

APSU Board of Trustees Meeting – June 5, 2026

Chair O'Malley ([00:00:01](#)):

Thank you all for being with us today as we open up our June meeting with the board of trustees, Austin Peay State University. Excuse me. Secretary, please call the roll.

Dr. Clark ([00:00:12](#)):

Trustee Cannata here. Trustee Gibson is absent. Trustee Jenkins. Here. Trustee Johnson. Here. Trustee Kimbrough.

Trustee Kimbrough ([00:00:19](#)):

Present.

Dr. Clark ([00:00:20](#)):

Trustee Martin is absent. Trustee May. Here. Trustee McInnis. Here. Trustee Mealer is absent. Trustee O'Malley. Here. Trustee Rainey? Here. Trustee Roe.

Trustee Roe ([00:00:31](#)):

Here.

Chair O'Malley ([00:00:32](#)):

Thank you we have a quorum. I call a meeting to order. Please note that there are items on your agenda that need to be adopted. Before I call for a vote, are there any items that you wish to be extracted for the consent agenda? Hearing none, I move for adoption of the agenda, including the consent agenda items. Is there a second?

Trustee McInnis: Second.

Chair O'Malley: It's been moved and seconded. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Aye. Any opposed? Thank you. The agenda's adopted. The minutes for the April 10th, 2026 board meeting were circulated in advance of the meeting. Are there any corrections or additions to those minutes? We have a motion to approve.

Trustee McInnis ([00:01:18](#)):

So moved.

Trustee Cannata: Second.

Chair O'Malley ([00:01:19](#)):

Thank you. It's moved and seconded. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Aye. Any opposed? Thank you. And at this time, I'd like to recognize President Licari who will introduce today's campus spotlight.

President Licari ([00:01:35](#)):

Thank you, Chairman O'Malley. It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Mickey Hepner, who serves as the Dean of College of Business here at Austin Peay. This is a position that he's held since his arrival in 2018. Dr. Hepner has a PhD and MA in economics from the University of Oklahoma, Bachelor's of Business Administration and Economics from Oklahoma as well. In his role as Dean, he has led significant growth and transformation within the college, including a 37% increase in enrollment, launch of a number of new academic programs and substantial investments in student success, experiential learning and community engagement. Under his leadership, the college earned AACSB International Accreditation in April.

Dean Hepner ([00:02:32](#)):

Well, good morning everyone. I'm Mickey Hepner, and as a dean for the College of Business, I'm honored to share a little bit about some of the great things happening in our College of Business for today's campus spotlight. There we go. Thank you. I want to begin with our recent accreditation announcement. On April 29th, we announced that we have officially earned AACSB accreditation, a distinction held by fewer than 6% of business schools worldwide. This is a significant milestone for our college of business. The formal AACSB accreditation process is designed to take six to seven years and requires a school to demonstrate excellence in teaching, faculty research, and engagement with students in the broader business community. However, the informal process, the time when a school must make the required investments in its faculty and staffing models to do the work to improve its processes and procedures and build a culture of continuous improvement, that process can take decades.

([00:03:44](#)):

For years, our team has been building for this moment and today we are proud to be recognized among the world's best business schools. And while I have the privilege of being the one here with you today, the truth is that accomplishing something of this magnitude requires a total team effort. This achievement belongs to our faculty and staff past and present who believed we could build something exceptional here. To our university senior leadership, for their support and trust through many long years, to this board for your encouragement and to our alumni, donors and friends who have supported us every step along the way. It took all of us and thanks to all of us we have earned the label AACSB Accredited.

([00:04:36](#)):

We did not do this just for us, but for the students that we serve. AACSB Foundation opens new doors for our students by signaling to employers that our students are prepared to succeed in today's competitive business world. And importantly, accreditation sends a signal to our students too. It tells them that they

are also ready to compete against the best. Accreditation helps ensure that when our students walk into that job interview or into a new job that they are not just qualified, but that they are also confident and know that they belong there. And I want to take a moment to emphasize just how important that is because we serve a very unique student body in the college of business. This year alone, more than 40% of our businesses are first generation college students. More than a third are military affiliated. With 25% of our current students being enrolled being veterans of the armed forces.

[\(00:05:33\)](#):

That is a truly unique student value among business schools worldwide. And that means though that when our students earn their business degrees, it can change the trajectory of their entire family.

[\(00:05:47\)](#):

And AACSB accreditation though is just part of our story. We are demonstrating momentum in other areas too. Over the past three years, enrollment in the college of business has grown by more than 35%. And it is important to note though that we're not just growing, we are also getting better. We've made intentional investments to support that success. And over the past decade, we have tripled the size of our professional advising team because we want our students to have consistent, high-quality guidance throughout their academic journey. Notably, this has been made possible through the business course fee that this board has approved and supported over the years. That investment has allowed us to build a student success center model focused on proactive advising and student support. These investments coupled with our team's efforts have enabled our college to improve student retention, persistence, and graduation rates over the last decade.

[\(00:06:43\)](#):

And that reflects something that we believe deeply in the college. The student success does not happen by accident. It happens through intentional and strategic investments in the systems and the people and the processes we support our students every day. And another important reason why our enrollment success or enrollment success comes from something that has become central to who we are as a college. In our college, we often say that we are committed to pushing students beyond the textbook. We even posted those words on the wall of the Kimbrough building, but that's not just a phrase for us. It has become a core part of our college identity. For us, it means giving students opportunities to apply what they learn, to engage in real world problem solving and to develop the kind of skills that employers are looking for. For example, we have a group of students who manage a real \$600,000 investment portfolio where they make real investment decisions with real money in real companies.

[\(00:07:42\)](#):

We have a group of students who get certified by the IRS to help local families file their income taxes. And this last year alone, they helped more than 250 local families file taxes right here in Montgomery. One of my favorite examples of our commitment to pushing students beyond the textbook is our growth in supporting student research. In 2022, we made this activity a priority in our college's strategic plan and since then we've had 144 students travel to present research at academic conferences, including a

record 65 traveling this year alone. Importantly, this effort was specifically recognized by our ACCSB peer review team as a distinctive strength for our college among business schools. But what matters most is not the number of students that. It's what those students are gaining. The ability to think critically, to communicate effectively and to solve complex problems. Those are the skills that will define their success after graduation.

[\(00:08:46\):](#)

We are also committed to developing academic programs that meet the region's workforce needs. In recent years, we have launched new concentrations in artificial intelligence, banking, business analytics, hospitality management, HR and real estate. And notably, two years ago we launched our new MBA program and within its first year of existence, that program grew to have more than 200 students clearly demonstrating the need in this community for an MBA program. So thank you to this board for voting to approve that much needed program just a few years ago. It is making a difference here. To create a world-class business program though, we need to recruit, retain, and develop world-class faculty. And over the past several years, we have not just grown the size of our faculty. We have strengthened the quality and the impact of their work. For example, from 2012 to 2018, only 3% of our colleges researched faculty research was published in highly ranked prestigious academic journals.

[\(00:09:52\):](#)

In the past six years though, that number has grown from 3% to more than 52%. A truly astounding improvement on behalf of our faculty. Furthermore, the work of our faculty are getting noticed in media circles. In the last few years, our listening faculty have been mentioned in stories on cnbc.com, Fox Business, Fortune, Yahoo Finance, Science, the Tennessean, the National Business Journal, and even on local television news throughout the state of Tennessee. Overall, our faculty research has generated more than \$11 billion in add value equivalent, a common marketing metric to measure the value of media exposure.

