agenda that seeks to transform public higher education through changes in academic, fiscal and administrative policies at the state and institutional levels. At the center of these reforms is the need for more Tennesseans to be better educated and trained, while also acknowledging the state’s diminished fiscal capacity to support higher education. This new “public agenda” for higher education establishes the direct link between the state’s economic development and its educational system, with the overarching goal for Tennessee to meet the projected national average in educational attainment by 2025.

Importantly, the Strategic Plan also will facilitate the aspirations, strategic goals and action plans of each campus and institute: the flagship University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK), the metropolitan University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (UTC), the regional University of Tennessee-Martin (UTM), the Memphis-based University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) and the statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute of Public Service. As part of the planning process, the mission of the University and the University-wide Administration were also defined.

For more than a century, American land-grant universities have served as the major public institutions promoting the education of their state's citizens, investment in state and regional economies, workforce planning and development, scientific research, inventions and innovation. More than ever, in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the economic impact of the University of Tennessee is central to Tennessee's achievements at every level, from the state capital in Nashville to the extension offices in all 95 counties. Directed at implementing President Joe DiPietro's mission for the role of the University-wide Administration, this five-year Strategic Plan defines a future with great momentum -- to remove obstacles to education, promote diversity, provide advocacy, secure and distribute resources, ensure accountability, produce work-ready graduates, generate premier research and engage innovation in ways more vitally needed than ever.

### The Strategic Planning Process

The project was formally launched in September 2011 by President DiPietro and was purposefully designed to expand and strengthen relationships among faculty, administrators, the Board of Trustees, students, friends, alumni, legislators, and the people of Tennessee. Activities of the transparent process were reported in a timely fashion through a comprehensive communications plan and on a special website allowing University and affiliated groups to track the project from start to finish.

The five-phase process included multiple participants and resources:

- A 17-member Steering Committee of members of the President's Leadership Team, campus Chancellors or their representatives and representatives from UT alumni, students and the Board of Trustees.
- Listening Sessions with more than 200 administrators, faculty, staff and students in the University community on each campus, within each institute and including alumni and state and local leadership
- Best practice, data and trend analysis regarding public higher education and land-grant institutions
- Affirmation of the new University-wide Administration mission and an updated mission for the University of Tennessee System
- 12 cross-University Task Forces bringing together 190 subject experts to develop action items, impacts, 5-year timelines, resources and accountabilities for the strategic goals and initiatives

- Draft plan development followed by a broader “constituent engagement phase” for response to proposed initiatives
- Budget and implementation plan
- Final approval by the UT Board of Trustees at their June 2012 meeting

## Mission Statements

One of the central themes that emerged early in the planning process was the need to define more clearly the major central-decentralized roles of the University-wide Administration and the campuses and institutes and their relationships with each other. That also raised the issue of clarifying several common terms. Going forward, the term “University of Tennessee System” will be used to refer to the entire University of Tennessee, the common portfolio and collective assets of all parts of the statewide institution, while “University-wide Administration” will refer to the President’s Office and the administrative offices reporting directly to the President, and, thus, the leadership team responsible and accountable for this Strategic Plan.

In this context, the Steering Committee recommended two mission statements – a new mission statement for the University of Tennessee System and a mission statement for the University-wide Administration, which President DiPietro had developed soon after taking office in 2011.

The University of Tennessee System mission is being considered by the Chancellors, with input from the Steering Committee, and will be finalized by the final strategic plan draft in May 2012.

### University of Tennessee System [draft]

The University of Tennessee System serves the people of Tennessee and beyond through the discovery, communication and application of knowledge. The University is committed to providing undergraduate, graduate and professional education programs in a diverse learning environment that prepares students to be leaders in a global society. The University’s delivery of education, discovery, outreach and public service contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of all Tennesseans.

### University of Tennessee University-wide Administration [March 30, 2011]

The mission of the University of Tennessee System Administration is to advance the educational, discovery, creative and outreach programs of the campuses and institutes through leadership that removes obstacles, understands needs, provides advocacy, secures resources, promotes accountability, fosters diversity, promotes innovation, coordinates campus efforts, and delivers efficient and effective central services.

