View this email in your browser



Outcomes of the State Legislative Session: Of Interest to UT Employees

The 2015 Tennessee legislative session concluded Wednesday, April 22. Several favorable outcomes for the University are the result of great work by our government relations team, UT advocates and state policymakers.

First, thank you to our UT advocates who helped secure funding for the West Tennessee 4-H Center.









The center was one of the top budget priorities I advocated for this year.

During the legislative session, funding for the proposed 4-H center was endangered. I called on our UT Advocacy network to take action and encourage legislators to support funding for the center. The result was nearly 7,500 legislative contacts and the approval of funding.

Currently, UT Extension's three 4-H centers in Middle and East Tennessee serve 13,000 young people. The new 4-H center will now give young people in West Tennessee an interactive environment to learn about science, natural resources and agriculture.

The Advocacy network is how we make a difference on issues like the 4-H center by standing together as a UT family. Sign up today to stay informed and be prepared to advocate in support of the University.

Sign Up for the UT Advocacy Network

Below are the outcomes of important legislation that had potential to affect the UT community.



Insurance Legislation Currently Being Examined, Additional Information to Come
Legislation that may impact the insurance of higher education employees passed at the end of the legislative session. Our insurance experts are currently reviewing the bill for any changes that may affect you. So far, there are no significant changes for current UT employees, but starting July 1, several changes will affect insurance benefits for new hires. Expect additional communication on this issue.



Cost-of-Living Raises to Take Effect July 1
The University has a $150 million market gap in employee pay, and we are seeking to close that gap over time. Due to limited state revenues, UT employees did not receive a cost-of-living adjustment in last year's budget. This year's cost-of-living raise will help UT remain a competitive employer in higher education and recognize UT employees as a critical component of the state's workforce. Expect additional communication on this issue.



Employee Performance Reviews No Longer Public Record
Public higher education employee performance evaluations are no longer available for inspection by members of the public. This affords higher education employees the same level of privacy as most other state government employees.



Full Funding for State's Higher Ed Outcomes-Based Formula
UT works hard to make sure its institutions are the state's top performers. This year, the legislature fully funded the outcomes-based formula, resulting in a $9.7 million recurring operating increase for the UT campuses. While this funding does not address the $377 million budget gap projected to

develop over the next 10 years, it does enable the University to mitigate the need for tuition increases this year.



Increased Funding for UT Institutions That Provide Services to All Tennesseans

The increased funding will cover the UT Institute of Agriculture, which has a presence in all 95 counties, the UT Institute for Public Service and UT Health Science Center. In 2013, these institutions provided combined outreach to more than six million people. Unlike our traditional campuses, these units have limited or no tuition mechanisms to offset declines in state revenue.



Funding for UT Knoxville Science Facility Approved

The science laboratory building will provide new facilities to educate students and produce groundbreaking research.

There were also several successful outcomes related to academic freedom and accreditation. Read about those issues and other legislative highlights at advocacy.tennessee.edu**.**

This session is a clear example of how advocacy for our University makes a difference, and I am grateful for your efforts.

All the best,

Joe

The University of Tennessee | Office of the President
831 Andy Holt Tower | Knoxville, TN 37996
Phone: 865.974.2241 | Fax: 865.974.3753

Twitter
Facebook

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.