[\(00:10:38\):](#)

The efforts of our faculty are truly elevating our institution's profile, enhancing our reputation, and ensuring that our students learn from recognized experts and their discipline. And as we look to the future, I want to briefly highlight one initiative that represents where we are going as a college. In the coming months, we will formally announce the formation of the Larry W. Carroll Entrepreneurship Center as part of a new multimillion-dollar investment that the College of Business is making in Clarksville, Tennessee. This center will serve as a hub for entrepreneurial activity throughout our community, hosting an entrepreneurship pitch competition for our students, providing coaching to local residents with potential business ideas and assisting faculty members across our campus in developing new intellectual property through their research. The goal is to seed and cultivate a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem right here in Parksville.

[\(00:11:44\):](#)

And as I close, I want to take just a few moments to reflect on what all of this progress represents. Today, I sit before you and can share that our college of business is a business school that is nationally recognized for its quality, that is growing, that is improving student outcomes and that is investing in the community we serve and none of this would have been possible without your support. What you are seeing today is a result of intentional choices, choices by our faculty and staff, by our university leadership, by this board. And what excites me the most is not where we are today, but where we are going. With the momentum we have built with the strength of our team and with new initiatives like the Larry W. Carroll Entrepreneurship Center, we are building something special here, business school that aspires to improve the lives of the students and enhance the community business.

[\(00:12:50\)](#):

I have said many times through the years that I'm an economist by training, I'm a dean by profession, but I'm a governor by choice. I was not raised in Tennessee, but this is now my home. I am here because I believe in this place, because I believe in this community, because I believe in this institution, I believe in what we are building, I believe in what we are becoming, I believe in our exceptional faculty and staff and I believe that despite all that we have done, the best days for the College of Business are still out of us. For all of these reasons, I sit before you today and I truly believe that there has never been a better time to be a business guy. Thank you.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:13:50\)](#):

Dr. Hepner, thank you very much. I'm sorry I missed last night's tour and presentation. Congratulations obviously on behalf of myself and all my colleagues on the accreditation just achieved. I can't imagine what went into it, but I know that it was really difficult, very challenging to be one of 6% worldwide is an amazing feat. You do a great job of accrediting everybody around you, but I know that none of this happens without your leadership and we're truly blessed or thankful to have you as the dean of the business school. Thank you for your great presentation today. I'd ask my colleagues to make any other comments or questions.

Trustee McInnis [\(00:14:37\)](#):

I just want to personally truly thank you the college of business I shared last night when you mentioned in your comments earlier about decades, I was remembering years ago, decades when this process started and it has truly been a long time coming, overdue and well deserved. And so there's a lot that goes into this. I know because of being involved early on, not so much now as far as different things, but it's just amazing. I mean, after I read that or listened to your report, Mr. Chairman, I thought do I need to go back and get my MBA? Dr. May just said the same thing, but so thank you all, everything in the College of Business so much.

Trustee Jenkins [\(00:15:24\)](#):

Mickey, you've inspired so many people to help you know that you have get the job done and faltered and then you made it all up. You're a selfless leader. I commend you on that. You have always talked

about your team and how your team did everything, but there's no question that it's your drive and your leadership and your vision is what got us to the finish on this time. It's an incredible accomplishment. I was thinking about four years ago when we went through college of business and saw the white concrete walls in the bathroom with no door and I thought to myself, wow, he's got his work cut out and we went throughout last night and it was absolutely incredible. It makes a statement for Austin Peay that we have never seen before. So congratulations. Thank you. Great job.

Chair O'Malley ([00:16:34](#)):

Anyone else? Great. Thank you, Dr. Hepner, very much. Trustees, in accordance with Tennessee law and University Policy 1.010, Dr. Tim Winters has asked to address the board regarding the academic affairs agenda action item A, new academic unit approvals, Honors College. Dr. Winters is here to visit with us. As a reminder, you have three minutes to share your comments and you must be limited to the topic you've identified in your request. Dr. Winters, the floor is yours.

Dr. Tim Winters ([00:17:13](#)):

Thank you for the opportunity to address you all this morning. I have directed the honors program for the last eight years and have grown it from admitting about 50 students each fall to admitting over 325 in the fall of 2025. After 29 years of service to APSU, I'm retiring this summer one year earlier than anticipated. My decision hinged on an initiative on which you will vote today, the establishment of an honors college. Last July, on his first visit to the Honors Commons, the provost who had been on campus a total of three days at that time asked if I had ever been considered moving from a program to a college; I had. He asked for a proposal and I submitted one on September 4th in which I expressed our greatest need, which is for dedicated faculty. No further communication occurred between him and me. On Friday, six March, the provost sent to the university community a proposal to create an honors college.

([00:18:22](#)):

In that proposal, the provost stated that I fully supported the proposal when in fact I had not seen it. I do not support this proposal as is because it creates high paid administrators rather than filling the need for permanent faculty. We currently staff about 30 sections of honors classes each fall by hiring faculty from various departments. That is not sustained. Creating the dean, associate dean, and three directors will not serve the interests of the students. Also the stated objectives, elevating the program, embedding high impact practices and expanding our reputation have already been met over the last several years. So I asked, what is the rush? I am not against an honors college, but the proper way to approach such a change is to gather all stakeholders to study the necessity and the viability of such a proposal and to listen to them. Instead, we receive a top down proposal that fails to address the pressing need for faculty and more resources for our students.

([00:19:37](#)):

Furthermore, at every presentation of the proposal, the provost has stated that there will be no vote taken, yet the THEP policy checklist A1.3 clearly states that they expect written demonstration of approval by all necessary bodies on campus. Since none of those bodies voted, no such demonstrable evidence exists. It is my firm belief that this proposal is ill considered and should not be approved. Thank you.

Chair O'Malley ([00:20:10](#)):

Thank you very much for your comments, Dr. Winters. Any further discussion with these comments will occur during the academic affairs report to the board prior to the board voting on the agenda item. We'll proceed now with the next agenda item. I recognize Trustee May to report on their committee meetings today.

Trustee May ([00:20:34](#)):

Thank you, Chairman O'Malley for the opportunity to present my report from this morning's academic affairs committee meeting. The committee met and approved minutes from the Academic Affairs Committee meeting on April 10th, 2026. We also reviewed and approved two action items that are on the consent agenda today, policy one, 025, policy on academic tenure, policy 1027, general education requirements and degree requirements. The committee reviewed and approved two action items on the agenda for your approval today. The academic unit approval for Honors College and the new academic unit approval from Department of Aviation Sciences. That concludes my report.

Chair O'Malley ([00:21:20](#)):

Thank you, Trustee May. Trustee May's report included three items requiring action of the board. Trustee May do you have a motion for action on the proposal to form an honors college.

Trustee May ([00:21:33](#)):

Yes, you have before you proposed to form a new honors college and by direction of the committee, I move to approve this proposal.

Chair O'Malley ([00:21:39](#)):

We've heard a motion to approve the proposal to form an honors college. Since this is a motion of the committee, a second is not required. Is there any discussion? Dr. Roe?

