Standardized Description of UT for Programmatic Accreditations

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(Created May 2015; revised May 2018)

Purpose
SACSCOC policy: Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies states,

“Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting body must describe itself in identical terms to each agency with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents, and must keep each USDOE recognized accrediting body, including SACSCOC, apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting agency.”

When preparing accreditation reports that require a description of the University, the mission and vision statements (see http://top25.utk.edu/mission-vision/, accessed October 12, 2016) or other language relating to the items previously listed, departments should contact the SACSCOC Liaison to ensure each uses similar language and maintains compliance with this policy.

This document provides recommended text (abbreviated and expanded descriptions) and is maintained by the Office of Accreditation and posted to sacs.utk.edu/programmatic-accreditation/ for department use.

Abbreviated Description of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT), is the flagship, land-grant, comprehensive research university in the University of Tennessee System (System). UT offers more than 300 degree programs to its 28,000 students and is authorized to award bachelor, master, professional and
doctoral degrees. UT’s Carnegie Classification is Research University/very high and holds the Elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

UT is one of the nation’s oldest institutions of higher education. Established in 1794 as Blount College, it was renamed East Tennessee College (1820) and again as East Tennessee University (1840). The Civil War forced the institution to close, and its buildings were used as a hospital. The University reopened after the war and, in 1869, was chosen as Tennessee’s land-grant institution, changing its name to the University of Tennessee (UT) in 1879. The medical campus in Nashville was acquired by the University in 1879 and moved to Memphis in 1911. The University of Tennessee System was created in 1968, bringing various entities together under one System Board of Trustees.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville has held continuous SACSCOC accreditation since 1897. UT Martin (1951), UT Chattanooga (1910), and the UT Health Science Center (1972) carry separate regional accreditation by SACSCOC.

Since creation of the state lottery that provides funds for the Tennessee Hope Scholarship, applications to UT have increased, and the quality of incoming freshmen has risen continuously during the past decade. The incoming fall 2017 freshman class has an average ACT score of 28 and average high school GPA of 3.94 (data from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, oira.utk.edu).

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**Expanded Description of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

*NOTE: Delete sections as appropriate depending upon the requirements of each programmatic accreditor’s guidelines.*

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT), is the flagship, land-grant, comprehensive research university in the University of Tennessee System (System). UT offers more than 300 degree programs to its 28,000 students and is authorized to award bachelor, master, professional and doctoral degrees offered by the eleven colleges. UT’s Carnegie Classification is Research University/very high and it holds the Elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

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University of Tennessee System was created in 1968, bringing various entities together under one System Board of Trustees.

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The UT System Board of Trustees, acting through a president and other officers, leads the System through the adoption and administration of system-wide human resources, financial management, and academic policies (http://policy.tennessee.edu/, accessed October 12, 2016). Dr. Joseph A. DiPietro, who previously served as Chancellor of The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, became President of the system on January 1, 2011. The President and the System Administration maintain their principal offices on the Knoxville campus. The organization of the UT System and Board of Trustees is defined in the Tennessee Code Annotated (Title 49, Chapter 9), the Board of Trustees Charter Provisions and Bylaws (http://trustees.tennessee.edu/charter-provisions/, accessed October 12, 2016). The UT System President and Board of Trustees report to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (www.tn.gov/thec/, accessed August 22, 2017).

The President, his staff, and the Board of Trustees review the System Mission (http://tennessee.edu/, accessed August 22, 2017) and the System Administration Mission Statements (http://tennessee.edu/static/strategicplan/plan.html, accessed August 22, 2017), and the mission statements of each campus and institute to ensure system integrity and identity. The Knoxville campus mission statement, as published on the web (see http://top25.utk.edu/mission-vision/, accessed October 12, 2016), is,

The primary mission of UT 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, UT embodies the spirit of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, outreach, and engagement attained by the nation’s finest public research institutions.

At the campus level, governance structures and rules applicable to campus and unit personnel and activities are set forth in the Faculty Handbook, available at http://provost.utk.edu/faculty-handbook/ (accessed October 12, 2016) with leadership from the UT Faculty Senate and Interim Chancellor Dr. Wayne Davis, and his Cabinet that includes (from http://chancellor.utk.edu/cabinet/)

- Mr. Chip Bryant, Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Affairs;
- Dr. Vincent Carilli, Vice Chancellor for Student Life;
• Mr. Chris Cimino, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration;
• Mr. Phillip Fulmer, Director of Athletics;
• Dr. Victor McCrary, Vice Chancellor for Research;
• Mr. Ryan Robinson, Vice Chancellor for Communications; and
• Dr. John Zomchick, Interim Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor.

Other campus policies relating to academics and student life, administration and operation, environmental health and safety, finance, human resources, information technology, and research and intellectual property may be found at Policy Central (http://policycentral.utk.edu/, accessed October 12, 2016).

UT’s strategic plan, refreshed during the 2014-2015 academic year, Vol Vision – 2020 (http://top25.utk.edu/, accessed February 13, 2017) was approved by the System Board of Trustees at the April 1, 2016 meeting. The six strategic priorities are, 1) undergraduate education; 2) graduate education; 3) research, scholarship, creative activity, and engagement; 4) faculty and staff; 5) resources and infrastructure; and 6) diversity and inclusion. The Vol Vision - 2020 elaborated on the 2010 Volunteer Values and articulates the Volunteer Difference of Volunteer Community, Mission, Academic and Research Excellent, Student Experience, Alumni Network, and Place.

UT is composed of eleven colleges which offer graduate and professional degrees, of which, nine offer baccalaureate degrees. The Graduate School provides oversight for graduate admissions, curriculum, and other aspects of graduate education. Both undergraduate and graduate catalogs are electronic and available online (http://catalog.utk.edu/) and managed by the Office of the University Registrar (undergraduate catalog) and the Graduate School (graduate catalog).

Since creation of the state lottery that provides funds for the Tennessee Hope Scholarship, applications to UT have increased and the quality of incoming freshmen has risen continuously during the past decade. The incoming fall 2017 freshman class has an average ACT score of 28 and average high school GPA of 3.94 (data from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, oira.utk.edu).