

VOL Vision: The Pursuit Of Top 25

The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee



*"We really are going to change the world around us."
UTK student*

VOL Vision provides the guiding framework for The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) to achieve its potential as the leading public institution of higher learning in the State of Tennessee. The mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities set forth below are a unifying set of principles and goals that allow all students, faculty, staff, and administrators to align their efforts and activities around a common vision. VOL Vision, which moves us toward the goal of becoming a member of the nation's "Top 25" public research universities, is being realized through companion plans for action and accountability that address implementation, resource allocation, outcome metrics, and program assessment.

Mission

The primary mission of UTK is to move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate the citizens of the State of Tennessee, the nation, and the world. As the preeminent research-based, land-grant University in the state, UTK embodies the spirit of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, outreach, and engagement attained by the nation's finest public research institutions.

UTK's Carnegie Classification is Research University (very high research activity). Most undergraduates are full-time, and admission is selective with a fairly low transfer-in rate. Admission to graduate and professional programs is also competitive. Graduate offerings include master's, doctoral, and professional programs that focus both on research and practice. Nationally ranked programs, as well as our partnerships with Oak Ridge National Laboratories, are among UTK's unique characteristics.

Vision

UTK embraces a three-part vision: Value Creation, Original Ideas, Leadership.

- **V**alue creation through economic, social, and environmental development targeted to an increasing global and multicultural world.

UTK leads an increasing number of academic and public service activities that involve and benefit the local community, the State of Tennessee, the United States, and ultimately, the world. This continuing commitment to the public good, through a variety of outreach activities, is grounded in our tradition as a land-grant Institution.

- **O**riginal ideas that advance society through discovery, inquiry, innovation, research, scholarship, and creative activities.

Our ability to create value is dependent on discovering new knowledge and generating new ideas and expressions. The complex concerns of the 21st century cannot be addressed with existing knowledge and systems. Our aim

is a dramatic increase in these activities, requiring the interaction between committed, diverse faculty, staff, and students.

- **Leadership** through the preparation of capable and ethical leaders. *UTK's diverse graduates have unique and enriched learning opportunities accruing from the comprehensive mission of UTK. We expect a large proportion of graduates will take their places as leaders in the State of Tennessee and beyond.*

Values – The Volunteer Spirit

The following values support our mission and vision and comprise our definition of the **Volunteer Spirit**. While our strategic focus may evolve over time, these enduring principles continue to permeate who we are, what we do, and how we accomplish our goals.

At UTK we value ...

- broad diversity, including people of all races, creeds, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical abilities, and socioeconomic groups;
- a culture that appreciates and respects faculty, staff, and students and that acknowledges their interdependence and the vital role of every member of the Volunteer family;
- engagement with our local and extended communities, embracing intercultural and global perspectives;
- high standards of ethical and professional behavior;
- intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom and integrity;
- transparent and data-informed decision making;
- wise management of resources and infrastructure; and
- our campus, our people, and our work.

Strategic Priorities

Our mission, vision, and values are achieved through the implementation of five strategic priorities.

- **Recruit, develop, and graduate a diverse body of undergraduate students** who, through engagement in academic, social, and cultural experiences, embrace the Volunteer Spirit as life-long learners committed to the principles of ethical and professional leadership.
- **Educate and graduate increasing numbers of diverse graduate and professional students** who are equipped to address the pressing concerns of their

fields, to extend the frontiers of knowledge, and to contribute to the public good through service to the academy or their professions.

- **Strengthen our capacity and productivity in research, scholarship, and creative activity** to better educate our students; enhance economic, social, and environmental development; support outreach to our various constituencies; and extend the reputation and recognition of our campus.
- **Attract and retain stellar, diverse faculty and staff** who will proudly represent our campus, execute our mission, embrace our vision, exemplify our values, and collaborate to realize our strategic priorities.
- **Continually improve the resource base** to achieve campus priorities by carefully balancing state revenues, tuition, and private funding, and by embracing stewardship of our campus infrastructure and a culture that values sustainability.

Top 25 Metrics

Implementation plans in support of each strategic priority include detailed goals, objectives, tactics, and assessment plans. Throughout the strategic planning process, focus will remain on closing the “gaps” between UTK and Top 25 institutions. The key metrics that will be targeted for closing these gaps are listed below, although additional metrics will be considered, where appropriate, to target broader goals.

1. Continue to attract first year students with ACT scores equivalent to "Top 25."
2. Retention rate from first to second year raised from 84% to 90% by 2015.
3. Six year graduation rate increased 1.5% per year, raised from 60% in 2010 to 75% in 2015.
4. Increase the number of Ph.D.s awarded by 30% from 277 in 2010 to 360 in 2015 with the goal of 486 in 2020.
5. Increase the number of professional/master's degrees from 1845 in 2010 to 2000 in 2015 with the goal of 2130 in 2020.
6. Increase in federal research expenditures of 50% from \$70 M in 2010 to \$105 M in 2015 with the aim of \$182M in 2020.
7. Increase in total research expenditures of 50% from \$165 M in 2010 to 247.5 M in 2015 with the aim of \$427 M in 2020.
8. Average Tenure-line salary range increased to meet the mean for our peer institutions.
9. Increase the number of faculty awards on campus from 10 in 2010 to 32 in 2020.
10. Increase operating expenditures/student by an additional \$8200 by 2020.
11. Increase endowments/student by an additional \$24,000 by 2020.

The mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities set forth above comprise a framework for action that engages students, faculty, staff and administrators in the achievement of UTK's potential – an objective that benefits all constituents. This framework is a touchstone for all of us as we set goals, plan our activities, and measure our progress.