Trustee Roe ([00:21:51](#)):

Yeah, I'd like to ask Dr. Cordova to answer some of Dr. Winter's comments. It's the first word the board has heard and I think that certainly the public needs to hear your side of the story.

Provost Cordova ([00:22:07](#)):

Yeah, thank you Trustee Roe. So first I did see great potential in what could be elevated our honors program to an honor college. We had those conversations and I asked Professor Winters for a proposal and he did send that proposal on October September and that proposal he submitted was okay. I looked at it, reviewed it. I also asked the university college dean for proposal. I looked at both of their proposals and did my own due diligence about what I believe Austin Peak could do at this point in time to take existing resources, reimagine elements of the honors college, take feedback from some alumni and some other stakeholders and think about what a structure could be to start. That's what initially created the proposal that was shared with the university committee on March 6th. Then through our academic reorganization policy, we followed the steps required in our own policy 2.009 to go through the creation or dissolution of an academic college.

[\(00:23:15\)](#):

So we went through that entire process. We received a lot of feedback. A lot of feedback I received as well occurred during my listening tour that included his area as well as other areas within university college after the initial proposal was presented and I received their feedback, listening deeply, intently, use that to further strengthen the document that you have.

Trustee Roe [\(00:23:39\)](#):

I mentioned two things about the greater need was more permanent faculty and more resources. Have you answered that?

Provost Cordova [\(00:23:48\)](#):

Currently the honors program has faculty fellows. It is not typical traditional of honors colleges across the United States who hire full-time honors faculty. What is typical is the faculty are pulled from academic disciplines within the colleges to contribute to the various courses. And so to hire eight or nine faculty would cost nearly a million dollars. It's a non-starter. It's not a typical model. And so for us to start an honors college that we know we can leverage our existing strengths, our existing resources, the proposal you have before you today in my judgment and many others as we refined it through the process represents that.

Trustee Roe [\(00:24:35\)](#):

Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:24:37\)](#):

Thank you too. Mitch, can you comment briefly on the support for the honors college that's kind of been garnered out there, the deans and faculty senate?

Provost Cordova [\(00:24:53\)](#):

Yeah, from the perspective of the different constituent groups that I've shared with and had numerous conversations with, there's overwhelming support. They're just it. The university and its leadership and leadership and senior leadership as we discuss is that our senior leadership team recognize that we are ready for the next step. Austin Peay has had an honors program for 32 years and through a Professor Winters no question. And that's acknowledging the proposal. We're ready for that next step. And so on the shoulders of Dr. Irwin, Dr. Winters, others, we are ready for that next step. So what we are doing is acknowledging that goodwill and saying we're ready for the next step. So we can be better competitive with our institutions across the region, Western Kentucky, Murray State, East Tennessee State, Middle Tennessee. We are losing students because we don't have the elevated stature and experience of those institutions.

[\(00:25:53\)](#):

Our students come here and then they leave here because they're being effectively recruited almost like the transfer board to go to these other honors colleges for more money. And so as I've talked with prospective donors, alumni, existing staff, student leaders, including our student body president, Tyler, it's a move of right. It's a move I think we have to hit. And so we've chartered course. We follow the procedure, we follow policy. Here we are today.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:26:24\)](#):

Thank you.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:26:28\)](#):

Go ahead.

Trustee Cannata [\(00:26:32\)](#):

I just wanted to congratulate Dr. Winters for just speaking up and then offering a different opinion. I think different opinions help everybody come to a better solution. So I know that was a big, very important way for him to do that. And so that was great. And then you might have already answered this question, but I wanted to really understand just from a very high level the benefit of going from a program to a college, what does that benefit to the school? And you might have just answered, it might be really marketing to our students.

Provost Cordova [\(00:27:06\)](#):

Yes, it's beyond marketing. It's students who are higher achieving students are recognizing honors college as that distinction of academic excellence that they're ready to pursue as an undergraduate student. These are students that are looking at another university. Austin Peay isn't their only choice. They fill out a common application where they're going to fill out an application to go to college that has six other institutions on them. And so these high achieving students are being courted by other universities and their honors program. So for us to remain competitive in this region and in the state and

attracting and retaining the type of student we know wants to be at Austin. And so it's the next step in this evolution of academic excellence for our higher achieved students.

Trustee McInnis ([00:28:01](#)):

Thank you. I had an alum of this university reach out to me about this issue, this proposal I should say. And I know there's multiple sides to every story which is a benefit of our partnership that we have between the university, the trustees, the faculty, staff and students. This alum, they have children that have been in the university college and have alleged that the provost that you have already taken steps to start to dismantle the university college and have shifted students to other areas for advisement, which again, there's multiple sides to every story. I'm sharing with you what I have as trustee have been communicated to me that it's created a disaster situation for advising with because of this alleged started of dismantlement already of the university college. And second, that alum also mentioned to me that it feels like this is a very hurried process, even though it might not seem hurried when you think about September, October, and now we're in June, but why is there a rush and perhaps there needs to be more time and I'm not saying I'm for or against this.

([00:29:14](#)):

I'm just sharing with you the feedback as a trustee that I have received from the alum of this university that reached out to me. So I'd like to get your comments on those two items if you would please.

Provost Cordova ([00:29:24](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for sharing that. We have started the process of moving degree programs into the academic colleges. We can do that without a reorganization proposal. That's not required to do that. So why did we do that? We have three academic programs that are not aligned in academic colleges. We have an AAS and culinary arts and AS and university studies and a BS in university studies that don't report up through an academic dean. There's no faculty governance structure specific to those programs and so better aligned And those academic programs to academic homes where there's formal academic curricular structures and governance, it is the best course of action for those programs. And also it also allows those programs to feed into additional programs that reside in those colleges. That can be done without any reorganization. The comment about it's been a disaster, I would respectfully disagree, where we have had transition of students being advised by staff in university college and then in some instances now staff in the college of behavioral health sciences.

([00:30:37](#)):

So for example, the two programs, the two associate degree programs, those students are still being advised by the same people that are in that are in university college. The BS and university studies program are being advised by staff and faculty within college of behavioral health sciences. So I would respectfully disagree with that. What was the second part of that?

Trustee McInnis ([00:30:57](#)):

The person feels like the alum feels like that it's rushed and that here we're trying to approve this now to implement it starting in August. So can you comment to that?

Provost Cordova ([00:31:07](#)):

So what we are asking you to improve in terms of the honors college, we are looking to have three faculty directors, director of student research innovation, director of community engaged learning and the director of global education and national fellowship. Those individuals already exist. They're already doing the jobs. That's not new. The director of community engaged learning is an individual who's already in the honors college working as the assistant director. No change there. We're not changing PELP. We're not changing administratives. We're not changing any of it. So the comment about it being rushed again, I would respectfully disagree with the structures there. What we are doing is we're starting the process of naming an interim dean. We'll name an interim associate dean or an associate dean and then start the process for a search for a dean this fall that we would put in place for fall of 27.

