

## HOST OF THE 120<sup>th</sup> MEETING: TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

### OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

*Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee*

As a comprehensive university, Tennessee Tech offers 44 undergraduate (bachelor's) and 20 graduate degree programs within six academic divisions: Agricultural and Human Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, and Interdisciplinary Studies and Extended Education. A university that the Princeton Review consistently calls one of the best in the Southeast, Tennessee Tech offers students the true college experience. The University is committed to the lifelong success of students in its undergraduate, master's, specialist, and doctoral degree granting programs through high-quality instruction and learning experiences. The University supports scholarly activity, especially basic and applied research, creative endeavors, and public service, with special emphasis on community and economic development. The University also supports student participation in a broad array of extracurricular activities as an integral component of its commitment to student life and success.

#### The History of TTU

In 1909, the state approved the charter of a church-supported school named the University of Dixie. Popularly known as Dixie College, the school opened its doors to students in 1912. Enrollment, however, was low and funding insufficient; the college struggling to keep its doors open. In a strategic move to salvage higher education in the Upper Cumberland, the school's founders deeded the campus to the governments of Cookeville and Putnam County in 1915. Despite protests that the college be located in another part of the state, the act creating Tennessee Polytechnic Institute in Cookeville was signed into law by Gov. Thomas Rye March 27, 1915.

The institute, with 13 faculty members, opened its doors to 19 college students at the start of the 1916-1917 academic year. At the time, Tennessee Tech's campus consisted of 18 acres of undeveloped land, an administrative building and two dormitories. From 1916 to 1924, Tennessee Tech offered courses only at the high school and junior college levels. In the early days, all students worked in the school garden and kitchen, growing and canning their own food. They were "practical work" students, helping to build the campus' first academic halls and maintain the grounds. They attended daily assemblies where Bible verses were read and instructions of proper behavior were given. The women kept strict hours. The men wore uniforms. All students prepared to be rural citizens skilled in industry and agriculture, with a modicum of fine arts and humanities education.

By 1929, the State Board of Education had authorized a complete college program, and the first class of four-year graduates received bachelor's degrees that June. In 1938, the instructional program was divided into two main divisions, "Arts and Sciences" and "Professional and Technical Sub-

jects." In 1949, in the population and enrollment boom of the post-World War II era, the programs were expanded into five schools: Agriculture and Home Economics, Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education and Engineering—an instructional mix very close to that of Tennessee Tech today. These five schools were reorganized into colleges in 1965, when Tennessee Polytechnic Institute gained university status, becoming Tennessee Technological University. In 1980, the university's new School of Nursing and the Joe L. Evins Appalachian Center for Crafts began their B.S. and B.F.A. programs.

Since Tennessee Tech was established, the university has blossomed from three buildings located on the fringes of a daisy field to an 87-building complex situated on 235 acres. The faculty have grown from the 13 men and women whose responsibilities included greeting students at the Tennessee Central depot to about 370 today. Curricula have changed from programs leading to high school and associate's degrees to undergraduate and graduate programs, including the M.B.A., the Ed.S., and the Ph.D. in education, engineering and environmental sciences. From the first class of 19 students, Tennessee Tech's enrollment has grown to more than 11,500. Among the 65,000+ men and women who have received degrees from Tennessee Tech are the former president of Boeing Corp., a two-time space shuttle astronaut, a *New York Times* assistant managing editor, and a four-star general.

#### Tech Today

From the beginning, Tennessee Tech has been known as Tennessee's technological university, and despite the political rivalries of the early part of the century, Tennessee Tech has flourished. All of Tennessee Tech's undergraduate programs meet established academic quality standards as rated in external peer reviews. The university is also only the second public university to receive a Tennessee Quality Award.

Despite the university's growing enrollment, more than half of its classes have fewer than 25 students. Strong faculty/staff relationships are typical of an education at Tennessee Tech, as are valuable student experiences such as writing and directing plays, building robots, helping cardiac patients with nutrition, and improving nanotechnology. Students benefit from a faculty which includes many individuals with national and international reputations who have received research grants from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and many others. These faculty members publish articles and reports in major professional journals and write books published by university and other refereed presses.

Located in Cookeville, Tennessee, a town of about 25,000 residents, Tennessee Tech offers the best of both rural and

urban living. The community is situated near scenic state parks like Burgess Falls and Fall Creek Falls, yet approximately an hour from three of the state's biggest metro areas—Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga.

Tennessee Tech has been recognized by numerous publications during the past decade. It has ranked among the "top public universities" by *U.S. News & World Report* on nine separate occasions and, in the 2011 report, was listed as one of the top ten "public regional universities" in the South. The Princeton Review included Tennessee Tech in its list of fifty "best value" public colleges and ranked the school among the "Best in the Southeast" for 2011. The school's average annual tuition and fees are lower than the average of all Tennessee Higher Education Commission public universities, Tennessee Board of Regents universities and Ohio Valley Conference universities. Such reports stress the combination of affordability and quality education that has long characterized the institution.

The traditionally strong engineering program continues to attract students from throughout the U.S. and many foreign nations. Among mechanical engineering students, for example, Tennessee Tech is the second most attractive school in the southeast, second only to Georgia Tech. The school's

engineering and technology graduates were recognized by 99% of respondents in a recent survey of employers as "excellent employees." Strong undergraduate programs in the sciences are augmented by graduate programs in biology and chemistry, including a doctoral program in environmental science. Nursing graduates achieved a higher pass rate among registered nurses taking the National Council Licensure Examination in 2009 than the state, national and Tennessee Board of Regents averages.

Tennessee Tech students also benefit from strong programs in business, education, and the traditional arts and sciences curriculum. They remain active in service activities as well. The school's University Service Center recorded that almost 2200 students engaged in community service or academic service learning in the 2008–2009 academic year. Those students logged almost 14,000 hours in volunteer work. Tennessee Tech's Service Center, established to match volunteers with organizations and projects needing support, is a member of the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

Tennessee Tech is pleased to host the 2010 meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science, the fourth time since 1977 that the Academy has met on this campus.