In addition, President DiPietro and the Chancellors are further clarifying the distinct roles of (1) the University-wide Administration, (2) the campuses and institutes and (3) areas of overlap among them. This, too, will become part of the final plan, to ensure that it defines its responsibilities, accountabilities and supporting metrics in implementing this Strategic Plan.

## Strategic Plan Summary: Goals and Initiatives

### **Goal I [Enhancing Educational Excellence]: Raise the University of Tennessee's academic quality, stature and impact through educational excellence and student achievement across diverse populations**

1. Drive educational excellence and student performance, raise graduation and transfer rates and ensure a "best in class" student population
2. Enhance the quality, productivity and visibility of the UT faculty and UT faculty expertise
3. Develop and coordinate collaborative and innovative academic programs that build on the unique capabilities of the System's campuses and institutes and drive key outcomes and standards defined by UT

### **Goal II [Expanding Research Capacities]: Strengthen University research capacities to provide solutions for critical problems, expand economic development in the state and enhance the quality of life in Tennessee, the nation and the world**

1. Develop a compelling vision and a strategic and business plan for expanding UT research
2. Promote the application and commercialization of UT-sponsored research to improve the economy and develop and expand business and industry in the state
3. Define standards, measure progress and communicate research outcomes and impacts in the economy

### **Goal III [Fostering Our Land-Grant Mission]: Engage every member of the UT community in understanding the land-grant mission, participating in outreach and engagement and communicating the outcomes for economic development and improved quality of life for Tennesseans**

1. Articulate clearly the role of the University in community outreach and engagement, link the land-grant mission across the enterprise and engage all campuses/institutes in this mission
2. Develop communications about outreach and engagement that are easily understood by constituents, with appropriate messaging for various groups including alumni and communities
3. Foster and measure alumni and student engagement and outreach exemplifying the land-grant story



**Goal IV [Growing Infrastructure and Investment]: Ensure the success of these goals through an infrastructure and practices that ensure a “best in class” university**

1. Catalyze and support collaboration throughout the University and with external partners, including removing policy and procedural roadblocks, to strengthen the impact of the University of Tennessee as greater than the sum of its parts
2. Define a System-wide approach to a service culture, modeled by the University-wide Administration, and support campus and institute strategic goals with financial resources, information and data
3. Implement Employer of Choice standards across the University
4. Implement a collaborative System-wide marketing/communications plan that supports all the goals of this Strategic Plan
5. Create a “culture of communication” throughout the University through a new internal communications program – both between the System and the campuses and the campuses with each other – that regularly informs the University community about System goals, processes and services through multiple channels
6. Collaborate with campuses and institutes to define the facilities and space necessary for an environment of excellence in research and education
7. Identify and promote compelling opportunities for continued and expanded investment in the University by the state, industry and philanthropic community
8. Extend diversity initiatives consistently throughout the System for faculty, staff, students and cultural/community life

## Implementation

Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan will be built on a budget to fund the initiatives over the next five years, an implementation plan to drive unit and individual operating plans for the University-wide Administration and a dashboard of performance metrics that will be used by Tennessee officials and the Board of Trustees to track and evaluate the plan’s progress and outcomes against CCTA objectives and other mandates. The budget; implementation plan with action steps, timelines and accountabilities; and the monitoring and evaluation dashboard for Years 1 and 2 of the five-year Strategic Plan will be completed in May-June 2012 prior to the plan’s finalization.

## Conclusion

In the University of Tennessee System, each campus and institute is responsible for developing its own strategic plan, for which it is also held accountable by the Board of Trustees. This University-wide Administration Strategic Plan is aimed at facilitating the long-term success of those plans through the President’s staff and leadership team offices, fostering alignment among goals and assisting with

resources and resource decisions. Placing a spotlight on the “System portfolio” as greater than the sum of its parts, the Strategic Plan also provides a framework for further decisions about the distinctive and shared roles of the campuses, institutes and University-wide Administration.

A substantial benefit of the new Strategic Plan is its flexibility. It has been purposefully designed as a framework and dynamic document that will accommodate change at the same time that higher education and public universities are undergoing transformation aimed at advancing the greater public good.

### Appendices:

- (1) Steering Committee
- (2) Task Forces
- (3) Listening Sessions
- (4) Highlights from Trends/Best Practices/Challenges and Opportunities
- (5) Implementation plan (action steps) in detail
- (6) Other