([00:32:05](#)):

We went through the appropriate reorganization policy. It's not that large of skills of a structural change. And so I would again, respectfully disagree that this was rushed. It went through a process effectively nearly the entire year. I feel that's appropriate given the level of scope of organizational change that will occur. And so

Trustee Kimbrough ([00:32:32](#)):

Could you help me, forgive my ignorance again, but could you summarize for me the basic two or three disagreements between what you're recommending and Dr. Winter's issues and where we are today? So I understand the change and understand what the ... I know there's a myriad of items, but what are the two or three basic disagreements?

Provost Cordova ([00:33:02](#)):

The first disagreement I believe is that it's felt that his proposal wasn't viewed or heard or listened to. His proposal contains the same elements virtually as the proposal you're reviewing today. What is not in there is the hiring of new faculty. What is not in there is the hiring of new director of student success. That's what he suggested. What he suggested a dean, an associate dean, director of communication, director of research, director of fellowships, director of PELP, and a director of honors. And so when I looked at that, it's pretty solid, but why would you have a director of honors, a dean of honors, an associate dean and a director of public? It was administratively heavy. Great start. I took another proposal. I did my own due diligence, benchmarking other institutions, best practices in knowledge colleges and formed the basis of that first portfolio. So effectively where we are today is not very different than what he proposed.

([00:34:06](#)):

I think perhaps what the issue was is the first proposal that was distributed through UI on March 6th didn't name specific titles of these three directors yet. It was still going through the review, still going through feedback, still going through the process. And so ultimately where we landed in the final proposal is substantively not much different than what he. And I've had meetings throughout my direct report. He's not a direct report level, but I've had meetings with my direct report over that area throughout the year refining and shaping what could be an honors comment.

[\(00:34:45\)](#):

How those communications have happened between my direct report and him, that's obviously a part of that, but I think we used the right process. We went through the right steps and ultimately where we've landed today was not too different at all from what he read.

Trustee Kimbrough [\(00:35:05\)](#):

So would it be fair to say that the biggest difference is hiring faculty?

Provost Cordova [\(00:35:10\)](#):

Yeah, I would say that would be the biggest difference in hiring honors dedicated ones.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:35:19\)](#):

Anyone else?

Trustee McInnis [\(00:35:21\)](#):

I have a follow-up. Yes, Sir.

Trustee McInnis [\(00:35:22\)](#):

Thank you. If I remember correctly, forgive me if I did not remember this correctly. When Dr. Winters spoke, he mentioned that you had visited when you first came on campus, which was wonderful, that you visited, of course. And then there wasn't much communication about this new honors college until they got something from you that says, "Well, we're doing an honors college." Am I remembering that correctly? So there appears to be a perception there wasn't a lot of communication other than he submitted a proposal as far as a lot of this due diligence. And I know he doesn't directly report to you, but it does give me pause that I need to ask you to comment on that.

Provost Cordova [\(00:36:07\)](#):

Yeah, I believe that's what he said. The proposal was, like I said, I got October 3rd, we reviewed it, I received the other proposal from our university college dean and then I worked with her throughout the months to land on where we are. So that's what we did. And so I don't know what kind of communication occurred between her and him. Obviously it wasn't as where it should have been and

that revealed itself later throughout the process, but the underlying essence of the polls of what we have today, like I said, is effectively not very different than what he proposed.

Trustee McInnis ([00:36:58](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker Unidentified ([00:36:59](#)):

And one last question.

Speaker Unidentified ([00:37:00](#)):

Is it your opinion that not somewhat reorganizing program puts the university at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace?

Provost Cordova ([00:37:11](#)):

I do. I do. I believe the time is now we've been talking about it, right? And at some point if there's been previous conversations, which there has been, this isn't new. It's not like it hasn't been discussed. And so I'm looking at timing, competitive advantage or ready to celebrate our hundred anniversary. This is great timing to leverage the strengths of leadership and then past leadership to take that honor to college to the next level. If I thought that it was too big of a jump too fast given the type of organizational change that we're looking to do, we wouldn't be here. But I do feel it's reasonable it's the next step and we're ready for that next step.

Trustee McInnis ([00:37:58](#)):

Thank you again. This is such important and the fact that Dr. Winters came and spoke too. I'd like to hear a comment from President Licari on his thoughts about this after you've heard this from Dr. Winters and you of course have known what's been going on through this process as well as the concerns that have been raised because I'm sure you've received direct communication from people too so you would please. Yeah,

President Licari ([00:38:24](#)):

Yeah, thanks. No, I agree with assessment of the need for an honors college. His proposal I think is in alignment with what we need at Austin Peay, but also connects very strongly to establish best practices colleges around the state and around the country. So what we are proposing here is in alignment for us, but then also it is a sensible structure that is replicated elsewhere around the country. And so I think change is always difficult. My assessment is that the time is right, the process that was used was right, that new things on college campuses or companies or whatever it is, is always difficult and that's some of what we're seeing here is a reaction to a proposal that is new and different and I think the process that we used was was correct and that we wound up with a very solid proposal for an honors college at Austin Peay.

[\(00:39:50\)](#):

I'm very excited.

Trustee Jenkins [\(00:39:54\)](#):

I'd just like to make a statement that in the real world, I know my organization, I tell them the way we've always done things, it's not always the way things need to be done. You've got to be wide open to changes and if you wait too long to change, it's too late to change, it's already patched you by. And I think what we're looking at here is there may be some differences in opinion on how to go about that change. The only thing constant today's world is change and you either go with the change and you go quickly with the change or you get left behind and Austin Peay, it appears we've been kind of left behind in this. It's been too long, thank goodness that you're here and that you recognize that we needed that change to get to the next level because we're at the next level type of university and I think that you've gone through due diligence and we don't need to delay this any longer.

[\(00:40:53\)](#):

We need to get with the program.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:40:56\)](#):

Thank you. I agree with Catherine and we want to thank again Dr. Winters for being here and being part of the process and I also appreciate Dr. Cordova and my colleagues for the healthy discussion. If there's no additional discussion, I'll ask for a motion to approve the recommendation. Second. Is there any additional discussion? Are we doing a vote or just a group vote? Voice vote. All those in favor say aye. Aye. Thank you very much. Trustee May, do you have a motion for action on the proposal to form the Department of Aviation Science.

Trustee May [\(00:41:50\)](#):

I do. For your proposal to form a new Department of Aviation Science within the College of Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. By direction of the committee, I move to approve this proposal.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:42:03\)](#):

Thank you. You've heard the motion to approve the proposal to form the Department of Aviation Science. Since this is a motion of the committee, a second is not required. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, in favor, say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Thank you. The motion carries. I'd now like to thank you, Trustee May. I'd like to recognize Trustee Roe to give us a report at the audit committee meeting today.

Trustee Roe [\(00:42:29\)](#):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to present my report from today's audit committee meeting. The committee approved the minutes of April 10th, 2026 audit committee meeting and audit committee executive session. Committee heard and approved one action item, proposed internal audit plan for fiscal year 2027. The committee heard a presentation on the following information. An internal audit report released between March 31st, 2026 and May 7th, 2026, and a list of outstanding audit recommendation. That concludes my report from the audit committee.

Chair O'Malley ([00:43:04](#)):

Thank you, Trustee Roe. I'd now like to recognize Trustee Cannata, chair of the business and finance committee to give us a report of the committee meeting today.

Trustee Cannata ([00:43:13](#)):

Thank you for the opportunity to present my report from this morning's business and finance committee meeting. The committee met and approved the minutes from the April 10th, 2026 committee meeting. The committee also reviewed and approved one action item that's on the consent agenda today. It's the policy 1.021 fees charges three funds and fees adjustments. The committee considered and approved three action items needing consideration of the board. The first is the tuition mandatory fees for the 2026 27 academic year. The second is the estimated budget for the 2025 and 26 fiscal year as well as the proposed budget for the 26-27 fiscal year and third is the capital outlay and maintenance requests for the 2027 28 fiscal year. The committee heard one informational item today, which was the review of the university's awesome organizational chart. And that concludes my report.

Chair O'Malley ([00:44:28](#)):

Thank you, Trustee Cannata. Trustee Cannata's report included three items requiring action of the board. Do you have a motion for action on the tuition and mandatory fees for the 26-27 academic year.

Trustee Cannata ([00:44:42](#)):

Yes, I do. You're meeting materials with information on the tuition fees for the 26th, 27 academic year by direction of the committee. I move to approve the tuition and mandatory fees for the 26, 27.

Chair O'Malley ([00:44:57](#)):

You've heard the motion to approve the tuition and mandatory fees for the 26, 27, 27 academic year. Since this is a motion of committee, the second is not required. Is there any discussion?

Trustee Roe ([00:45:10](#)):

Mr. Chairman, just a couple of things on the tuition increase and I know that every single person on this board trustee wants to keep the tuition and the fees. I'm a graduate of this school in 1967. It's a very affordable college that it is now. Just let me give you, put this into perspective a little bit. Tuition at great university up the road at Vanderbilt. We plan on being in football September 5th. Their tuition and fees

for attendance, the last information was \$94,000 a year a year. Belmont, another great university up the road, 68,000 lipstick, 60,000.

[\(00:45:57\)](#):

Universities are all except one higher than they are. I mentioned this earlier, health science, and I think this will be in the president's report, but as a physician, when you have 120 nursing students take a state exam and nobody takes that unbelievable. It's unbelievable. So the quality of education you're getting is really excellent and the value I can tell you personally that I've made a lot of investments, some not so good, some pretty good, but probably the investment in this education is one of the best I've made in my life. And I think you can say that to students now and I know when you're looking at it, when you're a struggling student, look, I've sold shoes on Main Street here, I've watched this. Everybody here has done those things to get to school, but you're investing in a future that'll last you a lifetime and I fully support this and I think the quality is here and I think it's not named after me, but ROE return on investment.

[\(00:47:11\)](#):

But you are getting a quality return on investment at this university. You just heard from the business college today, less than 6%. I could go on and on, but I think the value is there and certainly I appreciate Dr. Licari, you're trying to hold this cost down the best you can. I also want to add that 70, what is it? 60% of our students graduate with no debt. Let me put it in perspective. The federal government took over student loans in 2010, a disaster. I voted against that when it happened. 92% of federal \$1.8 trillion in student loans across the country, that's \$1,800 billion in student loans, which greatly exceeds credit card in this country. So I think the alumni that donate to this university, physical stewardship of the school needs to be shared. And again, I wish we had a zero increase, but I can assure you a small increase this year and a small increase if we need to next year is better than a humongous increase in two years.

[\(00:48:28\)](#):

With that, I can go back.

Chair O'Malley [\(00:48:30\)](#):

Thank you, Dr. Roe. Perspective that's important.

Trustee McInnis [\(00:48:32\)](#):

Chairman O'Malley? Yes.

Trustee McInnis [\(00:48:33\)](#):

I'd

Trustee McInnis [\(00:48:34\)](#):

Like to also just thank the people that took the time to send comments. They didn't have to do that and so it was a wide range of comments and so I just appreciate those people that did that because I read those, made those and took those into consideration and also like I said earlier in the committee meeting that we are one of the lower, excuse me, one of the universities LGI that has the lower increase this year, which is truly noted.

Trustee Roe ([00:49:04](#)):

Thank you. I read that twice. Thank you.

Chair O'Malley ([00:49:08](#)):

Kerri, I agree. I'm glad you mentioned that because part of the process. I think all of us read those comments and we're sobered by them and thank you. Any further discussion?

Speaker 13 ([00:49:25](#)):

Chairman? Yes, sir. I'd like to ask Dr. Roe shared something earlier. If we have an in state student that qualifies for the HOPE scholarship, what it would cost them a year?

Trustee Roe ([00:49:45](#)):

I'll look at student tuition and fees and if you're a freshman, it's \$4,500. I think it'd be a \$5,600 if you're a junior and senior and you meet those standards. The tuition is \$4,470 a year, which is unbelievable.

Chair O'Malley ([00:50:09](#)):

No further discussion. Secretary please call the roll.

Dr. Clark ([00:50:13](#)):

Trustee Cannata. Yes. Trustee Gibson is absent. Trustee Jenkins? Yes.

Dr. Clark ([00:50:16](#)):

Trustee

Dr. Clark ([00:50:17](#)):

Johnson? Yes. Trustee Kimbrough? Yes.

Speaker 12 ([00:50:19](#)):

Trustee

Dr. Clark ([00:50:19](#)):

May? Yes. Trustee McInnis? Yes. Trustee O'Malley? Yes.

Dr. Clark ([00:50:23](#)):

Trustee

Dr. Clark ([00:50:24](#)):

Rainey? Yes.

Dr. Clark ([00:50:25](#)):

Trustee

Dr. Clark ([00:50:25](#)):

Roe. Yes.

Chair O'Malley ([00:50:26](#)):

Motion carries. Thank you. Trustee Cannata, do you have a motion for action on the estimated budget for the 25-26 and the proposed budget for 26-27 fiscal year?

Trustee Cannata ([00:50:38](#)):

Yes. Your meeting materials include information on the estimated budget for the 25.6 fiscal year and the proposed budget for the 26-27 fiscal year. By direction of the committee, I move to approve the estimated budget for 25-26 fiscal year and the proposed budget for the 26-27.

Chair O'Malley ([00:51:01](#)):

Thank you. You heard the motion to approve the estimated budget for 2025, 2026 and the proposed budget for 26-27 fiscal year. Since this is a motion of the committee, a second is not required. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, secretary please call the role.

Dr. Clark ([00:51:19](#)):

Trustee Cannata. Yes. Trustee Jenkins?

Chair O'Malley ([00:51:22](#)):

Yes. Trustee

Dr. Clark ([00:51:23](#)):

Johnson? Yes. Trustee Kimbrough? Yes. Trustee May? Yes. Trustee McInnis? Yes. Trustee O'Malley? Yes. Trustee Rainey? Yes. Trustee Roe?

Trustee Roe ([00:51:31](#)):

Yes.

Chair O'Malley ([00:51:33](#)):

And Trustee Cannata, while you're on the roll, I do have a motion for action on the capital outlay and maintenance request for the 27-28 fiscal year. Yes.

Trustee Cannata ([00:51:43](#)):

Your meeting materials included information on the capital outlay maintenance requests for the 27-28 fiscal year. By direction of the committee, I move to approve the capital outlay and maintenance request for the 27-28 fiscal year.

Chair O'Malley ([00:51:58](#)):

Thank you. You've heard the motion to approve the capital outlay and maintenance request for the 27-28 fiscal year. Again, since this is a motion of the committee, a second is not required. Is there any discussion?

Trustee Roe ([00:52:11](#)):

I think it needs to be pointed out. There's a hundred million dollar need.

Chair O'Malley ([00:52:16](#)):

I think It was 112.

Trustee Roe ([00:52:18](#)):

112 million. State's budget is ... Our chair, it's about three million to let you know. And this I'm sure is with every school list.

Chair O'Malley ([00:52:34](#)):

Thank you. Anyone else? Secretary, please call the roll.

Dr. Clark ([00:52:40](#)):

Trustee Cannata? Yes. Trustee Jenkins?

Trustee Jenkins ([00:52:43](#)):

Yes.

Dr. Clark ([00:52:43](#)):

Trustee Johnson? Yes. Trustee Kimbrough? Yes. Trustee May? Yes. Trustee McInnis? Yes. Trustee O'Malley? Yes. Trustee Rainey? Yes. Trustee Roe.

Chair O'Malley ([00:52:52](#)):

Yes.

([00:52:53](#)):

Thank you. Motion carries. Thank you, Trustees. The next agenda item is the executive committee report. Before we hear the report of the executive committee, President Licari has asked to step out of the meeting. Give me a moment to do that. I'm pleased to present the report from this morning's executive committee meeting. The committee approved the minutes from the September 12th, 2025 executive committee meetings. The committee approved one action item that is on the consent agenda today and that is policy 1-010. Appeals and appearances before the board. The committee reviewed and took action on two items which are on the agenda for your approval today. The first action item is consideration of the president's performance evaluation and incentive for fiscal year 25 to 26. Information related to the president's performance evaluation was provided to you in advance of this meeting. During the executive committee meeting, an overview of the president's performance evaluation was presented and a recommendation made that President Licari qualifies for an incentive for fiscal year 25 / 26.

([00:54:13](#)):

By direction of the executive committee I move that the board award a 77.5% incentive in the amount of \$32,163 to President Licari for fiscal year 25, 26. Since this is a motion of the committee, a second is not required. Is there any discussion?

([00:54:38](#)):

Hearing none, all those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Aye. Any opposed? Motion carried. The next action item is consideration of the president's base compensation for fiscal year 26, 27. By direction of the executive committee, I move that President Ricardi's base salary be set at \$440,000 for fiscal year 26 / 27 based upon the positive performance evaluation and in order to keep the president's salary commensurate with other Tennessee LGI presidents. Again, since this is a motion of the committee, second is not required. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Thank you. The motion carries and that concludes my report of the executive committee. We can invite Dr. Licari back. I'd like now to recognize Trustee McInnis, chair of the Student Affairs Committee here for report on committee meeting today.

Trustee McInnis ([00:56:00](#)):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good opportunity to present this morning, Student Affairs Committee meeting. The committee met and approved the minutes from the April 10th, 2026 committee meeting.

There were no action items on the agenda. Dr. Clements presented the following information item, Engaged annual impact for board. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

Chair O'Malley ([00:56:20](#)):

Thank you. Trustee McInnis. You're welcome. Thank you. The next item on the agenda is a request to name two spaces on campus. I invite Mr. Kris Phillips, vice president for alumni, engagement and philanthropy and executive director of the APSU Foundation to provide details regarding these naming requests. Kris?

Kris Phillips ([00:56:44](#)):

Thank you, Chair President O'Malley, and thank each of you for your support in leading us so both at this university. Dean Hepner mentioned earlier if there's been a better time to be a business guy. While I'm old enough to take, it's never been a better time to be enough period. So just want to thank you all for what you're doing. As Chairman O'Malley mentioned, I do have a couple of names for you today. That means if I'm here and June had some donors step up and the stewardship for that is about to happen. The naming committee recommends ... First one, please.

([00:57:17](#)):

We named the High Bay Laboratory. We're in room 110 located inside the APSU technology building after Richard E and Bristol S. Ganaway. It'll be called the Engineering Technology and Innovation Laboratory. In memory of Richard and Bristol Ganaway, recognizing the generosity of their son, Dr. Richard P. Ganaway. Dr. Ganaway established a Richard E and Bristol S. Ganaway Memorial Scholarship Endowment in August of 2015 and has since made additional significant contributions to the fund. Dr. Ganaway is a Clarksville native, board-certified ophthalmologist and a Navy veteran who returned home in 2000 to serve his community. His father, Richard, graduated from Austin Peay in 1950 and retired as a professor of industrial art here while his mother Bristol attended Austin Peay, founded the cosmetology program at Clarksville High School and was a founding member of the APSU Women's Club.

([00:58:11](#)):

The next naming that we're asking for your consideration is classroom 212 located inside of the APSU Health Professions Building to be named in memory of Judy Lynn Oetter and recognition of the Judy Lynn Oetter Above and Beyond Memorial Nursing Scholarship Endowment. It was established by Robert Oetter in memory of his late wife. Judy graduated from Austin Peay in 1981, fulfilling her lifelong dream of becoming a nurse. She spent 30 years in emergency medicine at the University of Florida Health Science in Gainesville and volunteered on medical admissions throughout her career, always encouraged her team to go above and beyond. Now at this time, I'd like to transition into the three annual awards that you all named for philanthropy, service and military service.

Chair O'Malley ([00:58:57](#)):

I think we need to vote.

Kris Phillips ([00:58:58](#)):

Oh, I'm sorry. We vote.

Chair O'Malley ([00:59:04](#)):

Yeah, I know. I was on a roll. I'm like Katherine. I'm rolling. You heard the explanation with Mr. Phillips. You will take action on the recommendations as a group. Do I hear a motion to approve the naming requests as presented? Motion.

Trustee Johnson ([00:59:21](#)):

Second.

Chair O'Malley ([00:59:21](#)):

Thank you. It's moved and seconded that we approve the naming request. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? The motion carries. Thank you, Mr. Phillips. We are being asked to approve several awards to individuals or organizations who have demonstrated their commitment to Austin P. Mr. Phillips will provide information on these awards. Kris?

Kris Phillips ([00:59:48](#)):

Thank you, Sir. The APSU Philanthropist of the Year recommendation is Billy Atkins. Billy has dedicated over 66 years to community banking and civic leadership in Clarksville, Montgomery County. A lifelong resident, Atkins founded Legends Bank in 1998 with \$9 million in assets and it's grown to over nearly a billion dollars today. Prior to his 2019 retirement, he served as organizer, president, CEO, and chairman. Continues as senior chairman on the board of directors. His commitment to Austin Peay runs deep. Governor Bill Haslam appointed him to the university's inaugural board of trustees in 2017. He previously served as the president of the Governor's Club and on the foundation board. In 2019, the Atkins Family and Legends Bank stepped up and established the Billy Atkins Family Endowed Scholarship supporting the College of Business Students majoring in finance. Atkins and his late wife Sue have been strong philanthropic supporters of Austin Peay's academic and athletic programs and their legacy of generosity continues to impact the university community.

([01:00:50](#)):

Atkins's community impact extends far beyond banking. He has played an instrumental role in local economic development helping attract major corporate investments, including Hankook Tire, Google, and LG Electronics. He served four six-year terms on the Industrial Development Board, chairing it four times, led the Clarksville Area Chamber of Commerce as president in 1994 and contributed to numerous specific organizations.

([01:01:18](#)):

The recipient for the recommendation of APSU board of trustees military service award is Dr. Michelle D. Smith. Dr. Smith has dedicated her career to serving those who serve. Her military journey began as an enlisted combat medic in Korea. She attended Austin Peak State University as a cross-country student-athlete from 1988 to 1991, graduating in three years. After earning her medical degree from East Tennessee State University in 1996 on the Army Scholarship, Dr. Smith completed her dermatology residency at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where she served as a chief resident during 9-11. As a major in the United States Army Medical Corps, she served at Walter Reed and as the Chief of Dermatology at Fort Jackson where she established the hospital's first dermatology clinic. She also served as an assistant professor of dermatology at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland.

[\(01:02:13\):](#)

Throughout her military service, Dr. Smith balanced her role as an army physician and supporting soldiers with families as a commander's wife, leading family support groups for the 160th aviation regiment during deployments. After leaving active duty, she founded Dermatology of Lexington LLC in South Carolina where she practiced for 15 years. During this time, she employed many enlisted medics upon their separation from the military. This assisted in their transition from the military by helping build their resumes. Now practicing in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, Dr. Smith serves on the Austin P State University Library and National Alumni Association Boards and continues extension service to the military community as an Eagle Ambassador at Fort Campbell. She assists veterans with VA disability claims, attends military memorials, supports Gold Star families, mentors APSU pre-med students, and helps connect soldiers and families with resources that they need. The majority of the volunteer work Dr. Smith does for soldiers, veterans, and their families involves helping one soldier at a time as a quiet professional behind the scenes.

[\(01:03:19\):](#)

And finally, it's my pleasure to present to you for the service award, Dr. Jeanie Beauchamp. Dr. Beauchamp has distinguished herself as a national leader of pediatric dentistry and community health advocacy. Raised in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She earned her DDS from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in 1991 and then completed her pediatric dentistry residency in 1993. She began working in Clarksville in 1993 and founded Clarksville Pediatric Dentistry in 1999, which she continues to own and operate. Dr. Beauchamp's professional leadership extends nationally. She has served as the president of both the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the Tennessee Dental Association. She has served on four councils for the American Dental Association. She previously led the Tennessee Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the Eighth District Dental Society. At Austin Peay, Dr. Beauchamp has demonstrated sustained leadership and philanthropic commitment. For several years, she served on the executive committee of the foundation board and the Candlelight Ball Committee, chairing the event in 2008 and nine.

[\(01:04:21\):](#)

She's a member of the Tower Club and Reagan Giving Circle, supporting the various university missions through her ongoing engagement and generosity. She received APSU's Wendell Gilbert Award in 2019 and was inducted into the Governor's Redcoat Society in 2023, recognizing her ongoing commitment to the university and the community. Her community involvement is extensive, including CEMC, Clarksville Sunrise Rotary, Clarksville Chamber, United Way, Leadership Clarksville, Boy Scouts of America, her church, Customs House Museum Foundation, and of course the Clarksville Montgomery County Community Health Foundation, TennCare Advisory Board, and others. It is my pleasure to present to you those three qualified nominees and I look forward to the results. Thank you, sir.

Chair O'Malley ([01:05:06](#)):

Great job. Three terrific candidates. You've heard the explanation from Mr. Phillips. We will take these up as a group. Do I hear a motion to approve-

Trustee Roe ([01:05:19](#)):

I want to just say one thing about Billy Atkins. He and my mother working at Morgan Bank, which is just above FM Bank arena. So I knew him. He was just starting in the banking business and you won't be a nicer person than Billy Atkins, a more respectful person, faithful Christian, a good family man, tremendous supporter of this university and my friend. And I really can't think of anyone better than Billy. happy to say those things about my friend.

Trustee McInnis ([01:05:58](#)):

Chairman O'Malley, I would like to add if it would be possible, could you please, Vice President Phillips, let us know when you plan to present these awards to these different individuals because due to schedules, some of the trustees of schedules permit may want to either attend, be with you, however that's done, or you can at least reach out sometime when that's done.

Kris Phillips ([01:06:20](#)):

Sure. Our goal every year is to work with the individual and we will present that to the award at an event we already have scheduled based on their time so I can get with Dr. Clark and be sure that this out to each of you soon that's going to happen.

Trustee McInnis ([01:06:33](#)):

And I'd also like to mention too that Dr. I work with a lot of physicians in the Nashville vicinity and she is highly regarded with her peers in oral medicine. I'm very excited to see too that she's one of these honorees this year and then also to have Dr. Smith, who is a woman to be in her role during nine eleven chief resident. I mean Dr. Roe, you can imagine what that was like.

Trustee Roe ([01:06:57](#)):

If dermatology is easy though, if it's wet, if it's wet you dry. If you dry you wet.

Chair O'Malley ([01:07:21](#)):

So do I hear a motion to approve the following awards? Billy Atkins as the philanthropist of the year recipient, Dr. Michelle Smith as the governor who lead through military service recipient and Dr. Jeanie Beauchamp as the gov who lead through service recipient.

Trustee McInnis ([01:07:39](#)):

So moved.

Chair O'Malley ([01:07:39](#)):

Is there a second? Second. It's moved and seconded that we approve these award recipients. Is there any additional discussion? Thank you. All those in favor say aye.

Multiple ([01:07:50](#)):

Aye.

Chair O'Malley ([01:07:51](#)):

Any opposed? Thank you. The motion carries. Thank you Mr. Phillips for a great presentation. At this time I'd like to recognize President Licari to give us his report and to also report on interim items.

President Licari ([01:08:05](#)):

Thank you Chairman O'Malley. Thank you all. First I want to say that although he was not able to be here today, I want to welcome Ben Martin as our new student trustee. He's not here today because he's traveling to scope up graduate school opportunities so can hardly begrudge that and I know that he's going to be a great addition to the board. I also want to thank two board members for whom this is their last official meeting pending the appointment of new members. Robin Mealer and Don Jenkins both are inaugural members of the board having served since its inception since in 2017. Unfortunately Robin wasn't able to be here either, but her impressive army career and her long connection to Austin Peay has meant that she's provided the university and me tremendous guidance. She served as the professor of military science for our ROTC program from 1996 to 2000.

([01:09:08](#)):

During that time we won one of our MacArthur awards, which means that during her time leading that program, we were recognized as one of the very best in the entire nation. She also earned a master's degree from us during that time and so thank you to her for her commitment to making Austin Peay Better. I think we can give her a round of applause.

([01:09:35](#)):

I think she's stuck in the Pentagon with training for the United States Army. So at her level you wouldn't think she would need anymore of it, but there it is. Don, your encouragement, your support, advice and

expectations have made me a better president and a better member of the Clarksville Montgomery County community as well. Your support for this university is nothing short of amazing. You're not even an alum. Yes.

[\(01:10:08\)](#):

And so I am proud to be a part of your commitment to our students. Thank you for your guidance. Thank you for your leadership and thank you for your support. I also want to thank Keri McInnis. She comes to the end of her first term on the board. As an alum who was highly involved in student life, including a member of the PELP program, your perspective on this board is very valuable and so thank you and I expect to look forward to your reappointment. Thank you to the full board for the careful consideration of our tuition rate for the upcoming year. Nobody likes cost increases, but our own operational costs increase with inflation. We also need to preserve and improve quality as well as make prudent investments when we have the opportunities. This is balanced of course with understanding the need to not price out our students.

[\(01:11:21\)](#):

This is why I'm proud of the low tuition increase that you just approved at 3.23%. It is the lowest in the state amongst all other LGIs. This great increase and it preserves our place as what I will say is the most affordable university in the state. So thank you for that. Thank you too for the thoughtful engagement and for approving the establishment of the Honors College. This is an exciting development that will continue the momentum that was established by all those who have gotten us to this point. So the future for our top students here is bright. Thank you too, of course, for the support. I truly appreciate it. I'm somewhat embarrassed by it and I do look forward to donating my raise back to the university as I have always done. So thank you for that support. We, the university, certainly not me, our faculty and staff and students set a lot of important records and benchmarks in the 2025, 26 academic year.

[\(01:12:32\)](#):

I'll take a moment just to celebrate some of those big accomplishments. Record enrollment, of course we have Amy Corlew (give a wave) which included the fastest growing freshman class in the state last fall, almost 11% and that resulted in being the fastest growing LGI in the state. Up more than 7%. The next closest was ETSU.

[\(01:13:02\)](#):

Of our record enrollment, one third, fully one third of that is military affiliated and that is a testament to our commitment to serving Fort Campbell and beyond. Certainly our military affiliated students need and deserve that support. Walt Lord sitting in the back, give a wave if you want. Thank you for all of your work to make sure that all of these thousands of military-affiliated students we have here get the support that they need and deserve. Candlelight Ball raised a record \$423,000 plus destroying last year's record of 266,000. In fact, the last four events, each one of them has been a record. So no pressure, Kris.

President Licari [\(01:13:54\)](#):

I'm

President Licari ([01:13:55](#)):

Going to keep moving the goal post for you. He also has a new board, a new foundation board that was just reestablished and reinvented. So really no pressure at all. Now I know that you are more than capable of keeping us going in the right direction. Our ROTC program competed again at the Sandhurst Military Skills Competition at West Point. Only 16 of the 274 programs in the country get to compete and we do regularly. And so that means we have the best ROTC program in the state and actually in the entire Southeast region. That ROTC program also commissioned its largest class of second lieutenants a few weeks ago at 42. The RV expects 25 so we're well above that. And one of those cadets was the 1000 cadet that we commissioned. So very, very proud of that program. We cut ribbon on health professions building, of course, opening that tremendous facility that will ensure that we're able to meet the demands for healthcare workforce and be able to educate our students in the way that the faculty know that they need to educate our students and that means as teams of coordinated health professionals.

([01:15:19](#)):

So very proud of that. We're in the early stages of renovating the truck center into the Jack and Margie Turner event center and renovating the garage base next to the bookstore into the Millan Impact Center, which will house our expanded food pantry and community engagement center. The men's basketball is regular season champions for the first time since 2008. So it's always nice to hang another banner and have some fun doing it. On the academic front, we were able to sign a couple of really cool articulation agreements. One that we just signed with TCAT Dickson for a seamless LPN to BSN pathway. The folks in TCAT Dickson are very smart and enthusiastic of partnering up with the best nursing program in the state and so we're very, very happy to do these kind of innovative things that allow us to grow the workforce, save students time and money, and partner with great educational institutions around the state.

([01:16:28](#)):

We established a connection to Oak Ridge National Lab with our Institute for National Security Military Studies that will strengthen our national security workforce. So I'm very, very excited to grow that partnership as well. And then of course, as we heard earlier, College of Business earning AACSB accreditation is a huge milestone for the college and for the university. Looking forward, as much as it is nice to reflect on past success, we do need to make sure that we are always looking forward. The landscape for higher education is unsettled nationally, but I'm encouraged for the future of Austin Peay. We've done a good job of tackling the issue of ROI with 60% of our recent graduates graduating with no student loan debt at all. We will remain nimble, innovative, and aggressive in meeting the needs and expectations of our current prospective students and their families. We have to.

([01:17:30](#)):

We also need to be nimble, innovative, and aggressive in meeting expectations for workforce and economic development. As we begin to work on our next strategic framework for the university, student success after graduation will need to be a core priority for the university.

[\(01:17:47\)](#):

This will require expanded partnerships with business and industry as well as revised curricular co-curricular and extracurricular experiences for our students that build professional skills. I am excited for the upcoming academic year. In a recent lunch with a donor, he said he was ready to go to graduate school and he was ready to start his career and he was ready to launch his own business all because of the education that he got at Austin Peak. Our current student body is full of those stories waiting to be written and it is a great time to get up. Finally, your packet includes contracts and agreements that have been executed, state building commissions and actions that have occurred since the last board meeting. Thank you and that concludes my report.

Chair O'Malley [\(01:18:33\)](#):

For another great report. A lot of good news around Austin Peay in front of us. It's a bright future for sure. Again, I'd like to echo Dr. Licari's comments about Don and Robin. You completed your second terms of your inaugural board membership and Don, I know that you wanted to say a couple of words, but thank you and a great colleague, a great friend. So it's Robin and you'll be missed on this board.

Trustee Jenkins [\(01:19:18\)](#):

I'd just like to say what an honor and privilege it is to be on the office for people. Seven and a half years ago, Bill Hassan called me and he said, "Do you have any recommendations for this Austin Peak Board?" And I said, "I spent 10 minutes talking to him about Michael O'Malley." And after 10 minutes he said, "By the way, I was interviewing you." But he said, "I will talk to

Trustee Jenkins [\(01:19:45\)](#):

Mike."

Trustee Jenkins [\(01:19:46\)](#):

So Mike also joined us on that inaugural board, but the incredible transformation of Austin P during this last seven and a half years has just been incredible.

[\(01:19:58\)](#):

You look at physically, people that hadn't been here for five years don't recognize the campus. It's amazing. We've got the health professions building, we've got the Newton Military Center at this beautiful O'Malley Center. We don't play with a little red barn. We're not playing to the Dun Center anymore. We're over at F&M arena. And you just look at the change has been constant and I think back to all the different ... I've been on the last three president circle advisors, the different things that we talked about during those periods of time and just to see the absolute energy in Austin right now and all the positive things that go on and it wasn't that far along ago that we were playing, I call it non-competition football, but it was non-scholarship football and you look how far our athletics have gone

and athletics are the front port of any porch of any university. You attract people through athletics, through you get supporters and we've had great athletic programs now and I'll compliment Kris Phillips.

[\(01:21:13\)](#):

He's got two different hands now. We have to raise money for the college, I mean for the university, but we got to raise NIL money and they can't cross over and we've been very successful in that. And while we're talking about athletics, we've got Jordan Harmon our own. You look at Jordan Austin Peay has raised their own AD. How many colleges would that ever happen in? It's just the atmosphere here. It's you look at our AACSB accreditation business college. My gosh, we've been chasing that for 30 years and we finally got to the finish line. There's never been a better time to break up. The only thing I can say is Let's Go Peay.

Chair O'Malley [\(01:22:09\)](#):

Thank you very much. As a reminder, our next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on September 11th, 2026 and with that I move that the meeting adjourn. It is moved and seconded meeting adjourned. The ayes have it and meeting is adjourned.